

POS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2010

The Planning Officers Society E-Bulletin for POS Members

*Click on the heading to go straight to what's new on **POS Update** this month:*

- 1 [Spatial Planning Latest](#)
- 2 [Development Management Latest](#)
- 3 [Breaking News](#)
- 4 [Legal Update](#)
- 5 [Brief Updates](#)
- 6 [Society Matters](#)
- 7 [Forthcoming Events](#)
- 8 [Correspondence](#)
- 9 [And Finally](#)

1 SPATIAL PLANNING LATEST

Green Belt Latest

Green Belts: A Greener Future

A major survey of the environmental state of Green Belt land has been undertaken by Natural England and the CPRE to demonstrate the benefits it provides for people and wildlife. This report highlights the need for positive land management to ensure that this extraordinary resource delivers wider benefits for the natural environment and for the millions of people who live in and around the Green Belt. It proposes various actions to help to achieve this. See http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2010/280110.aspx

The Society has issued a press release supporting Natural England in suggesting the future role of green belts has wider than current statutory purposes see <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/5704a0ea7d5ef74b9b25a0fd1225f162/society-supports-natural-england-in-suggesting-the-future-role-of-green-belts-has-wider-than-current-statutory-purposes.html>

Local Planning Authority Green Belt Statistics: England

This Statistical Release presents information on designated Green Belt land in individual local authorities in England. It relates to the extent of Green Belt in 2007 and is based on a methodology in which the extent of the Green Belt is captured in digital (computerised) form from proposal maps in development plans. This approach, using digitised boundary, provides much more reliable figures than those published prior to 2000. In 2007, designated Green Belt land amounted to 1,635,670 hectares, about 13 per cent of the land area of England. For details go to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/localplanningauthority2007>

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System - Summaries of the Regional Studies

DfT has announced the programme of regional studies it will support within its work on "Delivering a Sustainable Transport System" (DaSTS). In guidance issued in April 2009 (see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/dasts/funding-guidance.pdf>) DfT offered up to £1m to each of the English Regions outside London (in each of the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11) to support their DaSTS work programmes. The study programme will examine identified priority challenges in each region, taking account of the five transport goals, and propose packages of solutions to address these challenges. For more information go to <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/strategy/dasts/regionalstudies>

National Policy Statements

Sir Michael Pitt, chairman of the IPC, has told the Commons Energy and Climate Change Committee that planning authorities dealing with nationally significant projects such as ports, power stations and new reservoirs need resources to fulfill their role under the new planning regime. Councils will require technical expertise to consider proposals to be determined by the IPC, he told MPs. "They will need resources to do this," he said. Sir Michael's comments echo the initial observations of the Society which have been put to the IPC.

To find out more go to http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/news/archive/2010/feb2010/2010-02-week-1/40210_2

Marine Policy Statements

Jed Griffiths attended a recent workshop on behalf of the Society; the purpose of the workshop was for DEFRA and others to gain a better understanding of the marine planning process. The outcome of this and other workshops would inform the preparation of a Marine Policy Statement, which would be published later this year. To see his notes go to: <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/6dab9f99420050167ec7095192754457/defra-marine-policy-statements-250110.html>

Climate Change – Evidence Base & Core Strategies

PAS as produced a case study to describe how spatial planners are integrating climate change policies into core strategies, the evidence they are using to do this, the challenges they are encountering and the opportunities they are creating. It also includes tips they have for other local planning authorities. To learn more go to <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=370622>

Responsive Planning Practices for Changing Economic Times

Responding to the challenges that many local authorities and their partners are facing in terms of maintaining the momentum on development schemes that have stalled as result of the economic downturn, ATLAS has launched a new series of practice notes entitled.

The practice notes draw on the ATLAS portfolio of projects as well as emerging and established practice in local authorities around the country. They provide key learning points and approaches that have been used to resolve issues around unblocking appropriate stalled schemes in a collaborative and solution-focussed manner. These include issues such as developing strategies for addressing stalled schemes, dealing with viability in the planning process and identifying potential planning tools that can be used to deliver solutions. To read the practice notes go to:

http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/topic/index.cfm?coArticleTopic_articleId=121&coSiteNavigation_articleId=121

If you would like any further information about the practice notes, contact Fionnuala Lennon (fionnuala.lennon@hca.gsx.gov.uk) or Rob Smith (robert.smith@hca.gsx.gov.uk)

Examining DPDs

PINS has recently reviewed its Learning From Experience guide; to read it in full go to http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/publications/newsletter/issue_14/learning.html

PPS12 and Plan Making

The CLG Plan making manual brings together council experience, useful advice and guidance in producing LDFs. To read more go to www.pas.gov.uk/planmakingmanual

See the examples of good practice at: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=110140>

2 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT LATEST

Publicity for Planning Applications

The Society is keen to learn more about how LPAs publicise applications to inform its debate with CLG. A short questionnaire has been devised (go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/847351f04de61e4626cf0182901ba943/planning-applications-publicity-questionnaire.html>) for you to complete and return to christine.sayer@broadland.gov.uk by 5th March 2010.

You may be interested to learn that a recent Government initiative to enable an App so that anyone can get free email alerts as to applications submitted in their area has stalled due to legal action by Royal Mail over the use of postcodes. To see the App go to <http://www.data.gov.uk/apps/planningalerts>

DCLG Consultation Papers

As a follow-up to the notification in the last POS newsletter of the three latest DCLG consultation papers on development management the POS DM committee has a special meeting on 5th March in Crewe to consider the Society's response. Phil Kirby commissioned POS Enterprises (Geoff Cross and Stephen Olivant) to write a briefing note for the POS DM Committee on 15th January in Croydon on two of the three consultation papers. This POSE note is available to view at: <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/media/www/documents/POSE-Briefing-Note-Jan2010.pdf>

Design and Access Statements – How to Read, Write and Use Them

This CABE report gives practical advice on getting the best from D&A statements to help deliver well designed, inclusive places. See <http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/1437295>

Garden Grabbing Latest

You will recall that some time ago we helped the CLG draft questions to be put to LPAs in an attempt to obtain information as to how extensive the alleged problem of building houses on back gardens really was. Responses have now been assessed by Kingston University on behalf of the CLG and as a result John Healey called on councils to use their existing powers to stop 'garden grabbing' (see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1440002>)

The study report can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/gardendevlopments>

The Chief Planners letter to local authorities can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/letterreviewgarden>

The subsequent amended PPS3 (with revised para 41) is to be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/planningpolicystatement3.pdf>

Planning Application Fees Frozen

John Healey MP, the Planning Minister, has announced a halt to any increases to planning application fees to help the development and construction sectors in England. He has also confirmed that fees for planning appeals will not be introduced this year to avoid placing any further burdens on businesses and householders. The CLG press release is at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1441804>

John Silvester told Planning magazine that many authorities had budgeted for fee increases and this announcement would cause them further problems in having to find compensatory savings and/or income.

A Guide to Planning Performance Agreements

This British Property Federation guide explains the benefits of PPAs: the key message is that they have the potential to give developers greater certainty and confidence in the planning process. It is designed to help encourage more planning applications to use the PPA process. See:

<http://www.bpf.org.uk/newsroom/pressreleases/document/23821/planningperformance-agreements-guide-launched>

Grampian Conditions

PINS has recently issued advice on the proposed revised policy guidance regarding Grampian Conditions and s106 agreements. To find out more go to http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/publications/newsletter/issue_14/grampian_conditions.html

Guidance on Making Article 4 Directions

English Heritage have prepared a flowchart based on detailed guidance set out in paragraphs 5.13-5.22 of English Heritage's Guidance on the management of conservation areas (2006) on Article 4 directions and how to make them. See http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Article_4_Direction.pdf?1263530272

3 BREAKING NEWS

... the Conservatives have announced new plans to tackle widespread public concern about the exploitation of the planning system. Bob Neill, the Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning, has called for more "fair play", as he pledges new measures to tackle illegal development and trespass. See http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/02/Ending_exploitation_of_the_planning_system.aspx

The Society has responded with a press release: **POS Views Tory Planning Proposals with Both Optimism and Concern** go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/8e0aaa44026f01e5e1d09a121a91aa7a/pos-views-tory-planning-proposals-with-both-optimism-and-concern.html>

4 LEGAL UPDATE

Bills Published:

Development on Flood Plains (Environment Agency Powers) Bill

This is a Bill to empower the **Environment Agency** to prevent development on flood plains to which the Agency objects; to require planning authorities to comply with Environment

Agency advice when considering development on flood plains. Private Members' Bill published 15th January 2010. Find details at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/developmentonfloodplainsenvironmentagencypowers.html>

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Amendment) Bill

This is a Bill to amend the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to enable local planning authorities to use sums received under section 106 of the Act for the building and improvement of housing. Private members' Bill published 27th January 2010.

To learn more go to <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/townandcountryplanningact1990amendment.html>

Latest Consultations:

Model Planning Conditions: Consultation, Planning Inspectorate, December 2009.

As part of the 2nd Killian Pretty Review consultation package DCLG has recently published "Improving the Use and Discharge of Planning Conditions". This comprises draft policy to replace Circular 11/95 on the use of planning conditions, and a set of potential measures aimed at making the discharging of planning conditions more efficient. To coincide with this consultation PINS has published for discussion this list of revised and consolidated model conditions, which will eventually replace the conditions currently in Appendix A of the Circular and the additional model conditions currently on the PINS web site. The list is not exhaustive and does not cover every situation where a condition may need to be imposed. The applicability of the conditions will need to be considered in each case against the policy tests in the final version of "Improving the Use and Discharge of Planning Conditions". Comments needed by 19th March 2010. See:

http://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/pins/appeals/model_conditions_consultation.html

Review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

This consultation seeks views on proposals to amend legislative protection for wild animals and plants. Sections 9 and 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) provide legislative protection for certain wild plants and animals listed on schedules 5 and 8. Section 24 of the Act requires these schedules to be reviewed every 5 years by the GB conservation bodies (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage) acting through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The JNCC then advises the Secretary of State, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive on any recommended changes. This consultation is aimed at a broad audience including the wildlife conservation sector, ecologists, the marine and fisheries sector and the planning community. Deadline date 20 April 2010. Go to: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wildlife-act/index.htm>

Recent POS responses:

Permitted development rights for small scale renewable and low carbon energy technologies, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/06a01cf062f668d5479922c5fc98f9cc/permitted-development-rights-for-small-scale-renewable-and-low-carbon-energy-technologies-and-electric-vehicle-charging-infrastructure.html>

Houses in Multiple Occupation go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/0f9c4942cb53873c65f13d2b81c25e6b/houses-in-multiple-occupation.html>

5 BRIEF UPDATES

Low Emissions Strategies: Using the Planning System to Reduce Transport Emissions, Good Practice Guidance. Key to the DEFRA guidance is its focus on reducing harmful emissions and improving the quality of the air through effective planning and transport policies. Its integrated approach can also help to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change. See

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/airquality/local/guidance/documents/low-emissions-strategies-2010.pdf>

Refurbishment of Historic Schools. This English Heritage and Department of Children, Schools and Families report demonstrates the huge potential and flexibility of traditional school buildings through case studies. See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21444>

European Planning Systems. The National Housing and Planning Advice Unit have commissioned a Review of European Planning Systems, which is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/nhpau/keypublications/research/revieweuropeanplanningsystems>

Planning Act 2008: Guidance related to procedures for compulsory acquisition. This guidance relates to applications for orders granting development consent that include provision authorising the compulsory acquisition of land. The guidance aims to help promoters and the Infrastructure Planning Commission understand the powers contained in the Planning Act 2008 and advise on the application of the correct procedures and statutory or administrative requirements to help ensure that the process of dealing with such orders is as fair, straightforward and accurate for all parties as possible. To find out more go to <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/guidancecompulsoryacquisition>

Future UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Local authorities, and others, throughout the UK including the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies will have the opportunity to nominate such sites for assessment by an independent expert panel. A new 'Tentative List' of candidate sites will then be drawn up for submission to UNESCO in 2011, with the first nomination going forward from 2012. Those on the last UK Tentative List, drawn up in 1999, which have not so far gone forward for consideration by UNESCO, will be able to apply again for inclusion on the new list. The new process, aiming to achieve fewer but better sites follows a review of UK World Heritage Policy in December 2008. An application form, accompanied by guidance on how to complete it, will be published shortly. For details go to http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/media_releases/6589.aspx

6 SOCIETY MATTERS

President's Piece

Astonishingly I'm now more than half way through my Presidential year – it must be true that time flies when you're having fun!

- With other POS Cabinet Members I attended the RTPI Planning Awards lunch at the Park Lane Hilton in London, where I presented the Award for E-Government, which POS sponsored. The winner was the London Brownfield Sites Review Stage 2 produced by Arup with the London Development Agency, the HCA and Rade New Media Ltd. I was also one of the judges for the Planning Consultancy of the Year Awards – which went to Scott Wilson, Laurence Associates and Urban Animation. As usual it was a very pleasant and well-run event and a chance to catch up with former colleagues and make new contacts.
- The following day I was due to chair meetings of the POS Board and Cabinet but unfortunately I was unwell and unable to attend. This is not a good time of year for me - the year before I couldn't make the February Cabinet meeting because heavy snow meant there were no trains! Fortunately, Stephen Tapper stepped into the breach and the meetings made useful progress.
- I haven't written any letters to John Healey this month but I have contributed to a joint press release by POS, the Home Builders Federation and the British Property Federation giving a cautious welcome to the CIL Regulations, which show positive changes in response to the concerns we expressed over the draft version. Good to see the public and private sectors cooperating effectively and heartening that the Government took notice of our comments. I hope we can do more of this in future.
- I have been preparing to respond to the much heralded Conservative "Green Paper" on Planning – which has been promised virtually every week since last October. As I write this there is still no sign of it –though its contents have been heavily leaked and at least one magazine has already asked me for comments on aspects of it. It has certain similarities to the Loch Ness Monster – very few have seen it but lots of people believe it exists. Come to think of it, it may even be the same colour!
- I attended another meeting of the CLG Planning Sounding Board and later in the month Phil Kirby and I will be meeting Steve Quartermain to discuss publicity for planning applications – specifically what POS can do to persuade the Government to re-visit the decision to keep the requirement for local press notices.
- Towards the end of the month I will be speaking at an LGA conference on Lifetime Neighbourhoods. My contribution, together with Dr Richard Simmons of CABE and Karen Croucher from York University will be on learning from experience here and abroad.

David Hackforth
President 2009/10

Society Spring Conference

Put the dates in your diary now for the conference being held at Milton Keynes on 20/21 May. The draft programme is now available on the website at: <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/4bd5a5dcbaf2398a98ec95524ad733ed/society-spring-conference-2010.html> . The booking form is to be available shortly.

Vacancy for Director of POS Enterprises Ltd

POS has the ability to nominate a Director of POS Enterprises and an opportunity has arisen for a new director. For details of the work of the company go to: www.planningofficers.org.uk/posenterprises. Any volunteers should send their details direct to president@planningofficers.org.uk

Options for Reviewing Planning Performance Indicator NI 157

Peter Rose represented the Society at a recent CLG meeting to kickoff this review. His response is included in full for your information:

Yesterday, I attended the initial CLG briefing with Linda Addison Associates and ARUPs along with representatives of about 60 other possible pilot authorities. In the morning there was a further session with other stakeholders (I drew the impression these included developers and non-lpa interests) and I believe they are running a similar sessions today in Manchester.

I set out below a summary of the key points arising.

At the moment, CLG are officially looking at 3 different approaches for a replacement regime, but it was pretty clear the preferred arrangement (and likely recommendation) would be to the following effect:

- a composite index would be introduced (a so-called 'dashboard' of indicators) which will reflect a range of different measures of planning 'quality'
- the dashboard will look at the development management process as an entity, and each indicator will focus on different aspects. They suggested the adopted scheme will reflect 7 key stages of the development management model, but the pilot will look at maybe 4 or so
- the dashboard will not just be about applications, but will extend, in theory, to include enforcement, LDF aspects and anything else relevant
- speed of decision will be retained in some form but will be set within a wider context

My impression was that the indicators may well be front loaded with an emphasis on pre-application discussions, and also possible Member involvement. Other likely targets for indicators were customer satisfaction surveys, on-line files (related to keeping customers informed of progress) and the whole area of physical outcomes.

The programme is as follows:

- CLG, Linda Addison Associates and Arups will now prepare their detailed pilot proposals for ministerial sign off in the next month or so
- pilot authorities will operate for 3 months from 1 March
- at the moment some 60 authorities have expressed an interest in pilot status and CLG will be selecting a final list of 30

- the new performance management framework will be in place for 1 April 2011

I remain keen for my authority to retain their interest as a possible pilot authority, and I'll be happy to continue to feed back to POS as required.

Unfortunately, I'm unavailable on 5 February but will be happy to prepare a further note or more detailed comments as required, and to continue to update.

Hope this is useful. PS: I'm not aware of any confidentiality. The only concern is that ideas are very embryonic and there's considerable potential for change, I suspect.

Peter (Peter.Rose@newham.gov.uk)

Planning Officers Society Contribution Award's Scheme

It's that time of year again when we seek out the un-sung heroes of the Society. Details of the POSCAs scheme and the nomination form to be used by members to make nominations can be found on the website at: <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/a6a0ab0c76ba710e17e907f9973883e9/poscas.html>.

As you will recall from last year, Chairs/Convenors/Contacts have already been tasked with being the first port of call for receipt of nomination forms; however, if you have any suggestions please put them forward to one of these three, or indeed direct to Mike Holmes, Junior Vice-President (jvp@planningofficers.org.uk) by the closing date of 31 March 2010.

POS Meetings

To see the notes of the **Cabinet** meeting held at the RTPI on **20 November 2009** go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/13e307207181f2cff90c6d7f14af145e/cabinet-20-nov-09.html>

To see the notes of the **Development Management Committee** held on **15 January 2010** in Croydon go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/c624812de869704ba10576bb87438578/development-management-cttee-150110.html>

To see the notes of the **Management & Performance Committee** meeting held at the RTPI on **5 February 2010** go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/10f8e2b4ab2823439199a688d61d1ffa/management-performance-committee-5-feb-10.html>

Recent POS Press Releases

Society Supports Natural England in Suggesting the Future Role of Green Belts has Wider than Current Statutory Purposes go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/5704a0ea7d5ef74b9b25a0fd1225f162/society-supports-natural-england-in-suggesting-the-future-role-of-green-belts-has-wider-than-current-statutory-purposes.html>

POS President Presents RTPI Award for E-Government to “London Brownfield Sites Review Stage 2” go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/dd8d9847c5439ede9436ff0fe1ca243c/pos-president-presents-rtpi-award-for-e-government-to-london-brownfield-sites-review-stage-2.html>

CIL – Public/private Consortium Pleased That Government Has Listened go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/31e5dee1ceacb0d7ce892e7829859818/cil-publicprivate-consortium-pleased-that-government-has-listened.html>

POS Views Tory Planning Proposals with Both Optimism and Concern go to <http://www.planningofficers.org.uk/file/8e0aaa44026f01e5e1d09a121a91aa7a/pos-views-tory-planning-proposals-with-both-optimism-and-concern.html>

7 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

POS Events:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Contact</i>
2 Mar	Minerals & Waste Committee	Birmingham	Richard.read@hants.gov.uk
5 Mar	Special Development Management Committee	Crewe	Phil.kirby@broadland.gov.uk
26 Mar	Development Management Committee	Weymouth	Phil.kirby@broadland.gov.uk

CPD/Training Opportunities:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Details</i>
24 February and 2 March	<i>Planning & World Heritage</i>	Telford and Newcastle upon Tyne	Organised jointly by the Local Authority World Heritage Forum (LAWHF), English Heritage and ICOMOS-UK. These free events are targeted at officers and councillors involved in day-to-day planning decision-making and policy-setting within World Heritage Sites. The programme's morning sessions will provide an introduction to the principles of World Heritage and the relationship between Planning and World Heritage. Following lunch, three case studies will focus on the experience of individual World Heritage Sites and presentations will include protecting World Heritage Sites through the planning system; dealing with the tension between development and conservation and the use of Supplementary Planning Guidance within World Heritage Sites. For details and booking form go to http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.17556
1 st March	<i>The Future of Planning: Return to Localism?</i>	Westminster, London	The Conservative Party has outlined significant changes to planning policy in the UK, pledging to abolish the new Infrastructure Planning Commission, transferring its function to the Planning Inspectorate and having the National Policy Statements ratified in Parliament. They want to return the decision making process to local communities with plans to increasingly 'front-load' the Local Development Framework (LDF) process, with better consultation to develop a clearer community vision for a locality. These plans will be set out further in a Green Paper due to be published this month. The policy debate raises many questions about the future of planning and the kind of planning system the country needs. What is the most effective and democratic means of assessing major infrastructure projects? What is the most appropriate governance level for strategic planning and the funding of infrastructure? And how can local people become more engaged in the planning process at the policy development stage? For more details go to https://www.eventsforce.net/waterfront/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=28394&eventID=76&mode=preview&version=future&eventID=76

9 th March	<i>How best can we meet the increasing Challenges of Flooding Resilience?</i>	Royal Commonwealth Society, London	How will we cope with 900k properties at risk by 2035 - up from 570k in 2009? How is the Flooding and Water Management Bill going to meet the challenges? What are Government's agenda and expectations? How is local government going to meet the challenges posed by increased flooding and the Bill? What has been done to meet local government's needs? How is the water industry going to meet the challenges of future flooding predictions and the Bill? How will lead local authorities in areas of heavy flooding meet the logistics and resource challenges? How do communities and households cope with the physical, financial, psychological and bureaucratic challenges? To see the full programme, list of speakers and booking details go to http://www.cppseminars.org.uk/site/dpb.cfm?do=ref&fldCPPSref=FR/288&varDetProgBiog=det
10 th March	<i>Public Consultation & Stakeholder Engagement for Major Projects: Understanding the New Requirements, Getting it Right</i>	Central London	The Planning Act 2008 makes it a statutory requirement for project promoters to engage in pre-application consultation with local communities, local authorities, and those who would be directly affected by the proposals. The new Infrastructure Planning Commission has made it very clear that promoters who fail to demonstrate evidence of adequate consultation will have their applications rejected and promoters must provide evidence of the consultation they have undertaken and how this has shaped the final decision. This conference will provide a guide for both project promoters and local authorities on the consultation requirements and how to engage with local communities to ensure a fair consultation. For more information go to https://www.eventsforce.net/WATERFRONT/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=27800&eventID=75&mode=preview&version=future&eventID=75
10 -11 March	<i>Towards Integrated Noise Management</i>	Kenilworth	Environmental Protection UK Spring Noise Workshop aims to enable discussion on practical ways forward in integrating noise considerations into transport, planning and open spaces policy, as well as energy obligations, and communicating noise concerns beyond the specialists. Moving closer to noise action planning in reality, we will look at practical transport noise management and mitigation. On the programme: Managing Environmental Noise; ■ Noise in context - WHO Guidelines for Night Time Noise ■ Planning for reducing transport noise impacts ■ Quiet urban areas ■ Engaging politicians and the public in noise reduction Noise in Neighbourhoods: ■ Managing event noise - festivals/sport ■ Licensed premises Planning and Noise; ■ Update on current concerns on renewable technologies ■ National Policy Statements and noise For further information visit www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events

8 CORRESPONDENCE

Two letters this month; one from the **LGA re consultation on proposals for a new accountability framework**, and the second from the **RTPI re a free event regarding the research agenda to support planning policy in Wales**.

Freedom to lead: trust to deliver

I am writing to invite your views and comments on proposals for a new accountability framework for localities that we have just published for consultation, "Freedom to lead, trust to deliver" [Ed: available at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=7784029>].

In essence we believe that in the current economic climate and with the prospect of severe spending restraints councils and their local public service partners must be liberated from the myriad and unnecessary targets, monitoring and inspection regimes and have the autonomy and flexibility locally to develop tailored responses to the challenges faced by their communities.

We have framed our proposals as an "offer" to Government setting out what local government can do locally to lead a collective effort to improve the quality of life for local people and make public money go further. At the same time we set out what needs to change to enable this to happen – this is our "ask."

Key elements include:

- Councils providing democratic accountability for a wider range of locally delivered public services – including devolved autonomy to shape the totality of local public sector spending in an area;
- A radically reduced set of national outcomes and indicators – allowing more flexibility to pursue local priorities;
- Reforming the LAA mechanism so that it becomes a means of agreeing priorities with local communities - not Government;
- Strengthened local accountability – with regular performance information for local people;
- Greater emphasis on local self evaluation and robust peer challenge;
- Axing the multiple systems of inspection, assessment and regulation and moving towards a single assessment process and single inspectorate for place;
- improvement support focussed towards local strategic partnerships and delivered through a shared approach to public sector improvement.

The LGA is committed to developing a fully worked up set of proposals by early April, ready to be implemented by a new Government.

I am sure that you will have views on the propositions we have set out and the specific consultation questions in "Freedom to Lead." We would be really pleased to receive your views and/or to discuss the proposals with you.

Please respond by email to jointhedebate@lga.gov.uk . The deadline for responses is 10 March.

Nick Easton, LGA Policy

We would be grateful if you could circulate the information about the event below to members of [the Planning Officers Society](#).

RTPI Cymru and the RTPI Planning Education and Research Network (PERN) invite you to a free one day seminar on 24th February in Cardiff to discuss the research agenda to support planning policy in Wales. [Go to <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3273>]

Kendra Gracie
Research Administrator
Royal Town Planning Institute
57 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7HL

9 AND FINALLY

..... have you heard the one about how many town planners it takes to screw in a light bulb?
Answer: Six; four to write an extensive study on the options for 100/200/250 watt light bulbs, one to write an article in the local paper praising the study, and one to put in a 10 watt bulb instead.

If you have any item of interest that you would like to share with fellow Society members for inclusion in the next [Bulletin](#) please send them to John Silvester by phone, fax or email.

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