



Spatial Planning and Policy Committee

Minutes of meeting held at RTPI

Date: 29th January 2010

Time: 11.00am

Present

NAME

Dave Simpson
Roger Hargreaves
David Feeney
Catriona Riddell
Alan Gomm
Don Gobbett
David Hackforth
Andrew Close
Stuart Hylton
Gillian Morgan
Phil Abbott
Alex Yendole

AUTHORITY

Solihull MBC - Chair
Surrey CC - Secretary
Leeds City Council
S.E. Partnership Board
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC
Dorset CC
POS President
CLG
Berkshire JSPU
Planning Advisory Service
Sheffield City Council
Stafford Borough Council

Apologies for absence:

Andrew Johnson, Roger Lawes and Darren Richards

1. Minutes of the meeting of 11 September and matters arising

Item 2 The secretary had not yet written to authorities involved in joint arrangements for LDF to find out more about the reason for the joint arrangement and how well it is doing.

Roger Hargreaves

Item 2 the chairman is meeting with GVA Grimley next week to discuss the progress of their study.

Dave Simpson

Item 3 The update of "Policies for Spatial Plans" had been delayed and will be reported to a later meeting.

Item 4 it was noted that the Conservative Green Paper had still not been published. It was agreed to circulate a note from the leader of Kent CC, Paul Carter that proposed a model for future regional arrangements.

Roger Hargreaves

Item 10 the chairman reported he had attended a briefing meeting with PINS and that PINS was about to publish a summary of all their briefing meetings.

2. National Policy Statements

Energy. The draft response was generally supported but additional comments included:

- Not enough attention is given to the handling of waste arising from proposals, particularly nuclear waste.

- Little reference to the Government's Carbon Reduction strategy
- The concerns over Transmission Lines, which appears in the text of the draft response, need to be included in the answer to Question 6.

Ports. The draft response was generally supported but it was agreed to submit the paper prepared by Don Gobbett as the views of the committee. A map of the existing ports would be helpful.

NPS generally:

- Lack of clarity over how to reconcile conflicts between NPS and LDFs. It is appreciated that the Infrastructure commission has to take account of the local impact statement, and priority will be given to “nationally significant” development and also to whatever is the later guidance, but nevertheless conflicts between local proposals in LDFs and national infrastructure could still arise.
- Could be helpful for the sake of clarity if the NPS included the thresholds to which they applied.

3. PPS4 and Local Economic Assessments

PPS4 was noted.

Stuart Hylton introduced the draft response on guidance on Local Economic Assessments. In discussion comments made include:

Proposals for sub-regions do not reflect the different boundaries for other purposes and that different forms of economic activity have different distributions.

The guidance does not properly deal with the relationship to regional strategies.

The guidance is very light on skills.

- Some concerns about relating the preparation of economic strategies to planning strategies, but others considered this was something to be sorted out locally (for example, in the context of community strategies) and central guidance did not add anything.
- Strong support for the need for common data sets and definitions so that assessment in one area could be related to those in other areas.
- It was noted that PAS had already provided guidance on How to do a Local Economic Assessment.
- Consider local economic assessments being part of the sustainability appraisal for LDFs.

Stuart agreed to take these points on board and submit a revised version of his note as reflecting the view of the committee.

4. Update from CLG

- PPS 11 still under consideration
- PPS 15 still under consideration and publication date delayed
- A climate change PPS would probably be published in the Spring

- PINS Lessons Learned guide is out and PINS is holding regional events on lessons learnt
- Consultation on HPDG had finished

National Policy Review: A timetable for reviews is published on the CLG website (the link is <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/programmereplacement/>)

- Policies for Spatial Plans had been delayed (partly because of resource issues) and is not likely to appear until after a general election.
- The contract for PINS to give advice on the preparation of LDFs was ending in April, as intended, and there were no plans to renew it.
- CIL. The regulations should be published in February to come into force in April.
- The regulations on lower fees for extensions of time on planning applications had not yet been finalised

5. Update of regional issues

Catriona Riddell noted that:

All regional assemblies would cease on 1 April 2010 and all regions were now setting up successor arrangements.

There is a general reduction in staffing at a regional level as staff leave.

Some regional planners were proposing to set up a network of strategic planners, in order to support a diminishing group.

6. Development Management

The committee supported the draft papers

7. Sustainable Communities Act – Transfer of Powers

Don Gobbett confirmed that the County Council Network had not been consulted by the LGA. It was agreed that Ian Bailey be asked to keep the committee informed on progress on the issue and Don Gobbett would report back on any CCN response.

Ian Bailey and Don Gobbett

8. Any other business

Gilliam Morgan reported that PAS was arranging a number of intensive events in February/March to look at future issues for senior managers, and also a conversion course for DC officers to work on policy and planmaking. Two residential courses would be held at Warwick and other courses in London.

Alex Yendole drew attention to events hosted by the government office in the west midlands in a particular format that put stakeholders in discussion with planners around individual tables. It was likely that this would be rolled out in other areas.

Don Gobbett noted that the NHPPA was arranging regional events to engage with planners.

David Hackforth noted that the POS Spring Conference was 20/21 May in Milton Keynes and that there would be a presentation of the POS awards, for which nominations were being sought.

The Secretary reported that he would be standing down as the secretary after the next meeting of the committee and anyone interested in taking on the post should speak with the chairman.

It was agreed that Miles Butler from CSS should be invited to attend the next meeting and the chairman would also be attending a CSS meeting.

Next meeting: 16 April 2010 at the RTPI, London Offices at 11.00 to 14.00