

REF: RTPI Press Release on Queens Speech



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AMENDING PLANNING SYSTEM WITHOUT PROPER ALTERNATIVE RISKS ECONOMY

25-May-10

Jamie Hodge

Press Notice from the Royal Town Planning Institute

Tuesday 25th May 2010 PR24

Amending planning system without proper alternative risks economy say planners

The Royal Town Planning Institute has responded to the Government's announcement in the Queen's Speech of a 'Decentralisation and Localism Bill', warning that summary abolition of major parts of the planning system without a viable alternative in place puts economic recovery at risk.

In particular the Institute is concerned that the Government's proposals to abolish regional planning are based mainly on an objection to imposed regional housing targets rather than to the principle of strategic planning.

The Institute strongly advocates the need for strategic-level planning that co-ordinates development and infrastructure between different areas, provides a wide range of environmental policies, and ensures that the needs of the wider than local community are properly addressed.

Ann Skippers, President of the Royal Town Planning Institute said:

"Moves towards giving local communities more power are welcome; but we feel there is a real danger in hastily abolishing regional planning.

It is important that the Government realises that strategic planning did not begin in 1997, but has been a vital part of our system for over half a century, with areas like the West Midlands benefiting since 1955. It is vital to have a level of strategic planning between local councils and national government to ensure proper co-ordination across council boundaries.

The hasty abolition of regional planning will leave a vacuum in terms of the policy needed to give the certainty to take major investment decisions that will help get us out of recession.

There is great potential in the principle of localism; but we will be urging the Government to ensure that planning at the larger-than-local level is embedded in the system.

Furthermore if councils are to be given extra responsibilities, it is absolutely vital that they are properly resourced to deliver the new localism; our concern is that impending public spending cuts will severely hinder the retention of key planning expertise and skills, which are vital to ensuring the nation's economic recovery."

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Notes to Editors:

1. RTPI page on the Decentralisation and Localism Bill

This can be accessed at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3741&ap=1>

2. RTPI: The Royal Town Planning Institute

The RTPI is the largest professional institute for planners in Europe, with over 22,000 members who serve in government, local government and as advisors in the private sector. It is a charity with the purpose to develop the art and science of town planning for the benefit of the public as a whole. As well as promoting spatial planning, RTPI develops and shapes policy affecting the built environment, works to raise professional standards and supports members through continuous education, training and development.

Royal Town Planning Institute

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