

# IDOX group



## **NPF 13 OCTOBER 2009: Background to ITEM 4 Inception Report: Study to Drive Delivery and Report on Progress on the NPF Culture Change Programme**

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## 1. Introduction

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The National Planning Forum (NPF) is a cross -disciplinary and inter-organisational body promoting good planning practice. It involves a wide range of interests across government, business, the professions and non governmental organisations, represented by some 70 bodies. Conscious of the new role for planning promoted by Central Government, with its emphasis on spatial planning and the delivery of inspiring places that are sustainable economically, socially and physically, the NPF identified the need for a change in culture among planners, related professions, politicians and the general public. To this end the NPF has been a catalyst for a change in culture around planning in England not just among land use planners but also across all sectors involved in planning.

NPF members committed themselves to a Manifesto for Change in July 2008. This sees planning as having a central role to play both in managing the process of creating a practical vision for each area and in delivering that vision. Nineteen NPF members then went on to develop specific action plans to facilitate the changes in culture and behaviour needed both through the leadership of the organisation as a whole and through specific NPF members. This work was brought together in a *National Planning Forum Culture Change Action Plan* published in early 2009.

The *Change Action Plan* committed the NFP to follow up the Manifesto by monitoring its impact and reporting on progress every six months. A rigorous evaluation of the desired change in behaviour would require that there is a base line from which to monitor change and this current study will investigate to what extent that exists and make recommendations. This project will not duplicate what is already being carried out by way of monitoring by other organisations.

Since the preparation and publication of the *Change Action Plan*, the role of the planning system including spatial planning has developed further. Its role has been clarified by Communities and Local Government (CLG) through a new version of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12 and the context in which it sits has also been further extended into new governance architecture. The transition from development control to development management has begun in earnest and other changes to planning consent regimes have also started to work their way through the system. The 2008 Planning Act has created the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) that will deal directly with nationally significant planning applications. These key changes are summarised further below.

## 2. Reviewing the commitments

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Since 2007, two critical challenges that planning has to address with some urgency have emerged.

1. **Economic downturn:** the economic downturn is now the focus of considerable effort to encourage recovery. Much of this is now being led by public investment and works which lies within a planning framework. There is a challenge to ensure that assumptions about reductions in private sector investment do not lead to presumptions of immediate reductions in public sector investment and planning's role can be central in this;
2. **Climate Change:** the full role of planning in mitigating and adapting for climate change is still being developed and understood. The RTPI's seven commitments on climate change together with its action plan is one example of an approach to action and over time this will undoubtedly need more development as understanding improves of what can be effective action, and be joined by other organisations acting in a similar way.

It is evident from recent government policy initiatives and other current activities such as the 2009 Local Democracy etc Bill that planning's role in delivery is central in the economy and in adapting to meet the challenges of climate change. The past two years have seen a downturn in private sector investment whilst the capital expenditure in the public sector is higher than at any time, although this will be reduced down to 2003 levels by 2016. The importance of planning's role to businesses, communities and individuals has been strengthened and it now lies at the heart of local governance and initiatives to promote the economic upturn. On climate change, the establishment of a new Government Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has focussed attention on the major issues and commitments that the Government has made to promote necessary adaptation at local level. The planning system is at the front line of this issue.

The scale of these challenges places considerable pressure on all those engaged in planning activity to remain fully aware of the range of reforms and the opportunities that lie within them. Inevitably it may also mean that organisations are more aware of some parts of the reforms than others, based on their own specific interest, and may not be aware of the changing picture overall. The scale of change in the English planning system places even greater emphasis on the role of the NPF in providing leadership to those using and delivering the planning system.

The opportunity to review the *Change Action Plan* commitments is therefore timely and necessary. As the next report, to be published in the autumn will show, considerable progress has been made within a dynamic environment. The challenge of preparing the next *Change Action Plan* suggests that it can provide an opportunity for NPF to realign its understanding of the English planning system in the light of these changes and to further develop the leadership task that it has both within member organisations and in planning as a whole.

## 3. The story since 2007

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Since the original preparation of the report, *Delivering Inspiring Places - The Role and Status of Planning*, and some of the final work on the *Change Action Plan*, there have been numerous additional policy initiatives in the delivery of spatial planning which we will review as part of the progress in delivering the *Change Action Plan* to date. It is important to recognise that spatial planning is an encompassing approach to delivery which is now at the heart of local governance and investment processes. It requires a more integrated approach across all local authority departments and related government agencies, health and utilities. The update report for NPF needs to ensure that it is taking account of this dynamic context and also recognises the actions that members have taken in responses to this changing agenda that may not have been envisaged in 2007.

These changes in this arena in England since 2007 include:

- Publication of **PPS 12 – ‘Local Spatial Planning’** - June 2008 with its significant emphasis on delivery and comprehensive infrastructure planning and coordination
- Publication of **‘Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities’** in July 2008 by CLG which identifies the clear role and leadership of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) which are responsible for developing and driving Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements (LAAs). They also have responsibility for the oversight and alignment of resources, performance management, consultation and scrutiny in the local authority area.
- Publication of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** proposals (August 2008). This will be a capital cost payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development.
- Publication of the new proposals for **single regional strategies** and **regional delivery programmes** (Feb 2009)
- **Local Area Agreements** (LAAs) commenced and to be delivered through LDF (April 2009)
- 13 **Multi-Area Agreements** (MAAs) – signed or being developed
- 2 **City Region Governance pilots** launched in Manchester and Leeds (April 2009)
- Publication of arrangements for **Local Spending Reports** (April 2009)
- Publication of the Bichard review of operational efficiency (April 2009) and introduction of **Total Place** processes which are budgets that map flows of public spending in local areas and make links between services to identify where public money can be spent more effectively
- Publication of **‘Planning Together’** April 2009 – a guide focussed on the strategic leadership role of local authorities
- Use of **single evidence base** including data and consultation across for each local authority including evidence from partners, scrutinies etc from April 2009
- The use of the **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)** as the single basis of population and needs data at the local level
- Introduction of **Comprehensive Area Assessment**, which includes Statements of Community Involvement, and now to be renamed **One Place** from December 2009

- **Steps Approach** to infrastructure planning and delivery for LSPs and Las published by the Planning Advisory Service
- RICS commissioned guide to spatial planning for the Planning and Development (P and D) division
- Publication of arrangements for **Housing and Planning Delivery Grant**
- The continuing economic downturn and restrictions on development finance and access to mortgages which is severely hampering house building and other developments and is causing revisions of planning agreements
- Development of similar arrangements for spatial planning at the local level for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (although not yet implemented)
- **Planning Act 2008**
- **Killian Pretty** Review on householder consents
- Establishment of the **Infrastructure Planning Commission** for national infrastructure projects
- Creation of the **Homes and Communities Agency** and the introduction of **Single Conversations** at the local level which will be focussed on Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)
- Publication of **Local Transport Plan 3** Guidance from the Department for Transport which focuses transport projects on the LDF
- Establishment of **Regional Select Committees**
- The strong and growing influence of **climate change** challenges and considerations
- The need to address the securitisation of long term **energy** supply

## 4. How all these changes are beginning to interweave...

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All of this now sits within the wider local government agenda including:

- **Total Place** – an initiative that was launched in the Budget 2009 and has bi-partisan support. it will be used in each local authority area to consider the combined implications of all public sector budgets and how services and budgets can be used together
- **Single Conversation** in their new role, the HCA will be seeking single local investment plans from local authorities which will be drawn from their delivery plans
- **Development Management** is a more proactive approach than development control and is expected to be a means of achieving the delivery of requirements set out in the local infrastructure delivery schedules (funded and as yet unfunded)
- **One Place** – the renamed Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process which has bi-partisan support and will be used to examine the extent to which local bodies are working together to meet local needs. This will include police and health
- **Local Spending Reports** – these have been published for all local revenue expenditure (April 2009). The arrangements for these include capital expenditure by all public bodies and will be incorporated in due course. These stem from 2007 Sustainable Communities Act.
- **Duty to involve** – this is a duty placed on all local authorities and their partners from 2009 following the implementation of the 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act. The duty places a requirement on the publication and transparency of evidence which is defined in two categories. The first is data and survey based evidence and the second is all consultation evidence. The approach to consultation is required to be more joined up in a single diary; the outcomes of consultation have to be published as does the response to the consultation. The test applied to the duty to involve is that any citizen seeing the evidence could reasonably come to the same decision. For LDFs, all evidence needs to be used not just that which is collected for LDF preparation. The SCI is now examined by the Audit Commission as part of this process and not by PINS.
- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)** – this is the key location for all population and associated data for the local authority and is prepared jointly by the local authority and the Primary Care Trust (PCT). It seems likely that all other local delivery planning including LDFs will need to work within the framework that it provides.
- **Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS)** – the role of the SCS is expected to be enhanced following the Operational Efficiency report publicised as part of the Budget 2009. It already has a key role as setting the vision for the Core Strategy, setting the priorities for the LAA and providing a location for as yet unfunded infrastructure requirements at the local level.
- **Local Strategic Partnerships** – the members of LSPs now have extended duties placed on them by Regulations following the 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in health Act that came into force from April 2009. These include
  - An oversight of all resources being used in the area
  - A common evidence base

- Common consultation processes
- Oversight of performance management and scrutiny

In 'Planning Together' (CLG April 2009) it was proposed that LSPs should together with a corporate lead in the Ia take a lead in infrastructure planning and delivery.

- **Multi Area Agreements (MAAs)** This sub-regional approach to developing economies and the support required to maintain and encourage economic growth has bi-partisan support. Recent statements by both leading parties indicate policy support for further developing these as planning and delivery mechanisms and they could be important either in contributing requirements to Regional delivery plans that will be set up following the adoption of the 2009 Local Democracy etc Bill. If, following a General election, some regional arrangements are scrapped, and then sub-regional arrangements for infrastructure provision will be pre-eminent.
- **City Region Pilots** Two sub-regions – Manchester and Leeds (which has 11 Ias in membership) are now working on enhanced governance models that will enable them to take on more the responsibility for more central government services such as Job Centre Plus at the local level similar to the London governance model. Manchester MAA has been given an additional budget of £1bn to manage. This may not be 'new' money but is new to the sub-region's management. Localities will want to ensure that it is ready for both the Regional Delivery Plan and/or other potential sub-regional funding management approaches in 2010. This project will support this readiness for local authorities, developers, major land owners and all those in membership of the NPF.

## 5. The delivery role of planning at the local level

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The national delay in the production of LDFs has created considerable concern that has lead CLG and PINS to be clearer about the role of LDFs in the local governance framework and their specific contribution of local infrastructure planning and delivery. PPS 12 now requires the submission of:

- **An infrastructure delivery strategy** within the Core Strategy which includes the process of identifying and delivering required infrastructure through all budget streams and available funding.
- **Infrastructure schedules** – which sit outside Core Strategies and AAPs as evidence and in two forms. The first contains the projects with a ‘good prospect of funding’ and this is in direct support of the Core Strategy/AAP. The second is those projects which are required but for which no funding has yet been determined. These sit outside the LDF and are appropriately housed in the SCS as a delivery programme. These projects are likely to be funded through existing capital sector budgets, funding bids, developers’ contributions and private sector investment over time.

It is important to note that the delivery schedules are required to be worked up in detail for years 1-5. Longer term requirements for years 6-15 can be included where funding has been agreed e.g. Crossrail. Otherwise, the infrastructure Delivery Strategy should be setting out the governance approaches to developing and delivering schedules of infrastructure requirements. This approach is realistic and represents an acknowledgement that:

- Some service delivery models change over time e.g. health and fire and rescue; agreeing 20 year requirements could lead to redundancy and will inevitably need changes
- There is concern at the amount of expenditure being placed into static infrastructure studies as these also do not transfer skills and develop local approaches to managing infrastructure requirements
- A static infrastructure schedule will inevitably be out of date on the day that it is published and this will be the case into the medium and long term. That is why a mix between requirements schedules and delivery strategy offer a stronger way forward
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In reviewing the infrastructure requirements, since the publication of PPS 12 in June 2008, the LDF now has to demonstrate how:

- It is delivering each of the LAA targets (para 1.6) – these now have a great importance in terms of delivery
- It is reviewing public sector service delivery locations and seeking to improve them (para 2.4)
- Reviewing and releasing public sector assets (para 2.4)
- It is demonstrating consistency and coherence in policy and delivery with neighbouring IAs (deliverability test)

## 5.1 What have been the successes of the last two years?

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Since 2007, a great deal has been done to inform and advise planning organisations and services about the changes that have been introduced since 2004. The publication of the revised version of PPS 12 has been a significant boost to understanding and this has been supplemented through a variety of means including training, publication of support material and clearer messages. There have also been changes in the responsibilities of LSPs and now the message is being made directly to Chief Executive in local authorities and other organisations through the Total Place initiative.

During this two year period each of NPF's member organisations have needed to consider the implications of both the changes in the operating environment of planning as they have affected their own activities and to address the commitments that they made in the NPF 2008 Culture Change Plan. It will be important to capture these actions as well as achievement of the formal commitments in the manifesto

## 5.2 What are the current barriers to success?

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Although much progress has been made, there still remain some barriers to success which will be explored and developed through this study. At the outset these appear to be:

### Systemic

- What assessment is there of the combined effects of the changes in the planning system/ is the continual incremental approach to change working?
- How far is the date of the next General election having an effect on slowing down the response to change due to uncertainty? (although some of this turbulence is now being settled through bi-partisan approaches)
- Will the additional measures being implemented to support spatial planning from September 2009 be enough to reinforce the changes in the system?
- How is change being measured? Are hard output measures enough? Would there be better engagement if outcome measures are emphasised instead?

### Corporate

- Need leadership from the top ie chief executive/chairman, leader and portfolio holder
- Need to appreciate planning's delivery role across all sectors

- Need to see spatial planning as a key component of the delivery of the local vision and approach to change/improvement
- Operational senior managers in all organisations involved with service delivery need to be aware of the delivery role of spatial planning
- Need to provide a corporate lead and support

## Organisational

- Need to engage a wider group of service professionals e.g. those working with children, education, social care, health
- Need to work across the LSP
- Private sector involvement essential
- Need to develop more integrated internal processes to support this approach – this will also be required for the single conversation

## Professional

- Ensuring that planners qualified before 2004 are on top of the new system – this is across all sectors
- Need to learn to work with others and not as a separate approach
- Need to acquire new and updated hard skills e.g. development funding, project management
- Need to develop new soft skills e.g. working with partners
- Need to develop new knowledge of the way in which other operational services deliver
- Planners in the private sector need to develop their client's understanding of the new processes

## 6. Implications for NPF

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**NPF member organisations will be engaged in developing approaches both to these key challenges and to the development of a new cultural change action plan will need to keep these centrally in view.** Within the NPF, there are also some challenges to consider in addressing these issues including:

- Clarity of the NPFs role – what can it do successfully? What should it leave for others?
- Should the NPF seek to build consensus on how these issues are tackled or should it represent a range of opinion from within its membership?
- Does the NPF have a picture of what a good planning system would look like and how it can be operated? What would success look like?
- How can supportive and complementary actions be developed between NPF members in growing its effectiveness and maturity?
- How can change be monitored more successfully and be used to inform NPF members and the wider planning community?

For the NPF this gives rise to a number of further questions on the leadership that it can provide nationally and from within its own member organisations. These questions need to be explored in the second stage of the study and include:

- What leadership can the NPF provide on the role of the planning system in the twin challenges of achieving economic recovery and adapting to climate change?
- If the NPF is to provide this leadership, how far is it important for the NPF to be able to communicate planning's role in a clear way based on this now more modern understanding of planning's place in delivery?
- How are NPF's members responsive to the twin challenges?
- Can the NPF demonstrate exemplary practices within its own organisations?
- How are NPF members dealing with the requirements for changing skills sets?
- Can the NPF produce case studies within member organisations that demonstrate good practice and can still confidence in the planning system's ability to deliver?
- Can the NPF create a shared agenda for planning across the sector?
- How far can the NPF identify gaps and problems in the planning system that can be put to Government?

## 7. The role of this study in developing the revised *Change Action Plan*

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This study has to

1. identify what has been achieved
2. what barriers remain
3. how these barriers can be addressed through a revised manifesto
4. suggest ways in which progress can be monitored in future so that actions can be properly evaluated

### 7.1 Approach to the study

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The approach to the study as agreed in the proposal includes the following four activities:

1. To help drive delivery of the NFP Culture Change Manifesto and Action Plan. You wish to assess how far the Action Plan has been delivered to date and will be delivered over the coming twelve months
2. To check how far the Action Plan is still fit for purpose and any new directions to be signalled at this stage for consideration
3. To chase progress. You wish to see that action is taken and momentum maintained. To this end you will need to know to what extent the Action Plan is fit for purpose and how it might be adapted in the light of considered feedback. The Plan specified activities for a large number of organisations/institutions but is unclear how far activities will lead to desired outcomes. The purpose of monitoring therefore has to be to look to long term evaluation rather than simple monitoring of activities.
4. to identify the **critical success factors** for culture change so that these can inform the next set of commitments
5. To set up realistic ongoing monitoring reports. The Action Plan doesn't say anything about their being a requirement for members to monitor the progress they are making towards to goals of the Action Plan. It is unclear what monitoring the signatories are currently engaged in. You wish to find out what monitoring is being carried out and what needs to be done to fill the gaps in monitoring revealed by the research.

## **8. Next Steps**

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- Completion of telephone interviews (July/August)
- Follow up interviews as appropriate (September)
- Wider overview of NPF members' organisational responses to planning change (September)
- Focus group round table discussion (September 2009)

Prepare first report 'How Far Have We Come?' (October 2009)