

**NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM: 10 DECEMBER 2007**  
**DRAFT CULTURE CHANGE MANIFESTO**

**KEY MESSAGES:**

*i. There has been a good deal of improvement in the way the planning system works, but if spatial planning is to achieve more sustainable outcomes there needs to be further action from all 5 sectors - Central Government and its Agencies, Local Government, Business, Professional Institutions and the 3rd Sector.*

*ii. The National Planning Forum<sup>1</sup> (NPF) - with members comprising the major organisations involved in planning - agrees that more needs to be done to:*

- understand and promote the role planning plays in place-shaping;*
- appreciate the complexity of planning, but simplify its procedures;*
- remove barriers to partnership working;*
- provide the support needed to enable planning to be more effective; and*
- devise better means to show what planning can achieve.*

*iii. By signing up to specific actions under these 5 themes, members of the NPF commit to work together to make the changes needed to help planning deliver more sustainable, inspiring, places.*

*iv. The NPF intends to monitor the effect of this Manifesto and report 6 monthly on progress.*

**The need for Culture Change in Planning**

1. The planning system has been subject to a number of reviews and changes over the past 5 years designed to improve the way it operates. The changes are starting to take effect and there have been some improvements, but to be successful the new spatial planning system must deliver improved outcomes everywhere. It must help to create more sustainable communities that take account of character and distinctiveness and deliver access to jobs, housing, health, education, recreational and community facilities, and space for business to grow, all within a diverse natural environment with well-designed buildings and spaces, efficient transport and resilient infrastructure.

2. It was always recognised that changing the system alone would not be sufficient to deliver this; we also need to change the way everyone - across all sectors - interacts with planning.

3. Whilst some progress has been made in changing the way planning works - the “culture” of planning - there hasn't been enough change to make a real difference. We still have a system that encourages people to be defensive and take sides, rather than to agree what is needed to ensure a sustainable future

for our cities, towns, villages and countryside. Planning is still viewed as negative and regulatory, rather than positive, facilitating and involving. This isn't an issue just for planners - it's an issue for everyone. Every sector, and everyone, needs to change the way they work and behave to secure better outcomes.

### **The potential to change for the better**

4. Membership of the National Planning Forum<sup>1</sup> (NPF) comprises all the major organisations involved in planning in England, together representing the whole population. The work of the NPF thus has the potential to reach everyone in England, to inspire people to take action that makes a positive difference, and to contribute to making planning more effective.

5. By committing to this Manifesto, by taking action in support of it, and by monitoring and reviewing progress, NPF and its membership will help deliver sustainable development that contributes to the economy, promotes social justice, respects natural and historic environments, and contributes to the health and wellbeing of the current, and future, generations.

### **Report: “Delivering Inspiring Places - The Role and Status of Planning”**

6. The NPF took as its starting point the Government commitment to planning in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development **[PHOTO OF COVER]** as an activity that *“shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in ... (and plays) ... a key role in the creation of sustainable communities”*. In debating the issues, and in drafting the specification for the research which contributed to shaping its work on culture change, the NPF also took into account the Government's requirement for planning to support local government delivery, and its importance to the economy.

7. The resulting research report<sup>2</sup> points out that planning makes an important contribution to maintaining and increasing land and property values, and so is critical to our economic success and competitiveness, helping to create jobs and encouraging businesses to grow, but it is rarely seen in this role. Major projects around the country involving planners have shown the benefits of regeneration and new development in key places when they maximise the benefits to everyone - St Pancras Station in London, the Sage in Gateshead, Laganside in Belfast, the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, and major projects in Manchester, Plymouth, Taunton and Kings Lynn are key landmarks and places of local and national pride to which planners have contributed. **[INSERT PHOTOS OF THESE]** There are many examples of planners helping to maintain environmental quality through heritage-led regeneration by revitalising market towns, developing parish plans and enhancing natural areas and biodiversity. As all places are special to someone, all merit special attention.

8. The report's agenda for change was discussed by NPF members; they concluded that:

(i) Planning can deliver more if more is expected of it and it is given the tools, funding, skills and powers.

- (ii) There is a need for clear political leadership and transparent assessment of the added value that planning brings at Cabinet, Chief Executive and Senior Manager level in all sectors.
- (iii) Everyone needs to understand the value added by (good) planning.
- (iv) Planning should use market forces to help create confidence, and enhance the character of all areas.
- (v) Creating local distinctiveness is a key component of success.
- (vi) Partners and stakeholders are a key part of the change process - planning cannot work on its own.
- (vii) Planners need to ensure clarity on what is to be delivered by whom and when and can help audit this.
- (viii) Planning should be made to work better, not blamed for its complexity which is not necessarily created by planners.
- (ix) There is a need to move away from the adversarial system – planners need to reach out to other professions and stakeholders and work in an integrated way.
- (x) Planning would be seen more positively if, by doing the above, it delivers sustainable outcomes.

### **Actions to Deliver Inspiring Places**

9. This Manifesto tackles these conclusions under 5 themes. The NPF commits to 5 key actions (in boxes below), and to sub-actions which support them. Some of these sub-actions may be individual, others will be undertaken in partnership, all are to be completed by a target date. Members commit to action on these, and will monitor/ report on the results. **[NOTE: WEB LINK WILL LINK TO SPECIFIC ACTIONS]**

#### ***THEME 1: Understand and promote the role planning plays in place-shaping***

**ACTION 1: Improve awareness by Government Departments and Agencies of the new approach to planning and their role in it**

#### ***THEME 2: Appreciate the complexity of planning, but simplify its procedures***

**ACTION 2: Ensure better links between Executive Members and Chief Planning Officers to join up policy and delivery between LDF/development management/LAA**

#### ***THEME 3: Remove the barriers to partnership working***

**ACTION 3: Improve relationships between Chief Executives and Chief Planning Officers so improving wider partnership working**

#### ***THEME 4: Provide the support to enable planning to be effective***

**ACTION 4: Improve planners' skills for example in delivering sustainable development; in development finance; in managing people, resources and programmes**

#### ***THEME 5: Devise ways of showing what planning can achieve***

**ACTION 5: Collect and publicise examples of good practice**

**Who, and what, needs to change to deliver on these actions?**

10. Much improvement has already taken place, but progress has been uneven. All participants need to “raise their game”. Specific, effective, change is needed from Central Government and its Agencies, Local Government, Business, Professional Institutions and Voluntary Sector bodies. **Government and its Agencies** has an important role. Government sets the statutory framework for planning and uses it for successful implementation of a good deal of its policy, but other Government actions can impact adversely on built and natural environments - demonstrating that it is taking action to improve its own processes in a joined-up way will be essential. Government has a crucial role in providing leadership and encouragement.

11. **Local government** has a responsibility for delivering the majority of the planning system, but it does not do so alone. It needs to work with other stakeholders, ensuring that its plan making and decision-making are fit for purpose and properly integrated. The Local Development Framework (LDF) **[INSERT PHOTO OF COVER OF ADOPTED CORE STRATEGY FOR HAMBLETON, HORSHAM, PLYMOUTH]** is a powerful tool to translate the Sustainable Community Strategy into policies to make a difference “on the ground” if it is linked with responsive development management (not simply development control). Where this is already in place – for example where there is a sound adopted development plan, pre-application advice is the norm, and there is information on local distinctiveness and character - the benefits can be seen by the existence of a clear spatial vision and better decision-making, enabling local communities to benefit from improved environments and infrastructure. Local government is also the vital link with local communities, being accountable to them, and responsible for involving them in plan-making and decision-making. All this underlines the importance of Members, particularly those with Executive responsibility for Planning and those who sit on Planning Committees - as well as Officers - updating their planning knowledge and skills regularly.

12. Change is also important for the **Business** sector including developers, investors, planning consultants, planning lawyers and others engaged in proposals to change our built and natural environments. Well-run businesses already see the benefit of engaging with partners and communities likely to be affected by their proposals - provided the requirements for this are clear from the outset and there is clarity about the means of ensuring this. Across a diverse business sector the challenge is to ensure that best practice becomes the norm.

13. **Professional organisations** - and all those involved in planning – need to adjust to the major changes in the system to enable them to tackle the complex range of issues that impact on our world, including climate change. We don’t need more planning, but we do need smarter planning. This can be achieved by using the best of existing knowledge and experience, adding the new skills that will help do justice to the places and people that we serve. In particular, planners need to continue to adapt to the new agenda, so that they have greater confidence, use the available tools and resources wisely, work more effectively with

partners, learn new skills and ways of working, and help to develop consensus around sustainable spatial strategies and solutions. **[INSERT PHOTO OF ASC REPORT “MIND THE SKILLS GAP”]**

14. The professional and technical press and the **Media** more generally has an important role to play in helping to disseminate key messages and encouraging a more positive view of planning. They should emphasise that planning can be creative and that constructive consensus building can lead to positive outcomes. This would be helped by positive messages about planning and planners from Politicians, Chief Executives and leaders in all sectors, including experiences and perspectives which demonstrate the responsiveness of effective planning to local circumstances. And those involved in developing the next generation of planners - in **educational establishments** as well as those managing and inspiring planners in the workplace – have a responsibility to ensure that students understand spatial planning and can use it effectively to help in place shaping.

15. The **3<sup>rd</sup> sector** is also engaged in adapting to the new system. They have an important role in informing their members about the new requirements, and encouraging them to contribute positively and thus ensure the creation of more sustainable development. The benefits of involving the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector are already evident - for example deriving from the Community mapping work being undertaken in the Thames Gateway - and are leading to better and more acceptable solutions. We need more of this good practice. **[INSERT EXAMPLE OF 3<sup>RD</sup> SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING]**

16. Above all, there is a need for joint action across the sectors, and a real appreciation that this will lead to better plans and better decisions. The cross-sectoral nature of the NPF means that it is uniquely placed to encourage the changes needed to help find more sustainable solutions to key challenges. More effective partnership working and community involvement will help us mitigate and adapt to climate change link plan-making with development management and implementation, and invest the proceeds of planning gain into required infrastructure as well as more local community benefits.

### **The way forward**

17. Having considered culture change issues, including those raised in *“Delivering Inspiring Places – The Role and Status of Planning”*<sup>2</sup>, the NPF is committed to ensuring that planning plays a full part in the new place shaping agenda. It intends to do this via this **Culture Change Manifesto**, prepared and delivered by NPF members. By committing to action itself, and activating members and their membership via individual action and cross-sectoral cooperation, the NPF aims to make a substantial contribution to delivering effective spatial planning.

#### **NOTES:**

1. The **National Planning Forum (NPF)** is the largest cross-sectoral forum focussing on planning in England with over 100 members from all 5 sectors involved in planning – Government and its Agencies, local government, business, the professions and the third sector. Its 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". The NPF has identified culture change (ie changing the way we do things) as a key issue for planning.

2. In April 2007, following a competitive tender, the NPF commissioned IDOX plc to look at the issues and the ways of tackling them. The IDOX team - comprising Professor Janice Morphet, Tony Burton and Laura Hughes - produced their report "Delivering Inspiring Places – the Role and status of Planning" which was approved by the Forum in October 2007. Copy is available on the NPF web-site: <http://www.natplanforum.org.uk>

## ANNEX: SCHEDULE OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS [TO BE COMPLETED + WEB-LINKED TO MANIFESTO]

### 1. Understand and promote the key role that planning plays in place-shaping

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR	BY	MEASURE
Limited understanding of the role of organisations and individuals in place-shaping, and how planning relates to this	1. Improve awareness by Government and its Agencies of the new approach to planning and their role in it in	All	12/2008	Improved understanding of the role of planning demonstrated in policy, statements and behaviours by Government and its Agencies
	<b>SPECIFIC ACTIONS</b>			
	1.1 Clarify policy, and encourage all sectors to engage positively with planning to secure more sustainable outcomes	CLG + its Agencies	6/2008	Evidence of the measures taken and their impact
	1.2 Hold briefing bilaterals with the relevant Departments (DEFRA,, DEBRR, DSCP, HO, DfT, DH) and their Agencies	CLG + its Agencies	6/2008	Evidence of improved understanding of the role of planning in policy, statements and behaviours
	1.3 Put greater emphasis in the Leadership Academy on these issues for Leaders + Executive Members (not just Planning Leads)	LGA/IDeA	6/2008	Number of local authorities and cabinet members with an improved understanding of the role of planning
	1.4 Make available material on web-site, case studies and briefings which illustrate the new system in practice	Private sector, Third sector	3/2008	Number of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations with an improved appreciation of the role of planning

## 2. Appreciate the complexity of planning, but simplify its procedures

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR	BY	MEASURE
Even when the role of planning is understood, lack of joined-up thinking inhibits its use in supporting delivery	2. Ensure better links between Executive Members and Chief Planning Officers to join up policy and delivery	All	3/2008	Assessment of degree of join-up between LDFs, development management and Local Area Agreements (LAAs)
	<b>SPECIFIC ACTIONS</b>			
	<b>2.1 Identify means of reflecting planning policy at departmental and delivery levels for their own direct needs in CO, HMT, No: 10 Delivery Unit</b>	CLG	6/2008	Evidence of improved understanding of planning by the way that other government departments (OGDs) address their own needs (eg accommodation and business planning)
	<b>2.2 Ensure that there is a planning delivery lead member and that they work with the LAA</b>	LGA/Council Leaders	6/2008	Number of local authorities with a planning delivery lead
	<b>2.3 Place material and case studies on the LGA web-site and continue to hold a programme of events that focus on improving working relationships between cabinet members and planning</b>	LGA/IDeA	06/2008	Number of cases of improved integration of objectives, procedures and outcomes within local government due to action from within local government
	<b>2.4 Actively encourage improved relationships within local authorities which value the role of planning</b>	CLG + its Agencies, Private Sector, Professions, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector	06/2008	Number of cases of improved integration of objectives, procedures and outcomes within local government directly or indirectly attributable to inputs from other sectors

### 3. Remove the barriers to partnership working

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR	BY	MEASURE
Working relationships (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	3. Improve relationships between Chief Executives and Chief Planning Officers	All	12/2008	Evidence of improved structures and mechanisms in local authorities that enable plan-making and development management to play a full role in delivering sustainable outcomes
	<b>SPECIFIC ACTIONS</b>			
	<b>3.1 Encourage improved liaison between CEXs and Planners via local joint meetings, development of good practice case studies, POS /RTPI speakers being invited to SOLACE meetings and v.v.</b>	SOLACE/POS /Professions	12/2008	Number of local authorities in which this relationship has improved
	<b>3.2 Encourage more cross-boundary, sub-regional and inter-regional working to widen perspectives and achieve better outcomes with the same resources</b>	Government and its Agencies	3/08	Number of instances of good practice
	<b>3.3 Work with Local Strategic Partnership and other groups to develop visions for all places and supporting delivery plans</b>	Private Sector, Third sector	12/2008	Number of LSPs which have made progress on developing a vision with improved quality of input



	<b>3.4</b> Engage in constructive dialogue with local authorities and developers, seeking to achieve consensual outcomes which integrate social, economic and environmental objectives	Private Sector, Third sector	12/2008	Number of outcomes that have been improved by quality input
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**4. Provide the support to enable planning to be more effective**

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR	BY	MEASURE
To be effective, everyone involved in planning as well as 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.	<b>4.</b> Improve planners' skills in particular in delivering sustainable development, development finance, managing people, resources and programmes	All	12/2008	Rigorous engagement with the "why, how and what" of spatial planning in initial professional planning education, and in continuing professional development (CPD) for current planners, demonstrated by the impact on practice
	<b>SPECIFIC ACTIONS</b>			
	<b>4.1 Map and coordinate material relevant to the role of planning in place-shaping, and clarify the role of PINS and GOs in LDF preparation</b>	CLG/PAS /Planning Portal	12/2008	Availability of a single source of authoritative policy and research on Sustainable Community Strategies, Place-shaping, and Local Development Frameworks on the web
	<b>4.2 Issue specific advice on Regional Infrastructure Frameworks (RIF), Local Infrastructure Frameworks (LIF) and how these link to LDFs, LAAs and MAAs</b>	CLG/OGDs	6/2008	Advice issued

	<b>4.3 Assess the most effective forms of training, support production of training materials and courses in this form, map their availability</b>	ASC/CLG /POS /Professions /Universities	6/2008	Availability of advice on the most appropriate forms of training, and evidence that this is being effective in altering outcomes “on the ground”
	<b>4.4 Ensure that in-house and other training is available for all members and officers dealing with planning taking account of the output of 4.2 above, to ensure that key skills are improved and planning knowledge is updated regularly</b>	LGA/PAS /POS /Professions	12/2008	Overall change in outcomes that can be attributed to planning work
	<b>4.5 Share and explain their position on issues of concern to them, drawing upon their expert knowledge</b>	Third sector, Private sector	12/2008	Evidence of improved understanding of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector/Private Sector concerns by other sectors

### 5. Devise better means to show what planning can achieve

ISSUE	ACTION	SECTOR	BY	MEASURE
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	<b>5. Collect and publicise research and examples of good practice</b>	All	12/2008	Number of examples of positive outcomes supported by local communities that were secured by good planning
	<b>SPECIFIC ACTION</b>			
	<b>5.1 Provide case studies of where work directly with the new planning system has led to improved outcomes</b>	Private sector, Professions, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector	6/2008	Number of cases of such engagement leading to improved quality schemes
	<b>5.2 Publish CCM Monitoring Reports</b>	NPF	10/2008 + 3/2009	Impact of dissemination.