

# **NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM: *inspiring planning***

**Draft note of meeting: Tuesday 13 December 2005**  
**Local Government House, Smith Square, London**  
**Attendance and apologies: list attached**

## **1. Welcome from the NPF Chair, Henry Oliver**

## **2. Debate : Performance Improvement in Development Management**

Presentations were given by: John Stambollouian#, ODPM; Simon Leask#, ATLAS; Sarah Richards, PAS; Jan Molyneux#, Terence O'Rourke Ltd; Graham Jones, POS; Henry Oliver, CPRE [*# ppt presentations on the NPF website*] on key issues relating to performance improvement from a range of perspectives.

The presentations formed a context for considering Planning Delivery Agreements (PDAs). A study of pilot PDAs is to take place over the next 6-9 months, led by the Planning Advisory Service. 35 local planning authorities have volunteered to take part. Workshop sessions are to be held (1 in the north, 1 in the south) in January 2006.

Henry Oliver resuming the Chair, thanked the speakers for their contributions, and asked for comments from members.

Points from the ensuing debate were offered as issues to consider in framing work on the pilot project, including possible roles for NPF marked \*

- good practice guidance\* would help all parties, including applicants
- an up-to-date and inclusively prepared development plan assists decision-making and should help the parties move on from confrontation, so should be an important consideration in the pilot
- there should be incentives for achieving improved quality outcomes via Planning Delivery Agreements (PDAs), even if decision-making takes longer than current targets
- it would be useful to find a measure of quality as well as quantity
- targets can/should be used as a means of obtaining wider improvements in the quality of outcomes, as well as processes
- the outcome of planning applications subject to a PDA should not be seen as a foregone conclusion
- PDAs will require extra resources
- project plans can be useful for small, as well as major, planning proposals
- pre-application discussions are valuable; they improve outcomes, and timeliness by focusing all sectors on key issues during the formal planning application stage
- the role of statutory consultees is vital in pre-application discussions, PDAs, and the planning system as a whole
- vision needs to be nurtured in development control as well as in design and plan-making
- developers should be encouraged\* to get involved in the PDA pilot

## **Item 2 cont'd**

The Chair commended the points to ODPM and PAS, and offered support on behalf of the Forum on the issues asterisked, and for the DA Pilot Steering Group.

## **3. ODPM Update**

Kerry Higgins, ODPM, gave a presentation on the Government's response to Kate Barker's review of housing supply [*copy of ppt on the NPF web-site*]

Points raised during the discussion included:

- the difficulty in delivery due to lack of funds to provide infrastructure at an early stage
- if the rate of Planning Gain Supplement (PGS) is to be lower on brownfield sites than greenfield, with current high targets for use of the former there would be a lower yield overall
- the inherent tension between demand for housing, its density, land supply and capacity
- emphasis on a "modest" rate a tacit acknowledgement that PGS could act as a disincentive to bring forward land for development
- the new National Advice Unit could usefully support RSS planning for housing;
- could funds from PGS go direct to the local area?

It was clarified that ODPM has invited bids for growth areas from all regions. They expect Ipas to consider housing needs of all ages and sections of society.

The Chair thanked Kerry for her contribution to the meeting, and her help in covering such a wide range of policy areas

Eamon Mythen, ODPM, gave an update on Culture Change and e-planning:

- the Councillors' probity guide had been issued
- PAS had held seminars with Planning portfolio members
- ODPM has launched the web-based spatial planning distance learning course developed by the University of the West of England, to improve Continuing Professional Development for existing practitioners
- The January Pendleton survey on take-up of e-planning by Ipas will show that the proportion rated as "excellent" as 80%

#### **4. Notes of the meeting on 19 September and matters arising**

The draft note of meeting had been circulated. It was agreed, and signed by the Chair as a true record of proceedings. Copies of the Good Practice Note and Communique on Climate Change were available for members at the meeting, and both documents were now on the NPF website.

#### **5. NPF event at the LGA conference Birmingham 13-15 February 2006**

The Secretary introduced the report and confirmed that the event would be held at 8.30am on Tuesday 14 February. She asked members to contact her if they could help with sponsorship of the reception.

#### **6. Annual Work Programme 05/06 and proposed Working Groups**

Four working groups are to be established on PGS, housing, culture change and delivery, each led by a member of the Executive Board. The Chair clarified that the Working Groups would consider the issues, pool ideas and identify common themes. They would attempt to find common ground and assist members in coming to a view on their own representations. Where appropriate, the Forum might subsequently convene meetings with relevant officials to communicate common concerns. The Chair confirmed that neither the Working Groups, nor the Forum as a whole, would respond

to consultation.

## **7. Membership**

The report was noted.

## **8. Any Other Business**

### **(i) Eddington Transport Study**

The Secretary said an invitation had been received (copies were available for members) asking the Forum to contribute to the above. She said that the Executive Board had considered the request, and had suggested a short reply be sent referring to the need to consider the wider spatial planning issues. The Chair confirmed that because of the timescale (reply required by 6 January 2006) it would be couched in broad terms, promoting the role of planning, noting that the terms of reference don't take planning into account, and that the Forum is keen to help.

### **(ii) Dates for future meetings - all at 1 for 1.30pm**

The Chair reminded members of the dates for the next 3 Forum meetings:

Thursday 9 March

Tuesday 20 June

Wednesday 18 October

### **(iii) DCMS Select Committee Inquiry into Heritage**

Kate Pugh said the above was considering the priorities of the Government White Paper, the balance between planning and heritage, and the planning skills required. Further detail is on the Committee's website:

[http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/culture\\_\\_media\\_and\\_sport/cms051115.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/culture__media_and_sport/cms051115.cfm).

**The deadline for submissions is 19 January 2006.**

The Chair thanked members for their contributions today and through the year. He wished them a peaceful Christmas and New Year, and a safe journey home.

The meeting closed at 4pm.

## **EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN CONTRIBUTING TO WORKING GROUPS (as at 20/12/05)**

### **PGS – Liz Peace**

Corinne Swain APOS/Arup

Jonathan Price English Nature

Cllr Temperley LGA

Nick Powell NHF

Emma Wild CBI

John Anderson CAP

Kevin Leigh Planning and Environmental Bar Assoc (PEBA)

Brian Waters LPDF

Roger Humber PDA

Ian Biddulph Wilson Bowden

Andrew Whitaker HBF

Henry Oliver, CPRE

Nominee, County Surveyors' Society

**HOUSING – Henry Oliver**

Andy Groves RDA Network  
Esther Kurland CABE  
Cllr Temperley LGA  
Nick Powell NHF  
Michael Hamerson Civic Trust  
John Anderson CAP  
Kelvin MacDonald (or rep) RTPI  
Kevin Leigh PEBA  
Michael Coupe RICS  
Simon Marsh RSPB  
Ian Biddulph Wilson Bowden  
Andrew Whitaker, HBF  
Nominee, County Surveyors' Society

**CULTURE CHANGE - Mark Southgate**

Andy Groves RDA network  
Brian McLoughin NFU  
Kelvin MacDonald RTPI  
Richard Goodwin  
Graham Jones POS  
Kevin Leigh PEBA  
Henry Oliver, CPRE

**DELIVERY – Mike Hayes****Planning Delivery Agreement Pilot Steering Group**

Simon Leask, ATLAS  
Ian Jeffries CBI  
Graeme Bell Neighbourhood Initiatives Forum  
Andrew Rogers Planning Advisory Group, Association of Consultant Architects

**Other aspects**

Kate Pugh Heritage Link - community engagement  
Nominee, CPRE - community engagement  
Nominee, County Surveyors' Society