

TAKING THE NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM FORWARD: DECEMBER 2009

The National Planning Forum was re-launched in 2003 and is today:

- n the only cross-sectoral forum focusing on spatial planning in England with a mission to inspire planning and planners
- n a broad based membership Forum with over 70 organisations representing the national organisations with a role in, and commitment to, planning
- n 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
- n a participatory organisation with four high level meetings per year held at Local Government House in London, providing the opportunity to hear presentations by expert practitioners and policy makers on key planning issues
- n a consensus building organisation which provides a platform for all the sectors to engage in discussion and debate on key planning issues at the meetings and through its task and finish groups
- n a learning organisation which informs debate, builds cross-sectoral consensus and provides clarity on the issues where views differ
- n an open organisation with a web-site that is open to all
- n a committed organisation which is driven by a shared understanding of the value of planning in responding to the big issues of the new millennium such as sustainable development and climate change and of ensuring that spatial planning is fit for purpose for these challenges

NPF PUBLICATIONS – are succinct and designed to add value.

Key documents are:

Fit for Purpose Spatial Planning (Oct 2009) identifies the key priorities as:

- n Sound strategy
- n Quality
- n Effectiveness
- n Delivery
- n Stability

and sets out an authoritative case for a spatial planning system that is:

- n more effective
- n outcome focused
- n engaged and engaging
- n coherent and robust
- n skilled, and
- n at the heart of things

Culture Change Manifesto (July 2008) sets out the 5 key commitments made by all NPF members to:

- n understand and promote the role that planning plays in place-shaping
- n appreciate the complexity of planning but simplify its procedures
- n remove the barriers to partnership working
- n provide the support to enable planning to be effective
- n devise ways of showing what planning can achieve

CURRENT NPF WORK

Mediation Pilot Project (Sept 09 - June 10) - designed to demonstrate the value of mediation at all stages in the planning process

Review and Roll-forward of the NPF Culture Change Action Plan (June 09-March 10) - which will record, review and update specific commitments to action

Planning and Building Control - scoping a rational, deliverable, system for the future which meets the needs of all sectors and the challenge of low carbon development.

NPF MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDING

The NPF is an organisation that combines high ambition with maximum value by keeping operating costs low. Its members:

- n hear the latest thinking on planning issues from leading practitioners and decision makers
- n receive intelligence and engage with other sectors
- n critique policy and reflect on current practice
- n engage in research, and
- n influence the policy and practice agendas

The Executive Board has reviewed the NPF funding regime and has concluded that the time has come to set a scale of subscriptions that members will be expected to contribute from 2010/11.

We are recommending a realistic subscription scale dependent on a member organisation's size, budget and degree of involvement in Planning and designed to raise the £70k pa the NPF costs to meet its operational requirements.

The proposal is that the CLG contribution would taper from £26k in 2009/10 to say £19.5k in 2010/11, £15k in 2011/12, flat-lining at £10k from 2012/13 - this is subject to further discussion with CLG and confirmation in due course. Other organisations would contribute at levels of either £5,000; £1,000; £500 or £100, subject to individual negotiation. Individual projects will be funded from separate, dedicated budgets.

FUTURE WORK

The shape of the next 3 year Business Plan and Work Programme for 2010/11 is currently being worked up and members have the opportunity to help shape that work. Current work is likely to include:

- n Revamped web-site – to improve service to members, attract new members and improve communication
- n Annual report – to demonstrate achievement and value for money
- n Fit for Purpose follow-up – to turn principles into achievements across the sectors
- n Continuing work on culture change, including a new Action Plan and roll-forward of the Manifesto
- n Projects (including vision for spatial planning)