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Culture of Planning to Change

Planning in England has undergone substantial change since 2000 but planners now need to adapt and change to make the most of the opportunities it presents, according to the National Planning Forum (NPF).

Government has given planning a central and strong role in creating better places and has driven these changes through new legislation and policy, but a far-reaching transformation of planning cannot be delivered by these mechanisms alone. **It requires a change in the culture of planning, and crucially of planners themselves.**

A report published by NPF today, supported by a manifesto for change, challenges all participants to better communicate the nature and purpose of planning and commits NPF members to action in five key areas.

- *To improve awareness by all stakeholders of the new approach to planning and their role in it;*
- *To demystify planning and link it to corporate policy and programmes to ensure united policy and delivery;*
- *To “get the vision back into planning” by looking to the future and helping to make the system less adversarial;*
- *To promote planning as a positive activity, characterised by a commitment to learning, understanding and improvement; and*
- *To seek out and highlight examples of good practice.*

The research report *Delivering Inspiring Places – The Role and Status of Planning* emphasises the important contribution that planning makes to maintaining and

increasing land and property values, and how it is critical to our economic success and competitiveness. Planners are involved in major regeneration schemes, helping to create jobs and encourage businesses to grow. Equally importantly, they help maintain environmental quality through heritage-led regeneration, revitalising market towns and enhancing natural areas and biodiversity. These elements of planning frequently go unnoticed and both the report and the manifesto seek to address the public misconception of planners as being merely bureaucratic regulators.

Commenting at the launch Chair of the NPF and Head of Planning at the Environment Agency Mark Southgate said: *“Planning done well is a positive activity that creates better places for people. But we need to change the way that everyone - across all sectors – works with planning. All the major organisations who are members of National Planning Forum (NPF) have signed up to this Culture Change Manifesto which represents a challenge to all planners to look at ourselves, change our ways, develop new skills and ensure that we adapt to the new planning approach so we deliver the goods”.*

By delivering on this Manifesto and the subsequent Action Plan, NPF members are showing their commitment to change the culture of both planning and planners, and to help to deliver inspiring places everywhere.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MARK SOUTHGATE is available for interview. Please call 01454 624075 to arrange.

The **National Planning Forum (NPF)** is the principal cross-sectoral voice on planning issues and aims to be recognised as a key agent for change in delivering a better planning service.

The NPF seeks to inspire planning and all those involved in the planning process and in delivering the new planning agenda. It aims to help achieve quality, inspiring places that enhance productivity as well as peoples' well-being. The Forum seeks to:

*critically inform and positively influence the planning agenda for England through a broad spectrum of interests

*act as a bridge and extend the common ground across the Forum membership, the better to deliver sustainable development; and

*promote the acquisition and exchange of knowledge and best practice amongst Forum membership and disseminate this so that it may be widely applied.

In support of this Mission, the Forum:

- represents multi-sectoral views, aiming to reach consensus wherever possible, and informed differences of opinion where not;
- promotes good practice across the sectors;
- enables a two-way flow between policy and practice, involving dissemination and feedback; and
- facilitates cross-sectoral networking.

We concentrate on areas in which all sectors have a common interest, aim to be constructive in all that we do, and avoid duplication of effort.

Membership

Members are drawn from five sectors: government agencies, local government, business, the voluntary/third sector and the professions. Representative organisations with an interest and involvement in planning within these sectors are invited to join the Forum to contribute to its work, in order to maintain broadly equal numbers, and balance between the sectors.

Executive Board

The NPF Executive Board - which drives the work of the Forum - comprises 5 Vice-Chairs, each directly elected by members of his/her own sector, and is supported by the Secretary. The current Executive Board comprises:

Chair and Vice-Chair (Government Agencies):	Mark Southgate, Environment Agency
Vice Chair (Local Government):	Cllr Paul Bettison, LGA
Vice Chair (Professions):	Mike Hayes, RTPI
Vice Chair (3 rd sector):	Simon Marsh, RSPB
Vice Chair (Business):	Liz Peace, BPF
Secretary:	Kay Powell

Web-site

<http://www.natplanforum.org.uk>