

NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM: 14 DECEMBER 2006

BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE, DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2007/8

Background

1. The National Planning Forum (NPF) Business Plan 2005-08 (approved 19 September 2005) has been revised to reflect recent discussions with the Planning Directorate of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The updated Business Plan and the draft Annual Work Programme (AWP) for 2007/8 are the result of:

- consideration of the current planning policy and legislative context,
- a review of progress on the current Business Plan, and of the AWP for 2006/7,
- revision of the Mission Statement,
- the updated Service Level Agreement between the NPF and the DCLG, and
- consideration of likely resource availability.

2. The strengths of the NPF are:

- its role as a standing, multi-sectoral forum of organisations with a key interest in planning,
- the two-way interface it provides between the five sectors (government and its agencies, local government, business, the third/voluntary sector and professional institutions),
- its senior level membership and its role in acting as a sounding board and in disseminating key issues throughout constituent organisations,
- the opportunity it provides to reach consensus – or better informed differences of opinion, and
- the powerful network (real and virtual) it represents.

The Forum's achievements

3. The Forum has made a number of authoritative multi-sectoral contributions to current reviews, emerging policy and good practice over the past year, including:

- inputs to the Barker II review including and a meeting between the Executive Board and Kate Barker;
- input to the Eddington review via a meeting of a Board member and his team;
- a joint workshop on stakeholder segmentation with the PSA 6 Culture Change Board and the Culture Change Working Group; and
- the NPF seminar on the successful use of project management that delivered a timely decision on a major planning application: "The Cube" in Birmingham.

The Executive Board ("the Board") and DCLG officials consider that this record of achievement has shown the strengths of the Forum, and indicates its most useful role for the future, deriving from its "unique selling point" as the largest cross-sectoral forum focussing on planning in England.

Working Groups

4. The NPF taps into the expertise and commitment of its members by engaging them in "task and deliver" working groups to discuss, and make progress on, key issues of joint interest. The Groups on Housing, Planning Gain Supplement, and Culture

Change have illustrated the value they can add by adopting a multi-sectoral approach and finding – the often substantial – common ground. This has enabled the Forum to contribute to emerging policy. The Delivery Group will re-convene once the various reviews with implications for planning (Barker, Eddington etc) have reported, and it is proposed to establish a new group on planning and climate change.

Engagement

5. The Board has decided that it is a priority to raise the profile of the Forum so that it is more effective, and to increase the impact of its messages. This will involve producing an engagement strategy, including improving our web-site as a key communication tool. It will be important to engage directly with member organisations, and in a targeted way to have a presence at major conferences and events run by others (eg the RTPI Planning Convention).

Resources

6. A draft Budget has been prepared with the support of our Treasurer (TCPA). This will enable the work set out in our Business Plan to be achieved – with project funding to be secured as noted. The Executive Board has made a bid for £25k to DCLG for the current year. To support our work for future years we are looking to DCLG for £25k per annum, subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review CSR07. The Board will be pleased to discuss offers of additional funding from any of our larger member organisations which do not yet contribute to our funds.

Updated Business Plan 2005-08

7. The Business Plan for 2005-08, updated in the light of the above assessment, is at Annex 1. It incorporates our proposed Annual Work Programme for 2007/8 (in column 3). The revised SLA is at Annex 2, and the draft Budget at Annex 3.

NPF Executive Board November 2006

ANNEX 1: UPDATED BUSINESS PLAN 2005-08

Introduction

- 1.1 This Business Plan defines the mission of the Forum and sets strategic objectives and actions for the period to the end of March 2008. The Plan will be implemented through Annual Work Programmes.
- 1.2 The 2005-8 Plan has been approved and adopted by the Forum, and is owned by its members. This revised draft is presented for consideration and comment before final adoption by the Executive Board. All members are expected to share in its ownership and commit to supporting its implementation.

2. Vision

- 2.1 The vision of the NPF is to be the principal cross-sectoral voice on planning issues and to be recognised as a key agent for change in delivering a better planning service.

3. Mission

- 3.1 The NPF aspires 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:

M1	to critically inform and positively influence the planning agenda for England through a broad spectrum of interests;
M2	to act as a bridge and extend the common ground across the Forum membership, the better to deliver sustainable development; and
M3	to promote the acquisition and exchange of knowledge and best practice amongst Forum membership and disseminate this so that it may be widely applied.

- 3.2 In support of this Mission, the Forum:
- represents multi-sectoral views, aiming to reach consensus wherever possible, and informed differences of opinion where not;
 - acts as a sounding board for Government initiatives;
 - formulates expert advice on specific issues and emerging policies;
 - promotes good practice;
 - enables a two-way flow between policy and practice, involving dissemination and feedback; and
 - facilitates cross-sectoral networking.
- 3.3 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.
- 4. Membership, Administration and Process**
- 4.1 Members are drawn from five sectors: government and their 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.
- 4.2 The Forum meets four times a year in full session to debate key issues relating to the planning system. Government officials are in attendance at all Forum meetings. 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 it is supported by a Secretary. One of the Vice-Chairs acts as the Forum Chair for one year, on a strict rotational basis amongst the five sector groups.
- 4.3 “Task and deliver” groups are established when necessary to deliver bespoke work on key issues outside meetings of the whole Forum. The Vice-Chairs each lead one or more of the working groups and take forward their group’s work and other issues as agreed by the Executive Board.
- 4.4 The Secretary liaises with the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and others including DCLG, LGA and TCPA (Treasurer) to secure the smooth running of the Forum and working groups.
- 5. Funding**
- 5.1 Members contribute to core funding in accordance with their means. DCLG offers funding of £25k per year subject to annual review and the CSRO7. Larger members make contributions to match fund this amount, with some adding substantial support “in kind” including administrative services, accountancy, venues, catering, printing and production. Additional contributions totalling £15k are being sought for 2007/08.
- 6. Key Priorities and Action 2005-8**
- The table overleaf sets out the updated Business Plan, incorporating (at column 3) a summary of the draft Annual Work Programme for 2007/8.

TABLE: KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTION 2005-8

Note: Column 1 "Actions" re-numbered and subject to minor re-wording; column 2 "Notes" revised as "Strategic Focus"; "Key Products for 2007/8" added as the new column 3.

ACTIONS	STRATEGIC FOCUS	KEY PRODUCTS FOR 2007/8	LEAD	RESOURCE
A1 Continue to input to policy development to ensure improved delivery by, performance of, and outcomes from, the planning system	Key aspects of emerging planning policy on which cross-sectoral input is vital, including : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barker II proposals ▪ Eddington proposals, climate change, and ▪ other issues as appropriate 	(a) Paper to inform responses to Barker and Eddington Reports (b) Input to drafting of DCLG's good practice guide on climate change	Executive Board, Working Groups and Secretary	Within Existing Resources (WER)
A2 Encourage high quality spatial solutions that contribute to achieving sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energise the delivery agenda for both spatial planning and development management, by improving the link to implementation 	(a) Thought piece on ways of improving delivery (b) Dissemination of the paper via the Forum to share best practice	Executive Board, Delivery Working Group and Secretary	WER
A3 Promote a positive image for planning, and attract and retain planners	Encourage all those involved in planning to change their behaviour, to ensure that the planning process is positive, spatial, plan-led, and produces sustainable outcomes, and when it does so to celebrate those achievements	(a) Culture change paper (b) Workshop for key opinion formers to refine messages for each sector, and follow-up (c) Programme of dissemination (d) Encourage participation in award schemes	Executive Board, Culture Change Working Group and Secretary	(a) and (b) WER; (c) and (d) as resources permit
A4 Continue to develop the capacity of the NPF to make an authoritative and distinctive contribution to spatial planning in England	Ensure that NPF members are aware of the latest thinking in spatial planning and are able to input to its development and enhancement	(a) Input to Spatial Plans in Practice (b) Position Statement on a National Spatial Framework, together with appropriate follow-up and dissemination	(a) Secretary, LGA and others (b) NSF Liaison Group and Secretary	WER
A5 Maintain robust criteria for membership of the NPF, contributions to its work and governance	Ensure balanced representation and appropriate contributions from each sector, and improve governance	(a) Review membership for representativeness (b) Actively engage members between meetings (c) Produce clear terms of reference, membership benefits and membership commitments	Executive Board and Secretary	WER
A6 Engagement to promote the Forum and its outputs	Ensure that the Forum and its work are known and valued	(a) Improve the NPF web-site and links to other sites (b) Promote the NPF, including targeted attendance at major conferences + events	Executive Board and Secretary	WER plus one-off project funding as necessary
<i>DELETE: Pursue work in the 2004/5 work programme</i>	<i>- as all work in 2004/5 programme is complete, or is included in Actions A1-A6 above.</i>			

ANNEX 2: REVISED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM (NPF) AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG): NOVEMBER 2006

The NPF is the largest independent cross-sectoral forum in England focussing entirely on the planning system and its role in achieving sustainable development. It seeks to inspire planning and everyone involved in the planning process, and through that to help to achieve quality, inspiring places that enhance productivity as well as peoples' well-being.

Members of the NPF are drawn from all five sectors involved in planning: Government and its Agencies, Local Government, Business, the Voluntary/Third sector and the Professions to give a broad balance in terms of representation. Central government officials attend all Forum meetings.

The unique contribution of the NPF is to bring these diverse parties together to increase mutual understanding, extend the common ground and make planning work better for all. This Agreement is between the NPF and the DCLG and sets out what each expects of the other in pursuing this objective.

The NPF will:-

- 1 Agree a 3 year business plan and annual work programme at the September cycle in full consultation with DCLG.
- 2 Seek to identify in that, a themed annual programme that has both a cross-sectoral dimension and national application on which the NPF can add value.
- 3 Focus on areas that help to embed the new planning reforms, energise the agenda and secure sustainable outcomes.
- 4 Meet 4 times a year in full session, plus task and finish groups and electronic communication between meetings.
- 5 Spread good practice and other messages by various means across and within the Forum membership to secure improvements in the operation of planning in England.
- 6 Raise matching funds from partners to the core funding offered by DCLG.

The DCLG will:-

- 1 Support the NPF with attendance at meetings by senior officials.
- 2 Offer both advice and intelligence to the Forum through regular liaison, to secure outputs that are timely and useful in relation to the planning reforms.
- 3 Help facilitate access to officials in other Departments of State.
- 4 Core fund the NPF at a level of £25K for 2006/7; thereafter agreeing the focus of the year's programme and core funding subject to CSR07, plus annual reviews.

ANNEX 3: DRAFT BUDGET

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Income (£k)			
ODPM/DCLG	25	25	25
LGA	2+*	2+*	2+*
RICS	1	1	1
CABE	1	1	1
HBF	1	1	1
PAS	5	5	5
PINS	5	5	5
RTPI	5*	5*	5*
BPF	5*	5*	5*
EA	*	5*	5*
TCPA	#	#	#
CPRE	*	-	-
RSPB	-	*	*
Others	-	-	15
Total Income	50	55	70

Expenditure (£k)

NPF web-site	0.5	1	1
NPF Secretary (contract)	30	30	33
NPF Secretary expenses	2	2	3
Administrative support	-	-	3
Publicity	2	2	3
NPF meetings expenses	-	-	3
Accountancy fees (TCPA)	2	2	3
NPF events~	-	-	-
Publications	2		3
Working Groups			
Housing	-	1	1
Culture change	-	14	13.5
Delivery	-	1	3.5
Balance	11.5	-	-
Total Expenditure	50	55	70

Notes:

- + plus administrative and design support
- # plus administrative and finance support and advice
- * plus input from Chair/Vice Chairs via the Executive Board
- ~ project funding