



RTPI

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PLANNING WITH COMMUNITIES NETWORK MONITORING REPORT 2009

Summary

Given the financial uncertainties it is perhaps not surprising that community interests have been noticeably focused on what might not be there in the future rather than new and additional opportunities. The Planning with Communities Network Bulletins and events, whilst being honest, have however attempted to set an upbeat tone, and there has been plenty with which the Members might engage. A working co-ordination with Planning Aid has been maintained. These factors are inevitably going to influence and shape the 2010 contribution of the Planning with Communities Network within the wider RTPI family of Networks. In an election year when policy changes may be very much in evidence and all political parties seem to be making a feature of local governance, a 'community up' perspective of planning will hold plenty of intrigue.

The Year

The Network has continued to work closely with RTPI Planning Aid, although 2009 has been a year of substantial change for them and that has been a natural pre-occupation for their staff. Since the Network takes a 'community up' look at planning there have been a number of opportunities to co-operate with others of the Networks, to help to give a broader and hopefully more community-informed approach to appropriate events. Such events have included Policy-led looks at major Consultations on the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Eco-towns and the draft PPS4 Planning for Prosperous Economies. With others the Network has offered an excellent range of opportunities including revisits to Section 106 Agreements in challenging economic times, a look at the Homes & Communities Agency to see how true it intends to be about the 'Communities' element in its title, and two visits to see what a sustainable community might look like – Bournville in Birmingham and Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. The Network provided a Study Tour for the 2009 Planning Convention – a tour around the Southwark Coin Street estate which, by happy coincidence, had just received the Secretary of State's blessing for a large multi-use tower block despite a number of reservations about its potential prominence.

A particular highlight, following on from the Summerfield Eco-neighbourhood visit that had attracted so much interest amongst Members in 2007, was the invitation from Bournville Village Trust (BVT) for Members to visit to see 'The original Sustainable community?' Network Member attendees enjoyed an engaging and enlightening tour, with the prospect of more to come since BVT offered further insights for 2010! Similarly, after the Network event introducing Members to the skills of Urban Characterisation Studies, there was an interest amongst Members to see the study in their context on the ground – and so a trip to Brighton may be on offer for 2010.

An abiding topic of interest with members, shared with members of the Politicians in Planning Network (PIPA), has been the role of Parish Councils in planning. The Network facilitated some speakers from Planning Aid for the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), further building on co-operation over articles and Conferences.

The Member Survey 2009 showed that by far the most valued feature of the Planning with Communities Network offer is 'information giving' (90% ranked this No1); second favourite was 'sharing information & knowledge with other Members' (via events in particular) and third was 'opportunities to explore and express views on planning with communities policies'.

I am also very pleased to report that 75% of those completing the survey are supportive of setting up some task groups to look at some specific or more detailed issues – although not all would be immediately available to support initiatives. There are a wide range of suggestions for Planning with Communities Network priorities – 83 in total – these helped to advise the content of future events and activities. Intriguingly, virtually everyone responding to the Planning with Communities survey indicated that they are a member of at least one other of the RTPI Networks, seeming to show a very strong commitment to the RTPI & its Networks.

Membership:

Figures current at 31.12.08: **1,130**

(For comparison: Members 2007 - 218; 2007 – 1,086)

RTPI members: roughly 50% (membership data has been accumulated in such a way that this figure is difficult to derive more accurately at present)

Advisory Group

Because of the difficulty in attracting a Group reflective of the disparate and dispersed interest of the Membership as a whole, there is no Advisory Group for this Network.

E-bulletins

E-bulletins have been distributed fortnightly, with special editions for any topics of urgency.

Unsolicited Feedback received in 2009

"That's a really good newsletter! Looking forward to getting involved in the Network"

"I see [the Network] as the perfect tool in my personal and professional development and also to introduce planning to a wider public when people ask why I find enjoyment in this profession"

"Thanks very much for your swift reply, that's excellent and just what I needed!"

"I was sorry to hear that the momentum has been lost for Regeneration Conventions as they were a valued opportunity to share some of the real issues around community & regeneration"

"I look forward to receiving the e-mailings"

"Thanks - another very useful Bulletin"

"Many thanks for one of the most comprehensive bulletins yet!"

"I am now retired but I would like to thank you for all your recent efforts to keep me well informed!"

"I am retiring – hence the change of contact details – but I would very much like to keep in touch with planning through your bulletins and events"

Policy consultations:

Network members have been invited to contribute to consultations on the following during 2009:

Draft Planning Policy Statement: Eco-towns - CLG
All Landscapes Matter – Natural England
Definition of Zero Carbon Homes and Non-Domestic Buildings - CLG
Guidance for Local Transport Plans - Department for Transport
Draft Revised Circular 12/1996: Planning Agreements – Scottish Government
Climate Change Strategy – First Stage – Welsh Assembly Government
One Wales: The All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy - Welsh Assembly Government
Draft of 'Designing Streets' – Scottish Government
Sustainable Homes: A National Housing Strategy for Wales - Welsh Assembly Government
Power to Promote or Improve Economic, Social and Environmental Well-Being - Welsh Assembly Government
Heat and Energy Saving Strategy - DECC
Financial Inclusion Strategy - Welsh Assembly Government
Sustainable Communities Act 2007: Local Spending Reports - CLG
Financial viability study of the eco-towns programme - CLG
Tackling race inequalities: A discussion document - CLG
A Bioenergy Action Plan for Wales - Welsh Assembly Government
The term 'carbon neutral': its definition and recommendations for good practice - DECC
National Energy Efficiency and Savings Plan - Welsh Assembly Government
Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Policy on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England & from the Recommendations of the Examination in Public Panel - CLG
Co-operative Commission
Scottish Planning Policy – Scottish Government
Scottish Planning Policy Environmental Report – Scottish Government
Commons Act 2006 - Updating the Commons Registers in Wales - Welsh Assembly Government
Safer places: a counter-terrorism supplement – Home Office
New Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies - CLG
Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework – Scottish Government
Draft Housing (Scotland) Bill 2009 – Scottish Government
The Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill – Scottish Government
Draft Technical Advice Note 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings - Welsh Assembly Government
Houses in multiple occupation and possible planning responses – CLG
Commission on the Future for Housing in Northern Ireland – The Commission
Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill - Scottish Government
Charges payable to the Planning Inspectorate - Welsh Assembly Government
Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions - CLG
A sustainable future for transport - Towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system – Department for Transport
Building a Society for All Ages - CLG
New Planning Policy on Development and Coastal Change - CLG
Adapting to Climate Change: Ensuring progress in key sectors - the adaptation reporting power in the Climate Change Act 2008 – DEFRA
Coastal Change Policy - DEFRA
Planning Act 2008: Examination procedures for nationally significant infrastructure projects - CLG
Building a Society for All Ages – HMG
The Planning System in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Assembly
Strengthening local democracy - CLG
New planning policy on Development and coastal change - CLG
Streamlining Information Requirements for Planning Applications - CLG
Improving Permitted Development - CLG
Publicity for Planning Applications - CLG
Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment - CLG
Hazardous Waste Strategy - DEFRA
Draft Noise Action Plans – DEFRA

Proposals for Fairer and Better Environmental Enforcement – DEFRA & Welsh Assembly Government

Proposed amendments to Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk - CLG

Proposals and Draft Regulations for the Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy - CLG

Implementation of the Removal of the Duty of Planning Authorities to Notify Historic Scotland on Certain Types of Listed Building Consent Application - Scottish Government

UK Equality Bill - Specific Public Sector Duties to Promote Equality, and Socio-economic Duty - Scottish Government

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities - Welsh Assembly Government

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance - Cadw

Changes to Planning Policy Wales to support the requirement for travel plans for specific types of development - Welsh Assembly Government

Eco-towns - allocations from the eco-towns fund - CLG

National Compact - Compact Voice, the Commission for the Compact and the Office for the Third Sector

A consultation on high hedges and other nuisance vegetation - Scottish Government

Coastal Access: Proposals to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 for coastal land - DEFRA

Scotland's Zero Waste Plan Consultation - Scottish Government

Historic Scotland Guidance Notes - Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Scottish Government

A Road Less Travelled - A Draft Gypsy Traveller Strategy Document - Welsh Assembly Government

Proposed changes to the Growth Fund for 2010-11 - CLG

Scottish Planning Policy - Proposed Policy Changes - Scottish Government

Thames Gateway Eco-quarter - CLG

Three London Mayoral Strategies – London Assembly

Proposals to incentivise landowners to bring forward land for housing in rural areas – CLG

Proposed Permitted Development Rights for Microgeneration - Northern Ireland Assembly

Proposed Changes to Householder Permitted Development Rights - Northern Ireland Assembly

Proposed Changes to Non-householder Permitted Development Rights - Northern Ireland Assembly

Fuel Poverty Strategy - Welsh Assembly Government

Call for Evidence: Inquiry into the proposals for energy national policy statements - DECC

Permitted development rights for small scale renewable and low carbon energy technologies, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure - CLG

Listening to communities: draft statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions - CLG

Draft Addendum to PPS 7: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas - Northern Ireland Assembly

Code for Sustainable Homes and the Energy Efficiency standard for Zero Carbon Homes - CLG

Consultation on a new National Park and Broads Circular and Vision Statement - DEFRA

Requests to/from Members:

Member attention was drawn to the publication '**The Community Planning Event Manual**' by Network Member Nick Wates

The RTPI response to the CLG Consultation on **Community Land Trusts** was publicised to Members who were invited to follow up on any points made in the submission

Members were invited to take part in an ACRE Survey to build a national picture of the state of **rural village and community halls** in 2009

When a '**Useful Publications**' page was added to the Members' website they were invited to share useful knowledge with your fellow Network members by sending details of publications that they had found useful so that others might benefit from the recommendation

RTPI Information Services invited Network Members to take part in a survey to find out what they think about the information the RTPI provides and how it is provided

Members were invited by the organisers to participate as a 'planning expert' in the **Expert Advice Centre** feature at the Grand Designs Live Exhibition

A Networks Member drew Member attention to a new Foundation Degree Course at the University of Gloucestershire in **Community Engagement & Governance**

Members responded to the request for contributions the RTPI's **Planning to Live with Climate Change**

Members were given access via the Member website to the excellent presentations at the **2009 Planning Aid Conference** held in Edinburgh

A local Councillor asked to hear from Members that had been involved in formulating local policies on the **location of wind farms**

In the wake of **Matthew Taylor's Report** on Rural Economies Members were asked to share any experience of, or views on, the impact of second homes in rural areas

The Centre for Public Health Excellence (CPHE) invited Members to join their Group working on guidance for policy makers, planners, local authorities, & primary care trusts on how to improve health and reduce inequalities through the process of spatial planning

One or more Member was sought to be the Network's **Climate Change Champion**

Members learned how Devon Planning Officer Rachel Bland, from South Hams District Council, won the 2008 George Pepler International Award which took her on a study tour to Canada to look at and report on **Community Land Trusts in Canada**

On behalf of the **National Planning Forum** project on evaluating the potential for using mediation as a tool at various stages in the planning process, the Network called on planners who may be working on contentious cases to volunteer their case as a potential case study in mediation

Following the announcement of the new **Planning Policy Statement for Eco Towns** and a raft of related green development initiatives, Members were invited to comment and exchange views

A Network Member offered a **Talk the Walk** network event co-hosted by Play England about how local neighbourhoods can be created for children, young people and families to play and move independently

A Network Member reported how, after 10 years of campaigning, her community of Knypersley in Staffordshire had protected their core open space by a **designation as a Village Green**

Members responded to a request to write a short, jargon-free explanatory paragraph about their planning role to be included in an **RTPI brochure for the 16-18 age group** promoting careers in planning

Planning Aid invited Members to a free training session on **Engaging People from Black & Minority Ethnic Communities in the Planning System**

Members were introduced to the purpose of and activities for **World Town Planning Day**

Network Members were invited to volunteer to test services and information available through the **RTPI website**

The Government release of 7 of the intended 12 **National Policy Statements** was publicised to Members alongside Planning Aid explanatory material and opportunities to contribute to the formal Consultations

Members were told of the opportunity for the **Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize**, a biennial international award to recognise individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions to the creation of vibrant, liveable and sustainable urban communities

A Network Member with 4 years work experience in social housing in the community, through the Bulletin, looked for **a new project to work on**, perhaps providing temporary cover

Planning Aid South offered a range of **Free Training Events** to Members

Members were offered the opportunity to contribute to the RTPI response to a **Consultation on Rural Housing** and/or then join a proposed Rural Housing Interest Group

Task Groups

There have been no task groups as such but members have been invited to contribute events and also case-studies to build the good practice resource at communityplanning.net

Events:

Date: 30th January 2009

Event: Joint Meeting with the RTPI-CIH Planning for Housing Network

Venue: London

Subject: The work of the newly created Homes & Communities Agency

Participants: 24

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 30th January 2009

Event: Consultation Event with RTPI & CIH Policy

Venue: London

Subject: Consultation on the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Eco-towns

Participants: 24

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 26th March 2009

Event: Event led by Planning Aid London, RTPI & LVSC

Venue: London

Subject: Get the best out of the Big 4: SCS, LDF, LAAs and Planning Obligations

Participants: 45

The Presentations from these events were available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 27th March 2009

Event: Joint event with RTPI Development Management Network

Venue: Bristol

Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?

Participants: 25

Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 11th June 2009
Event: Consultation Event with RTPi Policy
Venue: London
Subject: Draft PPS4 Planning for Prosperous Economies
Participants: 20
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 16th June 2009
Event: Study Tour at The Planning Convention
Venue: Coin Street Estate, Southwark
Subject: Community-led regeneration
Participants: 10

Date: 30th June 2009
Event: An event for National Housing Week hosted by Family HA Birmingham
Venue: Birmingham
Subject: Localis Report: Fixing Broken Neighbourhoods
Participants: 18
The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 1st July 2009
Event: An event for National Housing Week hosted by HTA Consultants
Venue: London
Subject: The First Carbon Challenge Scheme
Participants: 25
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 2nd July 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: London
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 24
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 29th July 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: Tunbridge Wells
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 20
Presentations from this event are available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 14th September 2009
Event: Joint event with the RTPi Development Management Network
Venue: Grantham
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 30
A Report from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 17th September 2009
Event: A joint event hosted by Bournville Village Trust
Venue: Birmingham
Subject: Tour of Bournville – an original sustainable community?
Participants: 20

Date: 29th September 2009
Event: Event hosted by the National Housing Federation (NHF)
Venue: London
Subject: Draft Regulations for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
Participants: 25

Date: 30th October 2009
Event: A joint event with the RTPI Urban Design Network Heritage Interest Group
Venue: London
Subject: Urban Characterisation Studies
Participants: 24

Date: 18th November 2009
Event: Event offered by the RTPI Rural Planning Network & RTPI West Midlands
Venue: Cheltenham
Subject: Is this what a sustainable community looks like?
Participants: 25

Date: 25th November 2009
Event: Joint event with RTPI Development Management Network
Venue: Leeds
Subject: Section 106 Agreements – Time for Review?
Participants: 28

The Presentation from this event is available via the members' area of the website.

Date: 9th December 2009
Event: Networks event hosted by ECOTEC
Venue: Birmingham
Subject: Transforming Estates
Participants: 22

The Presentation from this event was available via the members' area of the website.

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