

PIPA - the RTPI Politicians in Planning Network Business Plan 2009 Quarter 1 Progress

Aim of the Network




Politicians are at the core of a democratic planning system. PIPA aims to support co-operative working between professionals and politicians to achieve the most effective planning outcomes. PIPA has enormous potential to have an influence on national decision-making. It also has a strong role to play in helping politicians adjust to changes required by introduction of new planning systems.




Key objectives of the Network

- Raising the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a political perspective
- Providing a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences
- Providing a sounding board to further develop and improve democratic planning practice
- Providing a 'one stop shop' signposting service of professional planning information for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK




Actions

Objective one: Raising the profile and understanding of professional planning amongst people who are engaged in planning from a political perspective




Action	When	Resources required	Q1 Progress
Have in place for 2009 a programme of UK-wide initiatives and activities, including contributions to Planning magazine, that will widen awareness and help to build membership	Dec 2008	Network fliers. Support from magazine editors and Members. NM co-ordination and contributions	Initial attempt at a UK programme of gypsy & traveller events has stalled, avoiding any overlap with PAS. Planning for 2009 Conference in hand. Slot for 'Network of the Month' booked. 
Develop the circulation of the Quarterly PIPA Bulletin sent to national and regional people with a political interest in planning, in conjunction with RTPI communications staff.	March 2009	NM co-ordination	2 Bulletins despatched 2009. Discussions with Marketing Officer aim to improve circulation. 
Carry out a Member survey during 2009 to gauge levels of satisfaction and potential content for the Business Plan 2010	March 2009	Access to Survey Monkey or similar	Survey deferred to better fit with Business Planning cycle. 

Set up targeted task groups based on feedback from the member survey	May 2009	Members volunteering to attend set-up meetings; NM co-ordination and contributions.	To follow Member survey.
Host a Workshop at the Planning Convention 2009	June 2009	Network banner and fliers; place for NM and Workshop contributors	Debate event scheduled – working with SE Design Champions re speakers. 
Host a reception at the Elected Members' Summer School	September 2009	Network banner and fliers; place for NM	Funding agreed, slot booked. 
In conjunction with local Members and Planning Aid, have a presence at Party Conferences and other appropriate events	As per 2009 programme	Network banner and fliers; place for NM	Attendance at LGA event booked with Planning Aid but event cancelled. Funding for attendances is very restricted. 



Objective two: Providing a vehicle for all those involved in democratic planning to come together to build knowledge and exchange information and experiences

Action	When	Resources required	Q1 Progress
To offer at a regional or sub-regional level a series of Network-led events that might widen awareness by bringing Councillors together	Quarterly	Members host events, providing venue and refreshments; NM setting-up	Initial attempt at a UK programme of gypsy & traveller events has stalled, avoiding any overlap with PAS. One possible opening in the Midlands being explored. 
To offer in each UK nation on a 2 year cycle a Conference of the style which re-launched PIPA in 2007	2009: England (London?) + Wales	Sponsorship of up to £15,000 to be sought from PAS and Welsh Assembly Government. Network banner and fliers; NM time and co-ordination	Welsh Conference not supported at this time. PAS funding of at least £7,500 agreed for UK event to be held in London. 
Enable relevant topics to be debated through the website Discussion Forum	New topics introduced fortnightly	NM time	Despite the combined use of Bulletin and website Forum only a minority of Members have registered on the website. 

Objective three: Provide a sounding board to develop and improve democratic planning practice

Action	When	Resources required	Q1 Progress
Conduct a survey of each Local Authority Lead Councillor for Planning around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The status of the Chief Planning Officer within the local authority The need to increase the numbers of qualified planners 	Feb 2009	Database of target group; admin support	Database obtained. Survey yet to be circulated; approach discussed with Marketing Officer. 
Set up a targeted task group on the basis of the feedback from the Local Authority survey	April 2009	Members volunteering to attend set-up meetings; NM co-ordination and contributions.	To follow survey.
Provide intelligence to the RTPPI Policy Staff by identifying forthcoming issues and arranging joint activities as appropriate	On-going throughout 2009	Member contributions; NM co-ordination	Both 2009 Network events had Policy presence and helped to develop RTPPI/CIH thinking and/or submissions. 
Build co-operation with other organisations with shared interests by inviting their contributions to/participation in events whilst avoiding duplication	On-going throughout 2009	Member contributions; NM co-ordination	As noted above co-operative effort with LGA initially thwarted. Relations with NALC continue to be productive. Further potential for 2009 Conference. 

Objective four: Providing a 'one stop shop' signposting service of professional planning information for all those involved in democratic planning within the UK

Action	When	Resources required	Q1 Progress
Populate the website with comprehensive resources adding a new information topic each month.	Monthly	Member contributions; Sift co-operation and IT support as required	Some new topic areas and content added. 
In conjunction with Members and Planning Aid, to contribute Planning 'Surgeries' at Conferences and other appropriate events	As per 2009 programme	Network banner and fliers; place for NM	This worked well at NALC Conference 2008 but there is no equivalents (yet) for 2009. 

Additional resources required

- 11.5 hours per week of professional staff time.
- £500 financial resources for member expenses

Prospects

PIPA will play a major role in the RTPI's aim to put planning at the heart of local government. PIPA will continue to build relationships with the key politicians in planning to raise its profile and co-operation with professionals. 2010 or thereabouts can be expected to be an election year and through its Members PIPA can help to ensure a priority for planning issues in manifesto commitments.

Andrew Matheson
PIPA Network Manager

Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL
RTPI, a charity registered in England 262865 and Scotland SC 037841