



***“Our mission is to inspire planning and all those involved in planning and to help achieve quality, inspiring places that enhance productivity as well as people’s well-being”***

**National Planning Forum**

**Business Plan**

**2010 – 2012**

## The National Planning Forum

- is the only cross-sectoral forum focusing on spatial planning in England with a mission to inspire planning and planners
- has a membership of over 70 organisations representing the key national organisations with a role in, and commitment to, planning
- acts as 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
- informs debate, builds cross-sectoral consensus and provides clarity on the issues where views differ
- operates as a membership network with a web-site that is open to all
- is committed to ensuring that spatial planning in England is fit for purpose
- provides a platform for all the sectors to engage in discussion and debate on key planning issues - identifying consensus and clarifying difference

The Forum embraces the five sectors of business, local government, the professions, the non-governmental and voluntary sector and planning in central government. It operates on an entirely non-political basis and represents a unique body of cross-sectoral experience. It is a valuable tool as both a 'sounding board' for new policy and practice initiatives and as vehicle for exploring new approaches to planning process such as, for example, our current work investigating the potential to use mediation as a way to resolving disputes in planning.

## Changed circumstances

- In 2008/09 the collapse of banks in Europe and the USA led to the 'credit crunch' and a subsequent major down turn in world economies.
- In the UK this led to recession and uncertainty about growth prospects; property and housing values fell; a more risk aware banking sector began to restrict credit and unemployment in the private sector rose.
- In May 2010 a new Conservative/Liberal Democrat government came to power with a radical agenda to introduce a decentralising, 'localism' approach to decision-making; create a 'Big Society'; reform welfare and benefits; re-balance the economy to promote private sector growth and respond to the economic crisis with a major programme of reductions in public expenditure.

As part of this reform agenda the Coalition Government is introducing a major change programme for both the practice and the culture of spatial planning, which will be delivered through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill:

- Regional spatial strategies, regional development agencies, government offices, regional leaders' boards and 'top-down' targets for housing will be abolished and planning decisions made by local government alone.
- There will be a National Planning Policy Framework and National Infrastructure Plan for England.
- As the local planning authority, local government will be responsible for preparing a development plan, incorporating neighbourhood aspirations, supported by a strategic housing market assessment. There will be a general power of competence and a duty to co-operate and a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Neighbourhood-based community groups will be encouraged to engage in plan-making as part of a transfer of power to local communities.
- Local authorities will be incentivised to build new homes through the 'new homes bonus'. There will be a 'community right to build' and there will be major reforms to social housing policy, including 'affordable rents'.
- The Infrastructure Planning Commission will be abolished and replaced by a Major Infrastructure Planning Unit as part of the Planning Inspectorate

and will advise ministers on the determination of development consent orders.

- Local authorities and local business will be invited to form Local Enterprise Partnerships to address cross-boundary economic growth and deliver infrastructure.
- A major programme of abolishing, merging, and re-configuring arms-length and non-departmental public bodies is underway, which inevitably impacts on a number of members of the National Planning Forum. The Audit Commission, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, the Commission for Rural Communities, the Regional Development Agencies Network and the Sustainable Development Commission are to be abolished and a number of others will have major reductions in budgets and staffing levels and significant re-configuration of roles and responsibilities.

## Changed direction

The NPF Board has addressed the radical nature of these changes, the pace with which they are proceeding, the impact of unprecedented cuts in public expenditure, and the potential impact in the private sector, and has recognised that they will significantly impact on the Forum. It is likely that a number of Forum members will no longer exist, while new organisations may emerge. In the short term, Forum-member energies will be directed internally while organisations plan for a different future; all will be coping with a new policy environment and smaller budgets and others will be exploring new opportunities and operating environments in the new policy context.

The Board's view is that in this changing environment, the priorities for the Forum through to March 2012 are:

- Enabling practitioners to engage in the debates about a new way of doing planning – especially around the **Decentralisation and Localism Bill**.
- Developing new **spatial planning practice** including:
  - Understanding and enabling **localism** at neighbourhood level;
  - Preparing 'bottom-up' **development plans**;
  - Preparing and monitoring the **National Planning Policy Framework**;

- Addressing the need for ‘joined-up’, cross boundary planning and delivery mechanisms to be built from the ground up, particularly through **local enterprise partnerships**.
- Understanding the new mechanisms for setting and delivering **housing** targets at local level, including affordable housing.
- Identifying and publicising **best practice** in both urban and rural contexts.
- Ensuring Forum members continue to be **informed about and comment upon** the changing policy environment.
- Identifying and enabling the **new skills and new practices** required to deliver the ‘new’ planning across the sectors as public, private and third sector practitioners engage with new processes at neighbourhood, local, larger than local and national levels.
- **Supporting all the sectors** in a new system where local government will be even more ‘centre stage’ and all sectors will be addressing new roles, relationships and skill requirements.

## A new agenda

In the light of these changed and very different circumstances it is clear to the Board that the National Planning Forum remains as relevant as ever - both as a place for members to engage with the new agenda from a cross-sector perspective and as a critical friend to and sounding board for government as new policies and practice emerge.

The Forum is uniquely placed to provide thought leadership to spatial planning in England and will use the experience and perspective of its membership to support the new techniques, skills and cultures the new planning emerging from the Decentralisation and Localism Bill requires.

The priorities for the Forum in 2010/12 are:

- **Engaging with the new planning agenda:**
  - Providing members with information and the opportunity to comment on changing policies and practice.

- Using the experience of Forum members to provide advice to ministers and officials around the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and its implementation.
- Contributing to the development of new policies and practice through comment and research based on the Forum's unique, cross-sector membership; particularly in relation to:
  - the National Planning Policy Framework
  - Localism, including both neighbourhood and local planning
  - Local Enterprise Partnerships and spatial planning; and
  - Infrastructure delivery.
- **Supporting the new planning through NPF projects:**
  - Implementing *Mediation in Planning*.
  - Building on *Improving the Connection – improving the relationship between planning and building control in the context of sustainability*.
  - Using the experience of the Forum to provide the tools to support *Localism in Practice*.
- **Developing awareness of the NPF, improving the service to members and making the archive more widely available:**
  - Refreshing the website.
  - Producing a regular email newsletter.
- **Growing the membership:**
  - Adopting a more flexible membership structure without diluting the Forum's strength as across-sector organisation of representative organisations.
  - Increasing the number of members in each sector and ensuring new and re-configured spatial planning and allied organisations are invited to become members.
  - Publicising the benefits of membership through the website, exhibiting at targeted events, placing editorial material in key journals.
- **Growing and broadening the resource base:**
  - Actively pursuing the 'every member contributes' strategy to member subscription income.

## Performance measures and targets

Activity	Outcome	Timetable
<b>Engaging with the new planning agenda</b>		
1. Providing members with information and the opportunity to comment on changing policies and practice	<p>Four Forum events each year covering the range of policy initiatives, attracting key speakers and recording and publicizing the discussion.</p> <p>Using Forum discussion to produce 'soundings', think pieces and informal commentary.</p>	<p>Q1,2,3,4, 2010 - 13</p>
2. Using the experience of Forum members to provide advice to ministers and officials around the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and its implementation.		
3. Contributing to the development of new policy and practice through comment and research.		
<b>Supporting the new planning through NPF projects</b>		
4. Mediation in Planning	Securing support from government and stakeholders, producing a practitioner's guide and mainstreaming mediation in the context of localism.	Complete project plan by March 2011
5. Improving the Connection	Complete and publish report and contribute to CLG review of building regulations. Work with Building Control Alliance, POS and others to develop better connections between planning and building control in the context of developing sustainability targets and local service delivery.	<p>Report published September 2010.</p> <p>Review progress in March 2011.</p>
6. Localism in Practice	<p>Develop a series of task and finish projects to enable the Forum to contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood and local planning</li> <li>• Community participation and engagement</li> <li>• Infrastructure planning</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnerships</li> <li>• National Planning Policy Framework</li> </ul>	<p>Prepare work programme for review in March 2011</p>

Developing awareness, improving the service, making the archive more widely available		
7. Refreshing the website	Brief in preparation	Complete June 2011
8. Producing a regular email newsletter	To publicise activities of the Forum and its members	Develop quarterly newsletter – commencing Q1 2011
Growing the membership		
9. Adopting a more flexible membership structure	Agree policy on Associate Membership and raise awareness to attract new members.	Policy agreed Oct 2010 – awareness campaign Q1 2011
10. Increasing the number of members	Target – to attract 5 new members each year	March 2011
11. Publicising the benefits of membership	Through exhibiting at relevant events, preparing editorial material for publication and planned newsletter.	Planning Convention complete – article February 2011
Growing and broadening the resource base		
12. Actively pursuing the 'every member contributes' strategy	Putting Forum member subscriptions on a firm and rational basis and ensuring all members contribute.	On-going



## Resources

### PLANNED INCOME

	2010/11	2011/12
Subscription target	£30000	£40000
CLG support	£13000	£5000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£43000</b>	<b>£45000</b>

### PLANNED EXPENDITURE

Secretarial support	£30000	£30000
Mediation in Planning project	£18000	
Localism in Practice		£5000
Website refresh	£5000	£5000
Website maintenance	£500	£700
Exhibition	£1000	£1500
General expenses	£1000	£2000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£55,500*</b>	<b>£44200</b>

- Shortfall to be funded from project contributions previously received and reserves

## The Board

Chair	Cllr Mike Haines, Local Government Association
Vice Chair Business Sector	Liz Peace CBE British Property Federation
Vice Chair Government Agencies	Geoff Brown, East Midlands Regional Development Agency (to July 2010)
Vice Chair Local Government	Cllr Mike Haines, Local Government Association
Vice Chair Professions	Brian Waters, London Planning and Development Forum
Vice Chair Third Sector	David Chetwyn, Institute for Historic Building Conservation
Secretary	Mike Hayes CBE

# Membership

## GOVERNMENT

**AGENCIES** (includes sponsor Departments)  
Communities and Local Government  
Audit Commission  
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment  
Commission for Rural Communities  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Environment Agency  
English Heritage  
Forestry Commission  
Homes and Community Agency Academy  
Homes and Community Agency Advisory Team for Large Applications  
Health and Safety Executive  
Natural England  
Planning Inspectorate  
Planning Portal  
Regional Development Agencies Network  
Sustainable Development Commission

## BUSINESS

Arup  
British Chamber of Commerce  
Association of Town Centre Management  
British Property Federation  
British Retail Consortium  
British Urban Regeneration Association  
Confederation of British Industry  
Country Land and Business Association  
Future Cities Forum  
Home Builders' Association  
Home Builders' Federation  
National Farmers' Union  
National Retail Planning Forum  
Tesco  
The Guardian

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport East of England Regional Assembly  
Greater London Authority  
Local Government Association

Local Authority Building Control  
National Association of Local Councils  
North West Regional Assembly  
Planning Advisory Service  
Planning Officers' Society  
Planning Officers' Society Enterprises  
South East of England Regional Assembly  
South West Regional Assembly  
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

## PROFESSIONS

Association of Consultant Architects (Planning Advisory Group)  
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants  
Chartered Institute of Housing  
Commonwealth Association of Planners  
Conference of Heads of Planning Schools (Liverpool University)  
Institute of Historic Building Conservation  
Institution of Highways and Transportation  
Law Society (Planning and Environmental Law Committee)  
London Planning and Development Forum  
National Association of Planning Enforcement  
Planning and Environment Bar Association  
Planning Magazine  
Planning Summer School  
Positive action Training Highway (PaTH)  
Royal Institute of British Architects  
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
University of Westminster

## THIRD SECTOR

Campaign to Protect Rural England  
Civic Voice

Groundwork UK  
Friends of the Earth  
Heritage Link  
National Housing Federation  
Planning for Real  
Planning Aid England  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
Shelter  
The National Trust  
The Princes' Foundation  
Town and Country Planning Association  
The Theatres' Trust

[www.natplanforum.org.uk](http://www.natplanforum.org.uk)



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