

SCALA NEWS



REGENERATION KEY ELEMENT OF POLICY

This was the important message learnt at the successful joint RIBA, NHTPC & SCALA Conference held at Waltham Abbey on 10 October. A series of influential speakers emphasised the point to almost 100 attendees who had gathered to hear a wide range of presentations covering major local and national initiatives as well as learning of the government's proposals and the associated political perspective.

The theme of the conference was set by Lord Graham of Edmonton who spoke of the need to focus on urban areas and the proposal to better co-ordinate public funds through the Regional Development Agencies, whose aim was also to stimulate additional private investment. He emphasised the value of a period of stability and forward planning, a point which was taken up by Jim O'Sullivan, Project Leader for Enfield of a major regeneration scheme including shops and high rise housing. Jim also commented on the waste of resources associated with the multiple bidding process and the need for sustainable regeneration, long term planning and community involvement. Green Horizons then fleshed out their involvement as consultants in this complex process.

'Investing for your future' was presented by Nigel Turner and Mark Parnell who outlined how large suppliers, like the London Electricity Board, could supply a totally integrated energy solution at considerable cost savings following deregulation of the market and their role in providing Best Value to local authorities.

The cornerstone of the conference in respect of government policy and thinking, and planning for the future, was the in depth contribution made by Helen Ghosh, Director-Regeneration East of the

Government Office for London. This has been reproduced in full in this issue and is entitled 'Finding out what works-The future of regeneration programmes'. In it Helen talks in detail of the integration of the various regeneration programmes and their role alongside other key government policies which will hopefully avoid the duplication identified by Jim O'Sullivan. One issue is to more accurately

measure the outcomes of the programmes and the factors contributing to their success or failure, which will affect the overall strategy developed in partnership with the stakeholders and Agenda 21 principles. Robert Grundy of Savills talked of how to help Labour provide 'A decent home for everyone' and the 'Four steps to housing heaven' while the need for clear vision and workable policies was emphasised by John Taylor, Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association. He sees regeneration as vital to our economic success requiring a strategic and competitive framework not solely focusing on property issues. The social and economic renewal which results distinguishes urban regeneration from simple redevelopment.

Architecture was not forgotten with Alan Inglett showing examples of Enfield's work, while Jack Koynenburg gave a most entertaining and

interesting account of his work in and around the six closely spaced historic towns in North Wiltshire. The lasting image will be that of pigs walking from the ports serving the Irish coast to Calne to be made into sausages ! He described his work as being with the horizontal versions of tower blocks, which is very much the people friendly environment that Ian Tuckett has created in the highly urban setting of



The funding regimes and partnership working techniques are relevant to us all-



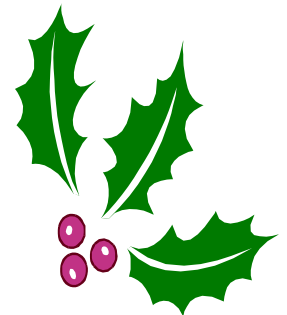
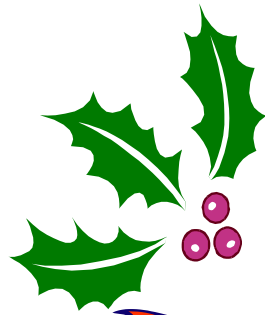
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SCALANEWS

WISHES YOU A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



SCALAFEATURE

This or a similar identifying logo signifies feature articles on topical issues such as the 'Finding out what works' and Conference articles in this issue



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A reference list of dates for future SCALA meetings and events including those for the regions and associated organisations



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SCALALETTERS

A section devoted to letters from readers on topical issues or matters of individual concern. Please send me your letters for the next issue.



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there is no
SCALA/NO
this issue owing
to Conference

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Please note editor's new address on the back page



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Alan
Tyler

SCALAAGM:Address by the I.P.P.

The end of another presidential year, and it only seemed like yesterday that I took over from Eden Lee. That can only mean one of two things, either I have enjoyed it immensely or I am getting old and losing my memory.

I have to admit that I set out to enjoy my year – I remember Ted Kelly saying to me before the last AGM “Are you going to enjoy your year?” At the time I wondered what he meant. Well Ted wherever you are, yes I have, and the only problem is that it has been too short.

But what have we achieved as a Society over the year? Eden left me with one unfulfilled ambition, which was to strengthen our links with the RIBA, and to this I added a number of other items which formed our work plan for the year. Our first priority was to strengthen links not only with the RIBA but also with all the other groups we have to work closely with on a day to day basis.

With RIBA – our links with the RIBA are getting better all the time.

We still need more public sector architects who are willing to get involved but the Treasurer and Vice President Practice are ex public sector, I am a member of the practice committee and chair the Public Architecture Group which contains four other Scala members. Ian Vincent has joined the Fees and appointments committee and there is representation on the RIBA Council so we are improving.

With LGA – Scala is recognised by the LGA and one of their divisional heads Phil Swann is now part of our council. In addition we are responsible for providing a list of advisors on property to the LGA.

With FPS – The FPS has been resurrected and is starting to work as the voice of Property with Solace and the LGA and in the most important area of best value. Again Scala is taking the lead and helping to drive these changes.

With TAG – we now have a developing relationship with TAG who are working with us on best value.

With the ICOW – Ian Atkinson has taken over as our link and regular meetings are in place.

With ACASLA and CLAW – we have rebuilt our special relationship with these two sister organisations

With ALBA – who we welcome as the London region of Scala and long may the relationships remain.

The second area was increasing the membership, which is critical to our survival. Rob has been working on membership issues and will be sharing with you in his report our vision for the future but we are moving forward and attracting working members.

Communication is a key area. We have successfully changed our support services and started a regular newsletter, which is a major step forward and one I am sure you all appreciate.

But what have we not completed?! I would have liked to have done more on a database of skills and external contacts, with benchmarking and marketing but we have started in these areas and will continue in the new year.

Continuity is very important and it is one reason why I have been so pleased to have Rob as my Vice President. This year has been very much of a joint effort and I know that Rob will want to finish what we have started as well as adding his own areas of work. Thank you Rob for the continued



Rob
Tate

SCALAAGM:Address by the President

It seems no time since Alan presented me with the claret and blue Vice Presidential medal – and I remarked how apt the colours were for an Aston Villa supporter! However, twelve eventful months have now passed, during which Alan and I have worked closely together. I have spent my SCALA year launching the latest edition of the Maintenance Survey, organising the Study Day at Cheltenham and tomorrow's conference, and preparing proposals for revisions to SCALA's membership structure. I am grateful to Alan for taking time from his Presidential duties to help me both in these activities and to prepare me for my Presidential year. Thank you Alan, the two of

us have worked well together over the year and you've shown me the virtue of setting a work plan for SCALA and then sticking to it! Some of Alan's initiatives have been completed, but some are on-going and I am delighted to receive the baton.

A marketing plan has been prepared and we must now push on to implement it. SCALA is more than a trades union for local government architects, it is an authoritative society which is increasingly consulted on national issues and developments. The coverage in national newspapers, as well as the technical press, of the new edition of the SCALA Maintenance Survey is a notable recent example of our role in this respect, but there have been increasing



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(cont)

In recent months Alan has strengthened SCALA's links with other societies together with our influence within the Federation of Property Services. The establishment of an officer within the LGA responsible for property matters is an important step forward, as is his co-opted status on SCALA Council. I understand that one of my Presidential duties will be as SCALA's representative on the RIBA's Public Architecture Group, which is something I very much look forward to as I believe SCALA and the RIBA must work very closely together. Bernadette has always been a strong supporter of SCALA and with the Immediate Past President continuing as Chair of the Group. I hope we can achieve much. SCALA must continue to expand its influence and implementing the marketing plan in its broadest sense through the initiatives I have just referred to, not just in the narrow public relations sense, must be a prime objective of the coming year.

Membership issues will be important over the coming year. A skills database has been initiated by Steve George over the last few months with the objective of making SCALA more effective by marshalling the full range of our skills. This will improve our mutual support for one another within the society and increase our efficiency in responding to initiatives and consultations. The revised membership proposals, which you will consider later in this meeting, are important in seeking to widen our membership and with it our skills and influence. Both these initiatives reflect the need to increase the involvement of all within SCALA. I will place emphasis on broadening the membership and increasing the depth of involvement of all members. A meeting of Regional Convenors is scheduled after this meeting. It is my intention to make the Regions the active power base of SCALA. Issues must be identified, initiated and led by Regions - in leading the society, Council must be the co-ordinating voice of the

Regions. However, this will place additional responsibilities on Convenors and additional importance on regional meetings. I will look for more regional representation on SCALA's committees to reflect this and to strengthen our committees. The most important single issue for the immediate future will be Best Value. I recently attended a seminar of the society of Chief Executives and was interested, if not dismayed, to find that competition is a major feature of Best Value. Just when you thought that CCT had gone (or, at least, was going) and it was safe to go back in the water.....! Technical Committee has adopted Best Value as its next main piece of work, but it is a topic which extends across all of SCALA's activities and will need all our committees to work closely together. We must be sure we attend to this issue thoroughly. It will test our ability to influence and to act effectively.

Finally, I have mentioned that SCALA is more than a trades union and that I want SCALA to increase in influence as an authoritative society. To do that we must broaden our horizons, not just in terms of membership but also in terms of where we seek to be involved. We must embrace property issues, not just architectural or even construction, and we

must learn to work comfortably with the private sector. I believe passionately in a fully integrated approach to property management in the public sector in partnership with the private sector, involving the proper co-ordination of all professions across both sectors. The building professions are crucial to that approach, bringing the vision and skills that innovate and generate developments, but are often left out of the equation until asked to implement (perhaps) projects at the end of the process. Those professions need to establish themselves at the centre of the process for the benefit of their authorities and the communities they serve. Under my



The incoming President showing his true colours helped by the very



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SCALASNAPS from the Conference



'If the cap fits.....'
Rob Tate about to be awarded his colours by Alan Tyler



John Harvey of the NHTPC with Rob Tate & Alan Tyler enjoying the Presidential dinner



The new Vice President, Chris Johnson, looking well practiced in his role



John Harvey & Helen Ghosh after 'Finding out what works'



Iain Tuckett indulging in community activities at the SCALA stand



John Taylor sustaining interest at the BURA stand



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RIBA Public Architecture Group

Alan Tyler, Chairman

The Public Architecture Group is the new name for the Public Sector Group, which was set up by the RIBA to champion public sector architecture and architects. Its objectives are to:

- q Develop and enhance the influence of architects within the Public Estate
- q Formulate policies whereby architects seek to ensure best value and quality architecture is achieved in the public domain
- q Ensure that the work of the group is communicated to the Institute and all architects working in the public sector
- q Harness the energies and initiatives of architects working in the public sector on behalf of the Institute at all levels of operation.

In achieving its third objective it has been agreed that the group will hold two of its meetings each year in the regions. Firstly to publicise its work and secondly to find out what the RIBA members working in Public Architecture would like us to take on in the future. Our first regional meeting will take place in Birmingham on the 23rd January 1998. We will be the guests of Trevor Skempton and Birmingham City Council and there will be presentations by the DfEE on Asset Plans and by the 4Ps on Private / Public Partnerships. Remember more than 16% of RIBA members work in the Public Sector so it is important that we make our views known to the Institute. So why not come along and give us your views. We look forward to seeing you on the 23rd January.



SCALADIRY

NOVEMBER

21- RIBA Conference at St. John's College, Oxford, on 'Public Architecture-The Role of design quality in the pursuit of Best Value at home and abroad'.

DECEMBER

- 5 - SCALA Professional Affairs Committee at RIBA
- SCALA Policy Committee at RIBA
- SCALA Council at RIBA

JANUARY

23- RIBA Public Architecture Group meeting in Birmingham (see above)

FEBRUARY

- 20- SCALA Professional Affairs Committee at RIBA
- SCALA Policy Committee at RIBA
- SCALA Council at RIBA

APRIL

- 24- SCALA Professional Affairs Committee
- SCALA Policy Committee at RIBA
- SCALA Council at RIBA

CIPFA/SCALA 9th. series of workshops on Construction & Property Services:
 Dec 2 London, Dec 3 Leeds, Dec 4 Coventry, Dec 9 Glasgow, Dec 10 Perth, Dec 11 Durham, Jan 8 Exeter, Jan 15 Buih Wells, Jan 21 Preston.

CIPFA/SCALA 10th. series of workshops on Construction & Property Services:
 Mar 4 London, Mar 10 Glasgow, Mar 11 Perth, Mar 16 Durham, Mar 17 Leeds, Mar 24 Preston, Mar 25 Exeter, April 1 Buih Wells, April 3 Coventry.

For info. on the CIPFA/SCALA Competition Advisory Service workshops on CCT & Best Value for Construction & Property Services contact Ed. or CAS direct on 0171 543 5780



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*Helen
Ghosh*

*Director -
Regeneration
East of the
Gov. Office for
London*

SCALACONFERENCE: Finding out what works -the future of regeneration programmes

A couple of weeks ago, there was an excellent article by Polly Toynbee in The Independent reporting from the Labour Party Conference in Brighton. She had spent sometime in the fringe meetings, the cafeterias and the bars, listening in to delegates' conversations. The sort of phrases she heard over and over again were "we must find out what works", "but does it really work?", "how do we know it works?". From this, she concluded that a spirit of pragmatism was abroad, that the new Labour Government was looking for practical solutions, building on what was tried and tested, to the challenges they had set themselves, particularly in the areas of Welfare to Work and Social Exclusion.

And this is indeed very much the approach that Ministers are taking to moulding the future of regeneration programmes and to ensuring that they work alongside other key Government policies, for instance on education, on the labour market, on health, on crime and on a sustainable environment. Many of the speakers at today's conference are going to be talking about approaches that have worked and are working in achieving this integrated approach to regeneration. The Government wants to build on those experiences.

But much of what I am going to talk about this morning will have an air of "work in progress". As a number of political commentators have observed, the Government has initiated an awful lot of reviews. After only 52 months in office, very few have yet produced conclusions. So in a number of areas, we know what Ministers' objectives are, but not yet in detail how they propose to achieve them.

Another issue we have to think about - and I imagine a number of other speakers will touch on it today - is establishing how we measure success. Regeneration Programmes over the past 10 years or so have produced an impressive list of outputs - houses built or refurbished, enterprise centres established, jobs created, people taking training courses and gaining skills qualifications. But it is much more difficult to measure outcomes in the longer term - the often unquantifiable effects of regeneration programmes - on an area. And it is even more difficult to extract from the statistics what factors contributed to "success" (which might have been almost

incidental to the programme itself) or to "failure".

SRB

As you will know, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, and his team of Ministers at the new Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, have put regeneration and regional development at the top of their agenda. They don't mean simply physical regeneration - improving the infrastructure - although obviously they recognise its importance. They believe that the need to regenerate communities, to restore a sense of identity and pride to local people to improve social cohesion, is equally if not more important. That is why we can already see a new emphasis in regeneration programmes - away from buildings for their own sake and towards the people who live and work in them.

Against this background they see the Single Regeneration Budget as one of our most useful and flexible tools for tackling social exclusion. It can still deal with infrastructure improvements, where those are needed. It can also support community-led schemes, local regeneration initiatives, strong local partnerships. The Single Regeneration Budget is all about responding local needs and priorities, getting public and private investment working together and giving local communities more of a say. However, Ministers see room for improvement. The SRB has tended to be rather fragmented and unfocused, and the competition for resources without a coherent regional strategy has become something of a beauty contest.

So although Ministers decided to proceed with Round 4 of SRB Challenge Fund, they issued supplementary guidance to ensure that those working up proposals were fully aware of the Government's policies and priorities. This year they asked for schemes which would:

- contribute to our commitment to carry out a concerted attack against the multiple causes of social and economic decline
- place a greater emphasis on tackling the needs of communities in the most deprived areas
- fit with their new policies relating to employment, education, crime, housing, public health and sustainable development
- take account of existing strategies for



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Helen Ghosh

SCALACONFERENCE (cont.)

promoting economic development and tackling deprivation

-include a more collaborative approach between those preparing proposals, their partners and Government Offices for the Regions in order to arrive at shared understanding of regeneration needs and priorities, and to stimulate fresh thinking

They recognised that every region was different and had its own needs and priorities and therefore asked the Government Offices for the Regions to issue their own guidance giving the regional picture. This was not intended to be the last word on regional economic planning; it was simply extra help to bidders in putting together their Round 4 proposals. The strategic guidance for London, which was issued in July this year, places particular emphasis on addressing youth and long-term unemployment, demonstrating clear and stable pathways from local communities to London's broader opportunities, and seeking to raise educational attainments.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that resources are limited, particularly for the first year of the programme, we have received more than a hundred outline bids for this year's Challenge Fund. We are in the middle of assessing them, and will be issuing invitations for fuller bids at the end of this month. But it is already clear that bidders have recognised the new agenda - "people" focused schemes certainly formed the majority of the bids received and are likely to be prominent among the successes.

We are being helped in the assessment by the new Advisory Panel for the SRB in London, which includes representatives from the business sector, local authorities and the voluntary sector. Some Government Offices already had informal consultative machinery of this kind in place, but some, including London, had not, and Ministers felt that the Advisory Panels could play an important role in bringing in outside expertise and a different perspective.

Welfare to Work

Of course in this year's SRB Round we will be looking for the links across, in particular, to the Welfare to Work programme. The New Deal for unemployed 18-24 year olds comes into operation from April, and pathfinder projects will be starting in January. The Employment Service is already working with local partners to draw up detailed local plans.

SRB schemes will have a vital role to play in delivering both the jobs and the training opportunities needed to ensure that the New Deal is a success. Many of you may have heard the Minister for jobs, Andrew Smith, expressing the high ambitions that the Government has for the success of Welfare to Work as a way of breaking the downwards spiral of lost hopes and expectations, and the waste of human resources brought about by unemployment.

The SRB has good examples to offer of what can work in terms of creating jobs and training opportunities. We in the Government Office for London will be working closely with our DfEE colleagues to ensure effective synergies between our programmes.

Sustainable Development

Ministers also recognise the importance of sustainability. There are no quick fix solutions for urban or indeed rural decline. We need continuing and lasting improvement. That is why they are committed to building sustainable development into all their policies. So, what does sustainable development mean for regeneration?

It means combining the economic goal with environmental and social ones. Giving people the chance to satisfy their needs and achieve their potential, while making sensible use of natural resources. And taking full account of the environment. Our aim must be an improved and lasting quality of life for all, now and in the future.

Sustainable development is not just a question of banning things or adding on pollution controls. It requires thinking about where people live. How they get around, and what goods and services they consume. And about issues of employment and competitiveness. The scale of the issues requires strategic thinking. The environment, and influences on it, must be considered.

On the wider front, Ministers aim to set clear strategic goals for sustainable development in the medium and long term, including targets for actions and outcomes. But they cannot act in isolation. We must work in partnership with all stakeholders to win consent for our objectives, and benefit from other ideas and experience, if we are to make real progress - both at the national level and through regional and local action.

Local Agenda 21, which sprang from the action plan endorsed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, harnesses the innovation and



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Helen Ghosh

SCALACONFERENCE (cont.)

energies of local communities, as local authorities work for sustainable development in partnership with others, particularly community-based organisations. Seventy percent of authorities have committed themselves to the process and have been inspired, as the Prime Minister put it, to "think global - act local".

Funds available through the Single Regeneration Budget and Supplementary Credit Approval have often been used to undertake schemes in line with Agenda 21 principles. Ministers want to see this extended to all authorities, and they will do what they can to encourage that. As a start, we are now working with the Local Government Association on a joint document drawing on local experience to show how effective LA21 strategies are being developed across the country. Ministers also intend to place a new obligation on councils to pursue the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities.

Comprehensive Spending Review

All those involved then, are agreed, that the Single Regeneration Budget is an approach to integrated regeneration that works. But as I said, the incoming Government initiated a series of reviews of all spending programmes to ensure that we were making the best possible use of limited public expenditure resources. The Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott announced a few months ago a comprehensive review of regeneration policies and programmes. This aims to ensure that we put in place a regeneration programme that will provide a basis for sustainable and effective regeneration, and contribute to the Government's overall aims of enhancing opportunity and fairness, and promoting employment and investment for sustained economic growth.

The review will produce a progress report on emerging findings later this month and final conclusions by March 1998 so that they can feed into next year's public expenditure round. They will be consulting fully on the outcome.

Without pre-judging the outcome, Ministers are clear what they believe should be important features of any developing regeneration policy:

-first that cities will not be competitive unless opportunities are extended to everyone who lives in them. There is nothing

more corrosive in their view than the existence of disaffected or disadvantaged groups who feel that they have no stake in their city's success and prosperity. So policies must be aimed at addressing social exclusion and need

-second, they do not subscribe to the view that Whitehall knows better what is good for the people, than the people know themselves. They want to develop local partnerships and build the capacity of local communities to take part in regeneration initiatives

-third, they accept that they will not have the resources to back all the good ideas which come forward on regeneration. Cash has to be rationed and this inevitably means some form of competition. But this does not necessarily mean everyone working in isolation, producing glossy brochures. They want to see a more collaborative approach and shared understanding of strategies and priorities

We in the Government Office for London and other Government Offices have been involved in the review, since we can offer local, first hand experience of things that work, not only in the short but also the longer term.

Regional Development Agencies

Ministers have already issued a consultation paper on their proposals for their Regional Development Agencies, which as you know they see as key players in ensuring regional economic development and wider regeneration. The objective of the Agencies will be to take a view of the needs of their regions as a whole, and to secure effective co-ordination to meet those needs - eliminating wasteful duplication of effort by the multitude of existing bodies.

But Ministers are keen to emphasise that there is no conflict between this and promoting regeneration locally in towns, cities and rural areas and it is certainly not their intention to drown out local activity. Local partnerships work, and they want to establish effective links between the Regional Development Agencies and those existing groups.

The RDAs will be expected to work in close cooperation with the Government Offices for the Regions, Regional Chambers where they exist (and of course they are already consulting on the Greater London Authority) the TECs and other bodies which promote economic development including the voluntary sector.



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Helen Ghosh

SCALACONFERENCE (cont.)

On local regeneration, the Agencies' tasks will be to provide funding for local partnerships, just as the SRB does now. It will not be able to tell them what to do, or to take over local activities. Its role will be to ensure that everyone involved is working within a single strategy to achieve the needs of the area and its communities not dictate on the agenda.

A number of you will have been involved in the London debate on what the proposed London Development Agency should look like. I can't today give you any hard news. Ministers are currently assessing and considering the responses they received to the issues paper that they published in June and are proposing to publish a White Paper later in the autumn before introducing the necessary primary legislation.

Europe

Of course both in London and in a number of other regions, support from the European Structural Funds is a vital part of regeneration programmes. The scope and size of these programmes after 1999 is also currently under review as part of the European Commission's Agenda 2000 programme. Meanwhile, the Government has supported the Action Plans Initiative for European spending, which means that in many areas of the country, Structural Funds are being administered within a strategic framework set out in Action Plans. These offer a good model for a strategic approach to the delivery of regeneration programmes and projects by the local partnerships, including the voluntary sector. Ministers know that community based regeneration works, and the Action Plan approach is one way of building on it.

Housing

Some of you may have noticed that I have not yet said anything specifically about housing. Of course housing policy is currently undergoing its own comprehensive spending review. But is not the case that the people based regeneration agenda will squeeze out Government's commitment to a decent house on the basis for long term sustainable regeneration. I have recently been chairing my first round of Housing Investment Programmes with local authorities in East London. I have been struck by the extent to which authorities already see housing programmes at the heart of their regeneration strategy, and ensure that their plans - for renovation and repair, for new

build partnerships with registered local landlords, in some cases for transfer of stock to secure new investment - fit with that strategy. One good example is here in Enfield, where in their Chalk Hill scheme, training opportunities are being offered to young people to give them new skills for the future.

Social Exclusion

All these initiatives and reviews of current regeneration programmes will be against the background of the Government's wider concerns about social exclusion. As you know, the Prime Minister has recently established a special Social Exclusion Unit within the Cabinet Office. Reporting directly to him. The Unit is being led, coincidentally, by a former Regional Director for London, Robin Young. So it will no doubt benefit from the particular lessons Robin has learnt about what works, both in London and more widely.

Conclusion

To sum up the Government is in the process of reshaping regeneration policies to meet a new agenda - a people based agenda. At a voluntary sector conference last month, Richard Caborn, the Regeneration Minister, quoted from a document produced by the Inner Cities Religious Council. It sums up the people - based approach to regeneration that will be at the centre of the agenda for the future:

"The only



address disadvantage is that which is born from a concern for social and economic justice and which involves those communities that experience disadvantage and who feel excluded. There is no level playing field and there may never be one, but the gap between the included and the excluded must be addressed and can be change.

The Government's will be looking to all of us to identify what works in achieving this.



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FPS, BEST VALUE & PARTNERSHIPS

Scala is an active member of the FPS (Federation of Property Societies) and this year it is our turn to chair the organisation. I have been invited to take on this role and am now working with the other societies to ensure our voice as Property Professionals is heard at the highest level.

The FPS brings together all the professional societies in England and has links with sister societies in Scotland and Wales. In the past it has struggled for an identity but with the inception of the LGA (Local Government Association) it has become a major player in the current discussions with the DETR and the Government.

Local Government has never known a period of such change but two issues stand out as being crucial to our future, Best value and Public / Private Partnerships. In both these areas we have the chance to influence policy before it becomes "Tablets of Stone", we must grasp this opportunity.

The FPS and SCALA are working together on these two issues to ensure that the needs of Property Professionals are fully considered. Working parties have been set up and for the first time all the Property Societies are working together for the common good.

In terms of Best Value we have produced a best value model and are now starting to develop the detail. All of this we are doing in collaboration with the LGA so that we know that the outcome will be in line with the Best Value Principles and Government thinking. We believe that we can have a major influence on future thinking on this subject as both the LGA and DETR have shown their willingness to listen to our ideas.

On partnerships we are examining with "The 4p's" ways in which in house teams can have a greater involvement in such deals. It is crucial to the success of any project that the wealth of local knowledge is used to best advantage and that the in house team starts with a level playing field. The likely outcome of this initiative will be a limited life panel whose objectives would be:

- To understand the process and issues associated with such deals.
- To develop best practice guidance and the need for effective asset management.
- The dissemination of the guidance through publication and roadshows.

There is clearly a lot of important work to be done over the next six months so watch SCALA News for further information and news of developments as they happen.

Have you noticed the abundance of seminars and networks springing up around best value and benchmarking. You seem to be able to buy the answer to everything, but at what price. The problem is knowing what is worthwhile and what is not.

It is worth remembering that Scala is working with CIPFA to bring Property Professionals the most timely and accurate information through the CAS Service. Joining the service not only means that you will be at the cutting edge of knowledge but will also be supporting Scala.

Further information can be obtained from CIPFA Client Advisory Service on 0171 543 5780

My best wishes to all SCALA members for a Happy Christmas and may the New Year bring some light to our current problems.

ALAN TYLER



SCALACIPFA Action Team for Best Value & CCT

Talking of Best Value and the joint initiative by SCALA and CIPFA, the adjacent photograph shows yours truly with Will Werry and Jill Bluestone from CIPFA who form just part of the team presenting the quarterly series of workshops listed in the SCALADIARY on P6. Other members include Sandra Black and Peter Hyatt on behalf of CIPFA, together with our own Peter Brown, with Alan Tyler currently in a supporting role. The team visits venues throughout England, Wales and Scotland and will be at a town near you in the not too distant future! Ring 0171 543 5780 for details of the Competition Advisory Service.



Will Werry, Jill Bluestone & Bernard Wyld



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BEST VALUE - BENCHMARKING AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(Cont.)

I am writing following our conversation about how S.C.A.L.A. and individual local authority architectural practices should be preparing to respond to the new Best Value regime. Since we spoke the groundrules for Best Value are becoming clearer but I think some of the issues that we discussed are still in the debating melting pot. You recall that you asked me for my views about whether the performance indicators should be nationally set. My own view is that they should be set nationally but developed, evolved and specified in partnership with the local authorities and professional associations rather than imposed upon us by the Audit Commission or the government. This stance implies that S.C.A.L.A., C.I.P.F.A and R.I.B.A ought to be anticipating this debate and doing some work to identify the sort of indicators that we regard as appropriate to assess the cost effectiveness and quality of local authority architectural services. Clearly, having regard to statements by Hilary Armstrong and others, it will not be acceptable to devise performance indicators that focus exclusively on soft qualitative issues. Cost and cost effectiveness are very much a component in the Best Value approach and we ignore that fact at our peril.

The other related issue is how comparisons are made using the agreed performance indicators. My reading of the situation is that there is some sympathy by members of the government with the view that

comparisons with the private sector are fraught and amount to comparing apples with lemons rather than apples with apples. However, at the same time benchmarking and league tables are key components in the government's approach and they will not have sympathy with any arguments which use the diversity of local government as an argument for saying that all comparisons are meaningless. I sense that their approach would be to argue for family groupings of authorities with the same profiles in relation to a particular service and look at constructing league tables on this basis. So for example, Gloucester's in-house Building & Design Services team would be benchmarked against other local authorities carrying out a similar range of work with a similar size of work programme and profile of work. Again, the practical implication of this is that perhaps SCALA should be anticipating this and as a first step start to develop the survey that you carried out in 1996 jointly with the SCQS and use the information contained within it, supplemented if necessary by additional information, to construct family groupings of like local authority in-house architectural teams.

I stated above that I am in favour of nationally agreed performance indicators and I perhaps need to justify that position. As you know, planning authorities have been subject to a performance indicator and league table approach for many, many years. They are benchmarked on the speed for which they determine applications of a certain size. The experience has been that initially some authorities massaged their performance by taking a different approach to the compilation of the statistics and the way in which they interpreted some of the definitions in the performance indicators. This led to unfair situations where the league tables were reflecting deviousness rather than performance. In response to this the RTP1 and the District Planning Officers Society developed a code of practice in relation to the performance indicators and this helped to reassert a level playing field and ensure that the comparisons were being made on a fairer basis.

David Scott

City Planning and Technical Services Officer
City of Gloucester

There is certainly a lot more mileage in this Best Value debate especially as the intentions of the government become clearer. Your opinions are very welcome and will add both to the debate and our reservoir of knowledge of this new initiative,



SCALANET

All readers will have had a copy of the website with the last issue of SCALANEWS but for those who are able to, but have not yet visited the site, it looks so much better in colour! It is also updated five times a year at the same time that SCALANEWS is distributed but special events etc. could be included at any time.

Another reason for for getting connected via an ISP (Internet Service Provider) is the increasing use of Email to communicate, especially when transmitting bulky files avoiding the use of the fax or sending floppy disks.



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NICK RAYNSFORD LAUNCHES BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME AT INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTION SITE

Construction Minister Nick Raynsford launched a £6 million initiative on 21 October aimed at ensuring that innovation and best practice techniques are spread throughout the construction industry.

Announcing the initiative during a construction site visit to mark National Construction Week, Mr Raynsford said:

"The Construction Best Practice programme, which has secured £6 million of Government funding over the next three years, will publicise the activities of successful organisations in the industry and seek to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities for change. It will stimulate improvement by providing firms with a point of contact with innovative companies and by signposting them to sources of best practice, advice and techniques."

Mr Raynsford launched the programme during a site visit to the innovative Guildhall Yard East development, a Corporation of London project, which has incorporated an important Roman Amphitheatre, discovered during construction into a gallery, museum and office complex.

Speaking at the site, Mr Raynsford drew comparisons with the Romans' reputation as construction innovators:

"New techniques and lessons, once learned, quickly became standard practice. We can still learn from that attitude towards innovation, learning and practice. I am therefore pleased to announce today that my department is putting in place machinery to encourage improvement and the wider adoption of best practice in today's construction industry."

The programme has been devised in conjunction with the Construction Industry Board, following positive consultation with the industry in September, and aims to create a chain of improvement through all sectors of the industry.

The work will begin by the establishment of a Management Unit, based at the Building Research Establishment, to co-ordinate the programme's activities.

Mr Raynsford emphasised the need for this unit to work closely with the many organisations and providers of advice across the country.

"I hope that the Best Practice Programme will make a real difference in stimulating wider application of new ideas and new ways of thinking and working. Government cannot

impose this. So it's very much a partnership with industry - a partnership in which government is seeking to help the industry to raise its sights and raise its standards.

Copies of the Best Practice programme document are available from John Goodburn, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, tel 0171 890 5718.

For further information on the Guildhall Yard East Development, please contact Lora Walsh,

PRESCOTT BOOST TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, has appointed Sir John Egan, chief executive of BAA plc, to head a Construction Task Force.

Launching the Task Force at the Construction 97 conference in London on 22 October, Mr Prescott said:

"This Task Force will be at the cutting edge of what I want the construction industry to achieve in building a better Britain. It will play a vital part in industry to become more competitive both here and abroad.

"I want to be a champion for your industry. I am proud of what you can do - your hard work in all weathers, your export achievements and the ingenuity of your engineering. I want to work actively in partnership with the industry to solve problems and to improve performance. I want to discuss a fresh approach with you.

"Sir John and his team have proven experience in improving the productivity of a wide range of industries and companies. I am confident that they can make a major contribution in helping to make a stronger, more effective and more efficient construction industry which can work in partnership with Government to help us rebuild and regenerate Britain.

"The industry has already accepted the target to cut construction costs by 30 per cent. "If we can build a third more houses for the same cost and at a higher quality, just think of the impact we can make on inadequate housing in this country.

"If we can build and refurbish a third more schools with the same amount of money - or provide more hospitals and leisure facilities - then think of the impact on our local communities and our quality of life.

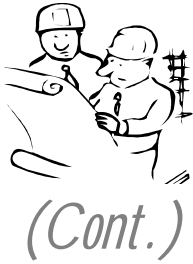
"To deliver that vision, we need a construction industry which is forward looking, well trained and understands its customers. The Government is going to be the most demanding, as well as the biggest of the industry's customers. But I am not going to be an armchair critic. I want to help the



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industry become more competitive both here and abroad. I want to see our construction industry able to take on and beat the best in the world. That is why I have set up the Construction Task Force - to help the British construction industry stay out in front".

The Task Force will be looking for practical ways of helping the construction industry improve its productivity. They will be looking at the scope for introducing further innovation in products and, especially, to streamline the process of construction, taking account of experience of construction overseas and that of other UK industries.

The terms of reference of the Construction Task Force are:

To advise the Deputy Prime Minister from the clients' perspective on the opportunities to improve the efficiency and quality of delivery of UK construction, to reinforce the impetus for change and to make the industry more responsive to customer needs. The Task Force will:

- quantify the scope for improving construction efficiency and derive relevant quality and efficiency targets and performance measures which might be adopted by UK construction;
- examine current practice and the scope for improving it by innovation in products and processes;
- identify specific actions and good practice which would help achieve more efficient construction in terms of quality and customer satisfaction, timeliness in delivery and value for money;
- identify projects to help demonstrate the improvements that can be achieved through the application of best practice.

The Deputy Prime Minister wishes especially to be advised on improving the quality and efficiency of housebuilding.

The Task Force is asked to report by Spring 1998 in a form which is capable of wide dissemination to clients and throughout the

MINISTERS LAUNCH A NEW SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Nick Raynsford, Construction Minister, began a new series of discussions on 28 October by meeting construction industry representatives to talk about health and safety. Angela Eagle, the Minister responsible for the Health and Safety Commission, was also present.

Following the meeting, Mr Raynsford said:

"The fact that we made health and safety the subject of the first of this series of discussions with the construction industry emphasises the priority we give to this subject. I am glad that we have been able to make such a positive start. Increasing health and safety awareness and reducing the level of accidents and injuries are an integral part of the process of improving the image and performance of the construction industry".

The discussion was very positive and came up with a series of proposals for further action which included:

- * Spreading good practice amongst clients, including those in the public sector, so that they demand good health and safety practice on site;
- * Making health and safety an integral part of good construction management;
- * Building health and safety into the professional training of architects, designers, engineers and surveyors;
- * Looking at ways of improving health and safety statistics to make it clear where the greatest risks lie;
- * Better health and safety training for site workers; and
- * The need for good and effective regulation.

This was the first of a new series of discussions with the industry on topical subjects. They are due to be held at regular intervals. Future subjects to be discussed include Integrated Transport, Regional Development and improving the service to the customer.

This highlights the need for Best Practice in Health & Safety matters and your need for

ORDERS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION: SEPTEMBER 1997

The total volume of construction new orders in September increased significantly from the low level seen in August. This increase is mainly due to strong growth in the private commercial sector. In spite of this rise, the three-monthly figure is down by one per cent compared with the previous period. This decrease is largely due to the August low.

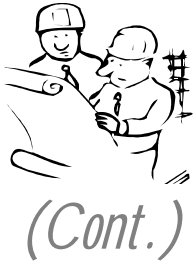
The total volume of new orders received by contractors for construction work in Great Britain in the third quarter of 1997 was one per cent lower compared with the second quarter of 1997 but seven per cent higher compared with the third quarter of 1996. These provisional figures prepared by the Government Statistical Service reflect the volume of orders at constant (1990) prices



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adjusted to exclude normal seasonal variations. New orders in the private housing sector in the third quarter of 1997 were five per cent higher compared with the previous quarter and 11 per cent higher than in the corresponding period a year ago. Public housing and housing association orders in the latest quarter were 17 per cent lower than in the previous quarter and 37 per cent lower than in the same period a year earlier.

Infrastructure orders in the latest quarter were 18 per cent lower compared with the previous quarter and 24 per cent lower compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.

Public non-housing orders (excluding infrastructure) in the latest quarter were seven per cent lower compared with the previous quarter and five per cent lower than in the corresponding period a year ago. Private industrial orders in the latest quarter were two per cent higher compared with the previous quarter and 35 per cent higher compared with the same period a year ago. Private commercial orders in the latest quarter were eight per cent higher compared with the previous quarter and 29 per cent higher than in the corresponding period a year ago.

HOUSEBUILDING: SEPTEMBER 1997

In September 1997, it is provisionally estimated that 15,500 dwellings were started in Great Britain compared with 15,600 in September 1996. Completions numbered 15,400 compared with 14,900 in the previous year.

In the latest three months 46,800 dwellings were started, up 3 per cent on the same three months a year ago, while completions at 43,600 were down 2 per cent.

Seasonally adjusted comparisons:

In the three months July to September, total starts were up 3 per cent while total completions fell by 4 per cent compared with the previous three months. Private enterprise starts were up by 6 per cent while completions were down by 4 per cent.

Housing Association starts and completions of new dwellings in the three months July to September both fell compared with the previous three months. Both starts and completions by local authorities and government departments remained at a low level.

NB: The figures shown in tables 1 and 2 are

derived from records kept for building control purposes. It is sometimes difficult for local authorities and the National House-Building Council, who are responsible for building control, to identify whether a dwelling is being built for a housing association or for a private developer. This may lead to an understatement of housing association starts

ARMSTRONG TELLS LOCAL AUTHORTIES - NOW IT'S OVER TO YOU
Housing Minister Hilary Armstrong on 2 October set out a framework for spending the money to be released under the Capital Receipts Initiative - and confirmed the Government's aim of letting local voices determine how the resources should be used. Publishing guidance on how to apply the £174m to be made available in 1997/98 and £610m in 1998/99, Ms Armstrong stressed the Government's intention that resources should be used to meet local needs and priorities. Once Royal Assent is given, final allocations will be issued to local authorities for housing and housing-associated regeneration works. Resources will be allocated on a two-thirds need and one-third existing receipts basis.

Ms Armstrong said:

"The clear message from the past is that putting local authorities in a rigid straitjacket when they spend money benefits nobody - not central Government, not local councils and, most importantly, not tenants. That is why we will be allowing local authorities maximum flexibility in deciding how to spend these much-needed resources.

"Local authorities should be imaginative and innovative in their approach. As well as plans for physical improvements and new developments, authorities will be able to use some of the resources to support housing-related regeneration works which will, for example, help to reduce crime and vandalism on estates and improve the employment prospects of tenants."

Ms Armstrong encouraged local authorities to take advantage of opportunities to combat social exclusion and support the Government's Welfare to Work programme.

"This is a real opportunity to begin to tackle poor housing, poor health and run down estates. We will also look to local authorities to use the resources in a way that supports our broader initiatives on Welfare to Work and combating social exclusion."

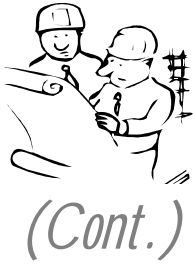
Copies of the guidance can be obtained from Lorraine Humphrey,
DETR, Zone 2/J3, Eland House, Bressenden



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PFI CASH BOTTLENECK

Many readers will remember the leading article in the Easter edition of SCALANEWS on the £11m replacement of the Colfax school at Bridport, Dorset, which also featured in the Study Day that Summer. Despite numerous expectations to the contrary the go ahead under the PFI process has still not been given even though it was hoped that the scheme would be a pathfinder project - one of the very first of its type where design, construction and operational risk would be transferred to the private sector.

Apparently the government are restricting the amount of revenue support grant available to finance PFI projects which is a matter of serious concern owing to the difficulty of finding alternative funding.

Can readers keep me posted please - Ed.

REVIEW OF RESTRICTED POSTS

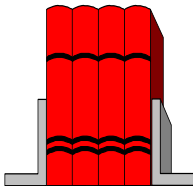
At the end of September Hilary Armstrong announced a review of the regulations that govern politically restricted posts in local gov.

LOTTERY FUNDS

Concern has been expressed by Sir Sidney Chapman, the only architect/planner in the commons, over how the diversion of £1bn. of lottery money for education and health projects will affect major construction projects already in the pipeline. He intends to approach the culture secretary, Chris Smith, over the matter which is also of concern to the RIBA.

NEW ARB CODE

Due to come into force at the end of March, 1998, following a delay of three months, it recommends that all architects take out adequate professional indemnity insurance. A basic scheme is available from the RIBA



Book list

SCALAPUBLICATIONS

A list of publications currently available from SCALA

1. **Building Maintenance Expenditure by Local Authorities - The results of the only authoritative survey of maintenance expenditure on Local Authority Buildings between 1977/78 and 1996/97**

Normal price £35 Discount price for SCALA members £22.50

2. **CCT GUIDE: A Guide for Clients to CCT for Architectural and related Professional services in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Acts 1988 and 1992.**

First Copy £35 or £30 to SCALA members - Additional Copies ordered at same time £18 each

3. **CCT Experienced - The report of a SCALA NW Conference on the experiences of authorities in the N W who were in the first CCT tranche.** £3 per copy

4. **SCALA Agreement for the Appointment of Consultants: Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Service Engineers, Structural Engineers, and Building Surveyors for Local Authority Commissions - 2nd Edition 1996**

First Copy £36 or £30 to SCALA Members - Additional Copies ordered at same time £15 each

5. **SCALA Report: The Enabling Authority : Property Management and Construction Related services.**

First Copy £18 - Additional Copies ordered at same time £10 each

6. **SCALA Guide to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations**

Now 2 copies for only £25 and 2 additional copies ordered at the same time will be only £10 (both +VAT)

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