

## Headlines

### Local Growth: realising every place's potential White Paper

The [white paper](#) sets out plans to:

#### National

- Replace existing planning policy statements and guidance with a **national planning framework** which will cover all forms of development. The new framework will set out national economic, social and environmental priorities and how they relate to each other

#### Regional and local

- Give neighbourhoods the chance to create **neighbourhood plans**, which would allow them to bring land forward for development which is not in the local plan. It is unclear at present what status these would have, who would draw them up and how neighbourhoods would be defined. In areas without a neighbourhood plan, local authorities will be expected to produce streamlined **Local Development Plans** to guide development in that area. That suggests where neighbourhood plans are produced they would be very influential documents.
- The proposals for **Local Enterprise Partnerships** and the **Regional Growth Fund** (£1.4bn, £1m minimum bid) are much as expected. The first 24 LEPs have been [approved](#) and it was confirmed that they will not receive central government support and will have to be funded by local authorities or local businesses
- Give **communities right to build** powers for small scale developments without planning permission

#### Local government financing

- **Rate retention:** The Government is considering ways of letting councils keep the business rates they collect locally to help stimulate economic growth in the regions. It is also considering allowing councils to retain a proportion of business rates – above a threshold - through the **Business Increase Bonus**. A further source of funding is **Tax Increment Financing**, which allows local authorities to raise capital for projects based on the business rates that they will generate
- Introduce a **New Homes Bonus**, under which Central Government would match fund the Council Tax of all new dwellings for a six year period. A consultation paper will be issued soon.

All of these issues will be considered in a Local Government Resource Review to be launched in January. The Government is asking for views on rate retention, TIF etc by 1 December.

### Comprehensive Spending Review: Rural Development Programme for England

Immediately after the CSR, Defra said that spending on Higher Level Stewardship would increase by over 80%. However this is not a real increase in funding as it is based on the 2010/11 budget being cut so that funding in future years appears higher.

## Agriculture

### Farm managers - jobs and pay

Results of the 2009 Institute of Agricultural Management Remuneration and Jobs survey have been published:

- Over the last two years average salaries have increased 14.6% to £44,655
- Non cash benefits were estimated to be worth an average of £11,970
- Around two thirds receive a fixed salary but nearly all of those on a incentivised system preferred it to a fixed salary

### RPA mapping update

The NFU has warned that it is unlikely that the RPA will be able to make early Single Farm Payments for 2010 and that they are worried about the pre-population of mapping data onto 2011 forms.

### Reinstating public rights of way after drilling

A cross-field footpath or bridleway should be reinstated to a minimum of 1 metre for a footpath and 2 metres for a bridleway within 14 days of the first disturbance if you are sowing a crop or within 24 hours in all other circumstances.

## Environment & Sustainability

### PLANET Scotland

This new free software package enables users to enter information about their fields to generate recommended fertiliser levels – saving money and benefitting the environment. Click [here](#) to access a copy.

### Utilisation of digestate from biogas plants as biofertiliser

This new [guide](#), from the International Energy Agency, covers the production and use of digestate.

## Estate Management

### Funding for village halls

The Big Lottery Fund is investing an additional £75m in grants for village halls and community buildings through its Reaching Communities programme. Applications will open for grants of £100,000 - 500,000 in December.

## Planning & Development

### West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project: economic value of residential conversions underestimated

This [Project](#) has revealed some interesting findings in relation to the economic contribution of barn conversions. The overwhelming majority of barns which are no longer in agricultural use have been converted into dwellings and the economic significance of these dwellings has previously been overlooked. 1 in 12 are the registered office of a limited company and 22% house a director of a significant firm (turnover £1.5m+), compared with an average of 5% of houses nationally. The report recommends that local policies and implementation plans should acknowledge that residential and economic use can be interlinked – a statement which is significant as the project was a collaboration led by English Heritage with the region's county and metropolitan councils.

## Property Agency

### Conveyancing Quality Scheme

The Law Society is launching the Conveyancing Quality Scheme, which will have a kitemark, to provide some assurance of quality to buyers and sellers. The scheme is supported by the Council of Mortgage Lenders, the Building Societies Association and the Association of British Insurers and will be launched in January 2011.

### Residential market update

- One of the country's biggest housebuilders, Bellway, has lowered its sales targets for 2011 after a disappointing autumn selling period. It is another sign that the housing market has deteriorated
- September's mortgage approvals were the lowest since March 2009 (BBA).

## Woodland & Arboriculture

### No sale of Scottish forests by Forestry Commission

The Scottish Government has confirmed that there are no plans to dispose of the national forest estate in Scotland and there is no review of Forestry Commission Scotland being undertaken.

## And finally...

### Development control question of the week

This week's development control question of the week is:

Would a wooden "zombie crypt" built on a paintballing field require planning permission?

Answers on a postcard please...

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this briefing, its information may not be comprehensive and recipients should not act upon it without seeking full professional advice.

If you have queries regarding any of the articles, please contact  
**jason.beedell@smithsgore.co.uk** (01733 866562) or **andrew.teanby@smithsgore.co.uk** (01733 866565)