



Planning Summer School St Andrews 2008



Cllr John W Bowman

Friday 29th August.

Introduction.

St Andrews 2008 celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the Planning Summer School.

Friday 29th August started with the 200 mile drive to the University of St Andrews and registration at New Halls almost the entire event took place on the University Campus.

Friday afternoon and evening consisted of a welcome to the planning school by the president and Opening Address, followed by an opening reception for everyone to be able to talk to other members.

Saturday 30th August.

Working with Communities.

(Petra Biberbach and Jenny Lynn)

09:30 - 10:20

10:20 - 11:00

These sessions were open to all members and consisted of two 40 minute presentations with no direct chance to ask question due time constraints.

**Community Engagement and Engaging with Communities –
Learning from Developers.**

These two sessions obviously gelled well with each other and will be dealt with as one session.

There were concerns on various aspects of how to involve the community and what is required by the statutory consultation process.

The following were highlighted:-

- Is the drive for efficiency reducing community involvement?
- Community involvement should be the base for effective and efficient planning?
- Involvement is seen as a waste of time?
- Planning matters to us all.
- The planning process is remote and generally does not involve the community?
- Communities and their representative should know how to get involved with the process meaningfully and not just to object to developments.

Should more emphasis be placed on involvement at earlier pre planning stages, communities, their representatives and planning officers can help with local knowledge and history that can be relevant to planning applications.

Communication at earlier stages can lead to greater efficiencies and help speed up the planning process with reductions in both applications having to be changed or even appeals to failed applications.

Enforcement.

(Linda S Russell)

11:30 – 12:45

This workshop was taken by Linda S Russell a solicitor with a solid background in planning and the legal process of enforcement at the beginning of the presentation it was stated very clearly that enforcement needed to be very firm and also consistent. There was also a need for discretion and expedience when dealing with enforcement issues.

This was a very practical explanation on how the planning enforcement system should work, these were some of the subjects covered:-

- Meaningful development.
- Operational development.
- Material changes of use.
- Permitted development.
- When development becomes lawful.
- Enforcing against breaches of planning control.

A very well delivered presentation by a person obviously with both knowledge and practical experience at all levels of the legal process.

Wind Power and the Planning Process.

(Geraint Ellis)

14:15 – 15:30

This workshop was presented by again a very experienced lecturer in Geraint Ellis from Belfast University and it was presented on the need for cleaner emission free power generation; in my view it was too clinical and did not look at the alternatives, it almost gave the view that if a planning application ticked all the boxes it should automatically be approved. Although time was very limited, time could have been spent comparing other efficient energy production methods.

Regeneration and Working with Communities.

(Mike Galloway)

16:00 – 16:45

This was obviously a major success story and a showcase regeneration scheme undertaken by Dundee, this was a lesson in delivery, a mixture of simple low cost quick fixes that involved painting shop fronts to make the more visually pleasing, that complimented surrounding shops and businesses. Even waste bins and recycling bins were well thought out well designed and again were visually acceptable. The main reason for this development was to develop a community acceptable area for both social, business and housing.

Another Day at the Office – The Life and Times of an Adventure Cameraman.

(Keith Partridge, TV Cameraman)

20:00 – 2100

What an incredible character, Keith presented a selection of his work from around the world and very different locations and situations, from the funny films with Ian Wright pulling a sled on an ice field many bleeps, funny but very serious. It was difficult to see at first what this had to do with planning, by the end of the session it was clear his work and his life depended upon meticulous planning just to survive in the situation and environments his team encounters in a normal day at their office.

Sunday 31st August.

Looking Ahead.

Keeping the Countryside Alive.

(Mike Breakwell)

09:30 – 10:20

This workshop focused on local communities and the need for local services, local employment, housing needs and the general infrastructure. The need for affordable housing and how this can be achieved.

The Growth Agenda and its Implications.

(Kevin MacDonald)

10:20 – 11:05

This session highlighted the need for quite clear control on developments with respect to growth within areas and the land allowed to be used, to control expansion into areas of natural beauty and other sensitive areas. This session was spoiled by Kevin turning it into almost a Party Political issue, this is not needed in effective planning and a quiet word with Kevin afterwards was needed, all comments were taken on board.

Practical Sustainable Development.

(Alan Gillard)

11:35 – 12-20

An interesting session, what is meant by sustainable development?
The need to plan changes to achieve sustainability, building design and build quality that lasts for many years, at least 100yrs and more, not erected today and outdated or ready for renewal in a short period of time. The challenge is to use modern technology to gain efficiency and reduce carbon footprints, and also stand the test of time.

Study Tour of St. Andrews.

13:30 – 18:00

The beautiful Royal Town of St. Andrews, how do you get the balance right; keep the history, and develop. This tour started with some of the most historic landmarks in St. Andrews and the history seems to blend in with developments through the years. Obviously it has been a delicate balancing act ancient and modern, the sites visited demonstrated this well. Will the ultra modern builds be sustainable? The University of St. Andrews where the Summer School was held seemed to be a poor example of modern build blending in, 1960's design poorly mixed on the fringe of the town, the new builds on the campus showed clearly how it should be done.

Coastal Management.

(Colin Wishart)

20:00 – 21:00

This was an excellent paper and obviously well thought out, it was not just about coastal erosion but how the coastal areas can be developed to be both sustainable businesses and protect the coastline where necessary, the coastline is a precious asset and much of the development is sensitive. Although the presentation covered mainly the coastline of Scotland our coastline and its impact through businesses like the nuclear industry can have a major impact on future developments like shell fish farms both in the Solway Firth and beyond.

Monday 1st September.

What You Need to Know.

Delivering the Housing.

(Leonora Rozee, Henry Cleary, Rosemary Thomas and Michael Newey)

09:30 – 11:00

This was a perspective of four presenters on how to deliver sustainable and high quality housing, the presentations covered affordable developments and the mix of social housing and private development and the partnerships that can exist between both types of developers, again the themes were sustainability, community improvement and various stakeholders working with planners to good effect.

Development Finance – A Progressive Training Workshop.

(David Elworthy)

11:30 – 12:45 and 14:15 – 15:30

This was a double session with the aim to give a basic understanding of how development is financed. Over two sessions it covered a single example of a proposed mixed use development:-

- Affordable Housing.
- Open Market Housing.
- Offices.
- Retail.

The Councils S106 requirements, what political, financial and negotiation issues councils should take into consideration in concluding any S106 agreements.

Typical S106 requirements could be:-

- Ratio of affordable housing.
- Education.
- Transport.
- Open Space.
- Environmental initiatives.
- Social and Community infrastructures.
- Public Art.

The full development costs and profits should be taken into account and a negotiation between the developer and the council needs to take place to assess the community benefits that should be expected.

Although this was a heavy session in a short period of time it showed the planning gains that could be achieved by councils.

Closing Address.

Working Across Boundaries.

(Vincent Goodstadt)

16:00 – 16:45

The closing address highlighted the erosion of local government powers and resources, the impact of climate changes, the limitations of national planning policies and managing the uncertainty of growth agendas. How these can and will affect local strategies and planning control at local government levels.

Civic Reception and 75th Anniversary Dinner Hosted by Fife Council.

19:00

The venue for the dinner was the Fairmont Hotel at St. Andrews; this was opened by the Provost of Fife. This gave us yet another opportunity to mix and talk to other planning school members and discuss issues that were common to us all. A welcome end to a very intense planning school.

Summary

An excellent weekend and a very good balance of papers and presentations covering many planning subjects. It was impossible to cover every session on offer.

A full copy of all the papers and summaries are available in the member's room courtesy of Member Services (not for the faint hearted).

and also on the Planning Summer School web site

WWW. Planningsummerschool.org

I would like to thank Member Services for printing and binding the Papers and the distribution of our reports.

