NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM: 17 MARCH 2008

BUSINESS PLAN 2008-11

Background
1. The Business Plan for 2005-08 was approved by the Forum on 19 September 2005. Annual Work Programmes were agreed by the Executive Board – the programme for the current year is at Annex 1, with progress on delivering the key products highlighted. A draft of this Business Plan was considered by the Forum in December 2007 and changes have been made to reflect comments made on it.

Business Plan 2008-11
2. This revised Business Plan is that of the NPF, and is for approval and adoption by the Forum.

NPF Mission
3. The NPF mission is *"to inspire planning and planners to deliver the new planning system, and through that to help achieve quality, inspiring places that enhance productivity as well as people's well-being*".

4. The Forum is evolving its role in line with this by:
- acting as a sounding board for Government initiatives;
- formulating expert advice and/or commentary on specific issues and policies;
- promoting good practice;
- facilitating cross-sectoral working; and
- engaging members in "task and deliver" working groups.

while also:
- avoiding duplicating the work of others;
- concentrating on areas in which all sectors have a common interest; and
- aiming to be constructive in all that we do.

5. In delivering on its Mission, NPF aspires to continue to be recognised as the principal cross-sectoral voice on planning issues in England, and a key agent for change across all sectors, enabling planning to deliver more sustainable communities.

NPF Strategic Objective
6. The strategic objective of the NPF is to work with Communities and Local Government to drive and support culture change within planning, to promote communication that secures mutual understanding and enables the planning to operate more effectively, and to support delivery of sustainable outcomes.

Administration and Process
7. The Forum meets four times a year in full session. The NPF Executive Board, comprising a Vice-Chair elected by each of the 5 sectors, drives the work of the Forum. Each of the Vice-Chairs takes their turn in chairing both the Board and the Forum, in rotation and normally for a year at a time.

8. The Board prepares a draft Business Plan covering 3 years for discussion by the Forum. This forms the basis for a 3 year Service Level Agreement with Communities and Local Government. An annual Work Programme for each financial year is also prepared in line with the current Business Plan. Together with progress on the previous year's WP, this is considered in draft, and subject to any required changes is agreed with Communities and Local Government and signed off by the Forum by March each year. The WP for 2008-09 is at Annex 2.

9. The work of the Forum is taken forward by task and finish groups, each led by one of the Vice-Chairs, who may also take on other issues as agreed by the Executive Board. The Secretary liaises with the Chair, Vice-Chairs and others to secure the smooth running of the Forum and its working groups.

Key Priorities for 2008-11

10. These are to:

1: promote **culture change** amongst everyone involved in planning via the Manifesto and Action Plan;

2: identify good practice in cross-sectoral **stakeholder engagement** in plan-making and decision-making**;**

3: focus on cross-sectoral good practice in **delivery** of high quality spatial solutions;

4: **develop the capacity** of the NPF to make an authoritative and distinctive contribution to spatial planning in England; and

5: enhance the **benefits of NPF membership and its governance.**

11. The aim of the Executive Board is to continue to raise contributions totally £70k from membership annually, plus one-off amounts to fund publications, research and events. This will allow work to continue at current levels in line with this Business Plan, whilst maintaining a prudent level of reserves. This Plan will form the basis for negotiation on the Service Level Agreement with Communities and Local Government for funding for 2008-08 and beyond. Other funding contributors are asked to maintain or, if possible, increase their contributions from 2008-09 as this would give our work added momentum. Additional annual or one-off contributions in cash or kind are also welcome.

12. Taking account of available resources, priorities 1-5 in para 10 will be reflected in the annual Work Programmes (WPs) for 2008-09, 2009-10 and 20010-11. The WP for 2008-09 set out in Annex 2 encompasses new work as well as the key item of work rolled forward from the current year (ie culture change).

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS ON THE 2007-08 WORK PROGRAMME

Note: *completed actions highlighted*

ACTIONS	STRATEGIC FOCUS	KEY PRODUCTS FOR 2007/8	LEAD	RESOURCE
A1 Continue to input to policy development to ensure improved delivery by, performance of, and outcomes from, the planning system	Key aspects of emerging planning policy on which cross-sectoral input is vital, including : ▪ Barker II proposals ▪ Eddington proposals, ▪ climate change, and ▪ other issues as appropriate	(a) Paper to inform responses to Barker and Eddington Reports *[Forum debate/note of mtg]* (b) Input to drafting of DCLG's good practice guide on climate change	Executive Board, Working Groups and Secretary	Within Existing Resources (WER)

A2 Encourage high quality spatial solutions that contribute to achieving sustainable development	▪ Energise the delivery agenda for both spatial planning and development management, by improving the link to implementation	(a) Thought piece on ways of improving delivery (b) Dissemination of the paper via the Forum to share best practice	Executive Board, Delivery Working Group and Secretary	WER
A3 Promote a positive image for planning, and attract and retain planners	Encourage all those involved in planning to change their behaviour, to ensure that the planning process is positive, spatial, plan-led, and produces sustainable outcomes, and when it does so to celebrate those achievements	(a) Culture change report + *Action Plan* **[in 08/09]** (b) Workshop for key opinion formers to refine messages for each sector, and follow-up **[in 08/09]** (c) Programme of dissemination **[08/09]** (d) Encourage participation in award schemes	Executive Board, Culture Change Working Group and Secretary	(a) and (b) WER; (c) and (d) as resources permit
A4 Continue to develop the capacity of the NPF to make an authoritative and distinctive contribution to spatial planning in England	Ensure that NPF members are aware of the latest thinking in spatial planning and are able to input to its development and enhancement	(a) Input to Spatial Plans in Practice (b) Position Statement on a National Spatial Framework, together with appropriate follow-up and dissemination	(a) Secretary, LGA and others (b) NSF Liaison Group and Secretary	WER
A5 Maintain robust criteria for membership of the NPF, contributions to its work and governance	Ensure balanced representation and appropriate contributions from each sector, and improve governance	(a) Review membership for representativeness (b) Actively engage members between meetings (c) Produce clear terms of reference, *membership benefits* and membership commitments **[08/09]**	Executive Board and Secretary	WER
A6 Engagement to promote the Forum and its outputs	Ensure that the Forum and its work are known and valued	(a) Improve the NPF web-site and links to other sites (b) Promote the NPF, including targeted attendance at major conferences + events	Executive Board and Secretary	WER plus one-off project funding as necessary

NPF WORK PROGRAMME 2008-09

ACTIONS	STRATEGIC FOCUS	PRODUCTS FOR 2008-09	LEAD	TIME LINE
1. Promote culture change amongst planners and everyone involved in planning by signing up to the NPF Culture Change Manifesto and the Action Plan	Using the unique membership of the NPF to identify and tackle the key behavioural changes needed in all sectors to ensure that planning and planners are positive, spatial, plan-led, and produce sustainable outcomes	Launch the Culture Change Manifesto; finalise and launch the Action Plan; disseminate, monitor progress 6 monthly, and review as necessary	Executive Board, Culture Change Working Group, Membership, and Secretary	Manifesto + Research Report: **Apr** - launch Action Plan **June** signoff **July** launch/ disseminate **Aug-Jan 09** implement

2. Input to policy development and implementation from a cross-sectoral perspective to ensure improved delivery by, and performance of, the planning system	Support from a cross-sectoral viewpoint on policy and implementation issues arising from the Planning Reform Bill to identify common ground and clarify any differences	(a) Commission advice on cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement (b) Act as a sounding board and/or establish task and finish groups on planning policy and practice issues as appropriate	Executive Board and Secretary	Stakeholder engagement **Aug** establish Working Gp +project plan **Sept/Oct** Commission research **Dec** Test initial conclusions **Mar 09** Final report Other issues **Oct** identify other policy areas that would benefit from cross-sectoral input **Dec** draft WP 09-10, to include relevant projects
3. Support delivery of high quality spatial solutions, ensuring that planning continues to contribute to achieving more sustainable development via cross-sectoral inputs	Ensure increased emphasis on the role of planning in supporting delivery of national, regional and local policy	(a) Process map for delivery of major projects (b) Report on good practice in major project delivery from a cross-sectoral perspective	Executive Board, Delivery Working Group and Secretary	**Nov/Dec** commission research to prepare (a) and (b) for major projects (as separate or linked pieces of work) **Feb** receive process map (a) **Mar 09** receive (b)
4. Develop the capacity of the NPF to make an authoritative and distinctive contribution to spatial planning in England	Ensure that NPF members are aware of the latest thinking in spatial planning and are able to input to its development and enhancement	Update members regularly at Forum meetings on policy developments and best practice from across the 5 sectors	Executive Board, Secretary, Communities and Local Government	**June, Oct, Dec and Mar '09** via meetings and Working Groups
5. Enhance the benefits of NPF membership, maintain robust membership criteria, encourage contributions to NPF work, and strengthen governance arrangements	Ensure balanced representation and appropriate contributions from each sector, and improve governance	Demonstrate enhanced membership benefits; review membership by sector in the light of the NPF terms of reference	Executive Board and Secretary	**June** membership by category on the NPF web-site **Mar '09** evidence of increased engagement in NPF work, and of improved governance