

NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM

DRAFT CULTURE CHANGE ACTION PLAN: DELIVERING INSPIRING PLACES: OCTOBER 2007

Key Message: The National Planning Forum (NPF) and its members commit to 5 Key Actions to ensure that the planning system supports, shapes and delivers inspiring places in sustainable urban and rural settings.

Introduction: Planning is a complex activity which affects the social, environmental and economic life of the country each day. Planning is also a highly regulated activity which crosses public, private and voluntary sectors, each sector engaging with it in a multiplicity of roles.

Those who work within the planning system are aware of the scale and range of pressures that are placed on it, whilst those outside can find it bewildering and difficult to engage with. More recently, the planning system has begun to change in ways that its own practitioners find challenging. It is moving from being primarily a policy and regulatory activity to a process which is at the heart of public sector investment and delivery. In order to achieve this, planning is having to work in new ways and integrate its activities with a different set of partners who have a far greater influence on its work than hitherto.

Planning's role is moving centre stage to be part of the new local approach to delivery of social, environmental and economic infrastructure whilst protecting these localities and managing change. Places have their own character and this can be enhanced through a variety of means including via Planning.

These changes in focus and activity are a major opportunity to support local place shaping in a way that has not been seen before. Covering all localities and bringing with it the opportunities to combine activities, programmes and future investment, place shaping is a vital component in creating better opportunities for the way people live that also contributes to the social, environmental and economic health of the country.

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Planning has an important role to play in this new, joined up approach to public service delivery and investment. Increasingly this will also be cross-sectoral, as new approaches create local delivery vehicles, companies and partnerships which will have an impact at all scales. Joint use of private and public sector budgets will be an increasing feature of this new way of working.

Change is important to those who work within the system as planners, other professionals or in other roles. It is thus vital that all organisations and individuals involved in planning are fully aware of, and are committed to, the changing requirements. The NPF - the unique body which brings together all the interests in planning across England - wants to play its full part in supporting these changes. It aims to do this primarily through the leadership and support of its members and the impetus that they can bring through their own organisations or members.

The Draft Action Plan: It is proposed that the wording in this draft should be revised as necessary, and the final version agreed in December 2007, when the NPF and its members will sign up to the actions and time frame. Each member organisation will be requested to agree 1 action to contribute to achieving each of the 5 Actions. The Secretary will collate the full set in December 2007. Progress on implementation will be reviewed 6 monthly starting in June 2008, the results will be publicised, and the Action Plan rolled forward as appropriate.

❖ Understanding the key role that planning plays in place shaping

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR/ORGANISATION	BY WHEN
Limited understanding of the role of organisations and individuals in place-shaping, and how planning relates to this	A1 Use all available opportunities during 2008 to ensure members and officials understand the concept of place-shaping and the role of planning in this	All	Dec 2008

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❖ **Appreciating the complexity of planning and how to make it work for you**

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR/ORGANISATION	BY WHEN
Even when the role of planning is understood, lack of joined-up thinking inhibits its use in supporting delivery	A2 Undertake at least one major initiative that demonstrates how planning is helping to deliver improved outcomes	All	March 2008, and again by March 2009

❖ **Removing the barriers to partnership working**

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR/ORGANISATION	BY WHEN
Working relationships (both horizontal and vertical, within and between organisations involved in planning, and at all levels: national, regional and local) need to be improved to deliver benefits from the new spatial planning system and to deliver sustainable development	A3 Establish or support at least one effective delivery mechanism that links spatial plan-making or decision-making with the pursuit of sustainable development	All	December 2008

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❖ **Providing the support to enable planning to be effective**

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR/ORGANISATION	BY WHEN
To be effective, planning and planners depend on support from academics, their employers, agencies, professional bodies, colleagues and other partners to make the most of their skills and to develop these on a continuous basis to improve processes and outcomes	A4 Provide high quality development and training opportunities for all engaged in planning, and make an increasing effort to spread the key messages gained from research and good practice	All	Key milestones to be established so that progress can be measured by June 2008, and thereafter 6 monthly

❖ **Showing what planning can achieve**

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR/ORGANISATION	BY WHEN
Tendency to concentrate on those instances where planning has not achieved the right outcome or failed to deliver on time, and to scrutinise in a negative way	A5 Take every available opportunity to engage positively with - and improve - planning processes, and celebrate success	All	Key milestones to be established so that progress can be measured by June 2008, and thereafter 6 monthly

ANNEX: COMPONENTS OF THE DRAFT PLAN

The Draft Action Plan was produced from the list below taking into account the comments and priority actions identified by the Executive Board and the Steering Group. The Forum is asked to flag any of the actions listed below – or indeed others not included – that they consider are not adequately covered, or that should be added to the Draft above.

NB: Column 2 indicates the number of votes cast by either an Executive Board or Steering Group member during the drafting process.

KEY THEME 1: Understanding the key role that planning plays in place shaping

Theme number		Agency	Issue	Action	By when
1.1	2	CLG	Other government departments are not aware of the new approach to planning and their role in it	Hold briefing bilaterals with main departments involved: Defra, DEBR, DSCF, HO, DfT and DH	June 2008
1.2		OGC/CLG	Current reviews of government property are being undertaken without any real tie in to the local processes of development	Issue joint advice to government departments and local authorities on this process and encourage joint working on identifying land for dispersal and development	March 2008
1.3	1	CLG	Civil servants working across government do not have a full understanding of the planning system, what it is there to deliver and its complexity in operation - this leads to misunderstandings and failure to use the system to full effect	With Sunningdale develop a planning module which should be taken by all those engaging in planning work in all government departments including CLG as part of the professionalisation of the civil service programme	June 2008

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1.4		ASC	Wider planning professions and those who engage in the development process do not understand the delivery role of planning	Through the means available support the development of CPD and case study material to illustrate the new relationship and role of planning	March 2008
1.5	3	IDEA	Local authorities are not yet fully understanding of their role in place shaping and how planning can support this	Put greater emphasis in the Leadership Academy to these issues for leaders and other exec members not just planning leads	June 2008
1.6	1	POS	Planning Officers Societies have an important role in communicating new role of planning to their members	Use the existing branch and membership network to promote understanding of changes through case studies, conferences and seminars	June 2008
1.7	2	Local authority leaders	Need to understand the role of planning in place shaping and delivery	Chief executives and planners need to support leaders in their understanding and how this approach can be used to local advantage in delivery	March 2008
1.8		RTPI	Planners not being regularly updated on the working and implications of the new planning system	Work through meetings on the editorial team on Planning magazine to put over this point and consider greater use of direct weekly email updates to keep planners informed of the changes	December 2007
1.9		Civic Trust/CPRE (and others)	Do members understand the new role of planning?	Make available material on website, case studies and briefings which illustrate the new system in practice	March 2008

KEY THEME 2: Appreciating the complexity of planning and how to make it work for you

Theme number		Agency	Issue	Action	By when
2.1		CLG	Internally work with Directorates to ensure that they are aware of what the new planning system requires of them, for example housing, local government and regeneration	Hold briefing meetings internally and agree actions to hold in an action plan which will be followed up	June 2008
2.2	1	CO/HMT/ No 10	All government departments are not	Issue advice and identify how this might be	June 2008

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		Delivery Unit	having the role of planning in delivery spelled out to them and hence they are in danger of ignoring it for their own activities	undertaken at departmental and delivery levels for their own direct needs, for example work with senior managers responsible for accommodation and business planning	
2.3	1	LGA	Local government awareness of the role of planning in delivery is poor	Place material and case studies on LGA website and continue to hold programme of events	March 2008
2.4	1	Local authority leaders and executive members	Have a clear lead on the promotion of projects and development but don't always realise that this is their role	Chief executives and planners need to work with leaders and executive members to ensure that there is a planning delivery lead and that this exec member works with the LAA	May 2008
2.5		Management team	Need to be aware of planning's delivery role across all public services and engaged with the internal process on the infrastructure group	Chief executive needs to brief management team and ensure that processes are in place to make this work for the LAA	December 2007
2.6		CHOPS/RTPI	Use existing means to bring about more understanding of the new system	Develop the role of and create more learning partnerships	June 2008

KEY THEME 3: Removing the barriers to partnership working

Theme number		Agency	Issue	Action	By when
3.1	1	CLG	Identify with each department what specific action needs to be taken, for example send Circular to chief executives in PCTs by DH and work with them to understand why this is important	Follow up bilaterals with an action plan for each government department and follow through on delivery	December 2008
3.2		PINS/CLG	Lack of understanding about planning's role in the local governance structure and in delivery of the place shaping programme	Make clear these relationships in all material for local government and planning so there can be no misunderstanding	December 2007
3.3	3	POS/SOLACE	Working relationships between planning officers and chief executives are not	Suggest local joint meetings of the development of good practice case studies	

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			always as good as they should be	for local use; planners be invited to speak to SOLACE and vice versa	
3.4		Chief Executive/Leader	Establish a Local Infrastructure group across the LSP	Ensure that there is support for this from within the local authority and the LSP partners, for example the PCT	December 2007
3.5		GOs	Lack of understanding about the way in which LDFs fit with LAAs	Make same officer responsible	March 2008
3.6	1	GOs and RDAs	Lack of horizontal integration at the regional level	Will the IRS be able to pull this together? Suggest make a statement of intent	March 2008
3.7	1	GOs/RDAs and major developers	At present there seems to be little opportunity for regional briefings for major developers who are not being advised of the current and future changes in the system	GOs and RDAs hold regular updating sessions	December 2007 June 2008 December 2008
3.8	1	HBF/CBI/BPF/BRC	Need to promote the ways in which these organisations can work together to promote place shaping	To hold a joint seminar and publish a position statement to members	December 2007
3.9		CBI/IOD	Need to support their members who are involved in local business partnerships and working with the Local Strategic Partnerships on the place shaping role	Identify their members who are engaged at local level and provide regular supporting briefings	January 2008
3.10		Small business/local chambers	Need to support their members who are involved in local business partnerships and working with the Local Strategic Partnerships on the place shaping role	Identify their members who are engaged at local level and provide regular supporting briefings	March 2008
3.11	1	RTPI	Public sector planners are finding it difficult to work inside their organisations yet where chief executives are involved more successful outcomes are achieved	Approach SOLACE to develop a joint statement about working together; promote network and regions joint events with SOLACE	March 2008
3.12	1	Civic Trust/CPRE (and others)	Want to ensure that all places are enhanced through place shaping and that their character is developed	Work with Local Strategic Partnership and other groups to develop visions for all places and supporting delivery plans	March 2008

KEY THEME 4: Providing the support to enable planning to be effective

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Theme number		Agency	Issue	Action	By when
4.1	1	CLG	Work with GOs and RDA to develop approaches to RIFs and show how these link to LDFs, LAAs and MAAs	Hold meetings and identify advice required and then issue it	June 2008
4.2		CLG	There is a considerable amount of research commissioned on planning by government but it is not very easy to find	Address access to planning research to see if this can be more easily made available	March 2008
4.3	1	CLG	The policy and other papers which show the relationships between planning and wider public service reform as reflected in the Local Government White Paper are not expressed anywhere in one place and thus are not in currency for planners as relevant documents	Put all the local government/SCS/LAA/Place Shaping/LDF material in one place on the website [NB JM is preparing a reader bringing together this material for PAS]	
4.4		PINS	Lack of understanding of the tests of soundness by all users of the system	Proposed revisions to PPS12 signalled in the PWP should clarify the role and purpose of the tests of soundness	December 2007
4.5		CLG	National planning policy statements are not fully taken up or understood	When issued, suggest that there is a delivery and take up plan associated with them and also monitoring of use and understanding	June 2008
4.6	1	PINS	Lack of understanding of respective role in relation to GOs and CLG	Propose that a clear diagram of relationships for LDFs and development application processes be set out and placed on all relevant websites	December 2007
4.7		PAS	Support planners in understanding the changes in the system as now	Develop some specific CPD products to be used by planners with an online registration to monitor take up and use by local authority	March 2008
4.8		Planning members	Need to be aware of the new Code of Conduct and its implications for the way that they conduct their work	Member training on new Code to be provided within each local authority – action chief executive	December 2007
4.9	1	Planning members	Need for planning training increasing not least to ensure that the new integrated planning system is understood	Member training to be provided in each local authority and made a requirement for all planning committee members to attend –	December 2007

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				action Head of Planning/Head of Legal	
4.10		Scrutiny members	Planning outcomes and deliverables need to be established and monitored including the actual realisation and delivery of S106 Agreements	Chair of Scrutiny and Head of Democratic services needs to programme regular planning scrutiny – not less than once per year	December 2007
4.11	3	Planners	Need to improve skills in particular areas including delivering sustainable development, development finance and management of people, resources, programmes and the organisation in which they work	Set up in-house or other courses to ensure that adequate skill levels are available in the planning team	March 2008
4.12		Planners	Not generally adequately engaged with the LAA, SCS and LSP	Make immediate arrangements to engage in the work of these groups	ASAP
4.13		Planners	Current knowledge of the planning system post 2004 is not up to date	Make immediate arrangements for in-house training to complement individual CPD updates	ASAP
4.14 deleted					
4.15		GOS and RDAs	Regional Infrastructure Frameworks and Funds will be important to support wider investment in the region but at present no process for these has been published	Public regional RIF process and mechanisms	June 2008
4.16		Planning consultancies	Clients are not fully aware of the changes to the system and the need for early engagement	Encourage their clients to take a risk mitigation approach and ensure that they engage early in LDF and other development processes	
4.17		RTPI and RICS	Members not fully aware of the implications of the post 2004 system	Use CPD as a proactive means of achieving a professional refresh – suggest look at Australian model of CPP as a possible way forward	June 2008
4.18		Law Society and Bar Council	Members not fully aware of the implications of the new system and its greater integration with the public sector	Use CPD as a proactive means of achieving professional updating	June 2008
4.19		RTPI	Planners need a new understanding of what being a 'professional' means in the new environment including issues such as	To develop GA debate and then advice about the role of a planning professional in all sectors including understanding client	March 2008

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			due diligence and risk management on behalf of their clients – this applies in all sectors	relationships and responsibilities	
4.20		RTPI	Younger planners are enthused by the new approach to planning that they learn about in planning schools but then find working practices do not relate to the new system	This should be supported by CPD proposals above	June 2008
4.21		RTPI	Younger planners are not encouraged to stay in the public sector by the attitudes, skills and practise of planning managers	The promotion of management development and skills should be a core element of CPD and the RTPI should work with employers organisations to support this; planning schools could also be encouraged to offer more planning management CPD courses including MBAs	June 2008
4.22		RTPI	To ensure that the RTPI gives the lead on new approaches to planning through its various policies and Boards	Review the 'new vision' statement and advise its membership of the practical implications of the changes in the system	Match 2008
4.23		CHOPS	Academics may not be fully aware of the implications of the changes in the planning system for their own teaching and research	Promote academic CPD	March 2008
4.24		ASC/ESRC	The new system is not fully understood and needs more active research on how it is working to support practice and research	Promote specific research programmes on the new planning system	September 2008
4.25		CLG	Under representation of BME planners	Develop more PATH courses with specific funding	June 2008
4.26 deleted					

KEY THEME 5: Showing what planning can achieve

Theme number	Agency	Issue	Action	By when
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5.1		CLG	Work with the LAA and place shaping team in order to identify good practice advice on the role of planning in delivery to those leading on LAAs and SCS in local authorities	Hold meetings and seek to publish advice to accompany expected advice on place shaping in November 2007	February 2008
5.2		Executive Committee members	Need to be made aware of planning's delivery role across all public services including those in house	Chief Executive (could use new PAS learning module when available)	March 2008
5.3	1	All in private sector	Lack of awareness in the change in the planning system is reducing the potential opportunities available for working together to achieve development through local delivery vehicles, companies etc	Provide case study examples of where organisations or consultants have worked directly with the new system to everyone's advantage	March 2008
5.4		Planning academics	Lack of understanding about international comparative practice	Promote more research and make available what has already been undertaken in ways that relate it more clearly to new UK practice	March 2008

NPF ACTIONS

NPF		Organisation	issue	action	By when
NPF1	1	NPF Executive	Action Plan can make a positive contribution to planning practice	To take action to achieve sign up to the actions identified in the Action Plan and, where appropriate, add further actions	March 2008
NPF2		NPF Executive	Support and promote delivery of actions by NPF members	Keep Action Plan under review and have updates	March 2008 September 2008 March 2009
NPF 3		NPF Executive	Ensure that there is wider awareness of the NPF Action Plan in member bodies and in central government	Develop a Communications Strategy and implement it	December 2007