

# Tripwire







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Tripwire magazine is published four times a year in digital form by the West Midlands region of the RTPI. The opinions expressed in Tripwire are the view of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, publishers, or the RTPI.

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**W**elcome to the Spring edition of Tripwire (hopefully it will feel a little more like Spring by the time you read this)! This issue continues our series of guest editors and thanks go to Ben Simm (Warwickshire County Council) for taking on the guest editor role for this issue.

It has been a busy start to 2018. The Regional Activities Committee has been restructured for 2018 with each committee member taking on a specific role. This will help us to ensure that the region is progressing with all of its objectives. We are always on the lookout for members who wish to get involved in the RAC or its sub groups, which cover topics including Urban Design, Planning Aid and International Planning. Please do get in touch if you wish to find out more.

It is pleasing to see so many successful events taking place in the region. We've had The Great Regional Debate which brought together nearly 200 built environment professionals to consider how we can best apply our expert knowledge to influence strategic infrastructure decisions; and I hosted a networking event at Worcester's Guildhall to provide an opportunity for colleagues from the West



*Maria Dunn.*

Midlands and South West regions to come together. We hope to offer more joint networking events throughout the year partnering with other neighbouring regions. Our CPD programme has also got off to a great start with a popular seminar and study tour on retail planning having taken place and a number of forthcoming events in the programme already sold out.

Looking forward, we welcome RTPI president John Acres to the region in March and the popular annual reception will this year be held at The Commandery in Worcester on 26th April.

Nationally, I'm sure we are all keen to see the Draft Revised National Planning Policy Framework (which may have been published by the time you read this) and understand the implications.

2018 certainly promises to be an exciting and interesting year for planning and for RTPI West Midlands. ■

**Maria Dunn**  
RTPI West Midlands Chair  
March 2018

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**“ 2018 certainly promises to be an exciting and interesting year for planning and for RTPI West Midlands. ”**

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## Ten Years on – What's Changed?

It was with stark realisation that I am now 10 years into my professional career, leaving the University of Sheffield with my degree in hand to make a difference in the world – a task I'm still trying to work out what this really means and entails. However, it has provided an opportunity to reflect, and consider what changes have happened over this period.

Over the past 10 years we have seen three Prime Ministers and five Secretary of States' for the Department for Communities and Local Government, now renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – a little more sinister in my view. In addition we have also seen the coming and going of seven Secretary of States for Transport. This demonstrates the continual flux in which UK politics sits.

We have heard how reforms to the planning system will provide increased housing delivery and end the shortfall of housing supply. And it has been perceived that the planning system is broken. This has led to revisions to Local Plan Making, from the Local Development Frameworks back to Local Plans, quickly followed by the abolishment of Regional Spatial Strategies only to be replaced by a new lower tier of Neighbourhood Plans under Eric Pickles.



*Ben Simm.*

With all this rhetoric about how the planning system is broken and failing to deliver what the country needs in housing supply, no Government or Minister has gone in for a full change. Perhaps Gavin Barwell was heading in that direction with the published White Paper, but it seemed to have stalled whilst MHCLG focused on more pressing matters, and quite rightly with the devastation witnessed at Grenfell Tower. Although with the looming revision to the National Planning Policy Framework and the expectation of a consultation in March 2018, this seems to be getting back on track.

However, this is not a full overhaul and based once again on the rhetoric you would expect. This may be because the political scene is now changing its view to that the market is broken. It is noted that Labour, under Jeremy Corbyn, has been very quick to say that it is the market that is dysfunctional. The main issues of the existing housing market seem to be an insufficient supply and overinflated house prices due to demand outstripping supply.

Another core issue has been Government Intervention reducing the available housing further through regeneration programmes. The first was the slum clearance that took place in the late 1950's and 1960s being replaced with the 'Streets in the Sky' and high-rise living. However, these homes fell short of what was expected; many had built quality issues and also broke the working class communities. In addition, Local Authorities found them expensive to maintain; in the end the demise was apparent, and a substantial number were felled less than forty years later. However this extremely high density living cannot be replicated on the ground and this has added to the problem. Not that any party is actively acknowledging it.

The Conservative Government has identified the need to stop developer land banking which has been a substantial problem for some time. A difficult area to control, but could see the beefing up on planning powers to control them. It appears that the State would take over the site if developers fail to build out over a prescribed period. The Government

has also acknowledged that the delivery of council housing provides the opportunity to boost housing supply. The Birmingham Housing Municipal Trust is a clear example of this providing new social housing opportunities for those locked out of the existing housing market. It is clear the solution requires Council Housing to make a significant re-emergence to aid the resolution of the national housing crisis.

So reflecting on 10 years, what has changed? I suppose not a lot! There has been a lot of tinkering, but the foundations of the planning system remain the same and fundamentally robust – which is a good thing. Politics seems to be the biggest change, but the impact on the planning system seems to be minimal, it keeps functioning. The biggest area of change can be tackling the housing market and resolving the housing crisis. However, Governments sitting in the centre ground really have not tackled this, with a status quo approach, and it seems nothing is apparent in the short term.

Looking forward, what does this mean? Firstly, the impact of Brexit will have to be seen and whether that has any impact on the market or the planning process. This could be considered unlikely as housing supply would remain outstripped by demand, unless the UK economy collapses. However, information from the Bank of England is demonstrating the economy to be robust for now.

The next general election is scheduled for 2022, unless the Government falls apart. Could this see Labour in power? Well that is pure speculation! However if Labour was successful under Jeremy Corbyn, significant changes would be seen especially in relation to the market. Most notable perhaps, Local Authorities being able to deliver substantial amounts of Council Housing, but questions remain as to how this would be funded. The impact on the planning system is unclear but it is likely that the core foundations will remain the same, as remember it was a Labour Government, under Atlee, that introduced the original Town and

Country Act in 1947 and set the principal of the Planning System as 'Plan Led'.

So the only thing I can conclude that has changed, apart from various Ministers, is me. I am now ten years older, with a significant amount of grey hair appearing. I have grown as a planner in both my knowledge and skills, and know that I chose the right profession, even when tackling the hardest projects, as I do something I am passionate about and enjoy. ■

**Ben Simm**

Senior Development Management Engineer  
Warwickshire County Council

The opinions expressed in the Tripwire Guest Editorial are the view of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor's employer or the RTPI.

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**“ The main issues of the existing housing market seem to be an insufficient supply and overinflated house prices due to demand outstripping supply. ”**

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# Exciting Times Ahead!

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

**T**he West Midlands Region has had two major wins recently: Coventry being named UK City of Culture 2021, quickly followed by Birmingham being announced as the host of the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Both will put the West Midlands on the map for a top destination which will aid and develop the local economy, especially the tourism aspect - building on the solid tourism markets provided around the region.

More importantly, it provides the opportunity to act as a catalyst for both cities to promote regeneration and new developments. However the benefits will not only be felt in these cities, with no doubt benefits also being seen in the Black Country, Solihull and the Shires.

Birmingham City Council has already set out the proposals for the Commonwealth Village which will house 6,500 athletes, as well as including 1,000 homes and new transport links to the city. This project is also anticipated to lead the further development of 3,000 homes around the 24 hectare site in Perry Barr.

This is definitely a watch this space moment, and will see the planning profession from all areas across the region being involved in both these national projects. ■

**Ben Simm**

Senior Development Management Engineer  
Warwickshire County Council



*Artist's impression of Birmingham 2022.*

# Fake News or a Lack of Understanding?

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

It was with great trepidation that I watched the latest BBC programme on Planning, entitled 'The New Builds are Coming'. Whilst I had the usual shouting fit at the TV, only rivalled by my Dad giving instructions to his beloved Manchester United, the series did provide some thought provoking points.

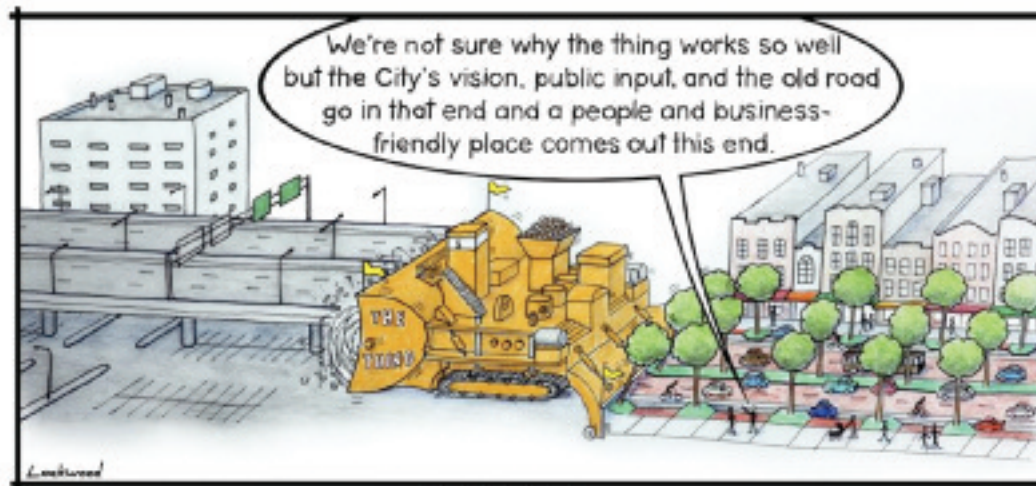
The most interesting point was a comment from the leader of the residents' opposition to the proposals of a new town near Culham when shown the results of the Planning Authorities consultation - that the consultation figures must have been doctored and it was therefore fake news.

Public Engagement and consultation is a fundamental part of our profession. I find that local knowledge, whether from a Councillor, Parish Council, Residents Association or a Resident, is invaluable. However, are we now guilty of hiding in our offices rather than going out and explaining the process to people and helping them to understand?

I don't think so. Most of the issue is about resources in the profession. There is a shortage, especially in Local Government. Therefore, not everything can be done and to some extent perhaps public consultation has taken a hit. However, we have to

consult, as the Law, National Policy and Guidance requires it. However, consultation is now done online and therefore the face-to-face element is diminishing and that is creating part of the problem.

The other way to look at the question is its NIMBYISM or is it that people do not want to face up to the facts?



The Thing Is ...

Recently it has to be noted that the planning system and the profession has taken a battering with negative comments by the previous Government and the media as being the cause of the housing crisis. In addition, media, especially local outlets, generally support the residents as they want to sell as many papers as possible – this often can lead to

sensational headlines and articles. This has not helped planners nor the public perception of the profession. People will always want to protect our environment and that is in our nature. There will always be resistance to development and infrastructure.

In addition, perhaps there is a lack of education about planning and the processes. It was interesting to note the woman taking the lead against the proposals stating that she had 'taken a crash course in planning' and that it was so complex that she still did not understand it. There lies the issue: it is too complex for the normal person on the street to understand.

I am not sure of the solution, but fundamentally at its core must be that education about the planning process is key. Moreover, whilst new technology and means of communication provide greater avenues to get the message out and make sure people are

aware, we should not abandon the old methods of a face-to-face discussion, as we might find out some useful information. ■

**Ben Simm**

Senior Development Management Engineer  
Warwickshire County Council

# Top 5 wish list for Changes to the NPPF

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

**W**ith the consultation on the NPPF now live I have considered the five headline areas where further development, clarification or justification is sought. Though as the NPPF is going to be revised, it doesn't sound like a substantial amount will change, but you can always hope!

**1** **Duty to Cooperate.** It is a recognised tool that duty to cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities is vital to accommodate the level of housing and employment growth needed by Central Government. However, if you consider the urban areas which are constrained by Greenbelt, notably Birmingham and Coventry, then pressure is being placed on the surrounding Authorities to accommodate this growth. This area is now being used as a greater potential for challenge for the soundness of Plans and Planning Authorities demonstrating they have considered and adopted the additional housing into the Local Plan. Residents often argue that the growth should be placed adjacent to that Authority, but this is not

always possible. However this may be amended, with the revision to the way housing allocations will be calculated as identified in the White Paper.

**2** **Greenbelt.** Another contentious topic but one that needs to be resolved as the Government has got a bit tongue-tied on this topic. The main revision needs to be in the type of land which is designated as Greenbelt; often people get confused that a lovely greenfield is the greenbelt, when actually the greenbelt is the poor quality scrub land adjacent over a ramshackle fence which acts as the boundary. This would also go some way to protect our high quality farmland for agricultural use, but also aid the public's perception of what greenbelt is. Alongside the above, a change to the 'exceptional circumstances' test needs to be provided; at present it is very woolly and subjective, meaning that a range of different decisions by professionals are made, keeping many a lawyer rather busy.

**3** **Transport Impacts – Severe.** Another subjective topic within the existing NPPF, however one that is yet to face a legal challenge as far I am aware as I sit writing. The phrase 'severe' provides no clarification and leaves it wide open to different interpretations. Though this has been tightened slightly, with the PPG requiring all Highway Authority's to have regard to Department for Transport Circular 02/2013. However this is still distinguishing what counts as severe impact in terms of highway operation, capacity and not forgetting highway safety. These matters can be continuous debates between Council Officers and Consultants until one side relents. I find transport discussions through Chapter 6 of the NPPF to be one of the key reasons for the delay in the determination of Planning Applications. It is also at present used as a way to provide the bare minimum possible in terms of transport access and infrastructure, which conveniently brings me on to the next topic.

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**“ Duty to cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities is vital to accommodate the level of housing and employment growth needed by Central Government. ”**

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**Viability.** This is now becoming one of the most time consuming elements of my current job. From my experience, developers wield too much power in this area and as long as a demonstrable case is provided, Authorities should fall away. The key area that always takes the hit seems to be affordable housing, with developers committing at determination, but then retracting once an issue or problem is found on site. This seems ridiculous as it is clearly against Government Policy, and only benefits the house builder, not home owners and the communities the houses are being provided for. Similar challenges have been made about transport contributions, but my position tends to be that without the contributions the development will not conform to the National Planning Policy Framework notably Paragraphs 32, 34, 35 and 38.

However the NPPF revision should require developers and landowners to do the various assessments beforehand at the outline including land quality and identifying issues such as contamination, high voltage cables and other issues as part of outline. Most sensible home owners do a survey before completing on a house, and therefore developers and landowners should have completed all the relevant surveys before getting planning permission.



*Transport Infrastructure is always a discussion surrounding viability.*

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**CIL Regulations.** My final point being the five pots rule. I am usually challenged on this after the submission of a response, asking for the number of existing contributions to be identified, the methodology for the cost calculations and how the request meets the CIL 122 Regulatory Tests. Once again the power lies with the developer, being able to demonstrate and manipulate to reduce the burden on their development. However most authorities are being restricted by the five pots rule, which often means ignoring the smaller contributions in favour of securing larger contributions which cover the cost of the required infrastructure. This is especially true regarding transport infrastructure, with additional funding coming from the Local Authority. However with the continuation of austerity this is difficult and there is therefore a reliance on Government Funding when available. This often means developments continue to build out without the required infrastructure, putting them in contradiction with the NPPF. ■

**Ben Simm**

Senior Development Management Engineer  
Warwickshire County Council

## Report from Seminar 31 October 2017 Birmingham

This was a very well attended spooky spectacular event kindly hosted by DLA Piper and chaired by the Chair of RTPI West Midlands, Craig Jordan. The informative topics of planning enforcement and Environmental Impact Assessments, combined with a planning case law round up, were engaging on their own, but to mark Halloween, the presentations were interspersed with an entertaining Halloween quiz. There were occasions when the speakers did not know that the next slide would interrupt their presentation with another quiz question! All in all, this made the session a very enjoyable event to be part of and not one bit ghostly quiet.

**Scott Stemp** from No5 Chambers started the session with an engaging and witty presentation on using the right tools for successful planning enforcement. Once everyone had chuckled at the slide image of a character putting a knife into a toaster (the wrong tool for the job!), the very useful presentation included the suite of powers available for planning enforcement.

This included other areas of the law, not just planning, for example, the health and safety

implications where a building presents a danger to public health or human rights, especially when considering if there are children at the site. He also gave us food-for-thought on always considering the outcomes and unintended consequences when choosing an enforcement method. For example, do you really want that Grade II listed building in poor state of repair to come into your ownership, or would you rather work with the owner on measures to bring it back into a good state of repair? He touched on the need to consider compensation and the Proceeds of Crime Act. The importance of picking the right legal tool for the circumstances was the theme of the presentation and the clear message was to consider all consequences - financial, reputational and political - before taking action.

The presentation further considered the use of stop notices, direct action and injunctions and the pros and cons of each. The presentation concluded with a thought on s215 notices and consideration about whether painting your house stripy constitutes an eyesore. The conclusion to that is painting a house does not impact on the condition of the land to adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area and therefore under s215 it is not illegal. However, as the property was in a Conservation Area, under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 section 4(2), it is outlined that “any particular development described... below should not be carried out within the whole or any part of a conservation area unless permission is granted” and therefore was illegal.



*Photo courtesy of [allaboutlaw.co.uk](http://allaboutlaw.co.uk). [www.allaboutlaw.co.uk/law-news/are-stripped-houses-illegal](http://www.allaboutlaw.co.uk/law-news/are-stripped-houses-illegal)*

**Trevor Ivory** from DLA Piper gave a comprehensive update on the number of cases that have made it to the Supreme Court over the last few months. Many cases have gone beyond the High Court and Court of Appeal this year and as these cases cannot be appealed once heard at the Supreme Court, they provide case law and references for similar hearings.

Trevor explained that the Supreme Court heard Lord Carnwath determine NPPF paragraph 49 as

irrelevant if the issue is over the five-year housing supply. If there isn't a five-year supply, environmental policies are less relevant. The court heard the difference between delivery and deliverability. To be deliverable it must be available, suitable, achievable and viable. Lord Lindblom explains, *"The fact that a particular site is capable of being delivered within five-year does not mean that it necessarily will be. For various financial and commercial reasons, the landowner and housebuilder may choose to hold the site back. Local planning authorities do not control the housing market. NPPF policy recognizes that."*

Another interesting case was around the definition of Previously Developed Land. We heard the case of Dartford BC v SoS CLG around development outside of a built-up area. The curtilage of a property is only considered in a rural area, whereas in a built-up area, previously developed land only extends to the footprint of the existing permanent structure. This clear distinction leads to the need to understand where a property is before considering the extent of brownfield land.

Dartford had refused permission for a new mobile home and caravan pitch on Shirehall Farm, the decision for which was appealed by the Applicant. In the Supreme Court, the local authority lost its appeal with Lord Justice Lewison saying, *"the NPPF accommodates the definition of previously developed land within the general policy about development in the Green Belt. If a new building is a*

*partial redevelopment of a previously developed site it is not to be regarded as inappropriate redevelopment in the Green Belt, provided that it has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The proviso also means that the encouragement of development on brownfield land is not, at least in the Green Belt, unqualified. So any possible tension is resolved."*

The final presentation was from **Vanessa Ralph** from DLA Piper who gave a very informative update on the changes to the EIA legislation that took effect on 16th May, meaning the 2011 regulations were withdrawn (with some transitional arrangements).

She explained that the legislation is catching up with caselaw and what has happened in practice over the past few years, rather than gold-plating new legislation. The presentation included the difference between screening (*do I need an EIA?*) and Scoping (*what should it have in it?*) and what is needed for each.

The exception as to whether schemes need a screening report to understand if an EIA is necessary is when development is for national defence or civil emergencies as its sole purpose, or where the regulations would have an adverse impact on development's purpose, and the 2014 regulations can be met in full. However, these exceptions need to be granted by SoS and not by the LPA.

The deadline for consultation has been extended from 21 days to 30 days and LPAs must not determine the EIA application before the 30 days has lapsed.

Another key change I picked up from this presentation is that the Environmental Statement now needs to be completed by a 'competent expert' and likewise the LPA's response must be completed by someone with 'sufficient expertise'. The onus on who justifies the credibility of the expert has been changed following challenge in the consultation drafting, and now the developer must be able to justify the Environmental Statement has been completed by a competent expert, whereas the draft legislation put the responsibility on the LPA.

The enforcement rules haven't changed substantially but there are significant changes in monitoring and Vanessa took us briefly through these.

The event was rounded off by some 'deadly-serious' questions, the announcement of the quiz winner and then a much-needed lunch to mull over the name of Tim Burton's 1999 spooky film and what on earth the Ghostbusters actually did! ■

**Anita Pearce**  
City of Wolverhampton Council

## Report from Seminar 23 November 2017 Birmingham

**F**looding issues – a drain on resources or an opportunity to sail through the application process? Well, whatever your views, flooding could never be a dry subject. Enough of the puns, at least for now (I can't guarantee I won't throw a few more in!)

This clearly popular and packed event in Warwick was chaired by **Ben Simm** from Warwickshire County Council before launching into a comprehensive introduction to the role of the Lead Local Flood Authority, presented by officers **Sophie Wynne** and **Hardeep Rai** from Warwickshire County Council. Sophie outlined some of the key recommendations from the Pitt Review which led to the creation of the LLFAs and associated changes to the planning system. She explained the different roles of the statutory consultees involved in flooding issues i.e. the LLFA, the Environment Agency (EA) and the Canal and River Trust. Different types of flooding sources were outlined, leading to an overview of the various methods for dealing with these including the role of SuDs and flood attenuation schemes.

Hardeep then continued, explaining what the LLFA is looking for in a planning application. He explained

that as a statutory consultee they make recommendations to the Local Planning Authority but the LPA don't have to take their comments on board although this only happens rarely. An LLFA is looking for compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the associated national guidance, ensuring that a development in one place does not increase risk of flooding elsewhere. He gave examples of the range of non statutory technical standards available, and highlighted that many LLFAs have produced their own more locally specific guidance documents. In planning applications, the LLFA are looking for Flood Risk Assessments and drainage strategies, surface water management plans, assessment of risk and safety, and consideration of residual flood risk. Maintenance plans are a key consideration. A range of data and information sources are used in making their assessment including flood maps and historic records as well as a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. He showed us a range of examples of mapping data utilised and an indicative site layout showing how SuDs can be incorporated at an early stage.

It was then the turn of the Environment Agency, and **Martin Ross** took centre stage to explain that the EA Sustainable Places teams cover large areas, each with several local authorities in the patch. Most of the EA staff in these teams have environmental and/or planning backgrounds and are the first point of contact for the LPA. The EA has a statutory role, advising on development in fluvial flood zones, 'ordinary water courses', 'main rivers' and on

proposals within 20 metres of a main river (20 metres "because that's what the law says"). He set out the policy context including the role of the sequential and exception tests.

Martin explained that there are a lot of pressures on floodplains, but some of these can be overcome. He showed us some images of flooded areas including one of a caravan site where all of the vans had been raised above the level of floodwater with hydraulic devices, showing how a local tourism business had been thrown a life-raft by investment in technology. He ran through several examples of good (and occasional bad) practice, with some inspirational solutions in the 'good practice' category, including developments with no living space at ground floor level, and the introduction of new trigger levels for warning people to evacuate early when there is risk of flooding to avoid them becoming stranded. He emphasised the need for early engagement in the planning process to ensure that a range of solutions can be thought through properly – such as raised access routes, lower 'rain gardens' and the use of private management companies.

Martin finished off by explaining that the EA offer early pre-app advice: basic advice is free although more detailed advice is chargeable.

A developer / consultant's perspective was then offered by **Dean Ward** from WSP. Dean didn't pull any punches when he said his presentation was more of a 'rant'! Dean's enthusiasm and passion for

his subject flooded through the room as he set out his frustrations with the way the NPPF is worded – phrases like ‘look to seek’ are too woolly and allow the barest minimum to be done. Dean stressed the need to consider flooding issues right from the start: make space for the flooding, for the water – don’t see it as a constraint, see it as an opportunity which can really add value to a site – after all who doesn’t like a view of a nice lake from the office window? Watercourses and flood mitigation measures have a wealth of benefits, multifunctional areas increase biodiversity and provide green space for communities and can also integrate amenity uses and play areas for instance.

There was another clear message: don’t shy away from consultation events. Communities often object to development – especially housing – but they have a wealth of local knowledge about the area. If the community (including Parish Councils) are telling you a place floods, ask them for evidence and records, does anyone have any photos, do they know what caused the flood, when / how often does it happen. Encourage people to keep records: evidence is vital.

Then we floated onwards towards the technical presentations. First up was **Brian Jones** from Hydro International Ltd. Brian explained how hydrobrakes work, through the pre-initial, transition and post initiation stages when triggered by a 100 year event (or a flash flood as you might prefer to call it when out to lunch with your non-planner friends: “Hey Doris, you’ll need your broly there’s a 100 year event

going on over Bill’s mother’s”). The technology was well illustrated by an animated slide which made it all look so simple! In very basic terms (which is all you’re getting from me here...) the system stores the flood water and then when the storm is over the water then gets released at a controlled rate to minimise damage and risk.

Brian explained that, hot off the press (November 1st), CIRIA had launched a new document, Guidance on the Construction of SuDs. He emphasised the need for different products / variations of products for different sites, one size most certainly does not fit all and there is still a need to educate people about this. CIRIA is going to be working with the RTPI on developing a set of resources to help develop policies and appropriately engage with stakeholders to deliver integrated water management. Watch out for the survey – coming to an inbox near you soon!

**Jarred Lester** from Rainwater Harvesting Ltd then followed. His focus was on smaller scale solutions as many smaller developers (including single houses and self builds) have been struggling with SuDs stipulations. Rainwater harvesting can be hard to model in terms of discharge rates and so a plot – based storm attenuation system has been developed. This is low cost (around £2k) therefore not a scary prospect for the small housebuilder. It requires only a shallow-dig tank (1m) and so is easy to install and is then calibrated to site requirements. Water entering the system is heavily filtered so doesn’t clog, and is then released at a controlled rate when the storm is

over. Maintenance is minimal – an annual filter clean, which is done by the owner of the property.

Finally, Sophie and Hardeep returned with some thoughts on current challenges for the LLFAs. They are new additions to the list of statutory consultees and LLFAs are still getting established. Resources – as everywhere – are limited and so areas of high risk are prioritised. For minor applications there are concerns because of their cumulative impacts and they do try and advise where possible. Ongoing monitoring is an issue as its not always possible to check whether schemes have been implemented and complied with, and ownership and management / maintenance is still an area which has not yet been fully addressed. Design standards vary between authorities and this can cause confusion in the development industry. Costs and viability arguments are an ongoing issue, and national policy is not strong enough to ensure truly sustainable development.

Ben brought the session to a close with a summary of the day’s key messages. Engage early. Treat water and flooding as an opportunity. Listen to communities and the evidence they provide. Educate people. Develop close working partnerships. New technology is evolving and doesn’t have to be expensive – embrace it. Be innovative...don’t just go with the flow! (that last bit was me – sorry, couldn’t resist). ■

**Clare Eggington**

Planning Policy Manager,  
Cannock Chase Council

The Panel, together with many in the audience at the Great Debate, seemed sympathetic to the suggestion that the provision of infrastructure for the West Midlands represented an era of confused chaos. This arguably represented the implicit context for a debate involving professionals from four of the most relevant bodies, RTPI, RICS, RIBA and the ICE.

Held at the Birmingham and Midlands Institute in Birmingham on 1st February, the debating topic of Infrastructure Provision attracted some 200 delegates. With lead speakers from each of the main professions, debate on infrastructure in the second largest conurbation was never going to falter.

For the RTPI, soon to be departing Chief Executive, Trudi Elliott, suggested one of the major contributions of planning lay in providing the framework for infrastructure provision through up-to-date statutory Local Plans and the NPPF. Mechanism for the funding of infrastructure is often poorly coordinated, with housing provision often presenting some classical examples. Trudi suggested there exists a greater need for the explicit recognition of complexity with future issues like smart city regions and the strategic locations for development being just two of the major challenges.

Beverley Nielson (City of Birmingham University and former candidate for elected mayor), whilst agreeing with many of Trudi Elliott's sentiments,



*Trudi Elliott, RTPI Chief Executive.*

underlined the critical importance of such current factors as congestion, pollution and, managerially the need for greater interconnectivity. Such matters must be clearly recognised in the preparation of visions for the future if the provision of infrastructure is to be more than a reactive process.

Adrian Dobson (RIBA) saw a stronger role for the National Infrastructure Commission and a requirement to accept the need for imaginative design to enhance the overall quality of the environment.

The challenge of managing complexity was seen by Geoff White (RICS) as requiring better quality leadership. There exists a need to focus on aspiration, delivery and funding. The latter is fundamental if large scale international funding is to be attracted with the need to meet international standards of provision (reference the ICMS).

Time and again speakers reverted to the need for care on costs and overruns exemplified so poignantly by Carillion with the project in the nearby Paradise Circus being literally a mere stone's throw away. Not surprisingly both Adrian Dobson and Geoff White emphasised a need for an immediate review of procurement procedures.

With the West Midlands urban conurbation representing a classical industrial age phenomenon the pressure for renewal, as well as totally new infrastructure is paramount. References to underground services, transport, education and medical facilities, telecommunications etc. ricocheted around the institute's theatre accompanied by the management challenges presented by complexity, uncertainty and conflict. But the context for dealing with all such issues and opportunities remains so opaque under the cloud of Brexit. For example, as far as infrastructure provision is concerned, what will be the future relationships, if any, to the European Investment Bank? ■

**Bryan Smith**  
RTPI West Midlands Committee

# Networking and CPD Evening in Worcester

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

For RTPI events in the West Midlands there are venues and there are memorable venues. The informative but social get together of RTPI practitioners working in the south of the West Midlands and north of the South West regions this evening networking event on 21 February was certainly in the “memorable” category, being held in the magnificent Assembly Room in Worcester City Guildhall. Hosted by RTPI West Midlands chair, Maria Dunn, the evening reciprocated the South West hospitality at Tewkesbury last autumn.

Designed to provide a networking opportunity for planners in the locality, the joint regional get together was a success. But it was not all chat as some fifty planners from both the public and private sectors were addressed on the issues confronting Worcester City Centre and the wider sub-region.

Nigel Wakefield from Node, an urban design consultancy, who together with CBRE and Systrae are tasked with preparing a Development Plan for the City Centre, gave the first presentation. Having a time-horizon of some 15-20 years the study seeks to analyse the centre as a whole, identifying development areas and how delivery might be achieved. However, as Nigel pointed out, the River Severn floodplain, heritage buildings and traffic circulation problems, means the future of Worcester City Centre needs careful assessment. One good example of the required care finds some expression in the quality pedestrianisation of the High Street.



*RTPI West Midlands Chair Maria Dunn presenting in Worcester's Guildhall.*

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## “ The constantly changing pattern of retailing ... need to be understood and catered for if Worcester is to retain much of its traditional attractiveness. ”

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Seeking ideas on how residential, economic and mixed commercial use activities could best be accommodated in a cathedral county town, consideration has been given to some comparable settlements (e.g. York, Gloucester etc.). But there are signs of new development with a hotel, university expansion and a revamped Cathedral Square shopping centre.

But it is the retail component of the city centre that arguably presents the most important challenge. The constantly changing pattern of retailing, influenced by changing life style, including the use of internet purchasing, together with economic uncertainty, need to be understood and catered for if Worcester is to retain much of its traditional attractiveness. The fact that many of the influences are beyond the Local Authority's control, or even influence, means that the next 15 to 20 years will need careful attention.

The second presentation by Maria Dunn (Planning Policy Team Leader, Worcester City Council) acquainted us with the strategic context of Worcester and the replacement of the development-planning framework. The city, strategically located

along the motorway spine of the M5, extending from the West Midlands conurbation to Exeter and embracing such important urban centres as, Birmingham, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bristol and Taunton is in a competitive corridor. Of the city's population of 101,300 some 65.3% are of working age and so the economic component of the evolving Plan is critical. Much of the traditional industry has gone or scaled down e.g. porcelain manufacturing although the county administration and commercial sectors remain and have been augmented by an expanding academic sector i.e. Worcester University, and the publicity afforded by a Premier rugby club, Worcester Warriors.

Joint working with the adjoining local authorities, Wychavon and Malvern Hills, has seen the plan to accommodate the growing population of the sub-region in new residential areas of growth; 2,500 units south of the city and 2,150 to the northwest. In addition, 6,800 residential units are allocated within the city boundaries. But the creation of new employment opportunities remains vital and to date a review suggests an adequate supply of land. Recent employment opportunities have arisen, with the

recently revamped Cathedral Square Shopping Centre being almost fully occupied.

Worcester City, together with its neighbours, is aiming to have a replacement Development Plan by 2021, the current version having been adopted in 2016. The new plan will have a horizon-date of 2041. As part of this exercise supplementary plans dealing with the City Centre and an Infrastructure Delivery (draft 2019), are underway together with updated assessments on housing, the Green Belt and flood relief. The completion of these studies and the Development Plan within the programme will ensure compliance with the rather bold notice on one of the Guildhall's side doors advertising "Quick Plan".

Whilst there is much to be recommended in a speedy plan making programme the uncertainty created by economic and political upheavals suggests that any evolving policy framework will need to be "flexible" and "robust" if it is to have any planning value with any meaningful shelf life. ■

**Bryan Smith**  
RTPI West Midlands Committee



# A brief history of the Green Belt

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

**S**o Coventry is following Birmingham's example and is to build 7,000 homes on around 10% of its Green Belt. This is just another twist in the ongoing Green Belt debate whereby local authorities propose Green Belt release (due to the exceptional circumstance of housing need) and those who live near the Green Belt protest and get very angry. Nonetheless, following the cases of Birmingham, Bradford and Coventry, it now seems that housing shortfall is a justifiable exceptional circumstance for Green Belt release...

However, historically governments have sought to restrain and constrain the growth of cities, especially London. For example, in 1580 Queen Elizabeth I issued a decree which attempted to contain London to within its City Walls. Nevertheless, the State was unable to enforce this decree so, through agglomeration economics, London has continued to grow and prosper (Cherry, 1996). Nevertheless, the huge growth of London during the Victorian era, which led to huge slums and terrible living conditions, prompted a lot of discussion and debate about urban growth (Hall, 2002). It was these conditions, alongside the growing popularity of the (perceived) 'rural idyll' in this, the world's first Industrial Nation, which led Ebenezer Howard and others like Unwin and Parker to generate their concept of *Garden Cities* (Bunce, 1994, p.1; Amati, 2008). These cities would be far enough away from London to be economically self-sufficient and were premised on seamlessly

integrating town and county (Hall, 2014). However, the development of these towns was limited, apart from Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, due to the lack of state support (Hall, 2002).

Arguably, it was the unprecedented housing growth and rapid ribbon development of 'Metroland' during the 1920s/30s, spurred by the growing Underground network, which changed public opinion towards favouring a Green Belt (ironically 1930s housing



remains some of the most popular housing stock today) (Cherry, 1996; Carlton, 2009, p.1). Both local and national Government began to act. Amati and Yokohari (2006, 2007) have shown how the Metropolitan Green Belt initially developed through land being purchased from private landowners by County Councils in Essex and Surrey. The Government also formally designated London's Green Belt through the 1938 Green Belt Act (Amati and Yokohari, 2006).

Nonetheless, it was WWII, which involved unprecedented state intervention and the following 1947 Town and Country Planning Act which created the State apparatus sufficient to designate and enforce Green Belt policy (Elson *et al*, 1994). The Act nationalised development rights (rather than land itself as was recommended by the Uthwatt Commission), meaning that it became illegal to develop land in the Green Belt without planning permission although there was a measure of compensation for landowners (Hall, 2002, p.73). Moreover, a number of reports during the War, most notably Abercrombie's *London Plan* (1944), argued for a Green Belt for recreation and roughly 5-8 miles wide (Gault, 1981, p.3; Thomas, 1963). The post-War Labour Government took up these recommendations, especially as one of its leading members, Herbert Morrison, had been instrumental in setting up the London's Green Belt as Leader of the London County Council (Amati and Yokohari, 2007). Moreover, as Hall (2002) argues, official statistics expected the birth rate to be low, car ownership not to rise significantly and the pace of economic development to be slow and manageable. Indeed, the government expected the state to take the leading role in housing development with the State controlling the growth of factories in the 'congested' regions of London and the South East. This regional policy also meant that companies were encouraged to move to the 'distressed' regions and, from 1965, the development of office buildings was banned in London and Birmingham (Hall, 2002, p.92). Academics have labelled this

economic system, where the state was heavily involved in economic planning and employment tended to be stable and secure in factory work, as Fordism (Prior and Raemaekers, 2007, p.580). Indeed, although in today's neoliberal society it is difficult to imagine such a high level of state economic intervention, Prior and Raemaekers (2007, p.580) argue that the Green Belt was created for, and a product of, this 'Fordist landscape'. Finally, although the Green Belt highly restricted growth around the large cities, the government also designated and established Development Corporations to build New Towns like Milton Keynes and Stevenage (Hall, 2012, p.62). This meant that during the 1950s the (Conservative) Government built 300,000 homes annually, there seemed to be an enthusiastic public attitude towards development and house price growth was generally kept low and affordable (Griffith and Jefferys, 2013, p.13).

Moreover, the Conservative Government (1951-1964), whilst not significantly changing the post-War (Fordist) settlement, also relaxed regional policy and shifted the burden of housebuilding from the State to the private sector which grew rapidly (Hall, 2002). Additionally, it was extremely influential in the implementation of Green Belt policy (Hall, 2002). The Housing Minister responsible for its implementation in Circular 42/55, Duncan Sandys, changed Green Belt's focus away from *conservation to containment* (Longley *et al*, 1992). The main purpose of the Green Belt was simply to

prevent urban growth (or sprawl) and Green Belt was not designated because it was of particular landscape value or for recreational use *per se* (Hall, 1973, 1974). Consequently, the Green Belt grew rapidly during the 1950s/70s as many county councils like Essex and Surrey viewed Green Belt designation as a mechanism to contain urban growth- this explains why the Green Belt is so large today. Moreover, the fact that recreation was not an objective of Green Belt *per se* explains the degraded and poor character of much of the Green Belt (Thomas, 1963; Hall, 1974).

### Epilogue

This blog has argued that the key drivers of Green Belt were the change in public attitudes towards greenfield development in the 1930s, the huge expansion of State intervention in the planning system in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the way that Green Belt was implemented by the Conservative and successive governments since the 1950s. However, while much of the post-war settlement with its high level of state intervention has been swept away with Thatcherism and neoliberalism including most of government's regional policy, the New Towns programme and public/ social housebuilding, it poses the fascinating and poignant question as to why the Green Belt policy remains (Prior and Raemaekers, 2007). Indeed, in the midst of huge housing and development pressure and throughout the changes of successive Governments, why has the Green Belt policy not been significantly reformed or

abolished? This PhD will aim to explore the answer to this alongside trying to find solutions for how the Green Belt could be reformed in an environmentally sustainable and politically acceptable way. No easy task!

However, some initial thoughts are, firstly, that Green Belt is generally very popular because of the love many English people have of the countryside and because it symbolises Britain's 'Green and Pleasant Land' (Bunce, 1994). Arguably Green Belt also is a tool by which property owners, especially in or near the Green Belt, maintain and sustain their property values and 'rural exclusivity' (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000, p.1382; Amati and Taylor, 2010). Indeed, where policy is 'captured' and used by people to protect their vested interest this is often called 'rent seeking' behaviour (Cherry, 1996, p.202). To conclude, therefore, the countryside property lobby and a popular love of the countryside combine to make the Green Belt such an enduring and popular policy although it is also what makes reforming it, and this study, so challenging... ■

### Charles Goode

Charles Goode is a PhD candidate in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Birmingham and is evaluating whether reforming the Green Belt is a feasible solution to Britain's housing crisis. He is very interested in the views of RTPI members on this topic- feel free to contact via email: [charlesgoode@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:charlesgoode@hotmail.co.uk)

# On the Integrative Role of Town and Country Planning

RTPI West Midlands // Spring 2018

## Integration /,ɪntri'greɪʃən/ noun

- the act of combining or adding parts to make a unified whole.
- The state of combination or the process of combining into completeness and harmony.
- To combine two or more things in order to become more effective.

*Origin: 1610s, from French intégration and directly from Latin integrationem “renewal, restoration,” noun of action from past participle stem of integrare.*

A recent seminar on planning and health<sup>1</sup> included a presentation by Hugh Barton drawing on his new book: *City of Well-being*<sup>2</sup>. The scope of the work includes numerous agendas, from the purpose of planning to the essence of good design, and includes a substantial body of argument and evidence concerning the fundamental link between planning and health. The improvement of public health was, of course, one of the key drivers for the establishment of planning as a discipline, a purpose which has been subsumed into a more diverse programme. Hugh Barton's work seeks, I think, to stitch back together some of fragments which have been created over the past 50 years into an integrated approach which sets public health (physical and mental) at its heart to meet a different, wider conception of a healthy environment. Putting this into practice, according to Nicholas Falk<sup>3</sup>, practical planning activity should focus on:

WHAT	HOW
<b>Connectivity</b> (‘joined-upness’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development around railway hubs</li><li>• Rapid transit for extensions</li><li>• Link to jobs</li><li>• Cyclists have priority / treat cars as guests</li><li>• Integrated parking</li></ul>
<b>Community</b> (choice, quality of life, health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schools at the heart</li><li>• Children first</li><li>• Open space stewardship</li><li>• Life-long neighbourhoods</li></ul>
<b>Climate</b> (anticipate change to enhance desirability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water as a focus – SUDS</li><li>• Renewables</li><li>• Social spaces</li></ul>
<b>Character</b> (distinctive, sense of place, vernacular)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Masterplanning for neighbourhoods</li><li>• Attention on lifestyles</li><li>• Appeal to different tastes (milieus – ‘actives’, ‘escapists’, ‘transitionists’ etc)</li></ul>
<b>Collaboration</b> (common perspectives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land assembly</li><li>• Local development companies</li></ul>

Plenty of sensible suggestions then to deal with the type and scale of the current planning challenge which is of an order not seen since 1947 – housing ‘targets’, associated infrastructure provision, a scarce land resource, and an urgency of delivery which forces the decision-making process. Given that planning is a blend of the technocratic, legalistic and political, we tend to get the planning outcomes that we deserve, witness the apparent confusion and lost opportunity associated with how to deal with the Green Belt ‘problem’, in particular the tensions between its planning function, inflexibility and popularity.

Whilst always being a contested policy, the battle lines appear to be hardening as large-scale release is likely to be required across the Country, in many cases for the first time since the Green Belt’s establishment. To try and help, the Housing White Paper<sup>4</sup> proposes some steps towards what might be interpreted as more integrative policy and practice. At pages 84/85 we have the following:

- Amend Green Belt boundaries only when they can demonstrate that they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements, including: use of brownfield land, public sector land, development densities and the Duty to Co-operate.
- Where land is removed from the Green Belt, local policies should require the impact to be

offset by compensatory improvements to the environmental quality or accessibility of remaining Green Belt land (community forests, nature reserves or allotments).

- When carrying out a Green Belt review, local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs.

All reasonable proposals which seek to advance positive planning, but their implementation raises questions over their practical realisation. In short, there needs to be a better demonstration that Green Belt release can be part of a strategic approach to development which is not intrinsically damaging, either to the open character of the countryside or to property prices.

Locally, planning for Green Infrastructure might assist in realising joined-up approaches to the allocation of development in a way in which health and well-being is promoted. These studies have been widely prepared but too many appear to be languishing unimplemented because of their failure to demonstrate how their recommendations can be realised as part of development proposals. Here needs to be a better understanding of how these strategies can be used as part of a wider planning approach, as the NPPF and the Housing White Paper suggest, and in turn a strategic approach to planning for Green Belt release. Perhaps an

additional prompt, and focus, could be the new agri-environment funding regime planned for 2024, as part of which the relationship between land management in the urban fringe and the health and well-being needs of urban and suburban residents might be examined. In this regard, if the integrative potential of town and country planning is to be realised, the geographical relationship between homes, services and jobs, along with the provision of strategically planned greenspace, will need to come under particular scrutiny. ■

**Robert Deanwood**

Wood. Environment & Infrastructure UK

- 1 RTPI West Midlands Seminar: **Planning for Health** 29/09/17 Reported in Tripwire Autumn 2017
- 2 Hugh Barton (2017) **City of Well-being: A radical guide to planning**
- 3 RTPI West Midlands Seminar: **Planning for Health** 29/09/17
- 4 MHCLG (February 2017) **Fixing our broken housing market**

2018 has kicked off to a flying start for planning professionals; most recently with the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation Proposals (you may have seen our own **Luke Coffey** introducing Prime Minister Theresa May at the launch of the document). So with a buzz of excitement in the air, the Committee is as busy as ever organising events for Young Planners across the region.

## HS2 update: The journey begins

On 7 February, we hosted 'HS2 update: The journey begins' with presentations from James Mumby (Town Planning Manager at HS2) and Gary Woodward (Development Planning Manager at Birmingham City Council).



James Mumby set out HS2's timeline from the project's inception in 2009, through the parliamentary process as a Hybrid Bill, followed by Royal Assent and into the construction of Phases 1 and 2 up to 2033. James' focus was the Phase 1 scheme and the range of powers enabled in the High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Act 2017, in particular the planning regime and the consents processes required to deliver all the works associated with the railway.

Gary Woodward focussed on 'unlocking the potential of HS2', centred on the new Curzon Street station and the ambitions and opportunities for wider growth in the area which could be enabled by it. He described the key planning and urban design challenges that the project needed to take into account in delivering a high quality station and urban realm, but also to facilitate new connections and growth around it. Gary explained the context of the Big City Plan, the 'big moves' for the station to be developed through detailed design and how the wider benefits for the city could be realised.

## Forthcoming Events

### Licentiate APC Workshop – Monday 9 April 2018

Ready to take your career to the next level? Join us at Birmingham City University on Monday 9 April for essential guidance on achieving success in the L-APC. You will be briefed on what is involved in preparing an application, what you need to include and how you present it. It is also a great opportunity to ask questions and hear from others preparing their submissions.

Students, Licentiates, mentors and employers are all welcome. For more information and to book your place, [click here](#).

### EP-APC, A-APC or Associate Membership Workshop – Wednesday 25 April 2018

This is a joint event for the West Midlands and East Midlands and will cover the RTPI's new routes to Chartered membership:

- the Associate Assessment of Professional Competence (A-APC)
- the Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC)

Applications to join the Associate class – a partial professional qualification – will also be covered.

### RTPI YPWM Annual Quiz

Back by popular demand will be our annual RTPI Quiz! The quiz will be held at Sterling's Bar in Birmingham and details will be available shortly. A great opportunity to meet and compete with your fellow RTPI colleagues.

There are many more great events in the pipeline from YPWM. We hope to see you at one very soon! ■

**Rosie Cotterill**

Turley (YPWM Chair)

## Awards for Planning Excellence – RTPI Regional & National awards come together

**F**ollowing a review of the RTPI's regional awards schemes, our regional winners will now be automatically entered into the UK wide RTPI awards. This will better recognise our local winners as an outstanding exemplar of the region at the national level.

The RTPI's 2018 regional awards will now launch shortly after this year's national [Awards for Planning Excellence Awards Ceremony](#), which takes place on the 24th May. By aligning categories, entry requirements and judging

methodologies we aim to attract even more entrants to our awards schemes which each year give organisations a great opportunity to demonstrate their planning credentials on both a regional and national stage.

The RTPI West Midlands 2018 Awards for Planning Excellence will be launched in early June and winners will be announced at our **Ball and Awards Ceremony on Friday 12th October 2018 (save the date!)**.

Winners of our 2018 regional awards will then be offered the opportunity to be automatically shortlisted in an appropriate category in the national 2019 RTPI Awards. This means our regional winners will gain excellent publicity and recognition as both regional winners and national finalists, and potentially national winners!

We will be inviting regional entries from June, so start identifying your potential winning submission now! ■



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**“ The RTPI West Midlands 2018 Awards for Planning Excellence will be launched in early June and winners will be announced at our Ball and Awards Ceremony on Friday 12th October 2018 (save the date!) ”**

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Last September the RTPI Board strongly endorsed a review of the Planning Aid England (PAE) service which signalled a return to the original aims of PAE around providing free specific professional planning advice as well as helping communities in need engage with the planning system. Much of the new approach is about creating a wider range of volunteering opportunities for RTPI Members, under three main themes:

- **PAE Direct:** to continue providing planning advice and guidance to the public in the form of e-mail advice, individual casework, web-based advice as well as workshops and training with the emphasis on expanding the range of activities which can be undertaken by our chartered volunteers.
- **PAE Support:** to work with regional PAE task groups to devise and deliver a pro-active

approach to helping communities in need engage with the planning system. This work stream will develop over time in line with different regional priorities but will in many cases involve an ongoing dialogue between PAE task groups and relevant local authorities over a programme of targeted planning engagement activities.

- **PAE Consulting:** to include helping with bespoke community engagement exercises and bespoke training and workshops where these are consistent with RTPI/PAE objectives.

Under the PAE Direct work stream our e-mail advice service is being delivered by a panel of chartered PAE volunteers who have been trained to respond to general planning enquiries from the public. We have a second volunteer panel who have reviewed and updated our on-line PAE planning information.

Under the PAE Support work stream excellent work is being taken forward by regional PAE task groups to target specific areas and groups for support in various planning activities including on local plans, neighbourhood plans as well as individual planning applications.

There is considerable enthusiasm amongst PAE volunteers to get involved in delivering our new refocused work programme, which we hope will also attract new (and former) volunteers. To register to become a Planning Aid England volunteer, please visit <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/volunteering/how-to-apply/> and complete the online application form. ■

**Chris Pagdin MRTPI**  
Planning Aid England Manager



**Planning Aid**  
England  
*Engaging Communities in Planning*

## Our 25,000th member



We have celebrated a major milestone, electing our 25,000th member Holly Hobbs, a Principal Planning Officer at Powys County Council in central Wales.

### Commonwealth Summit Lecture given by Sir Terry Farrell CBE RIBA MRTPI FRSA FCSD

RTPI's most recent gold medal winner, Sir Terry Farrell, will give the RTPI commonwealth lecture on Monday 16 April 2018 at University College London. This will be based on [City making: the work of many hands](#). The evening starts at 6.30pm and will be followed by a networking drinks reception. Tickets are £15 including VAT. **[Book now](#)**.

## Professional Ethics



[An Introduction to Professional Ethics](#) is a new RTPI CPD module looking at the importance of professional ethics and the ethical challenges faced by planners. This bitesize module asks you to consider ethical scenarios and think about what you would do. The module is free, interactive and can provide an hour of CPD for RTPI members. Access it here <http://rtpilearn.org.uk> (log in required)

### Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA)

New practice advice from the RTPI aims to help town planners to improve the effectiveness and

efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans. It focuses on the particularly influential or problematic stages of SEA/SA, and emphasises how, when done well, it is a positive tool improving both local and neighbourhood plans, and protecting and enhancing the environment. Find the full report and summary here: [www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/practice/sea/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/practice/sea/).

### RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants

The Directory is now live at: [www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk](http://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk).

### Think Planning – Think Global: Planning Challenges in the Commonwealth

To coincide with the visit of the Commonwealth Heads of Government to the UK we are holding our own regional Commonwealth seminar in Birmingham on Thursday 22 March 2018. For all those who want to explore how the skills of planners are being used to help tackle some of the world's biggest challenges including rapid urbanisation, poverty and climate change. **[Book now](#)**.

### 2018 Planning Convention

On Thursday 21 June 2018, expert speakers from around the world will come together at the UK's largest planning conference, the annual Planning Convention, to address '*Resilient planning for our future*'. The programme will offer delegates the opportunity to hear from key industry influencers, network, discuss, debate and find creative solutions to the most pressing problems facing the profession. This year's headline sponsor is Allies and Morrison. **[Book now](#)**.



## 2018 CPD Programme

Further information about the remaining events in our 2018 CPD programme is available [online](#).

### Thursday 22 March

Think Planning - Think Global: Planning Challenges in the Commonwealth  
*University of Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Tuesday 17 April

Planning Law Update (Spring)  
*DLA Piper, Birmingham*  
Fully booked, waiting list only

### Wednesday 25 April

Utilising Infrastructure to Unlock Housing Delivery  
*Glenn Howells Architects, Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Wednesday 23 May

Neighbourhood Planning: Here to Stay?  
*University of Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Wednesday 6 June

Delivering Sustainable Transport for a Healthy Future  
*Pinsent Masons, Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Tuesday 10 July

Planning and Viability: How to Deliver Better Places and Outcomes  
*Cushman & Wakefield, Birmingham*  
Fully booked, waiting list only

### Monday 17 September

Preparing for Public Inquiries and Examinations in Public  
*De Vere Venues, Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Thursday 27 September

Design for the Real World  
*Bond Co., Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Tuesday 9 October

Planning Law Update (Autumn)  
*DLA Piper, Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)

### Thursday 1 November

The Challenges of Delivering the 'Right Homes in the Right Places': a Regional Perspective.  
*Pinsent Masons, Birmingham*  
[Book here](#)



## Other Events

[Details of all our events can be found online](#)

- Becoming Chartered: Licentiate APC. Monday 9 April, Birmingham. [Book here](#)
- Planning and design: making better places. Thursday 19 April, Birmingham. [Book here](#)
- North Staffordshire Dinner. With RICS. Thursday 19 April, Stoke-on-Trent. [Book here](#)
- Becoming Chartered: EP-APC, A-APC or Associate membership. Wednesday 25 April, Lichfield. [Book here](#)

### RTPI West Midlands Spring Reception

Thursday 26 April, Worcester.

The RTPI West Midlands annual Reception has become a popular social event. This year we are having a Spring Reception, on 26 April, which will be held at The Commandery in Worcester. The evening will provide an opportunity to tour The Commandery, a building with an 800 year history in the heart of historic Worcester, most famous for being the Royalist Headquarters during the deciding battle of the English Civil War – the Battle of Worcester 1651. Besides a drinks reception this networking event also includes a light buffet. [Book here](#)

### RTPI West Midlands Ball and Awards Ceremony

Friday 12 October 2018, Burlington Hotel, Birmingham. **Save the Date!**