

Heads of Planning Scotland

Newsletter Summer 2013

Welcome



I am delighted to have been nominated as Chair of HoPS for this year and am looking forward to the role! For those that don't know me, I am Head of Planning & Building Standards in Highland and have been in that role for the last two years.

It is a really exciting time for HoPS and we will remain a really important voice in the continuing discussions around improving performance. As well as being involved in the group which is chaired by Derek Mackay, we all need to promote improvements we have made and best practice through our submissions of the Planning Performance Frameworks by the end of September.

Some of the other areas of work for this next year will include looking at the costs of delivering the planning system, developing standard conditions and promoting best practice through the establishment of benchmarking groups. It would be great if you could find time over the course of the next few months to contribute to these and other improvement projects which will provide us all with benefits when they are completed.

One of the points that were made at the recent HoPS conference was that we should be proud to plan. I share that view – there are lots of good things happening around Scotland. HoPS has a really important role in ensuring that our role in delivering economic growth is recognised and appreciated.

Malcolm MacLeod, HoPS Chair

News Bulletin

- The new website is now fully up and running after previous technical difficulties. If you would like any content uploaded, email nicola.malone@improvementservice.org.uk
- We would like to make sure that video conferencing is available at each meeting to ensure all planning authorities are able to participate.
- We are still encouraging members to individually sign up to the private Knowledge Hub group, which has replaced the members forum on the old website: <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/web/headsofplanningscotland/membersforum>
- Fraser Williamson has now stepped down after 14 years as HoPS treasurer. The Improvement Service will now be handling the accounts and the Vice Chair will take overall responsibility for them.
- As part of their internal Governance Review Highland Council were interested in how other authorities handle referral of applications to Committee. Responses were received from 20 authorities and this information has now been collated and is available on the website.

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Update from the Committees

Executive committee

Malcolm MacLeod, Highland Council is now Chair of HoPS and his Vice-Chair is David Littlejohn, Perth and Kinross Council. Two new members were also voted onto the Executive Committee at the AGM – Pam Ewen from TAYplan and Iain McDiarmid from Shetland Islands Council.

Development Management sub committee

The sub committee has been involved in discussions reviewing recent changes in householder permitted development and neighbour notification. Many of the recent and impending changes shortly to be enacted are as a consequence of discussions between the members of the sub committee and Scottish Government.

Renewable energy and opencast coal mining continue to take a high profile. Problems with restoration bonds and the current state of the opencast coal industry has led to several meetings co-ordinated by the Scottish Government on this subject.

Renewable Energy continues to high on the agenda and the group has prepared a paper for the

Minister's short life working group on streamlining the consenting process, available here: <http://hopsotland.org.uk/publications/consultation-responses/>

Development Planning sub committee

The Development Planning sub committee has been working in collaboration with the Key Agencies Group and the

Scottish Government to identify good practice in how Planning Authorities are working with Key Agencies in preparing Development Plans. Questionnaires were completed by the majority of Planning Authorities and Key Agencies. A report has been prepared recognising the significant change in culture and practice in collaborative working and identifies good practice to allow organisations to identify practices and tools they could adopt to improve their performance. The report is available on our website <http://hopsotland.org.uk/publications/other-publications/>

Pam Ewen has stepped down as Chair of the sub committee and Bill Lindsay, Fife Council has now taken up that position. Stuart West from Orkney Islands Council is now Vice Chair.

Performance and Practice sub committee



The Performance and Practice sub committee continues to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and much constructive work has recently taken place in relation to reviewing and assessing the contents and qualities of the PPF submissions, the processing of major planning applications and the key factors which contribute to the ways in

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- Richard Jennings from East Lothian Council will represent HoPS at the 'Sport and Planning System' session in conjunction with Scottish Sports Association on Tuesday 16 July in Edinburgh.
- Keep on top of your CPD with the Improvement Service's Planning Development Programme, view the Learning and Development Opportunities forward planner here: www.improvementservice.org.uk/planning-events/
- Improvement Service is now also collecting data on how planning authorities are implementing the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013 as well as the before and after impacts of onshore wind energy.

processing times, the recent review of section 75 agreements and how the process around planning obligations can be streamlined.

Throughout the year, we will be focusing on working with the new Business Plan, further advancement of the PPF model, continued benchmarking with the Planning Advisory

Service on fees and resources and further joint working and dialogue with Scottish Government and COSLA on the agreed strategic improvement areas.

The P&P sub committee welcomes two new members – Christina Cox from South Ayrshire Council and Steve Rogers from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Dates for your diary

Fri 23 August @ 1pm

Executive Committee meeting,
Perth

Fri 20th September @ 1pm

Performance and Practice sub
committee meeting, COSLA

Wed 25 September @ 2pm

Development Planning
sub committee meeting,
Edinburgh

Fri 27th September @ 11am

Development Management sub
committee meeting, Perth

Volunteers needed!

The Performance and Practice sub committee is looking for new members, if you are interested please get in touch.

DM service costs

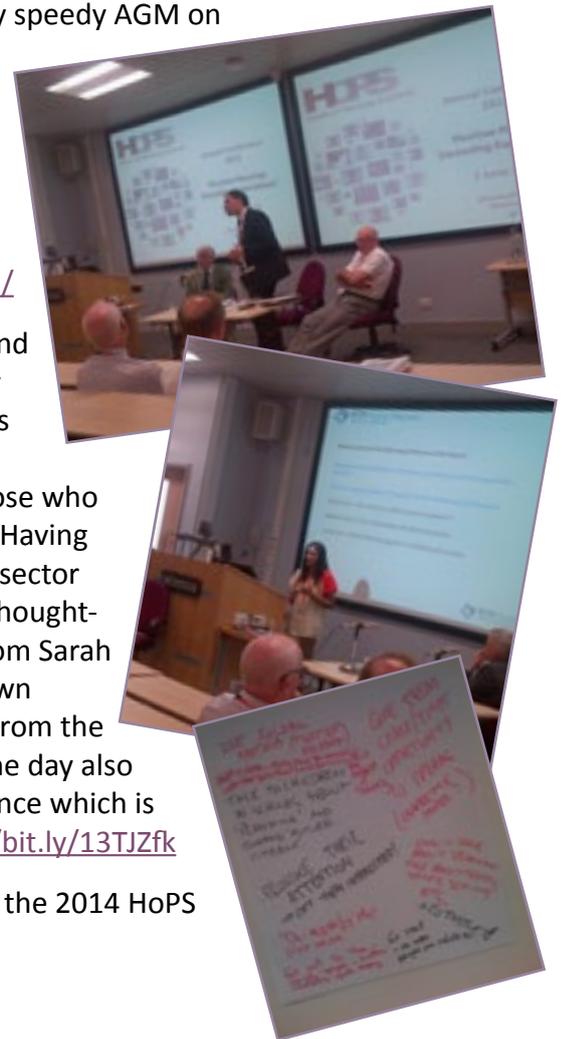
By the end of this year, our aim is to have collected new and robust information on the cost of delivering development management services across Scotland. The methodology was created by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), and is based on detailed time recording over a 4 week period. A HoPS working group has been set up to oversee the project, with support from the Improvement Service and PAS, and the aim is for the time recording to take place in September. If you would be interested in your authority participating in this project, please email emma.hay@improvementservice.org.uk

AGM and Conference Round Up

HoPS held a successful and very speedy AGM on Thursday 6 June which saw Fraser Carlin hand over the reins to Malcolm MacLeod as Chair of HoPS. The minutes are now available online: <http://hopscotland.org.uk/publications/other-publications/>

The conference ran smoothly and the feedback received was very positive. The variety of speakers and content was well received and thanks must go to all of those who contributed to the conference. Having a mixture of public and private sector speakers was welcomed. The thought-provoking afternoon session from Sarah Drummond at SNOOK went down particularly well. Colin Donald from the Sunday Herald who spoke on the day also wrote an article on the conference which is available to view online: <http://bit.ly/13TJZfk>

We are now looking forward to the 2014 HoPS Conference in Inverness!



Draft SPP and NPF3 Main Issues Report Update

Draft SPP and NPF3 Main Issues Report were launched by Derek Mackay, Planning Minister on 30 April from Dundee Waterfront (www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XfGma0Sdo4). HoPS welcome both national planning documents which set out a key positive role for planning in delivering the Scottish Government's ambitions. The Development Planning sub committee held discussion forums to which all Planning Authorities were invited in mid May. These wider discussions have informed proposed HoPS responses which were considered and approved by the Executive at the AGM on 6th June and have now been submitted to Scottish Government. Both responses are available on our website at <http://hopscotland.org.uk/publications/consultation-responses/>

Thanks must go to David Hammond, Bill Lindsay and especially Pam Ewen for leading on this.