

**Helping to Deliver Climate Change Adaptation through
the UK Planning System**

**TCPA - RCEP Workshop
28th July 2009
TCPA London**

**ANNEX
Workshop Report
prepared**

for

**The Royal Commission on
Environmental Pollution**

By

the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)

August 2009

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Town and Country Planning Association

The aims of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) are to:

1. secure a decent home for everyone, in cohesive, well designed communities;
2. empower communities to influence decisions that affect their future; and
3. promote high-quality development through better planning of the use of our land.

The TCPA seeks planning policies to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development, including a better match between the demand for and the supply of homes – from both new and existing stock, providing a decent home for all, as well as a less volatile housing market. To do this effectively, good planning decisions are needed now more than ever before. And they must be made in a more transparent and simplified planning system based on widespread community engagement.



TCPA-RCEP Workshop Report

“Helping to Deliver Climate Change Adaptation through the UK Planning System”

This is a report of the Workshop held at the TCPA Offices in London on 28th July 2009, to inform the TCPA Study on the delivery of climate change adaptation through the UK planning system, which will in turn inform the wider RCEP Study on Adapting the UK to Climate Change.

On Tuesday 28th July 2009, the TCPA hosted a workshop to discuss the interim findings of both the RCEP and TCPA Studies on adaptation to climate change, and to identify high level issues with respect to the planning system.

The workshop was attended by over 40 people including Members and the Secretariat of the Commission, and TCPA staff. The 29 guests were invited from the built environment and environmental sectors, with a particular focus on planning professionals, and those with experience and knowledge of the planning process. Participants represented government departments, agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, community groups, universities, consultancies and professional bodies and industries from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The discussions were conducted under Chatham House rule.

The following report gives an account of the main topics deriving from the workshop discussions, including in **Annex A** a list of responses to the following question that delegates were asked to complete: *“in order for adaptation to climate change to be delivered successfully through spatial planning...”*.

Background and Aims of the Workshop

The focus of the RCEP study is on the institutional capacity and arrangements necessary for the UK to adapt to changes in the natural environment brought about by climate change. The Commission has focused on three aspects of the natural environment to illustrate the institutional arrangements relevant to adaptation:

- biodiversity, nature conservation and protected areas;
- sea-level rise and coastal zones, including estuaries; and
- freshwater (flood and drought).

The workshop opened with Professor Judith Petts (Member of the RCEP) presenting the background to the RCEP study, and conveying the issues surrounding building adaptive capacity. Professor Petts also outlined the aims for the day, which included:

- understanding the capacity of planning system to deliver adaptation;
- understanding how adaptation features in policy and development planning; and
- understanding how different actors engage in planning for adaptation e.g. communities, and how they can influence the approaches.

The exchange of ideas and expertise amongst the delegates would then feed into the final TCPA study. Another focus of the session was to look critically at the preliminary findings and observations of the TCPA's interim report, and incorporate feedback and comments into the final report. These findings, as well as key diagrams of the planning system for each country, were sent to participants in advance so that they could formulate their thoughts. Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner at the TCPA, made a presentation to the group reminding them of the findings and encouraging them to explore various issues in the ensuing individual group discussions.

An interactive, informal debate during the workshop was encouraged by group facilitators and the Chair, to discuss the barriers, enablers, gaps and synergies apparent in the planning system for delivering adaptation to climate change. There were two stages to the discussions: the first involved delegates choosing one of three groups to join, where they spent 30 minutes having a broad discussion about the findings and observations of the TCPA study, followed by 45 minutes on a specific topic, as follows:

- **Group 1:** policy development and development planning (Facilitators: Jon Freeman and Bill Morrison)
- **Group 2:** development management (Facilitator: Kay Powell)
- **Group 3:** community/stakeholder engagement (Facilitator: Hugh Ellis)

As the first topic was the most popular, Group 1 was divided into two sub-groups, each discussing the same topic. The agenda, topics and their 'starter questions' are included in **Annex B**.

After the delegates reconvened, representatives from each group presented a summary of their debate. The second stage of discussion took place as a plenary,

picking up points raised in the individual group sessions and giving delegates an opportunity to put forward general comments.

Emerging Themes

The following commentary conveys the main points that arose during both stages of discussion, arranged within a number of themes.

The Role of Planning

The spatial planning system's links to wider issues such as health and social services are becoming increasingly apparent, particularly in relation to its role in adapting to the impacts of climate change and creating sustainable communities. However, the planning service was not perceived to be a priority area within the management team of a local authority, and it therefore lacks the resources to deliver to its full potential. There was a consensus that planning has a significant role to play, but as other statutory and 'front-line' services such as education and housing are given priority by local authorities, planning budgets are often reduced.

Currently, planners lack the power to act. If spatial planning is to accomplish a greater role in adaptation to climate change, and realise its ambition to join up with other strategies, the resources and accompanying support are needed for effective delivery.

Uncertainty and the Need for Greater Knowledge

Uncertainty and a lack of relevant knowledge are major barriers to the effective delivery of adaptation measures through planning; not just in relation to determining climate change risks, but also as to the process needed to practically respond, for example, through development management. If planners are to play a greater role in adaptation, they will need advanced understanding of the definition of adaptation and how to take climate change implications into account, in order to make informed decisions about development proposals (a tick-box mentality will not deliver). There is therefore an evident need to build the capacity and skill levels of planners through a targeted programme of training and education. But it's not simple – they will also need to know what questions to ask, along with the skills and confidence to apply any relevant tools available to assist with the process.

Capacity-building of Councillors is also crucial – those on Planning Committees need to understand why climate change adaptation has been taken into account, and

Cabinet members why it should be a priority along with such issues as housing and education.

It was suggested that, in England, the National Indicator 188 process gives an early indication of the lack of knowledge and understanding within local authorities. When scoring themselves throughout each stage of the process, those authorities who assess themselves to be on higher levels of progress may not always understand the reality of acting on adaptation, and the extent to which it needs to be integrated into all activity. Those who put themselves on lower levels are often the ones that recognise the great challenges ahead - knowing “what you don’t know” is part of the solution.

One way of enhancing understanding is through the creation of, and interaction between, strategic partnerships. An example where this is urgently needed is between coastal management and planning bodies. Coastal and inland planning are not joined up sufficiently. Shoreline Management Plans were not planning documents, and there was nothing in place to deal with the outputs. Staff exchanges with other councils or with other departments can improve skills in, and understanding of, for example, coastal management, and enable more joined-up work on adaptation action plans.

Even if planners have the knowledge and understanding to deliver, it is crucial that the process itself is improved so that there is a supportive framework in which the necessary decisions can be made (such as the availability of robust evidence and comprehensive assessment). It was thought to be vital that Planning Inspectors appreciate climate change considerations in testing the soundness of development plans and conducting appeals – they will also need training and capacity-building to recognise that climate change is an integrated part of the process rather than just a bolt-on. Another issue was the availability of expertise that development management officers can call on when weighing up the many different aspects of a proposal – experts may be available in larger authorities within their sustainability teams (who will be analysing the UKCP09 scenarios), but smaller authorities may not have access to this type of resource. Some argued for the creation of larger unitary authorities which would have the capacity for a climate change team or department (compared with small district councils which do not have the requisite climate change knowledge). However, this was countered by those arguing that small district

councils can respond more quickly and sensitively to local needs and can therefore be more proactive.

The communities' awareness and understanding of climate change will also be essential, so that pressure can be put on politicians and local authorities from the bottom-up. It was suggested that, in Northern Ireland (with its lack of drive from central government), local government should take the lead in approaches to adaptation. However, this would be difficult without support from central government, hence the need for a big movement at the grassroots level (the public are signing up to climate change even if Ministers are not).

Once knowledge and understanding are established, sharing best and worst practice and learning from successes and failures will be valuable. In Cambridgeshire for example, climate change has been included as part of the County Council's corporate reporting mechanism, resulting in strong guidance and leadership at Director-level downwards. The drivers for adaptation action included: political and departmental leadership; growth area status; and proximity to flood risk-prone land. Another important enabler was the investment in building the skills and capacity of councillors, through training seminars for example.

In order to share best (and worst) practice, case study databases have proved useful. However, resources such as these need to include sufficient information on *why* approaches worked – the conditions under which they worked - as well as what didn't work. Defining 'good' adaptation is difficult to do, and planners will have to identify what they think good practice is.

In its action plan on planning to live with climate change¹, the RTPi has committed to develop climate change education and skills, reviewing and developing their policy for approving training providers. Some delegates argued that a new professionalism was needed.

Embedding Adaptation

Stemming from the lack of understanding and awareness, there was concern as to what extent climate change was being taken seriously in local planning authorities, and whether it was truly embedded in their visions. In England, a set of 198 national

¹ RTPi, June 2009, *Planning to live with climate change: Our seven commitments*, found at: www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2624/23/5/3

indicators have been selected to measure the performance of local authorities in achieving national priority outcomes. National Indicator 188 (NI188), “Planning to Adapt to Climate Change”, measures progress on assessing and managing climate risks and opportunities, and incorporating appropriate action into local authority and partners’ strategic planning². To date, a minority of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are focusing on climate change, and NI188 has only been taken up in only 56 (out of 150) Local Area Agreements. For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, performance indicators do not include adaptation to climate change. In England, the take-up of the PPS on climate change was also considered to be weak due to both the economic pressures on local planning authorities, and the inability of planning processes to evolve to adapt to new challenges (they are often too focused on traditional planning techniques).

Across all administrations, mitigation to climate change remains a priority, and a lack of local leadership and funding means that adaptation is taking second place (or being parked). In order to work, adaptation measures need to be integrated into all areas of governance and embedded into what communities do on a day-to-day basis. There are signs that individuals in local authorities are beginning to recognise the importance of adaptation, but it has generally not been embedded in ‘the system’. The procedure for doing this will naturally vary by nation and local authority – different areas will experience different climate change scenarios, and will require appropriate local responses. Although adaptation responses must be embedded into the activities of local authorities, there is not going to be a ‘one size fits all’ solution.

This lack of integration is partly due to the inability to measure results: mitigation outcomes have tangible, quantifiable results (e.g. reduction of CO₂ tonnes per year). However, analysis and evidence isn’t as strong for adaptation – there needs to be more research into what the ideal results are, followed by ways of measuring them. This has knock-on effects for the sharing of best practice amongst local planning authorities, as given the long timescales between implementing adaptation actions and experiencing their benefits, best practice examples may not be forthcoming immediately.

There are many competing priorities for a local authority, and climate change will be just one of them. The problem for planners is how much weight they should give to climate change – should providing more affordable housing come before the retention

² LRAP, December 2008, *Adapting to Climate Change: Guidance notes for NI188*. Version 1.6

of green space? There needs to be clarity on where priorities lie – where climate change fits within housing goals - as well as a level of evidence to back this up to Committee Members. The first stage may be to map all the services a local authority is expected to provide, and how adaptation can be incorporated into each activity. Unfortunately it was felt that many local planning authorities were more susceptible to pressures from economic development, housing and transport as policy drivers, rather than the impacts of climate change.

One solution suggested by delegates was that a ‘duty for resilience of the local area’ be introduced, which would encourage adaptation measures be incorporated into the delivery of all services, and that spatial planning becomes more focused on resilient land-use. The Climate Change Act was deemed insufficient to stimulate change as it doesn’t impose a duty to adapt on local authorities. The downside of this suggestion is that several powers and duties exist to drive other policies which are not necessarily working, such as the duty on biodiversity (under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act), which has not necessarily led to all public bodies successfully considering biodiversity in the work they do. Duties are therefore only one aspect of a portfolio of actions required.

Another potential incentive for adaptation action within the wider public sector, stemming from the Climate Change Act, is the power given to the Secretary of State to direct reporting authorities to produce a report on how their organisation is assessing and acting on the risks and opportunities from a changing climate³. However, local planning authorities and the housing sector are not specifically identified as reporting authorities, detaching planning’s role from adaptation even further. It was also noted that NI188 is intended to act as a lever for embedding adaptation into local authority activity, but its take-up has been limited, it is process rather than outcome driven, and it is discretionary for councils in England.

In embedding adaptation into authority activity, it was agreed that all institutions will need to work together – there is a danger of compartmentalising adaptation. To overcome this, thinking on climate change will need to be embedded within each institution.

³ Defra, June 2009, *Adapting to Climate Change: ensuring progress in key sectors – Consultation on the Adaptation Reporting Power in the Climate Change Act 2008*

In Northern Ireland in particular, the current period of planning reform would be the perfect opportunity to mainstream adaptation into any new processes.

From Guidance to Delivery

Participants highlighted the gap between the abundance of guidelines available, and actual delivery on the ground. As there is a wealth of guidance available, planners should take the lead in using it. One barrier is the inconsistencies between what government advises in guidance, and what regulations will allow. For example, development management officers may be constricted by building regulations. Any planning conditions implemented will need to be legally acceptable, and consistent with Government policy as applied by the Planning Inspectorate. Planning officers may be keen to go beyond building regulations, but the Government needs to catch up by putting a supportive framework in place. The gap between guidance and regulations needs to be addressed, and how mechanisms such as Building Regulations and the Code of Sustainable Homes relate to planning for adaptation.

It was agreed that a wide variety of guidance exists and it is a matter of knowing where to look for information, rather than producing more. The guidance, such as that provided by ESPACE⁴ (European Spatial Planning: Adapting to Climate Events) and FLOWS⁵ (Floodplain Land Use Optimising Workable Sustainability), needs to be followed through and better disseminated. It can be a valuable part of the evidence base for action, but hasn't necessarily led to delivery. One delegate described how the South East Partnership Board has produced specific guidance for incorporating climate change adaptation into Local Development Frameworks, which lists all the support available for delivery. However, it was perceived as a document aimed at the willing – Cabinet Members would still need persuading, and this would need to come from a different direction – perhaps via a duty or power on local government (with a duty more likely to achieve results than a power).

Part of the problem in delivering adaptation may be the perceived increased costs associated with this. Delegates argued that increased costs wouldn't necessarily arise (for example, planting a tree which enables better adaptation to climate change may not cost more than planting a less resilient species). The main costs would stem

⁴ ESPACE was a five-year project led by Hampshire County Council and funded by the European Commission's North West Europe INTERREG IIIB Programme, further details available at: www.espace-project.org

⁵ FLOWS was a five-year project lead by Northamptonshire County Council and funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)/ Norwegian ERDF through the INTERREG IIIB North Sea Region programme, further details available at: www.flows.nu

from the education of local authority staff and councillors, and in consulting experts, in order to understand the costs and benefits involved.

At the moment, Planning Committees barely mention climate change in their proceedings – therefore there is no impetus to take actions forward. Delegates pointed to LCLIP – a Local Climate Impacts Profile⁶ – as a powerful resource in convincing councillors and staff of the importance of taking action. Similar hooks are needed for the wider public to achieve community buy-in. However, individuals and communities usually agree that climate change actions are important, yet can react negatively to development proposals such as windfarms: the disconnect between aspiration and delivery is a significant barrier.

The general consensus was that the system architecture was there in order for change to happen, but that more effective leadership was required to take it forward.

Levels and Scales for Action

Although the overall approach to climate change adaptation should be based upon a common set of guiding principles, the most appropriate adaptation responses will differ depending on the scale at which they impact – region, sub-region, city, town, neighbourhood or individual building. Large-scale strategic adaptation strategies at the urban scale (such as green infrastructure networks), need to be related to smaller scale responses (such as green roofs on individual buildings) – each scale will require different solutions⁷. Opinions on appropriate scale naturally varied: one delegate thought biodiversity was better suited to national level coordination due to its cross-boundary nature, whereas the urban heat island effect is much more of a local impact that should be addressed by local strategies. For example, reducing flood risk involves work at catchment area or coastal zone level (i.e. across administrative boundaries) linked to action at neighbourhood level for the implementation and management of SUDS.

The question of scale also applies to the evidence base – what evidence is appropriate, and at what scale? Regional coordination was seen to be useful for collating relevant data, as this would need to be scientifically robust, as long as it did

⁶ Further information on Local Climate Impacts Profiles is available from the UK Climate Impacts Programme website: www.ukcip.org.uk

⁷ Shaw, R., Colley, M., and Connell, R., 2007, *Climate Change Adaptation by Design: a guide for sustainable communities*, TCPA

not create inflexibility to respond to local information. There could be benefits in local data collection which could lead to greater ownership and innovation.

For decision-making on planning for adaptation, all levels were deemed important – local, regional, national and European. It is essential that all levels connect, but it is not clear how to go about doing this – multi-agency involvement can lead to confusion. In Wales, the same Minister is responsible for both planning and climate change, so a more integrated approach has been achieved with greater linkages between strategies such as those for biodiversity and water. In England, planning and climate change are within the remit of various different departments (DECC, Defra, CLG), which need to work together with varying success to develop a coordinated adaptation strategy (see ‘Other Actors’ below).

In England, the Regional Development Agencies are set to play a greater role in developing Integrated Regional Strategies, which will provide the strategic planning framework to be taken forward by local planning authorities in their Local Development Frameworks. It is important that climate change is given the attention it deserves during this process. Many argued that local level decision-making would make the most impact, although clearly it would be essential for local and regional bodies to work together. Some argued that action at national and local levels would be more significant than at regional level – as funding for climate change needs a national lead, but many of the relevant actions would need to be delivered locally. The group did however agree that regional transport schemes could play a key role. As for the European level, it was felt that direction from the EU was essential for putting the framework for decision-making in place, but that Directives shouldn’t obstruct adaptation – they could be a potential barrier.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill is currently being consulted on in England, and may present a potential institutional barrier, in that it removes reciprocal roles and duties of the regional planning body (RPB) seeking the advice of upper-tier authorities in drawing up the RSS, and of the authority giving advice to the RPB (e.g. relating to the inclusion of specific policies on climate change). Potential legislation such as this could change the role of local government, and subsequently threaten the delivery of climate change adaptation through planning.

Practical Solutions (and Barriers)

There was a comment about the possibility that considering various adaptation measures could increase the length of time it would take to reach planning decisions. If planners are to work towards a more efficient and speedy planning application process (as advised in the Killian Pretty Review in England, and by the Environment Minister in Wales upon announcing a review of the planning applications process in June 2009), the quality of decisions and application documents may be compromised. However, if a supportive LDF is in place through which decisions are made, this would not be a problem.

Well thought-out plans and more prescriptive policies in LDFs were deemed important in terms of guiding decision-making, and facilitating the measurement and subsequent reporting of climate change outcomes. The development management group suggested that adaptation be reflected as soon as possible in the LDF making process, if necessary within other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents rather than in the Core Strategy. With 80% of LDFs still incomplete five years after the process was implemented, progress is slower than expected, but now is the time to get policies integrated. Policies for climate change adaptation will need strong champions as some council members may not support them. Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) need to be used as a review and feedback mechanism to improve planning performance and measure the success of plans towards a local vision that includes adapting to climate change. It was suggested that the new Adaptation Sub-Committee could have a scrutinising role, or act as a reporting mechanism. However, the first stage would be creating plans and strategies with clear and realistic policies to monitor achievements against. The links between NI188 and the role of planning need to be established too. Both NI188 and AMRs could then act as mechanisms for incorporating adaptation into planning.

Measures such as sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS) will be extremely important in reducing flood risk. The Flood and Water Management Bill, covering England and Wales and currently under consultation, envisages sustainable drainage being considered at an early stage of the planning process, with unitary councils (or county councils in liaison with district councils) ensuring planning conditions require appropriate SUDS solutions. It proposes developing national standards for SUDS (which would become a material consideration in planning decisions), but neglects the urgency of retro-fitting SUDS into the existing built environment. The Bill also envisages that local authorities will have an increasing role in local flood risk

management linked to the spatial planning process, and that planning obligations and CIL could help introduce the required infrastructure into developments.

The potential use of Compulsory Purchase Orders was considered to be a last resort because of the complexities. It could be more effective to ensure adaptation measures (e.g. planning of green infrastructure) are integrated into the LDF Core Strategy and other DPDs. Design and Access Statements, which are mandatory in most planning applications, could also play a greater role, with developers required to outline the climate change adaptation measures incorporated into the design.

It was suggested that there should be a requirement to assess climate change impacts (and the necessity for adaptation) as part of the hierarchy of environmental assessments surrounding plan-making and development proposals (e.g. SEA, SA and EIA). This would feed into the evidence base to inform planning officers and councillors when making recommendations and final decisions. Environmental assessment procedures also allow for community consultation and the opportunity to look at wider social issues rather than solely environmental ones.

At the wider level, it was felt that planners should be supported (by amending PPS guidance for example) in moving away from infill development, towards comprehensive developments such as urban extensions, which would provide the opportunity to build-in a network of green infrastructure and other measures to adapt to climate change.

An improvement in the status of planning including creation of a statutory requirement for appointment of a Chief Planning Officer in every local authority was also considered important in making planning visible and giving planning more credibility. This would put planning on a par with other sectors such as education (the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local education authorities to appoint a Chief Education Officer). Chief Planners need recognition on the senior management team of the local authority.

The Community Role

Existing processes used to engage the public in planning are not considered effective enough. However, actions on adaptation could open more positive gateways for communities to become involved, for example, with the planning of green and blue infrastructure at the local level. This would require a) gaining political consensus and

unilateral agreements between neighbouring councils on the issues, b) pooling the knowledge and information available about adaptation with strategic partners and deciding how best to communicate this information, before c) engaging communities.

Greater understanding is needed of different approaches – ‘public participation’ is needed rather than ‘consultation’; consistent language is needed before engagement can deliver to its full potential. One way of achieving this is to ensure that effective means of engaging communities is on the curriculum for trainee planners and features in every planner’s continuing professional development plan. It is also necessary to identify where and when issues of climate change adaptation are best discussed – it could be via the LSP, or at community planning events. There are lots of good examples that will provide inspiration, but the resources are often lacking to replicate these.

The diversity of the audience or local community must be considered – culture, race, disability, resident or business, and degree of deprivation demand different approaches. In some cases there need to be changes in the planning engagement methods used, in others the introduction of adaptation issues into existing forums. It was argued that existing methods only engage a minority of community stakeholders and residents, and this problem needs to be addressed before community engagement on climate change adaptation can be implemented. However, local authorities need to avoid creating consultation fatigue.

Ways are needed to help people visualise the impacts of climate change, and make them more real. Unfortunately, communities do not tend to engage or demand change until a dramatic impact occurs, such as flooding. The mitigation aspects of climate change have been difficult for communities to understand, and applications for renewable energy plants have been vetoed. Through effective engagement, communities can get a better grasp of the benefits of approving schemes which feature adaptation measures, as these are often easier to understand than developments for mitigation. One delegate had experienced effective engagement through the recruitment of a ‘climate change teacher’ who travels from school to school engaging students. Case studies would be useful, including those from abroad, on innovative methods of engagement.

It was suggested that planning is a good vehicle for interpreting adaptation needs of the local community. If communities are engaged and awareness is raised, it can

open doors at the local level to trigger change. However, skilled facilitators with relevant experience are needed, possibly external to the local authority running the public consultation, and these people come at a cost. Again, funding is an issue.

Is Planning the Answer?

Adaptation to climate change will have an appropriate place within other regulations and sectors, and we should not be over ambitious about the importance of planning. However, planners can be key players in the UK's institutional response to climate change, particularly in understanding the risks and opportunities in spatial terms. Planners and other actors need to be brought closer together to address adaptation – planners do not necessarily have to become experts, but they need to be able to ask the right questions. The role of planning could be as a vehicle for integrating different strands of work and different actors in the process, thus building adaptive capacity. This ties in with the new vision for spatial planning (PPS1), with its emphasis on integration and coordination with other non-planning mechanisms, programmes, initiatives and professionals. The new National Policy Statements could also act as a catalyst for a coordinated response to climate change adaptation, as long as different government departments such as DfT and DECC work together.

A robust, forward-looking, overarching plan and its policies can contribute significantly to ensure developments that are resilient to climate change. Planners are still coming to grips with the impacts of climate change and their relationship to the long term vision of spatial plans – but now is the time to think about this. Climate change, including adaptation, should not be seen as competing with priorities such as housing, economic development and transport, but rather as an underlying theme or principle to deliver sustainable housing, transport, economic development and other social care activity. This would mean a focus on delivering outcomes of the vision set out locally and creating high quality places.

Given the numbers of planning applications processed annually (649,000 in 2007/08⁸); there is a great opportunity to deliver adaptation measures through wider place-making objectives. Planners need to use their skills to help think ahead 20-30 years and over the longer term. As the place-making agenda evolves, so must the culture of planning. Clearly, the environment is not static – it will continue to change,

⁸ Live Tables on Development Control Statistics, available at: www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/livetables/livetablesondevelopmentcontrolst/

therefore any planning initiatives to adapt to climate change will need to be adaptable themselves and planners need to shift to become more flexible in their thinking.

Summary

The following diagram summarises the findings according to barriers, enablers, gaps and synergies.

<p>Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a priority Availability of funding and investment Uncertainty and inexperience Tick-box mentalities Political resistance Silo mentalities (within LPAs and in central government departments) Conflicts with Building Regulations Detached from consequences of climate change Inability to quantify / measure results Inconsistent strategies / regulations Planning Inspectorate mentality NIMBYISM Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill Multi-agency involvement Slow progress on LDFs Fixed mindsets and inflexibility Inconsistent messages from Government Culture of planning profession Lack of urgency Perceived costs of adaptation action Lack of duties / power 	<p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and education programmes Investment in councillor training Defining good practice Tools for raising awareness Accessible expertise Sharing best and worst practice Provision of capital expenditure Local Strategic Partnerships (incorporating climate change into the LAA) Transferring / exchanging skills Climate change teams / departments (working with planners) Inclusion in council's corporate reporting (and recognition by senior managers) Revised PPS on climate change More effective / targeted duties (e.g. duty for LPA to report / duty of resilience) Resources such as ESPACE / LCLIP Proactive policies in LDFs / DPDs / SPDs Annual Monitoring Reports Design and Access Statements Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal Role of Chief Planning Officer Innovative community engagement examples Consultation on curriculum for planners Exposure to impacts National Policy Statements Mapping high risk / vulnerable areas Climate change section in all Committee reports Assessing the value of adaptation
<p>Gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive framework to deliver (e.g. for empowerment to act) From guidance to delivery on the ground Resources e.g. skilled staff Knowledge and expertise Leadership Community understanding Positive thinking yet prevention of delivery Case studies (e.g. on innovative methods of engagement) Clarity on regional role (single Regional Strategies?) Recognition by Planning Committee Integration across all LA activity Evidence base Approaches to community engagement / language and information used Integration with development management 	<p>Synergies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place-making incorporating health and social welfare Sustainable Development agenda NI188 objectives Planning reform Regional transport schemes Adaptation Sub-Committee New vision for spatial planning (PPS1) Green infrastructure and biodiversity strategies

Links with the TCPA Report

The findings from the workshop reflect those of the TCPA's main study in many ways, and reinforce many of the barriers identified in its conclusions. The gap in delivery is clear – planning professionals can make a valuable contribution but without a supportive statutory framework in place, they lack the power to act, and are unable to give priority to decisions based on climate change. The institutional arrangements were also perceived to be a barrier, with delegates pushing for more joined-up thinking between departments responsible for the environment and spatial planning. In terms of policy development, the group felt that more explicit, prescriptive guidance was required in development plans to actually deliver climate change adaptation effectively. However, to support delivery, clarity and assistance in establishing an evidence base and accessing relevant data was also seen to be important. Perhaps the greatest obstacle is the lack of understanding and skills evident amongst planning officers, committee members, management teams, the community and even politicians. Innovative techniques for awareness raising, and a targeted programme of training and education, were seen as crucial resources for addressing this issue.

The opportunities towards change, and enablers for delivery (as outlined in the summary), closely relate to the TCPA's study – such as through the application of existing statutory duties and powers, and better integration with other sectors within the spatial planning performance framework. Other valuable suggestions were forthcoming in terms of, for example, enabling development management decision-making, consistency between guidance and regulations, as well as taking greater action at the local level.

Annex A: Delegate Responses

“In order for adaptation to climate change to be delivered successfully through spatial planning...”

- we need (inter alia) development plans to be spatially explicit (i.e. on a map) about:
 - areas of high risk, where development will be very strictly controlled (e.g. high flood risk, high coastal erosion risk)
 - areas to be used for green infrastructure, flood storage, space for wildlife to move etc
 - areas of existing development to be relocated out of risk, and non-vulnerable uses allowed

...and we need climate change to be factored into most development control decisions, through:

- specific climate change chapters in Environmental Statements in EIA
- specific climate change sections in all committee reports for applications
- climate change information to be a requirement of applicants for development above a certain size threshold

The test for these decisions is “is the development fit for the climate it will exist in?”.

- we need to understand better what can only be delivered through planning, and do that well; rather than trying to do through planning what could be done and is being done through other routes and probably doing it less well
- every planning application should be assessed and scored for its environmental impact (against standard criteria relevant to the Local Authority and area) before submission to the Planning Committee
- we need informed and “appropriately” connected decision and policy-making capable of operating and different spatial and temporal scales
- there need to be consistent messages from Government that dealing with the consequences of climate change is mandatory at all levels of planning activity, across all sectors...and recognition that planning is vital to delivery
- local authority planning departments need to be supported, encouraged and required to incorporate a changing climate into local development frameworks and development control decisions
- we need to make climate change personal to people. What does it mean to the public? What does it mean to planners? How does it affect their lives on a day to day basis?

- we need to think more carefully about whether we are asking the right questions (including this one which implies that planning can “deliver” adaptation)
- we need:
 - full integration of all departments in local authorities so planning, climate change, housing, health, social services etc all work together and take full account of climate change issues; and
 - all land use developments must be part of spatial planning consideration
- local planning authorities need to have a duty to take climate change fully into account, and the Planning Inspectorate to be guided to take greater account of climate change adaptation and mitigation
- there needs to be:
 - national guidance
 - regional direction
 - community buy-in
 - inescapable obligations (through regulation)

Adaptation needs to be focused on local level decision-taking

- funding and education will be needed
- there needs to be a cultural shift in the planning profession
- one shouldn't rely on planners to provide leadership
- we need to resurrect the high level, high profile visionary planners to lead the change
- we need to increase its power over existing development
- we need the same urgency which is understood in mitigation to be attached to adaptation planning. Work back from where and what we need towns and cities to look like, and attune the timescale and strategies needed to get there – we probably need LPA's to have a strategy two months ago
- the evidence base and will base of local authorities need to be on a level playing field with the competing priorities across the local authority service provision i.e. we need costs/benefit analysis of all ecosystem services – adaptation will be recognised as cost effective and implemented in a timely way rather than retrofitted at a potentially much higher cost
- there needs to be a step-change in political momentum at the local government level to deliver adaptation on the ground e.g. through green infrastructure strategies and biodiversity opportunity areas (as in South East Plan) linked to LDF's, so planning applications can be decided in accordance with them

- most developers at all scales need to appreciate the value that “future proofing” their development proposals will add!
- there needs to be consistency between regulations (e.g. Building Regulations), national policy and guidance
- there needs to be (in Northern Ireland):
 - legislation, strategy, duty and guidance from Assembly and resourcing (LEADERSHIP!!)
 - fewer intra departmental silos – e.g. between Planning Policy and Climate Change Divisions (MAINSTREAMING)
 - revisions of the current suite of PPS’s
 - incorporation of key principles into Planning and Local Government Reform
- all stakeholders and levels of government must understand the issue, accept and agree the evidence base and develop systematic processes across all professions to determine what adaptation is required in a way that takes the public (in all their diversity) with them
- planners need to have a clear understanding of available evidence in relation to climate change adaptation and how it can be successfully applied to policy preparation (more detailed than PPS requirements e.g. plan-making manual etc)
- there needs to be detailed local knowledge / appreciation of adaptation requirements. This information needs to be “sold” to local political leaders and managers
- there is a need for a standard approach to mapping and assessing the value of ecosystem goods and services to feed into spatial planning decision-making relating to adaptation
- we need to plan at a scale appropriate to the problem which will facilitate the delivery of the solution

Annex B: Agenda and Topics for Discussion

Delivering Climate Change Adaptation through the UK Planning System – a TCPA/RCEP Workshop

Tuesday 28 July 2009 (17 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AS)

AGENDA

1300 Registration and Coffee

1315 Welcome and introduction by Chair, Kelvin MacDonald

Session 1: RCEP and TCPA Studies – background and findings

1320 Prof. Judith Petts: Introduction to RCEP Study

1330 Hugh Ellis: Introduction to TCPA Study and Findings

Session 2: Planning for climate change adaptation – working groups and plenary discussion

1350 Group sessions – introducing objectives and structure

1400 Stage 1 discussion

1430 Stage 2 discussion

1515 Plenary discussion: feedback and other comments (coffee available)

1645 Ends

Group Discussions

There will be three or four groups (if one topic is more popular than another, the group will be divided into two, each discussing the same topic), with a facilitator for each, and the group will identify a rapporteur to feedback at the plenary. The facilitator will also be responsible for capturing comments and action points. Each group will discuss the TCPA findings in Stage 1, and in Stage 2 will move on to discuss the more specific topics highlighted below.

Participants will be invited to choose which of the three groups they would like to join, and encouraged to join groups where they don't know anyone else (if the groups are uneven then people may be asked to change groups to even things out). The subjects for the groups and some suggested starter questions are provided below.

Stage 1: delivering climate change adaptation through the UK planning system (30 minutes)

Participants will have a broad discussion about the Key Findings and Observations. Starter Questions:

- to what extent are planning bodies/authorities empowered to make decisions and policies to deliver EU and national level climate change adaptation aspirations?

- are there capacity or capability gaps in delivery and implementation, and if so, where?
- are more institutions required in order to ensure adaptation to climate change is delivered through planning?
- what are the nature of the barriers?
- how significant is political resistance/ resilience?

Stage 2: (45 minutes)

Group 1: policy development and development planning

Starter Questions:

- what degree of integration is there between different planning regulations and guidance that ensures a long term perspective is taken?
- what is the appropriate level (e.g. European, UK, regional, local) at which decisions should be made for climate change adaptation?
- what is and should be the role of spatial planning in adaptation for the natural and built environments?
- what about timescales?
- is there enough availability and understanding of data sets as robust evidence base to sound policy and plan-making?

Group 2: development management:

Starter Questions:

- Planning permissions: to what extent can local planning authorities add in conditions on adaptation measures, such as SUDS?
- Planning obligations: to what extent can local planning authorities secure financial or in-kind contributions from developers through planning obligations?
- Given the above, how are local planning authorities prioritising securing contributions in policy and in actual negotiations?
- Compulsory Purchase: what scope is there for local planning authorities to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire land for development, redevelopment, or improvement of an area for adaptation? What kinds of development would be allowed, and would this use be consistent with the qualifications of the use for 'planning purposes' or 'proper planning'?

Group 3: community/stakeholder engagement:

Starter Questions:

- to what extent does development planning engage with communities, either through consultation or other participatory methods at regional and local levels?
- some adaptation responses could disadvantage some individuals or groups (e.g. coastal realignment could lead to individuals or communities having to move). How should the 'fairness' of different adaptation responses be considered?
- are there any measures in place which address the vulnerabilities of certain communities and/or mechanisms to enable consultation to take place?
- who are the key actors and bodies in the process?
- how should these key actors and the planning departments interact with each other, and how can their roles and functions be integrated into the planning system to help deliver adaptation?