

BRANCHOUT

No. 143

Spring 2010

<http://southwest.rtpi.org.uk>

Welcome from the Chair



Welcome to the Spring edition and my first piece as Chairman.

I celebrated New Years Eve's in St. Ives, a symbolic move that saw me travel the breadth of the region on the first day of 2010! Time seems to have accelerated since then but, on reflection, I feel that the planning profession in the south west has achieved a great deal in the first two months. The pages of this edition are testimony to both our achievements and ongoing challenges.

Housing issues featured heavily in January and February. I was delighted to present an accolade to one of the RTPI SW award winners at the Housing Summit, hosted by the South West Housing Initiative ... but more about this inside. John Howell MP, Opposition front bench Planning and Local Government team, addressed the Summit and provided an insight into potential changes should a Conservative government be elected. The Summit was closely followed by our own conference entitled 'Delivering housing in a fragile market'. The conference was well attended and the six speakers brought a fresh perspective to the relationship between planning and housing.

I have also been representing the RTPI on the snappily titled Regional Economic Task Group – Housing and Infrastructure Action Group, set up to brief the Regional Minister for the South West on key issues. The action group has undertaken some fantastic work over the course of the past year, although is now likely to be suspended in the lead up to the General Election. RTPI SW has also forged strong links with the Chartered Institute of Housing in the South West and I was delighted to accept an invitation to the CIH annual dinner in mid February.

Having listened diligently to all of the conference and after dinner speakers, I have had an opportunity to reflect on the

year ahead; the fragility of the economy and impending general election prompt intense speculation and more than a little foreboding. Will the planning system persist or face further reform? Will funding cuts take a further toll on the built environment professions?

I'm determined to support planners and defend the profession when required, but also grasp opportunities to enhance the system in which we work. This pro-active stance is aptly demonstrated in RTPI SW's recent 'Beating the Recession' workshop and in our recent responses to newspaper articles in Bath and North East Somerset. I am also delighted to report that RTPI SW has secured the extension of the SW Policy Officer post, which will allow the region, regardless of who is elected, to play a pro-active role in RTPI policy consultation responses throughout 2010, particularly in relation to regional and sub-regional matters.

I believe that it is essential that planning is seen as a profession that enables new development, whilst ensuring that genuine sustainability and quality are upheld. This will increasingly require creativity, new understanding and skills. I have always tried to embrace new opportunities for learning. My employer has recently embarked on several projects in Scotland and I have therefore been busy absorbing and interpreting the Scottish Planning regulations with all the bilingual grace of a 'Brit abroad'. Nonetheless, this has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to compare and contrast the merits of each system. But I'll save my views on this for another day!

I have no doubt that 2010 will be a very interesting, and at times very challenging, year to be at the helm, and that's without the distractions of the Winter Olympics and the World Cup!

I would like to end by paying tribute to Phillip Watts, a serving member of the Regional Activities Committee who sadly passed away on Thursday 11th February. Phillip was a long serving member, who made a considerable contribution to the activities and wellbeing of the Region. He will be greatly missed.

Brett Spiller, Chairman

In this edition:

- 2 News from South West Planning Aid
- 3 Planning Policy in the South West
- 4 RTPI SW Planning Achievement Awards

- 5 RTPI SW Young Planners & Devon and Cornwall RICS Matrics Annual Ball 2010
- 6 TLT Planning Law Update, CIC South West, Subscription Arrears Amnesty

- 7 Philips Watts, Beating the Recession, Good Practice Advice
- 8 Today's & Tomorrow's Leader's Event Presidential Award for RTPI Volunteers Diary Dates





Planning Aid gets involved with NSIPs

In addition to our normal range of activities, South West Planning Aid has been busy over recent months helping communities to come to terms with the new planning system for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

A veritable mountain of material has emerged for us all, including the general public, to assimilate. Early in November the Government published six draft National Policy Statements (NPSs) for consultation on various aspects of Energy infrastructure, and another NPS on Ports. Aided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) providing an advance draft copy, we published a range of short summary sheets, one for each NPS, as soon as the consultation was announced. By January we had had over 90,000 hits on the Planning Aid website, and over 8500 summary sheets had been downloaded. The subject matter is so important, however, that we needed to offer help in depth on getting down to specifics. The devil is most certainly in the detail.

DECC arranged a series of helpful exhibitions and consultation meetings across the SW, for example, at Exeter, Bridgwater and Oldbury, and we were on hand to support communities likely to be interested and affected. There has, however, been much criticism about the paucity of opportunities for the public to really engage and learn about proposals. In reality, very few people knew about the events and could attend.

Meanwhile, and very swiftly off the blocks, promoters have been active in revealing their own plans for individual NSIPs. Proposals in the south west include new nuclear power stations at Hinkley Point and Oldbury, a windfarm off the coast of Devon and a new and upgraded national grid connection between Avonmouth and Bridgwater. Each of these has also started the process of consulting local communities on their schemes.

To ensure that those affected by the planning process are able to consult effectively, Planning Aid is helping local authorities to assess and improve the promoters' Statements of Community Consultation. We want to see real, not token, consultation, which is proportionate (to the importance for local communities of the proposals being promulgated) and coordinated so that it does not overwhelm. We have organized a number of specific 'capacity building' events for communities in the areas affected to raise their awareness and understanding of the range and relatedness of consultation initiatives, and to equip them to offer their views as effectively as possible. But it has been an uphill battle.

The Government hopes the new system will make consideration of infrastructure proposals faster, fairer and easier for people to get involved. Perhaps not surprisingly there has been a good deal of negative reaction. Local communities are of, course, faced with really tough decisions, decisions which are hugely significant for the public interest. But the challenge for them has been compounded by the sheer volume and complexity of consultation material that has suddenly appeared, all at the same time, from the Government and NSIP promoters. Much of it has been highly technical and communities have felt besieged. The SW has probably seen more than any other region, and for some communities the mountain seems so big to climb that they are opting to avoid taking the first steps. Consultation overload has become a reality.

To read Planning Aid's NPS summaries go to www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk. If you would like to see what the communities have said at our capacity building events on specific NSIP proposals, go to the south west pages by clicking on the 'News' and then 'South West' links.

Barry Pearce
 SWPA Regional Manager
 0117 929 7292
swco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

South West Policy & Media Officer - Update Report



Introduction

Geoff Walker is the RTPI South West Policy & Media Officer. He offers sterling service and guidance to the RTPI in the SW on the plethora of policy, consultation documents and other announcements emanating from Government.

Branchout will, in future, provide a brief summary for members of his extensive research on our behalf. This first report includes news of another new PPS, further Government announcements and development guidance on Eco-towns, and feedback on the SWHI 'Housing Summit'.

Eco-towns

The ongoing Eco-towns initiative gained a slightly different complexion at the end of November 2009, with the announcement, by Planning Minister John Healey, of a 'second wave' of four schemes, all backed by the relevant local authorities, with a closer than hitherto relationship to emerging development plan policies and not free-standing. This goes some way towards meeting RTPI criticisms about Eco-towns' transport links and these being non-plan led. At the beginning of December, further Government supported guidance was published by the TCPA in the form of an 'Energy Worksheet' on 'Developing Energy Efficient & Zero Carbon Strategies for Eco-towns', intended to help developers, planners and those who will 'manage' these new settlements. In addition to DCLG and DECC, some 19 different bodies have apparently had a hand in this, so the range of current expertise probably can't be faulted!

'**PPS 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth**' was issued by DCLG at the end of December. Probably the first real evidence of PPS rationalisation, co-ordination and shortening, its 37 pages replace the former 'PPG 4 Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms' 1992, 'PPG 5 Simplified Planning Zones', also 1992, 'PPS 6 Planning for Town Centres' 2005, and the economic development sections of 'PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' 2004. Published at the same time was a summary of the 472 responses to the PPS 4 Draft issued in May 2009 and 'related practice guidance' on 'need, impact and the sequential approach' when planning for town centres, together with a PPS 4 Impact Assessment – so actually almost 250 pages in total. The town centres guidance features a controversial new 'impact test' to replace the previous 'needs test' approach.

South West Housing Initiative 'Housing Summit 2010'

On 15 January Geoff, Brett Spiller, Jean Marshall and Bob Maynard attended the SWHI's first 'Summit' conference at Sandy Park, Exeter, together with some 160 other delegates and speakers. In a very full morning programme, high level speakers rammed home the extent of the house building 'crisis' in general and affordability in particular. These included Robert Napier, the national Chair of the HCA, Stuart Whitfield, SW Chair of the CBI, Matthew Taylor MP (very much a rural housing/economy expert) and John Howell MP (joint author of the soon to be published Conservative Green Paper on Planning). The not insignificant matter of changing the mind set of 'nimby' councillors was also considered. The afternoon session comprised an interesting collection of eight different 'housing accolade' presentations which, in their various ways, gave a much more optimistic picture of what can be achieved, at the local level, by professionals and others to address this 'crisis'. Included in these was the RTPI South West's 'accolade' for the 'Infrastructure Planning Advice Note' of the SW Strategic Leaders' Board and SW Councils, introduced by Brett. Jean Marshall received an accolade, on behalf of South Somerset District Council, for an 'exemplar' affordable housing scheme planning application process in Yeovil. Apart from the issue of councillor mindset, noted above, if one theme emerged supreme from the day it was the importance of partnership in finding solutions

Geoff can be contacted at SWPolicy@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Student Awards for Academic year 2008/2009:

The Royal Town Planning Institute National Prize

Awarded by the RTPI for the best performances on the following courses:

Jennifer Springer

(MA Town and Country Planning)

Ralph Forder

(MA Town and Country Planning Joint Distance Learning Programme)

Timothy Beddingfield

(BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning)



left to right - Sarah Neill, Brett Spiller, Charlotte Rujas

The Royal Town Planning Institute South West Prize

Awarded by the RTPI South West:

- i) for the best contribution to the planning profession based on the Agency Project, awarded jointly to:

Sarah Neill (Master of Planning)

Charlotte Rujas

(BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning)

- ii) for the postgraduate work making the best contribution to planning practice (based on the Masters Dissertation):

Tom Albery

(MA Town and Country Planning)

- iii) for the best performance on the MA Urban Design programme:

Ben Spencer

- iv) for the best performance on the MPlan Town and Country Planning (undergraduate component)

Candice Coombes

(Master of Planning, Town and Country Planning)



left to right - Ben Spencer, Jennifer Springer, Brett Spiller, Timothy Beddingfield

RTPI SW PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2010

Sponsored by WYG Planning



The RTPI SW Planning Achievement Awards presentation was held on Wednesday 20th January 2010 at Cabot Circus Marketing Suite in Bristol. The Awards and Commendations were given in the annual competition run by the RTPI SW in which entries are judged by a panel of professional peers. To achieve an award, entries must demonstrate something beyond the ordinary and be seen as a significant planning achievement in both a regional and possibly national context.

There are two award categories – ‘schemes on the ground’ and ‘other planning work’. For 2009 the judges had nine entries to consider. The awards were presented by Andrew England, RTPI SW Chair 2009 and David Lowin, Planning Director of WYG which sponsors the awards. The winners were:

SCHEMES ON THE GROUND

Cabot Circus, Bristol



Cabot Circus, a Hammerson and Land Securities joint venture, with Turley Associates as planning advisors, impressed the judges with its innovative design, high energy efficiency and good local community involvement. These attributes helped this complex scheme to create a major planning achievement, in the context of Bristol itself and also of the whole region.

Left to right - Richard Matthews, Bristol City Council; David Lowin, WYG Planning; James Bailey, Centre Manager, Cabot Circus; Andrew England, RTPI SW Chair; Philip Morrison, Cabot Circus and Dan Templeton, Turley Associates

Best entry in category and overall winner of the Philip Barclay Silver Cup and Plaque

OTHER PLANNING WORK

The South West Infrastructure Planning Advice Note



The South West Infrastructure Planning Advice Note, published by the Strategic Leaders' Board of South West Councils (formerly the Regional Assembly) and produced by Arup with Knight Frank, addresses what is possibly the key issue facing planners in the region. Having appropriate infrastructure – road, rail, public transport, utilities and community facilities for health, education etc – in place and at the right time, is vital to enable delivery of sustainable development. This note offers possibly the most comprehensive guidance of its kind.

Left to right - David Lowin; Andrew England; Stuart Todd, SW Councils; Wayne Dyer, ARUP and Tim Durant, ARUP

Best entry in the 'other planning work' category

Norton Radstock Rail Land Commended



A history of stalled initiatives for the regeneration of a complex brownfield site, with a close and critical relationship with a too long neglected town centre, has given way to a partnership guided Master Plan based on a 'vision' driven by the Norton Radstock Regeneration Company, its consultants LDA Design and Bellway Homes as developer.

Left to right - Andrew England; David Lowin; Cate Le-Grice Mack, Norton Radstock Regeneration; Carol Walsh, LDA Design

Tremough University Campus, Penryn, Cornwall Commended



The Master Plan prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd for the developing campus shared by University College Falmouth and Exeter University, has demonstrated close working with the Local Planning Authority, where the speedy and efficient securing of outline planning permission has gone hand in hand with careful design work on a complex, topographically challenging site.

Left to right - David Lowin; Andrew England; Laraine Southwood, Terence O'Rourke; Neal Barnes, University College, Falmouth and Rodger Dewhurst (formerly of Kerrier DC)

Torbay Mayoral Vision Commended



Work by LDA Design, as consultants, to interpret and carry forward the 'Mayoral Vision' as outlined in the Torbay Community Plan, has paved the way for significant regeneration and investment, with a level of integration with local planning policy in the LDF process, not often found.

Left to right - Andrew England; David Lowin and Paul Connolly, LDA Design

Andy England, RTPI South West Chairman 2009 said "Cabot Circus is an outstanding and well deserved overall winner. As a member of the judging panel considering the entries, I have seen at first hand evidence of the wealth of talent and good practice we have in the region. Planners and good planning can have a really positive impact"

THE RTPI PLANNING AWARDS FOR 2010: Closing date Monday 12th April 2010

Details of the 2010 national planning awards are now available on the website www.rtpi.org.uk under Events, Awards and Networking.

RTPI SW Annual Dinner Thistle Hotel, Exeter Friday 16th July 2010



**Four course black tie dinner with after
dinner speaker: Chris Shepley**

“Grotton revisited: the real story of modern planning”



For a booking form please contact RTPI SW

Email: southwest@RTPI.org.uk

Telephone: 01823 250822

Chris Shepley is co-author of 'Grotton Revisited'.

It is intended to lift the spirits of planners in these challenging times, and to prove that we are not all stodgy and boring (though there are exceptions.....). But though satirical and side-splittingly funny, it has a serious intent too. It tells the real story of modern planning.

Competition: Win 2 free tickets

To enter the competition simply write your own positive parody of modern planning (entries should be no more than 750 words).

The winning entry will be published in Branchout.

How to enter: by email to b_global@hotmail.com
Deadline for entries is 30th May.



RTPI
mediation of space · making of place



With thanks to our sponsors and supporters.



Photographs courtesy of Cabot Circus.

RTPI SW Young Planners & Devon and Cornwall RICS Matrics Annual Ball 2010 29th January 2010



**Young Planners in the South West
organised their first Annual Ball,
in conjunction with RICS Matrics
(Devon and Cornwall).**

For those members who may not be aware the Young Planners' Network (YPN) is for all planning students, Student and Licentiate members, and Corporate members under the age of 35. Details of how to sign up can be found at (http://www.rtpi.org.uk/young_planners_network/). RICS Matrics performs a very similar role to the Young Planners Network looking after the interests of members entering or not long in the surveying profession.

For the last few years RICS Matrics (Devon and Cornwall) have held their ball at Kitley House Hotel, near Plymouth. However, this year the RTPI SW Young Planners Network joined up with RICS Matrics (Devon and Cornwall) to provide a black tie ball at the Southgate Hotel in the centre of Exeter.

The inaugural event was a fantastic success and was sold out with 120 people attending. A drinks reception was held in the hotel foyer, followed by an excellent three course dinner, raffle and live music. The event enabled people to meet with not only colleagues in the planning and surveying professions but also other like minded young professionals working in the built environment.

Over the last year the YPN has focused on building stronger links with other bodies such as RICS, IHT and TPS. We are keen to hold further joint events with others over the coming year and therefore if you have any ideas for social/networking/CPD events etc please do get in touch with the RTPI SW Young Planners' Representative (james.holbrook@arup.com).

Congratulations to both the RTPI/RICS committees and especially Marcel Venn for organising such an excellent event. Special thanks also go to our sponsors who we hope will continue to be supportive throughout 2010/11.

Planning Law Update



Greater flexibility in the planning system

Economic changes have brought into sharp focus the need for flexibility in the planning system in relation to the implementation of planning permissions. In response to recession, the Government set out guidance in its November 2009 publication *Greater flexibility for planning permissions*.

Following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the default time period for implementing planning permissions in England was reduced to three years and applications under Section 73 of the 1990 Act, to extend time periods for implementing planning permissions, were prevented. The Government has now introduced greater flexibility via a system of replacement planning permissions and introduced a formal method of dealing with non-material changes to planning permissions.

Replacement Planning Permissions

The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendments No.3) (England) Order 2009, came into force on 1 October 2009. The general purpose is to allow applicants to extend the time period during which a planning permission may be implemented. An application can now be made by anybody for replacement of a planning permission (including outline planning permission and associated listed building and conservation area consents) in existence on 1 October 2009 for which development has not commenced.

This is a relatively straight forward process. The standard application form on the Planning Portal's website should be used. There is no requirement for a design and access statement, although Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have the power to seek further information as required. Also, an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required if the relevant screening criteria are met. Consultation, notification and publicity requirements are the same as for a new planning application. It should also be noted that the LPA must consider the application against policy current at the time of the application. So, where circumstances have changed since the original application was granted, the LPA may not grant the replacement permission.

The fee is currently the same as for a new planning application, but draft fee regulations have been published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), which is expected to lead to a reduction in application costs. A date has not yet been set for the fee regulations to come into force.

Points to Note in relation to Replacement Planning Permissions

If there is a Section 106 Agreement in place linked to the original planning permission it may be necessary to enter into a supplementary deed which will link the replacement planning permission with the s106 Agreement. Also, LPAs have the power to impose different conditions to those on the original planning permission. This may occur in circumstances where there has been a policy change and the imposition of new conditions is required to make the scheme acceptable. If an application for a replacement planning permission is refused, the same procedure will be available for submitting an appeal as for other planning applications.

It is important to note that replacement planning permissions will not be available to replace planning permissions which are granted after 1 October 2009. In addition to this, only one replacement application will be permitted. Applicants will have to ensure in future that they negotiate a suitable time period for implementation rather than allowing the default period of 3 years to be applied.

It's also worth noting that these powers introduced by the Government only apply to England. The planning system in Wales differs in that applications to extend time limits for implementation are still permitted, and the default time limit for implementation is 5 years rather than 3 years. This gives developers greater flexibility and less pressure to implement planning permissions.

For more information please contact Christian Silk on 0117 917 7580. Christian is an associate in TLT's Planning and Development team.

Construction Industries Council (CIC) South West

The SW RTPI, as a member of the SW regional CIC, was represented by Geoff Walker at a committee meeting on 2 December 2009, followed by a special exhibition and reception at the Architecture Centre in Bristol, marking the 175th anniversaries of both the RIBA and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). The meeting considered the contrasting ways in which member bodies respond both to policy consultations, for example from central government, and develop and promote policies of their own. The CIC is active in promoting its own policies and has, for some time, published schools' careers packs. It has already produced a 'Manifesto for the Built Environment' in readiness for the 2010 General Election and plans a CIC SW 'political debate' in Exeter in late summer, to seek the views of newly elected MPs on the future of transport and the built environment in the South West. CIC recognises the need to identify a young professional contact within each member body and to organise a 'young professionals' cross-disciplinary event, based possibly on the RICS Matrix format. The next CIC Committee meeting is in Taunton on 18 March 2010.

Subscription Arrears Amnesty

Former members of the RTPI whose membership has lapsed can, for a short time, take advantage of a one-off subscription arrears amnesty.

For a limited period, the RTPI will waive any existing subscription arrears owed prior to 1 January 2010, for those who wish to reinstate their membership. This offer will be available for a six month period from 1st January until 30th June 2010. After this point, reinstating members will once again become liable for their outstanding arrears.

Reinstatement to Membership will involve:

Completion of a reinstatement application form including evidence of continuing professional development (CPD) activity for the last two years

Payment of a £50 administrative fee

Applications for Reinstatement under the amnesty will be considered by the Membership Panel through the normal process.

Please pass on this information to colleagues who are lapsed RTPI members.

Go to <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=322> for further information.

Philip Watts



© Nicholas Toyne

A key personality of the RTPI SW Region, sadly died on 11th February 2010. He was a long standing volunteer for the Region over some 35 years, and has the rare distinction of both speaking to the Branch as a Student at the early Student Meetings and being Branch Chairman in 1979/80. He spoke to the Branch on 29th January 1960 (i.e. 50 years ago!) on the subject of "Mobile Caravanning and Tented Camping". He held many roles in the South West including the post of Hon. Secretary for seven years and was the Institute's Policy Officer in London for 9 years. His commitment to planning in general and the RTPI was enormous and in recognition, he was awarded the RTPI Outstanding Service Award in 1997. Philip had struggled with ill health over the last few years, but even then was a regular attendee at the RTPI SW committee meetings and he will be greatly missed by all his friends and colleagues.

Beating the recession!



HAYS Recruiting experts worldwide

Following the success of the 2009 'Beating the Recession' event, RTPI South West offered a second event in early 2010. The events are pitched towards those facing, or at threat of, redundancy, as well as those wishing to gain an overview of the current job market. RTPI South West is acutely aware of the anguish that redundancy, or the threat thereof, can cause. The economic downturn hit many private planning consultancies in 2009 leading to discretely made redundancies. Local authority re-organisation in some parts of the region also played its part and this may be compounded by a sharp fall in application fees and uneven allocations of grant across local authorities in the south west. I am sure that many of you will know someone who has been affected, or indeed had personal experience.

On 11th February RTPI SW teamed up with the South East Region and Hays recruitment experts to offer a workshop in Winchester.

Chris Sheridan, RTPI Planners in the workplace manager, explained how the RTPI is focussing on the needs of individuals. He provided an overview of the assistance offered by the RTPI, including practical advice, concessions for those facing hardship and support for sole practitioners. A key message was the relative resilience of the planning profession; despite one of the deepest recessions on record, there has been some evidence of new recruitment in 2010.

Mark Staniland, Director at Hays, provided practical advice on CVs, interviews and networking. Mark imparted some genuine pearls of wisdom with real eloquence and charisma. Delegates are now armed with a suite of covert networking skills! I'd like to say thank you to both Mark Staniland and Helen Futcher of Hays for their considerable support. For more information about how Hays recruitment experts can help you, email: helen.futcher@hays.com.

The University of the West of England (UWE) also supported the workshop. UWE has secured funding through HEFCE's Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) to help individuals and businesses during the current economic downturn, under the banner of 'solutions4recession'. Support is available to individuals who are unemployed or under notice of redundancy and also to established businesses in the West of England sub-region and Swindon. You can find more information at: <http://rbi.uwe.ac.uk/solutions/>.

Steve Avery, RTPI SE Chairman, highlighted the volunteering opportunities available through Planning Aid. Perhaps surprisingly for an event covering such sensitive issues, the workshop proved extremely positive and enjoyable. Whilst the facilitators inevitably played their part, I would like to thank those who attended and spoke so candidly about their experiences and aspirations. I was really impressed by your commitment and drive and wish you every success in finding new employment.

Brett Spiller

Good practice advice in delivering development

One of the biggest challenges for local authorities over the next 20 years will be to deliver major development in an effective manner. In the current economic climate local authorities are facing the more immediate challenges that are caused by recession - declining land values, delays in regeneration projects and the sharp reduction in housing starts, whilst the high demand for affordable housing is increasing.

The Strategic Leaders' Board & South West Councils (with funding support from CLG and South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) has provided a number of 'Planning for Delivery' workshops. By sharing experiences, good practice and developing skills and knowledge, these workshops have sought to help Local Authorities to manage the delivery of major development, and to fulfil planning and place shaping duties.

The workshops have focused on:

- Infrastructure Delivery Planning
- Development Economics
- Making Better Use of Local Authority Powers and Resources
- Engaging with Utility Companies
- Innovation and Future Proofing Development
- Delivering Sustainable Communities Utilising the Natural Environment

A resource pack was developed for each event, outlining best practice examples from the UK and overseas, weblinks to useful resources and further reading. The presentations and the resource packs are available to download from the Strategic Leaders' Board & South West Councils website.

http://www.swcouncils.gov.uk/nqcontont.cfm?a_id=4736&tt=swra

For further information call the Regional Secretariat Strategy and Implementation Team on 01823 270101.

Today's and Tomorrow's Leader's Event 18th January 2010



Kath Haddrell and Mike Harris, the Today's and Tomorrow's Leader's respectively in the SW, attended an event hosted by Drivers Jonas in London in mid January.

The event was attended by many of the winners from other regions as well as the now former President, Martin Willey, RTPI MD Sara Drake and the Director of Planning Aid, England, Sue Percy.

The purpose of the meeting was to think about leadership, both from the RTPI and from a personal perspective.

Many of the discussions focussed on topics that have been dear to both our hearts. If you are familiar with the "No Laughing Matter" blog on Planning Resource, or the letter Kath wrote to Planning magazine last year, you will know that many planners feel that the RTPI should be much more ambassadorial for the profession. When seeking a quote about planning, for example, You and Yours or the Today programme should go the RTPI, rather than RICS or RIBA. Well, there is some progress already this year. The RTPI has been on the BBC's "One Show" and on the front page of The Daily Telegraph!

Really positive outcomes of the meeting were that the awards ought to be repeated and that, for most individuals, employers had recognised the awards. We know that there are many, many planners out there, under the cosh, doing an outstanding job in increasingly difficult circumstances and perhaps working for reduced pay. We heard some interesting examples of what might be best practice. Windsor and Maidenhead, for example, deal with most planning applications within 4 weeks and we were assured that they weren't all refusals! Other authorities have made excellent progress with their LDFs, not only getting their Core Strategies adopted, but AAPs too.

We hope that there will be many more entries into the 2010 Leader's awards, particularly in the Tomorrow's Leader's category. If you work with an outstanding younger planner who will go far, make sure that you nominate them! It's both motivating and good publicity!!

Kath Haddrell and Mike Harris
The Planning Inspectorate

All contributions for Branchout to:

Branchout Editor: Helen Clarke, RTPI Co-ordinator,

Contact details:

Email: southwest@rtpi.org.uk Tel 01823 250822. Address for correspondence:
Ground Floor, East Reach House, East Reach, Taunton.TA1 3EN.

The deadline for the next edition is 25th June 2010.

The Royal Town Planning Institute is a registered charity in England and Wales
No 262865 Registered Office: 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL.

Presidential Award for RTPI Volunteers

At the recent RTPI Planning Awards, the Presidential Special Award was given to the volunteers and active members of the RTPI. Martin Willey said that the success of the Institute is due, in a large part, to the immense time and effort offered by its members. He hoped that, by giving this award to the volunteers of the Institute, he would demonstrate the depth of appreciation and gratitude of the Presidential team and staff for volunteers' effort. For more details see <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/436&ap=1>

DIARY DATES

Friday 23rd April 2010 – RTPI SW Conference – **Community Infrastructure Levy and Other Innovative Mechanisms for Collecting Contributions** – Taunton Conference Centre. Cost £75+VAT. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Friday 21st May 2010 – RTPI SW Conference – **Coastal Planning** – RNLI College, Poole. Cost £75+VAT. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Friday 18th June 2010 – RTPI SW Conference – **Planning for Amenity** – Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. Cost £75+VAT. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Wednesday 14th July 2010 – RTPI SW Conference – **Regional Planning and LDFs** – Roland Levinsky Building, University of Plymouth. Cost £75 + VAT. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Friday 16th July 2010 – **RTPI SW Annual Dinner** – The Thistle Hotel, Exeter – Guest Speaker Chris Shepley – Cost £40 (inc VAT).

DIARY MARKER

Planning for the Severn Estuary

Monday 21 June 2010 - The Council House, Bristol

The Severn Estuary Partnership is organising a joint conference with RTPI Cymru and RTPI South West to discuss integrated management of the Severn Estuary in June at the Council House in Bristol. Further information will be available from the RTPI Cymru and RTPI SW websites

Further details available from Helen Clarke, RTPI SW Coordinator, Tel 01823 250822 or email southwest@rtpi.org.uk