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Will the Planning Reforms deliver a workable planning system for the future ?

***Essex Property Forum : Chelmsford
Thursday 27 October 2011***

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Towards a Workable Planning System

1 : Introduction

Localism and National Planning

- ❑ The “fundamental reform” of the planning system is causing uncertainty, delay and extra cost
- ❑ The Localism Bill is evolving with the Growth Strategy and the Draft National Planning Policy Framework
- ❑ How will the “top down” Draft NPPF be aligned with the “bottom up” Localism Bill ?
- ❑ How will the reform of national planning and local planning establish a workable planning system?



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Planning before the Bill and NPPF





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2 : The Localism Bill

What it takes out ...

- ❑ Over 1,000 pages of National Planning Policy Statements and even more in other guidance
- ❑ Regional strategic planning (RAs, RSSs, RDAs and RESs) (English Partnerships now with HCA)

What it adds in ...

- ❑ A National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to replace Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)
- ❑ Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Forums and Neighbourhood Development Orders



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The Localism Bill

Localism Bill

[AS AMENDED IN COMMITTEE]

The Bill is divided into two volumes. Volume I contains the Clauses. Volume II contains the Schedules to the Bill.

CONTENTS

PART 1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL POWERS OF AUTHORITIES

- 1 Local authority's general power of competence
- 2 Boundaries of the general power
- 3 Limits on charging in exercise of general power
- 4 Limits on doing things for commercial purpose in exercise of general power



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3 : What the RTPI is saying

We welcome localism in principle

- ❑ Planners have been working with local people since the Skeffington report in the 1960s
- ❑ The RTPI is continuing its dialogue with government to improve the wording of the Localism Bill

We are working to amend the Bill

- ❑ Our proposals to strengthen the duty to cooperate and make transition arrangements have been recognised
- ❑ These and other amendments will soon be considered by Peers in the Lords Third Reading



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The Minister for Decentralisation





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4 : Other RTPI comments

Neighbourhood Plans

- ❑ Need to think through neighbourhood planning and simplify the current proposals

Transition arrangements

- ❑ Carry over the RSS policies “assumed” in an LDF for 3 years or until the Local Plan is updated

Local Finance in planning decisions

- ❑ Withdraw the proposal for local finance to become a “material consideration” in development decisions



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5 : The draft NPPF

Leaked and then published late

- ❑ The draft National Planning Policy Framework was published just after MPs broke up for the summer
- ❑ The RTPI's first reaction described the Draft NPPF as a "missed opportunity" because it lacked vision
- ❑ The polarised media debate then prompted 23 RTPI Past Presidents to call for a reasoned discussion
- ❑ The RTPI has since hosted a meeting with 13 key organisations in the debate to find common ground



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The Draft NPPF



Draft National Planning Policy Framework



www.communities.gov.uk
community opportunity prosperity



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6 : Key features of the Draft NPPF

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- ❑ Economic, social and environmental benefits must be delivered by Local and Neighbourhood Plans
- ❑ Plans must meet objectively assessed needs and the default answer to planning applications must be “yes”
- ❑ Proposals in areas where plans that are out of date must be permitted if they comply with the NPPF

What is sustainable development ?

- ❑ “Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the future ...”



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7 : ... and the condensed PPSs

Planning for Prosperity

- ❑ Securing “sustainable economic growth” to restructure to a low carbon economy against global competition

Planning for People

- ❑ Increasing the delivery of new homes, widening home ownership and creating sustainable communities

Planning for Places

- ❑ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing resilience to the risks of climate change



The Draft NPPF and Localism

8 : The Draft NPPF media row

Promote “sustainable economic growth”

- ❑ “Sustainable development” is the balance between economic, social and environmental interests
- ❑ The Draft NPPF confuses “sustainable development” with “sustainable economic growth”

Protect the “everyday countryside”

- ❑ The draft NPPF dropped “brown field first” and protection of the countryside “for its own sake”
- ❑ It added a requirement for 20% extra housing land supply which will make plans “out of date” at once



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Parliament in Committee



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9 : The RTPI response in brief

Transition arrangements

- Adapting Local Plans

Clarity of wording

- Consistency (*eg of “weight”*)

Sustainable development

- Striking the right balance
- Sustainability Appraisal

Spatial strategy

- A vision of future areas for development

Statutory basis

- Parliamentary debate and parity with NPSs

Positive planning

- Integrating plans as well as development decisions



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10 : A workable planning system

National and local planning

- ❑ How will the “presumption” and NPSs be reconciled with local and wider than local planning ?

Economic growth and the environment

- ❑ How will planning enable economic growth and meet housing needs without eroding the countryside ?

Neighbourhood planning

- ❑ How will local communities accept the prospect of development and prepare neighbourhood plans?



RTPI Membership Services

1

Membership information

- **General enquiries:** info@rtpi.org.uk | 020 7929 9494
- **Governance:** General Assembly, Board and Committees
governance@rtpi.org.uk | 020 7929 8172
- **Membership:** membership@rtpi.org.uk | 020 7929 9462
- **CPD guidance:** cpd@rtpi.org.uk | 020 7929 8174
- **RTPI Regions:** www.rtpi.org.uk/regions | 020 7929 9477

Planning news and policy advice

- **Planning magazine:** *two-weekly and electronically*
- **Planning Theory and Practice:** *discounted price for members*
- **Policy guidance and comment:** *lobbying and shaping policy*



RTPI Membership Services

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Education and lifelong learning

- **RTPI Networks:** *sector-specific virtual communities*
- **Continuing Professional Development:** *Regions and Nations*
- **High quality commercial training:** *RTPI Conferences*
- **Assessment of Professional Competence:** *guidance*
- **Accredited planning courses:** *high educational standards*

Planning Aid

- Voluntary planning advice for individuals and communities
- RTPI is now bidding for the new Community Planning Fund
- Planning Aid will probably be adapted to meet new needs



RTPI Membership Services

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Workplace and practice support

- **Planners in the Workplace:** *personal support service*
- **Good Practice Notes:** guidance on planning practice
- **Signposting: information** on key planning topics:
- **RTPI Learning Partners:** employers supporting planners
- **Management guidance:** for public and private sectors
- **Consultancy support:** information and guidance
- **Recession support:** personal guidance

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