



National Planning Forum

INSPIRING PLANNING

Culture change monitoring stage 2 report

Progress so far

IDOX are 2/3rds through this project and have completed inception and a result of survey reports. This report concentrated on five key areas:

- 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

The report concluded by acknowledging that progress has been made in delivering most of the Action Plan commitments although significant barriers remain in making the actions effective.

Progress so far

Twelve specific suggestions were made on how progress might be improved:

1. that the NPF considers the web site commitment in more detail to assess whether it should provide more 'model' material that its members could tailor and use.
2. that the Government and Local Government members of NPF discuss the issue of understanding of the role of the planning, local leadership and achieving integration.
3. that the professions primarily concerned with planner training and development discuss the issue of lack of willingness to change and redouble their efforts to find ways in which training and development can provide what is needed.
4. that those NPF member organisations representing the employers of planners consider ways in which they can support the changes needed of planners in practice.
5. that the NGO members of the Forum get together to identify what further development they need of their own membership to understand the integrated approaches to spatial planning and partnership methods of delivery, including the NGO role in Local Strategic Partnerships.
6. that the monitoring of the Forum' Culture Change Action Plan is shifted to outcomes that help to identify how far member organisations are mobilising to achieve change.

Progress so far

Twelve specific suggestions were made on how progress might be improved:

7. that the Professions members of the NPF get together to consider what leadership they can provide to encourage a more positive approach to change from professional planners as part of this study and their ideas are fed back in the Phase 2 report.
8. that the NPF works harder to involve local government leaders in understanding the benefits that more proactive planning can bring to all their authorities' work.
9. that each member of the Forum prepares one case study of the impact that culture change is having in their organisation that the NPF could publish on its website.
10. that those Forum members who have some responsibilities for those delivering the planning system within its wider local governance context e.g. CLG and LGA consider ways in which together they can undertake further action to reinforce the centrality of planning within the wider local government agenda.
11. that the Professions members of the Forum consider what actions they may need to take to provide appropriate leadership and support for their members in the light of these comments.
12. that the Forum considers which issues need wider government support to achieve successful culture change and put them to CLG and other government departments, if this is appropriate.

12 suggestions summarised

- Developing a better web presence.
- Using the NPF's unique membership mix to move culture change on by a series of in-sector, cross-sector and common-interest sector discussions
- Providing evidence of good/best practice through publicising case studies.
- Developing an outward-facing agenda that engages the LGA, CLG and wider government.

The NPF's culture change programme

- It is very ambitious and requires six monthly monitoring, which will be resource intensive.
- It is not clear how much organisations have been influenced and motivated by the NPF's Manifesto for Change or by the need to make changes as a result of government policies or as a response to changing circumstances.
- The agenda for both planning and local government have moved on considerably since the Manifesto, which laid the ground work for culture change, was produced (as the report of survey makes clear); and
- We are close to a general election to be followed by major resource restrictions irrespective of the outcome.

The NPF five culture change commitments

- Understand and promote the role that planning plays in place-shaping.
- Appreciate the complexity of planning, but simplify its procedures.
- Remove the barriers to partnership working.
- Provide the support to enable planning to be effective.
- Devise ways of showing what planning can achieve.

Preliminary stage 2 proposals

- Developing a self-assessment methodology/toolkit for NPF members to assess their own progress in delivering culture change to be accessed via the website.
- Proposals for creating a more interactive web-site potentially to act as a 'hub' for spatial planning practice and to enable NPF to operate as a 'network'.
- Developing sector and cross-sector agendas.
- A demonstration project exploring how cross-sectoral working can enable delivery on the ground.
- Encouraging NPF member organisations to be RTPI Learning Partners to help develop tomorrow's leaders.

Culture change study – self assessment method

1. 6 key components to be identified from NPF 'Fit for Purpose'
2. For each of these six themes – 3-4 questions identified in order to assess where member organisation is in terms of progress
3. Each question can identify a response on a 'good', 'better', 'excellent' scale
4. Each question to have a one page support note to suggest approaches, ideas from other organisations, other practice
5. Where organisation does not reach the 'good' standard and it is an issue relevant and central to that member organisation, suggest prioritising this in an action plan which will also include expected timescales for achieving the 'good' standard
6. A similar approach can be taken where organisations want to move up the scale from 'good' to 'better' and 'excellent'
7. Undertake self assessment process once a year (or more frequently)
8. NPF to publish an annual report on progress, innovative ideas
9. Review after two-three years

Six culture change tests

1. More effective

- Providing efficiency and certainty to the development industry and all planning's customers.
- Reducing bureaucracy, complexity and overloading in both plan making and development management.
- Maintaining efficiency, but improving effectiveness.

2. Outcome focussed

- Achieving high standards of design and sustainability performance.
- Discovering what works and communicating best practice.

3. Engaged and engaging

- Responding to the diverse voices of business, community and single interest groups and achieving meaningful community engagement at all scales.

Six culture change tests

4. Coherent and robust

- Achieving coherence through the policy hierarchy – planning policy statements / national policy statements / regional strategies / local development frameworks – the golden thread.
- Making regional strategies work.
- Developing more effective and efficient local development frameworks.
- Developing confidence in the evidence, targets and outcomes of planning.
- Embedding development management to achieve quality outcomes and effective use of resources.
- Building confidence in new systems and agencies for delivering new development and infrastructure, particularly the Homes and Communities Agency and the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

5. Skilled

- Developing skills in development economics, project management, environmental assessment and the metrics of carbon reduction.

6. At the heart of things

- Ensuring spatial planning is central to place making, infrastructure planning and delivery, public sector service delivery, community engagement, private sector-led development, environmental protection and enhancement, economic recovery and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Next steps

- Draft final report to NPF Executive on May 13th
- Forum consultation to follow
- Final sign off at Forum on June 23rd