

london calling

RTPI London newsletter

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Spring 2010

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Editorial

James Bompas



Welcome to the first London Calling of 2010.

As election fever grips the country, planning is becoming the focus of greater discussion. If elected, the Tories would embark on its "open source planning"

agenda, fundamentally changing the way that the profession considers growth, policy tiers and the appeals process. And, given impending budget cuts, whoever is elected, the year ahead for planners and planning is one of change.

RTPi London wishes to ensure that it continues to support its members. Whether you are looking for career advice, or wanting to stay ahead of the latest thinking in the profession, RTPi London offers both. This year we have already hosted many events at no charge to our members and look forward to announcing many more throughout the coming year. Some to watch out for include Olympic Park and Thames Barrier tours, RTPi President's Visit and the repeatedly requested 5-a-side competition.

RTPi London is encouraged by the rising levels of interest in its events and increasing support from its Members. Your support is always welcomed and is crucial to the success of the region. We are always looking for new members, of all ages and backgrounds, to help us expand the role of RTPi. For more information on how you can help, please get in touch.

I hope you enjoy this edition of London Calling.

James Bompas in acting Chair of RTPi London

Want to get involved?



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Member without portfolio: Andrew Dorian, Transport for London

Regional Coordinator: Lucy Barton, RTPi



RTPi London is looking for experienced planners, particularly those working for Local Planning Authorities to join its Regional Activities Committee (RAC). As an RAC Member you will be influential in shaping the way that RTPi London is run. For more information, please contact Lucy Barton on london@rtpi.org.uk or 0208 613 8357.

2010 has got off to a good start for RTPI London with a number of events already taken place.

This has included a legal update and an event focussed upon Planning Performance Agreements kindly hosted by SJ Berwin; a tour of the Olympic Site; as well as a Young Planner's Event with a high profile panel to discuss how the Conservatives would approach planning if they were to form the next Government.

We've got many more events planned for the year ahead. To keep fully updated on RTPI London events make sure you are on the data base by emailing Lucy - london@rtpi.org.uk.

RTPI London has a new Regional Management Board (RMB) and Regional Activities Committee (RAC) chaired by James Bompas. We are an increasingly young group and are always seeking new members (in particular those from the public sector, or older RTPI members). If you would like to get involved contact Lucy at london@rtpi.org.uk.

Members of the RAC were successful at this year's Planning Awards, held at the Hilton in London in early February. Laura Smith was awarded the President's Special Award for her dedication in organising the RTPI London Young Planners Steering Group. Meanwhile RMB members Sara Eustace and Tom Venables were both shortlisted for the Young Planner of the Year Award. Tom narrowly pipped Sara to the post by just a few votes, winning the prize to the American Planning Association's conference in New Orleans.

Ann Skippers became President of the RTPI in January taking over from Martin Willey.



Laura Smith (second from left) accepting her President's Special Award at the RTPI Planning Awards 2009.

Ann is seeking to raise the image and profile of planning over her 12 month tenure and has identified the following priorities for her presidency:

- Raising the image and profile of planning
- Making the benefits of planning more visible by raising the profile of what planners do
- Working more closely with the other built environment professions
- Working with schools and colleges to promote planning as a career
- Encouraging RTPI members to be more active within the Institute.

Ann will be visiting RTPI London on 13th and 14th of May giving RTPI members the chance to meet her and discuss issues relating to the RTPI and profession as a whole. We have a series of events planned including tours and a wine tasting evening. If you would like to attend contact london@rtpi.org.uk

London Planning Awards

The Regent Street Vision has received the Mayor's Award for Planning Excellence at the London Planning Awards.



The seventh annual London Planning Awards took place at City Hall on Monday 29th March. The awards are jointly run by the RTPI, Mayor of London, London First, and London Councils, with a member of the RTPI London RAC on the judging panel.

The awards are designed to recognise planning professionals and organisations that have made a vital contribution to the capital in making it a better place to live, work, do business and visit.

This year, the Mayor's Award for Excellence was looking in particular for a project that combined real quality of delivery, a lasting change for London, and which sent out a clear message about the type of city the Mayor wants London to become. The Regent Street Vision, submitted by the Crown Estate, was

deemed to show strengths across a number of the award categories – but was praised in particular for its excellent renovation and remodelling of historic buildings and for its ambitious long term plans to bring Regent Street up to international standards of retail and commercial floor space and public realm. The project was deemed to combine the best of modern architecture whilst making the most of London's built heritage, a key objective in the London Plan.

New category, Best Historic Building Management, was also a huge success, attracting an exceptional field of diverse projects which focused on older and historic buildings. Royal Arsenal Riverside won the award, with a commendation going to St Bartholomew's Hospital.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said: "Once again the London Planning Awards have

attracted strong entries that really do improve the quality of life of Londoners. It's particularly important during these tough times for the economy that we press on with developing our city so that the capital emerges from the downturn stronger and more competitive. Our planners and designers have an important role to play in ensuring we produce functional projects that also fire the imagination."

Other categories and recipients in this year's awards include:

Best Built Project:

Highbury Square.

Best Built Project – Community Scale Scheme:

Loxford Polyclinic (Winner);

Viewtube - A View, A Brew and a Loo (Commendation).

Best Conceptual Project:

Ponders End Framework for Change, (Winner).

Best New Public Space:

Barking Town Square (Winner).

Best New Place to Live

Bermondsey Spa Regeneration, Southwark (Joint Winner);

St James Quarter, Regeneration Area (Joint Winner).

Best Built Project, Five Years On:

Swiss Re Headquarters (Winner);

Cass Business School, City University London (Commendation).

Best Historic Building Management:

Royal Arsenal Riverside, (Winner);

St Bartholomew's Hospital (Commendation).



This year's winners: Highbury Square (top left), Barking Square (top right), Bermondsey Spa Regeneration (middle), Loxford Polyclinic (second from bottom) Cass Business School (bottom)

RTPI London Young Planners - The Future of Planning Debate – Five perspectives on a post-election system

The recently published Conservative Green Paper, Open Source Planning, has proposed radical changes to the planning system. A recent RTPI London Young Planners debate highlighted that whilst Conservative proposals are controversial amongst planners and politicians, they have shown that planning is high on the political agenda, reports Tom Venables.

A panel comprising Nick Raynsford MP (former Labour Planning Minister), Bob Neill MP (Shadow Planning Minister), Ann Skippers (RTPI President), Hugh Ellis (TCPA Chief) and Phillip Atkins (DTZ Director) convened at TCPA HQ on 17th March. Each panel had five minutes to set out their views on the future of planning in a new government, followed by questions from an audience of Young Planners. The debate was facilitated by Laura Smith and Sara Eustace of RTPI London's young planners' group and included some insightful questions from the group. Here is a summary of the panel's different perspectives on planning change under a new government.

Hugh Ellis, TCPA – Greater consensus between planners and the people

Hugh Ellis kicked off proceedings, setting out his concerns and aspirations for the profession. He cited a view that planning is turning into a "secular religion" which threatens the profession's ability to perform to its maximum potential. Meanwhile he identified the conclusions of the Foresight Report as a serious

threat to the entire profession which challenges the requirement for planning and makes the case for replacing planners with cost benefit analysis. However, as Ellis pointed out, cost benefit analysis can't deal with democracy.

Ellis considered that the planning system has to demonstrate value and planners presently do not debate their core principles or state their purpose. Ellis identified the loss of high profile leading planners to the IPC who cannot comment on the emerging debate, and together with the "lost generation" of planners (a legacy created by lack of new planners during the 1980's/90's) the pressure is on for the new generation of young planners to inform and lead the debate.

Ellis stated that planning must be founded upon clear evidence, based upon principles that integrate sustainable development, equality and social justice. "There needs to be a consensus between planning and people which we are not getting right."

"The drive to address issues arising from climate change will place extraordinary pressure upon the system – in particular how to deal with the spatial distribution of the UK population with rising sea levels". In meeting this challenge he stated, "planning will be pivotal."

Ellis reckoned that the TCPA and RTPI need to be rigorously involved in leading the reform debate and state that planners are more than operatives. They are essential in making the system work.

In conclusion, Ellis considered that fierce critical debate is a good thing and that young planners must play an active role in articulating how planning should change. "Planning is a social movement that we must reinvent before it's too late."



The Panel - Hugh Ellis, Nick Raynsford, Phillip Atkins, Bob Neill and Ann Skippers

provide greater certainty to developers”.

Skippers could see that from outside looking in, the profession would appear to have numerous problems. However, she noted that good practise and skills are rising, although the main issue in implementing the 2004 reforms has been a lack of resources and political leadership.

Skippers welcomed the focus on planning during the election campaign and is glad to see political debate on the future of planning. On the Tory green paper, Skippers supported the drive towards localism, with a focus upon gaining community leadership.

However, she identified that the notion of community is problematic – in particular how to define communities. She cited the example of people being more connected to their workplace than where they live in terms of access to services. She also considers changes to the system need to be mindful of business community requirements.

Skippers identified Tory proposals to incentivise the local planning system as “potentially leading to the buying and selling of planning permission”. This she stated is not “ethical, good or community led”.

However, it “will be important, and difficult,



Audience of Young Planners from across the Capital

to gain consensus and that will be the big challenge in the drive towards localism”. In summing up Skippers quoted Thomas Adams (the first RTPI president) who in 1932 said “Town Planning is limited in its ideas by what the public will agree to.”

Phillip Atkins, DTZ – a simplified system to kick-start development

Phillip Atkins, Director at DTZ set out the private sector perspective on change to the planning system. He identified the need for the planning system to kick-start development, whilst ensuring social cohesion and sustainable elements are integrated. “The system needs to become clearer, quicker, open and transparent”. Agreeing with Raynsford and Skippers the system is “not broken, just over-engineered, although this is for the right reasons.” But he warned “Certainty in the system is not helped by re-engineering it every 10-15 years as is the current trend.”

In the current climate viability is a major issue, Atkins posed the question: “who would develop for a 17.5% return on investment, a 3 year planning process and no guarantee that planning permission will be forthcoming at the end?”

“The key to the system’s success is to ensure that

investment in resourcing and upskilling local authority planning departments”. He noted that whilst the private sector can easily resource planning this is not mirrored in local planning authorities.

Atkins recognised that a balance is required between the Labour and Conservative perspectives:

“At present we have a system that has brought about a raft of tools through the 2004 Act, with shorter PPSs, PPAs, LDFs, LDOs, CIL, Regional Assembly’s, and a pre application system. Whilst these are well meaning there is a huge amount of information to deal with. On the other hand the Tories have set out a radical green paper focussed upon simplifying the processes and focusing upon local delivery. However, this localism likely to lead to a resistance in delivery of development.”

Bob Neill MP – Local incentives to deliver development

Finally Bob Neill spoke in defence of his Green Paper stating that he “makes no apology for being radical”. The Conservatives believe that the existing system has led to “inertia and serious issues in planning and is therefore broken.”

He stated that the Conservatives “recognise that planning is important and do not want to diminish from its key role. However, it needs to be changed and seen in its broader context”. The system he said has grown incrementally and is not delivering.

House building is not delivering for key participants including the development industry, local authorities, environmental groups and in particular residents who Neill believes planning is not “done with, but done to.”

Planners, he set out, “need to have be a change

in mindset and need to embrace change”. That said the Conservatives will talk carefully with the key players prior to reforms being drawn up.

Neill set out that we live in a “post bureaucratic age where Government cannot impose from above.” In undertaking planning processes it is local communities who must be a sounding board with genuine discussion that is radical and reflects changing nature of society. “The electorate have been broken down by Government in recent years and now expect engagement.”

He believes that incentivising communities through finance initiatives will work, and a focus on enlightened self interest is a “thoroughly good thing.”

Quoting Terry Farrell, Neill believes that planning is central to policies and must be entrenched into political processes. “Planning is essential as it shapes communities where people live, and therefore it is right that they should be engaged. This in turn will lead to greater stability and more engagement.”

On the abolishment of regional planning bodies, Neill believes that regionally defined targets do not work and are undemocratic as they are inflicted by unelected regional authorities. By providing finance breaks, local planning authorities will be incentivised to allocate land for development and believes that planners have a “Stockholm syndrome on targets.”

The Conservative planning green paper can be found at:http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/-/media/Files/Green%20Papers/planning-green-paper.aspx

Tom Venables is an Associate Director at AECOM Design + Planning

news plan

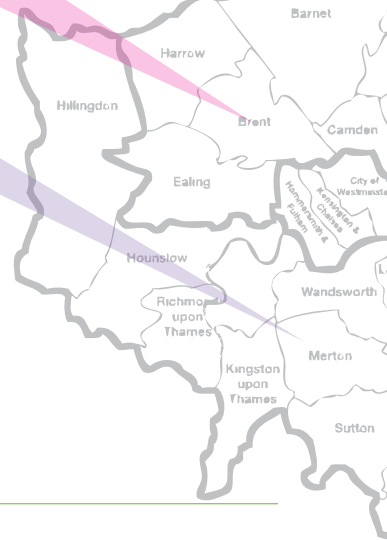
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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Old Oak Common in West London will become a key transport hub, following the announcement by Transport Secretary, Lord Adonis that it will serve as the interchange between High Speed 2, Heathrow Express, the future Crossrail service and the Greater London, suburban and intercity rail network.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Every council seat in London will be up for grabs at the 'all out' elections scheduled for Thursday 6 May. With the Conservatives having made considerable gains across the capital in 2006, there could be some interesting battles – such as in Brent where the current Liberal Democrat-Conservative coalition will be challenged by Labour



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LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

Finsbury's Grade II listed Ironmonger Row Baths, which opened in 1931, will receive a multi-million pound revamp over the next three years after planning consent was granted by Islington Council. The work will begin in May and will include upgrades to the swimming pool, refurbishment of the Turkish Baths and a larger gym area, along with other improvements.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

In what will be seen as a 'test case', Mayor Boris Johnson 'called in' and approved a major application that had previously been rejected by the local authority, LB Tower Hamlets. The proposed Columbus Tower scheme, which includes apartments, offices, shops, a hotel and a 63-storey tower, will contribute £4m to Crossrail and more than £3m towards affordable housing and the local community.

LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

Planning Board members have approved the application for the London 2012 Equestrian and Modern Pentathlon Olympic Games events to be held in Greenwich Park. The plans, which have caused local controversy with some residents objecting to use of park for the Games, have been prepared to ensure disruption to the park will be kept to a minimum. The park will host all the equestrian events and all the temporary structures including a 23,000 seat arena which will be removed after the Games. Greenwich will host two other venues—Woolwich Arsenal and the North Greenwich Arena—in the Borough but the park and its historic buildings will become one of the most iconic backdrops for the London 2012 Games.

Planning now for the future of transport in London

Transport for London and other members of the GLA family group are striving to achieve the Mayor's vision that London will become the best big city on earth. TfL faces many challenges in delivering this vision all of which must be embraced within regional strategies to deliver a transport system that will support the future of London.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) aims to meet these challenges, setting out a 20 year action plan to develop the transport network to deliver the objectives of the draft replacement London Plan, the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy. Integrating transport within the London development process can have great benefits to all, ensuring that the network is able to operate around significant changes in the built environment to implement an efficient reliable public transport service promoting travel by more sustainable modes, supporting the delivery of new developments across the capital

Changing Travel behaviour is one way in which TfL can continue to enhance the public transport network, working with the local authorities and the private sector, TfL can support the

delivery of travel planning for new and existing developments, re-evaluating how people travel across the capital. This will help in achieving the aims of the MTS in supporting economic growth, enhancing quality of life safety and security of Londoners improving transport opportunities and reducing transport's contribution towards climate change through taking steps to 'green the network'.

Investment in the network to increase capacity and provide greater choice to passengers can promote public transport as a viable way to travel, meeting the aims above. TfL are currently undertaking a significant investment programme across the network. .

The much publicised London Underground upgrade work will increase capacity by 30% on a network where more than a billion passenger journeys are taken per year. Miles of track and thousands of signals are being replaced to enable trains to run closer together, carrying more passengers over quicker periods. Additionally new trains are being added to TfL's four sub-surface lines and the Victoria line. New trains will feature walk through carriages, air-conditioning and wide doors to enable easy boarding. Regenerative braking is being fitted to the network to make journeys on the network as smooth as possible. By increasing new rolling stock and investing in greener technologies, TfL can increase capacity by creating an efficient network.

The construction of Crossrail is ongoing to provide, by 2017, a much needed new link across London. This will support economic growth within the capital but also the environmental impact of travelling to key sites such as the West End, Canary Wharf, Stratford, Heathrow Airport and the London Thames Gateway development areas.

Passenger growth on London's bus network has been phenomenal over the last decade. However, with a growing population and with road space in London at a premium, the bus network must be able to continually develop and respond to changing travel needs and development pressures including that of new homes, residential areas and leisure attractions. Working with developers TfL can ensure the bus network can adequately serve the needs of each development.

2010 is viewed as the year of the Cycling Revolution in London delivered through a broad range of measures, this year will see the roll out of the Mayor's Cycle Hire scheme in central London, two cycle superhighways, increased provision of bicycle parking facilities both on street, working with local authorities and off street integrating provision with development. Such measures work alongside TfL's programme of raising awareness over the benefits of cycling as a valid mode of transport across London.

Although the transport network needs to support the economic development of London and move people efficiently across the city, equally the Mayor and TfL are committed to balancing the needs of all users of the network through creating good quality spaces that reflect the architectural beauty of the city. Spaces are being developed that people can pause within and enjoy but equally travel through which evoke pride in the city. TfL are working with all

parties to deliver improved public realm and improve the safety of all users including the redeveloped Trafalgar Square and The Cut in Southwark.

TfL are planning to deliver an ambitious investment programme in London's Transport network in order to meet the aims and objectives of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and London Plan. This supports the economic development of the capital while ensuring all Londoners have good access to the network. Transport can support new developments and open up new opportunities to communities, supporting the regeneration and reducing deprivation in certain areas.

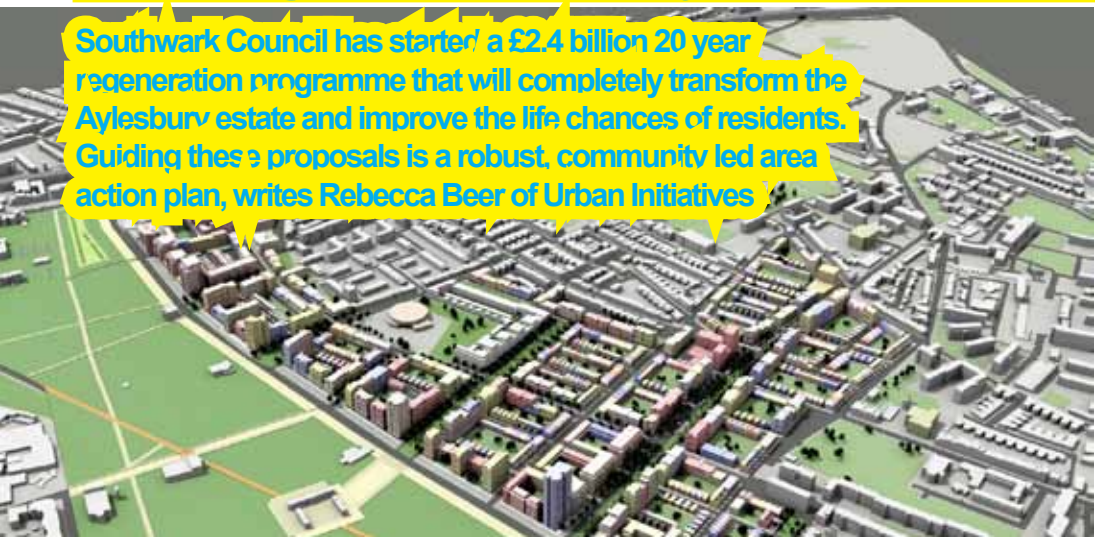
Effective planning and partnership working can equally help deliver these goals. Integration of planning and transport is crucial to ensure that any development is served by sustainable modes of transport. Promotion of the available modes through travel planning can increase the appeal of travelling on the public transport network, or walking and cycling, alongside continued investment through working with local planning authorities to increase the capacity, reliability, safety and comfort of the transport system, providing an efficient way to travel in the capital. Joined up approaches can help to deliver solutions to the challenges faced in London over the next 20 years.

Further information on the implementation of the MTS and London Plan can be found at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl-14172.aspx>

Andrew Dorrian is an Assistant Planner in the Land Use Planning Team at TfL.

The Aylesbury Estate AAP - Creating a Community Led Plan

Southwark Council has started a £2.4 billion 20 year regeneration programme that will completely transform the Aylesbury estate and improve the life chances of residents. Guiding these proposals is a robust, community led area action plan, writes Rebecca Beer of Urban Initiatives



The Aylesbury Estate is located in the heart of Southwark to the north of Burgess Park. At the time of its construction (1966 – 1977) the plans were considered aspirational – large concrete slab blocks with elevated pedestrian walkways would link a number of estates between the Elephant and Castle and Peckham, to create an attractive and safe living environment. The estate, however, soon fell into a state of disrepair and this was accompanied by an increase in deprivation and anti social behaviour.

Even today, and perhaps a little unfairly, the estate is negatively portrayed in the media and is often described as one of London's 'notorious' housing estates.

Southwark Council has now started a £2.4 billion 20 year regeneration programme that will completely transform the Aylesbury Estate and improve the life chances of residents. As part of this programme, the council appointed Urban Initiatives in February 2007 to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide the renewal of the estate. After two years of hard work, Southwark Council's Assembly formally adopted the AAP on 27 January this year – a huge milestone for both residents and the council.

An essential part of developing a robust AAP was imaginative and continuous consultation with all those who have a stake in the area. By going above and beyond the statutory requirements we have created a plan with real community buy-in and ownership.

At the outset of the project we set up a Neighbourhood Team – a group of about



40 individuals representing residents, local businesses and social and community groups across the Aylesbury area. The aim was to build capacity amongst the Team, to help them make informed decisions and spread the message about our work to a far wider group than would otherwise be possible.

We worked closely with the Team throughout the project – we provided urban design training; took them on visits to Paris, Glasgow, Dublin and Amsterdam to demonstrate best practice examples of regeneration elsewhere; and played a bespoke planning game to understand the trade-offs between development densities, the provision of open space and community facilities, as well as project funding and delivery.

Equal thought was given to engaging imaginatively with the wider community. Events were held throughout the process, including a family fun day, a show homes exhibition, special viewings of exhibitions for hard to reach groups, and an art competition for primary school children.

Both the Neighbourhood Team and the wider community have played a crucial role in the development of the adopted AAP. Their aspirations helped to define the objectives for the AAP, and helped to shape the development of options and a preferred approach. Indeed, in light of comments from residents, the proposed mix of housing was amended at the preferred options stage.

The Aylesbury AAP has set a benchmark for other planning documents to respond to. It has demonstrated the importance of engaging imaginatively with all those who have a stake in the work that we do. We hope that all those involved in the preparation of the Aylesbury AAP will continue to champion the regeneration of the estate in the years to come – the AAP is certainly a stronger planning tool as a result of their input.

For more information please visit Southwark Council's website – www.southwark.gov.uk

Rebecca Beer is a Managing Consultant at Urban Initiatives

London University Planning Schools Update

Caroline Huett and Richard Lemon provide an update on the latest news on planning education in London

RTPI Careers Event at Kingston University

Monday 1 March 2010 saw the first of the RTPI London Young Planners' events promoting careers in planning at universities in London. This is part of an initiative set up by Julia Riddle, the aim of which is to explain to students, both those already studying planning and those considering a career in planning, the diversity of opportunities which a career in planning presents.

Julia comments: "Having seen firsthand the difficulties for graduates, entering the marketplace at present, it struck me that the time was right for a series of events which demonstrate the breadth of opportunities available in planning and which inspire optimism in young people entering the profession."

The event set was welcomed by both the staff and students of Kingston University, who take a very pro-active approach in finding suitable employment following undergraduate and post graduate courses in planning.

A series of case studies were presented by members of the RTPI London Young Planners group, which consists of members from a range of private and public sector employment. This helped to articulate the range of employment opportunities available in planning and also set out some of the different means of getting into those jobs, be it though volunteering, work experience, working your way up within an organisation or joining directly onto a structured

graduate programme.

The event was also supported by recruitment consultants, The Oyster Partnership, who provided valuable advice in relation to CV writing and interview skills. The Young Planners group hope to hold a number of these events at other planning schools in London this year and would welcome attendees considering a career in planning.

Department of Urban, Environment and Leisure Studies, London South Bank University

RTPI London Young Planners will be holding an event at London South Bank University promoting careers in planning on the 28th April at 5.30pm. There will be several short case studies presented by planning professionals from the private and public sector, hints and tips from recruitment consultants, The Oyster Partnership, on CV writing and interview techniques, followed by an informal question and answer session and opportunity to speak to Young Planners about their roles and the job opportunities in planning. For further details please contact Julia.Riddle@dtz.com

The department continues their series of Second Tuesday evening seminars. These are organised by The Local Economy Policy Unit (LEPU) and examine aspects of local economic development. The next event will be in May. These are free events but you do need to book in advance by e-mailing: lepu@lsbu.ac.uk

Also On Wednesday 30th June 2010 South Bank will be holding a 1 day conference on. Rented Housing for the Future. Speakers include Lord Best, representatives from the Chartered Institute for Housing and the Homes and Communities Agency Full details are available at: <http://www1.lsbu.ac.uk/rbdo/external/Housing2010/Housing30June2010.shtml>

Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

The Bartlett School of Planning's free evening seminar series on planning in London continues, with a seminar on the 5 May 2010 on the growth of west London, led by Kiril Stanilov, a research fellow at UCL. A further presentation will be held on 2 June 2010 by Mark Saunders of Spectacle Productions on Battersea Power Station and the London Olympics.

Meanwhile the Bartlett's Urban Film Society continues to present a wide range of built environment-themed films. Entry is free and all are welcome. www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk

School of Surveying & Planning, Kingston University

Research by a team at Kingston University has found that, despite concerns that 'garden grabbing' is on the rise, there was no significant increase in garden developments between April 2003 and March 2008. The study was led by Professor Sarah Sayce, Head of the School of Surveying, whose team looked into the scale and type of garden development across the country and asked whether local planning authorities regarded building in back gardens as a significant problem within their area. Visit http://fada.kingston.ac.uk/schools/surveying/schools_surveying.php for more information.

School of Architecture and the Built Environment, University of Westminster

The School is offering a 'Planning for Non-Planners' course, which is designed to explain what planning is, why we need it, how it operates in the UK, and the systems and processes behind it in local planning authorities. The course is particularly aimed at planning administrators and built environment support staff. If you know someone who might be interested, more information can be found at

www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/architecture

LSE Cities Programme

LSE held its second Space for Thought Literary Festival earlier this year, with two Cities-linked events on 13 February. The first event was 'Reading London', a discussion with Will Alsop, Professor Rosemary Ashton, Leo Hollis, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Dr Fran Tonkiss which considered whether art, architecture and literature can help us to 'read' London. The second event, 'Sociology as Literature', was a talk by Professor Richard Sennett. Visit www.lse.ac.uk/collections/cities for more information.

LSE London

LSE London continues to run its programme of free seminars, on Mondays from 4pm. Future seminars include Peter Bishop of Design for London on using urban design strategies for regeneration in London, and Michelle Dix of Transport for London on dealing with London's growth from a transport perspective. Visit www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSELondon for more information.

Department of Architecture & Spatial Design, London Metropolitan University

Duncan Bowie, Reader at London Metropolitan University, launched his new book at a drinks reception on 11th March with a speech by former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone. Duncan's book, 'Politics, Planning and Homes in a World City', is a major new work on planning in London under Mayor Livingstone. Visit www.londonmet.ac.uk/architecture/home.cfm for more information.

Caroline Huett is a Planner at Indigo Planning and Richard Lemon is an Associate at Roger Tym and Partners.

Hike for Heroes

When I started my planning career at Rochford District Council in the late 1990's, little did I know that I would meet a group of like-minded planners that would become friends for life. When tragedy struck and Captain Nick Beighton, the brother of Dave Beighton (now Principal Planner at Forest Heath) stood on an IED, whilst serving out in Afghanistan and lost both legs, we knew as a group we had to do something. After much research and discussion the idea was born that we would raise money for Help for Heroes by doing a two day, 47 mile walk along the North Norfolk coastal path in February. We hoped that we would raise a £1000.

The weekend of the walk arrived and we started walking from Hunstanton at 0700h excited at the task ahead, and yet very naïve about how far 27 miles actually was. The parents of one of the walkers were roped into assisting us (they became affectionately known as our "Sherpas"). They met up with us at various intervals, carried food and spare clothing and most importantly gave us moral support.

Burnham Overy Staithe is clearly the postcode to have if you live in Norfolk. The houses we passed were large and extravagant to say the least, though we (as planners) were somewhat sceptical about some of the extensions allowed and felt that the Planning Authority had been slightly generous!

We arrived at Stiffkey Red Lion at 1830h to the welcome sight of a glass of wine and a warm fire. After a bath and change of clothes sat down to eat at 2000h. A couple of drinks later we dragged ourselves half asleep off to bed,

Following a full fry up and several cups of tea, we headed out into a blizzard at 0900h bound for Cromer. Walking along the raised sea defence wall into driving snow was definitely the low point of the weekend, especially as there were only two sensible people who thought it wise to



pack waterproof trousers! Arriving at the pub at Cley to find two fires and several portions of chips definitely helped to cheer us up.

On approach to Sheringham we literally dragged ourselves up one of the steepest hills in Norfolk. We reached the summit only to be overtaken by three runners who had sprinted up! After a few minutes of leg resting, we headed off for Cromer, now only five miles away. These five miles seemed the longest of the whole trip and having reached the highest point in Norfolk (I can assure you that it isn't as flat as I first thought or hoped) it was downwards and at 1830h Cromer pier came into sight. A quick photo at the end before collapsing in a heap on the floor! We had made it – 47 miles in two days!

The support we have received has been fantastic and to date we have raised almost £10,000. This money will make a huge difference in helping soldiers like Nick re-build their lives. We are still collecting so if anyone would like to sponsor us you can still do so at www.justgiving.com/hike-for-heroes

Hannah Baker

Associate, Indigo Planning



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Thursday 13th May 2010 - Wine Tasting Challenge

Vivat Bacchus, London Bridge, kindly supported by the Oyster Partnership

This event is available to RTPI members for just £30 and non-members for £35. This event is open to all built environment professionals.

To book a place at this social evening please email london@rtpi.org.uk. If sufficient availability a booking form will be emailed to you. Alternatively, please call 020 8613 8357.

Thursday 15th July 2010 - BedZED: A Tour of the UK's Largest Mixed Use Sustainable Community,

This event is available to RTPI members for just £20 and non-members for £25. To book a place on this tour please email london@rtpi.org.uk. If sufficient places are available a booking form will be emailed to you. Alternatively, please call 0208613 8357.

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