



National Planning Forum

Annual Report

2009 – 2010

The National Planning Forum

- is the only cross-sectoral forum focusing on spatial planning in England with a mission to inspire planning and planners
- has a membership of over 70 organisations representing the key national organisations with a role in, and commitment to, planning
- acts as a critical friend to the Planning Directorate within the Department of Communities and Local Government, helping to inform and shape policy by reflecting significant depth of experience of practice
- informs debate, builds cross-sectoral consensus and provides clarity on the issues where views differ
- operates as a membership network with a web-site that is open to all
- is committed to ensuring that spatial planning in England is fit for purpose
- provides a platform for all the sectors to engage in discussion and debate on key planning issues - identifying consensus and clarifying difference

The Forum embraces the five sectors of business, local government, the professions, the non-governmental and voluntary sector and planning in central government; operates on an entirely non-political basis; represents a unique body of cross-sectoral experience; and is a valuable tool as both a 'sounding board' for new policy and practice initiatives and as a vehicle for exploring new approaches to planning process such as, for example, our current work investigating the potential to use mediation as a way to resolving disputes in planning.

Performance

In 2009/10 the National Planning Forum:

- Held 4 meetings attended by 161 delegates.
- Received 13 presentations from, *inter alia*, The Foresight Project; English Heritage; Department for Communities and Local Government; the Right Hon. Bob Neil MP, Shadow Minister for Planning and the National Housing Planning Advice Unit.
- Initiated reports addressing:
 - Culture Change Action Plan Monitoring
 - Fit for Purpose Spatial Planning
 - Mediation in Planning
 - Improving the Connection - Planning and Building Control
- Exhibited at the 2009 Planning Convention.
- Managed the replacement of the Secretary following the retirement of Kay Powell after four years' service in the role.
- Welcomed Local Authority Building Control as a new member.

Reports

Culture Change Monitoring Stage 2 report (Received March 2010)

Reviews the progress made by Forum members in addressing culture change in planning in the context of its culture change action plan. The report was produced by IDOX plc and covers:

- The things that NPF members have achieved.
- Barriers to progress
- A consideration of how these barriers might be addressed by any revisions in the action plan
- Suggestions as to how progress can be better monitored by the members in future.
- A review of changes in the spatial planning system and its context since 2007

Fit for Purpose Spatial Planning (November 2009)

The report addresses the challenge for spatial planning in a rapidly changing world and argues that the 'credit crunch' and subsequent severe economic downturn, the realisation that there is a limit to non-renewable resources and that essentials such as water and food cannot always be guaranteed alongside the reality of climate change fuelled by global carbon consumption require:

- a rethink about lifestyle, the sources of economic wealth, transportation, land use, design and development.
- a focus on (a green) economic recovery.
- achieving new energy supplies, including 15% renewables by 2020.
- a major investment in achieving low carbon footprints through design, technology and retrofit.
- difficult choices about priorities for infrastructure investment.

It identifies 5 challenges for spatial planning:

1. Enabling economic recovery
2. Responding to climate change
3. Securing the future
4. New transport and accessible locations
5. Developing sustainable places and communities

and puts forward ten propositions for effective spatial planning:

1. a continuing '**big conversation**' at national, regional and local levels
2. a **spatial vision for England**
3. a **joined up approach to the production of national policy statements**
4. longer term **strategic planning**
5. require **evidence, sound analysis and practical options**
6. commit to **stability**
7. strengthen the cross-sectoral **culture change** programme
8. develop **regional strategies and sub-regional plans and** delivery focussed, visionary, **local delivery frameworks**
9. support the **new measures and agencies**
10. support sustainability and climate change initiatives at **local level**

Mediation in Planning (Completed June 2010)

A report by Leonora Rozee and Kay Powell commissioned in partnership with the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Advisory Service that examines the case for using mediation as an alternative dispute resolution technique and outlining steps to achieve wider use of mediation in planning.

The project aimed to demonstrate the value of mediation by undertaking and evaluating five live case studies, drawing on the results of completed mediations, related work in England, expert interviews, an opinion survey amongst local authority officers, international experience and relevant literature.

The report identifies the barriers and opportunities to the use of mediation in planning and concludes that mediation could be an effective tool to tackle a wide range of planning issues. It recommends that mediation should be strongly encouraged by Government by providing a policy framework, creating capacity to allow its benefits to be realised and establishing an appropriate regime of incentives and penalties to support the delivery of a new approach to planning.

Improving the Connection (Completed September 2010)

A thinkpiece examining the relationship between Planning and Building Control in the context of their shared objectives to deliver sustainability. It identifies five areas:

- Ensuring better clarity between the roles and responsibilities of building control and planning
- Establishing an integrated approval service at small scale
- Establishing stronger links between building control and planning to ensure a more integrated approach to the use of building technologies in complex developments
- Unlocking the potential to deal more effectively with completion and enforcement
- Re-thinking CDM to reduce complexity and tackle whole-life issues

and made recommendations covering:

- Improving clarity in the of role and purpose of Planning and Building Control through:
 - Shared objectives
 - Clear roles
 - Improve the position and recognition of Building Control within local
 - Increased knowledge and awareness between the service areas
- Improving the links to achieve better service outcomes:
 - Develop skills, procedures and organisation in joint working
 - Pursue the Development Management approach to major and complex development proposals

2009/10 budget summary

Income

Subscriptions/contributions	£
Department for Communities and Local Government (grant)	26000.00
British Property Federation (also in-kind support)	1000.00
Planning Advisory Service	5000.00
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants	500.00
English Heritage	5000.00
Local Government Association (also in-kind support)	2000.00
The Planning Inspectorate	5000.00
RICS	1000.00
RTPI	5000.00
Environment Agency	5000.00
CABE	1000.00
Contributions to Mediation in Planning project	
The Planning Inspectorate	9000.00
Planning Advisory Service	10000.00
Accrued interest	228.00
Total	71728.00

Expenditure

Projects	£
Mediation in Planning	19091.00
Culture Change Monitoring	14950.00
Fit for Purpose Spatial Planning	4685.00
General	
Secretary	29599.00
Secretary appointment	1032.00
IT services	665.00
Accountancy services (TCPA)	3000.00
RTPI Planning Convention	518.00
Other expenses	153.00
Total	73693.00

The Board

Vice Chair Business Sector	Liz Peace CBE, British Property Federation (Chair of Board to October 2009)
Vice Chair Government Agencies	Geoff Brown, East Midlands Regional Development Agency
Vice Chair Local Government	Cllr Mike Haines, Local Government Association (Chair from October 2009)
Vice Chair Professions	Mike Hayes CBE, Royal Town Planning Institute (to December 2009) Brian Waters, London Planning and Development Forum (from January 2010)
Vice Chair Third Sector	Simon Marsh, Royal Society Protection of Birds (to October 2009) David Chetwyn, Institute for Historic Building Conservation (from October 2009)
Secretary	Kay Powell (to December 2009) Mike Hayes CBE (from January 2010)

Membership

GOVERNMENT

AGENCIES (includes sponsor Departments)
Communities and Local Government
Audit Commission
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
Commission for Rural Communities
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Environment Agency
English Heritage
Homes and Community Agency Academy
Homes and Community Agency Advisory Team for Large Applications
Health and Safety Executive
Natural England
Planning Inspectorate
Planning Portal
Regional Development Agencies Network
Sustainable Development Commission

BUSINESS

Arup
British Chamber of Commerce
Association of Town Centre Management
British Property Federation
British Retail Consortium
British Urban Regeneration Association
Confederation of British Industry
Country Land and Business Association
Future Cities Forum
Home Builders' Association
Home Builders' Federation
National Farmers' Union
National Retail Planning Forum
Tesco
The Guardian

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport East of England Regional Assembly
Greater London Authority

Local Government Association
Local Authority Building control
National Association of Local Councils
North West Regional Assembly
Planning Advisory Service
Planning Officers' Society
Planning Officers' Society Enterprises
South East of England Regional Assembly
South West Regional Assembly
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

PROFESSIONS

Association of Consultant Architects (Planning Advisory Group)
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants
Chartered Institute of Housing
Commonwealth Association of Planners
Conference of Heads of Planning Schools (Liverpool University)
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Institution of Highways and Transportation
Law Society (Planning and Environmental Law Committee)
London Planning and Development Forum
Planning and Environment Bar Association
Planning Magazine
Planning Summer School
Positive action Training Highway (PaTH)
Royal Institute of British Architects
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Town Planning Institute
University of Westminster

THIRD SECTOR

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Civic Voice
Groundwork UK
Friends of the Earth
Heritage Link
National Housing Federation
Planning for Real
Planning Aid England
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Shelter
The National Trust
The Princes' Foundation
Town and Country Planning Association
The Theatres' Trust

www.natplanforum.org.uk

Contact: The Secretary
National Planning Forum
c/o 4 Hyde Farm Mews
London
SW12 0QB
E: secretary@natplanforum.org.uk

Published by the National Planning Forum November 2010
© National Planning Forum 2010



National Planning Forum
INSPIRING PLANNING