

NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM CULTURE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2009

National Planning Forum: Inspiring planning



“Culture change is not about seeking short term results but rather investing in securing big change over the long term.” Achieving Culture Change: A Policy Framework, Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, January 2008

1. Planning needs to be more visionary, plans need to meet the objectives of many organisations not just local authorities, and planning needs to be at the heart of delivery if it is to secure the long term economic, social and environmental progress of every area for the benefit of its people.

2. The planning system and the issues it has to address are changing, and planners need to change if they are to remain relevant. As planners we must positively embrace the central role being given to planning in managing change. This is a huge task for everyone in planning, including all the organisations involved in the National Planning Forum (NPF) - Central Government Agencies, Local Government, Business, the built and land use Professions, and Non-Governmental Organisations.

3. Our work on culture change was informed by the report “Delivering Inspiring Places: the Role and Status of Planning” by Janice Morphet, with Tony Burton and Laura Hughes of IDOX plc. The ‘Manifesto for Change’ derived from this and published in July 2008 committed Forum members to:

- improving awareness by all stakeholders of the new approach to planning and their role in it;
- demystifying planning and linking it to corporate policy and programmes to ensure joined-up policy and delivery;
- getting the vision back into planning and helping to make the planning system less adversarial;
- ensuring that planning is viewed as a positive activity, characterised by a commitment to learning, understanding and improvement; and
- seeking out and highlighting examples of best practice.

4. Signing up to our Manifesto was only the first step for NPF members and their commitment to help deliver more sustainable and inspiring places. As actions speak louder than words, the NPF undertook to produce specific actions for each sector. The resulting Action Plan will help us to nurture and create places of which future generations can be proud.

5. All member organisations of the NPF pledge to continue to change in line with the Manifesto commitments and to undertake the individual organisation actions identified in this Action Plan. We will continue to check the impact of our Manifesto by monitoring the impact of the Action Plan and reporting on progress every six months.

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STRATEGIC ACTION	SPECIFIC ACTIONS	BY WHOM & WHEN	MEASURE	AGREED ACTIONS
<p>➤ Understand and promote the role that planning plays in place shaping</p>				
1. Improve awareness by all stakeholders of the new approach to planning and their role in it	1.1 Ensure all National Planning Forum members' web-sites contain up-to-date briefing material on the new planning system and the organisation's role in it, plus links to relevant web-sites with further information	All + National Planning Forum Secretary by 06/2009	Evidence of an increased number of professionals, Members, the development community and members of the public with an improved understanding of the new planning system	<p><i>Association of Town Centre Managers -prepare and disseminate a layman's guide to the planning system for all partnership members</i></p> <p><i>British Institute of Agricultural Consultants - ensure the Rural Planning Division web-site contains up-to-date briefing material on the new planning system.</i></p> <p><i>British Property Federation - update web-site to include information about spatial planning and links to relevant web-sites such as the National Planning Forum, Royal Town Planning Institute</i></p> <p><i>Commonwealth Association of Planners - distribute this Action Plan to all its members</i></p> <p><i>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications (ATLAS) - update ATLAS Guide web-site to promote and signpost best practice re spatial planning/ development management from across all sectors and development community</i></p> <p><i>Local Government Association - publicise "Planning at the heart of local government" (July 2008) on their Planning web-page</i></p> <p><i>Natural England - update website to include information on Natural England's role in spatial planning and links to relevant websites</i></p> <p><i>Planning Inspectorate - use their electronic Newsletter and web-site to provide better information on their role in planning</i></p> <p><i>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - use their web-site to inform members about the planning system, including links to the 'Take Action for Wildlife' campaign</i></p>
	1.2 Co-operate on joint case studies, dissemination of best practice and training both within and across sectors, providing inputs and holding joint events	All by 10/2009	Number of instances of cooperation achieved, and evidence of its impact	<p><i>Association of Consultant Architects -</i></p> <p><i>(i) hold regular planning policy and law update seminars for architect members,</i></p> <p><i>(ii) collect and collate evidence of good and bad practice for onward transmission to Government,</i></p> <p><i>(iii) participate in planning practice consultations, working groups etc for Communities and Local Government and its advisors,</i></p> <p><i>(iv) establish a Task Force with the Royal Institute of British Architects and others to consider responses to the recession</i></p> <p><i>Arup - hold internal planning law seminars</i></p> <p><i>British Property Federation - explore with relevant Government Agencies and Planning Advisory Service holding seminars for members on best practice for planning</i></p> <p><i>Communities and Local Government -</i></p> <p><i>(i) provide speakers to support others in raising awareness of their role in the planning system,</i></p> <p><i>(ii) support the Environment Agency in establishing a network of Government Agency Planners, and in setting up a job shadowing scheme with local government</i></p> <p><i>Environment Agency - establish:</i></p> <p><i>(i) a network of planners in Government Agencies to exchange ideas and improve practice,</i></p> <p><i>(ii) a job shadowing scheme with local government; and</i></p> <p><i>(iii) encourage technical development frameworks for staff training on the Environment Agency model in other Government Agencies</i></p> <p><i>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications - provide speakers for relevant events to promote quality of process and scheme outcomes in the handling of larger scale development</i></p> <p><i>Natural England -</i></p> <p><i>(i) work with the Environment Agency and other Government Agencies to develop network of planners and progress joint training initiatives,</i></p> <p><i>(ii) develop capacity of Natural England staff on spatial planning</i></p> <p><i>Planning Advisory Service - investigate producing joint case studies of best practice that tell the same story from different perspectives</i></p> <p><i>Planning Inspectorate -</i></p>

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				<p>(i) continue extensive ongoing training of inspectors in the Local Development Framework process,</p> <p>(ii) provide speakers to support others in raising awareness of their role in the planning system,</p> <p>(iii) provide more effective feedback of the outcomes of appeals, Development Plan Document and Regional Spatial Strategy examinations (quality of outcomes as well as process), and</p> <p>(iv) provide information on quality outcomes in its Annual Report</p> <p>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds -</p> <p>(i) provide relevant and timely information to planners through the bi-annual publication 'Conservation Planner',</p> <p>(ii) provide speakers on conservation and planning issues to Royal Town Planning Institute and other events, and</p> <p>(iii) build capacity of own and other non-governmental organisation staff on planning and environmental assessment issues</p> <p>Town and Country Planning Association - launch a new public planning education initiative</p>
<p>➤ Appreciate the complexity of planning but simplify its procedures</p>				
2. Demystify planning and link it to corporate policy and programmes to ensure joined-up policy and delivery	2.1 Identify means of reflecting Planning policy at Departmental and delivery levels including Cabinet, Treasury and Government Agencies	Communities and Local Government/ Government Agencies by 06/2009	Evidence of improved understanding of planning across Government Departments and Agencies	<p>Communities and Local Government - prepare a narrative on the role and purpose of planning for colleagues in their own and other government departments</p> <p>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications- establish team operating principles within the Homes and Community Agency including the promotion of quality outcomes through good spatial planning and development management approach</p>
	2.2 Ensure that the Cabinet member with responsibility for planning delivery works with the Local Area Agreement and new performance framework and ensures integration between plan-making and development management	Local Government by 06/2009	Proportion of councils where this is in place	<p>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications - through its project work with local planning authorities ensure that appropriate corporate and Member engagement is achieved in delivery of the desired development outcomes</p> <p>Planning Advisory Service - use its case studies (in Let's Stick Together - overcoming barriers to joint Local Development Framework preparation) to illustrate the benefits of working across administrative and functional boundaries</p>
<p>➤ Remove the barriers to partnership working</p>				
3. Get the vision back into planning and help to make the planning system less adversarial	3.1 Work openly and transparently with the Local Strategic Partnership to develop a vision for each area that links with the LDF and delivery plan	Local Govt, Govt Agencies, Private sector, 3rd sector by 10/2009	Evidence from reports on Local Development Framework examinations; joint working on Area Action Plans - local authorities and developers	<p>Communities and Local Government -</p> <p>(i) fund an update of the good practice guide for Local Strategic Partnerships and planners 'Planning Together', and</p> <p>(ii) implement an support package for local planning authorities where Local Development Framework delivery is a particular priority</p> <p>Local Government Association - prepare 'Planning Together' with Communities and Local Government</p> <p>Planning Inspectorate - identify examples of good practice including where it is aware of joint and partnership working leading to quality outcomes</p> <p>Regional Development Agencies Network-</p> <p>(i) set in place a new approach to collaborative working with local authorities to develop, implement and monitor strategic planning policy,</p> <p>(ii) commission and promote the dissemination of evidence based research and master planning to support the development of strategic and local planning policy</p>
	3.2 Engage early in policy and spatial plan-making, and pre-design pre-application	Communities and Local Government, Local	Proportion of Development Plan Documents that are found to be sound;	<p>British Property Federation - maintain regular channel of contact with the Planning Inspectorate; work with them, Communities and Local Government and its members to explore how best the business sector can engage with plan-making</p>

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	discussions to achieve consensual outcomes that integrate social, economic and environmental objectives, drawing on all available expert knowledge	Government, Private sector, 3rd sector by 06/2009	change in rate of refusal of planning permission on applications for which pre-application advice was given	<p><i>Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment - undertake workshops with local authorities and government offices - in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Service and Government Agencies - to encourage a place-making approach in Core Strategy documents and disseminate key lessons and best practice from the workshops to a wider audience (linked to Action 1.2)</i></p> <p><i>Communities and Local Government - increase its engagement with the awards process including judging</i></p> <p><i>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications - through its project dissemination activity promote collaborative working practices and robust pre-application discussions and in particular the use of Planning Performance Agreements</i></p> <p><i>Local Government Association - prepare a Probity in Planning guide</i></p> <p><i>Natural England - engage in early stages of plan making and pre-application discussions on proposals with significant impacts on natural environment</i></p> <p><i>Planning Inspectorate - apply more proportionate processes to appeals and continue to evolve an 'inquisitorial' Development Plan Document examination process</i></p> <p><i>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - where requested, provide timely pre-application advice on all major developments affecting Special Protection Areas</i></p>
> Provide support to enable planning to be effective				
4. Ensure that planning is viewed as a positive activity, characterised by a commitment to learning, understanding and improvement	4.1 Improve planners' skills in particular in delivering sustainable development, managing people, resources and programmes in initial and continuing professional planning education	Professions by 6/2009	Demonstrable impact on planning practice reflected in advice to members and/or clients, reports, Appeal documents and evidence of positive media coverage	<p><i>British Property Federation - (i) in conjunction with other stakeholders explore the idea of establishing a training module on development economics; (ii) investigate the feasibility of creating a system by which members are able to offer a structured internship/ secondment scheme to planning students and/or local authority planners</i></p> <p><i>Royal Town Planning Institute - link with other Professional Institutions to improve training for planners and related professions</i></p>
> Devise ways of showing what planning can achieve				
5. Seek out and highlight examples of best practice	5.1 Widen the scope and effectiveness of knowledge transfer to include best practice from Awards and other sources	Planning Advisory Service, Planning Portal, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment by 10/2009	More accessible, linked sources of best practice advice (plan-making and project delivery) that have a measurable impact on planning practice	<p><i>Association of Consultant Architects - highlight knowledge transfer and best practice examples in their Newsletter and Council meetings</i></p> <p><i>Association of Town Centre Managers - consider featuring plan-led activity in their internal awards process</i></p> <p><i>British Property Federation - where research is commissioned which is relevant to planning we will consider if there are other stakeholders that we can partner with to achieve wider and more effective dissemination. For example, we are currently proposing to work with the British Urban Regeneration Association and the Advisory Service on Large Applications to produce a best practice guide on the provision of social infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Homes and Communities Agency/Advisory Service on Large Applications - support appropriate collaborative research/ dissemination with other stakeholders and use the Advisory Service on Large Applications Guide web-site to signpost best practice</i></p> <p><i>Planning Inspectorate - educational role to be developed and enhanced</i></p> <p><i>Royal Town Planning Institute - develop a web-based resource of best practice examples</i></p>
	5.2 Celebrate Planning achievement involving excellence in joined up cross-sectoral working via a new Award	National Planning Forum by 10/2009	Successful launch of the Award	<p><i>National Planning Forum - investigate the practicalities and initiate an Award</i></p>