

## **NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING ASSOCIATION**

### **REVIEW OF 2015-16**

#### **The world of infrastructure**

1. On legislation,
  - a. the Infrastructure Act 2015 was implemented, allowing early appointment of inspectors and a revised process for amending DCOs post consent. Allowing the appointment of two inspectors has yet to come into force.
  - b. A simplified process for non-material and material changes to DCOs was brought into effect in July. Despite that, there have been no applications for material changes to DCOs yet. Four applications for non-material changes have been granted so far.
  - c. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 received Royal Assent earlier today, and will allow 'an element of housing' to be included in applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects, including business or commercial projects. This is expected to come into force in October and presents an opportunity for NIPA to expand its reach. The Act also makes certain reforms to compulsory purchase procedure, some of which affect NSIPs.
  
2. On projects,
  - a. in the last year eight new applications for DCOs have been made to PINS, and 18 previously-made applications have been decided, suggesting a slowdown in the application rate.
  - b. Of the 18 decisions, three were refusals, in fact the first three refusals to be made and not subsequently reversed, suggesting either a stricter approach to applications, the submission of applications that are less certain to be consented, or both. We will hear more about NIPA assisting in establishing how the regime can be further improved to achieve its aims.
  
3. On organisations,
  - a. Last year's AGM guest Simon Ridley, then chief executive of the Planning Inspectorate has moved on, and is now Director General of Decentralisation and Growth at DCLG. His successor is Sarah Richards, formerly of Slough Borough

Council. We wish her every success and hope that she will attend a future NIPA event.

- b. The National Infrastructure Commission is expected to be formally set up via legislation in the next Parliamentary session. This body will be charged with producing a long-term National Infrastructure Assessment of what new infrastructure is needed, or other ways there may be to address need, and its work will feed into National Policy Statements. We look forward to engaging with it as it continues its work.
4. All in all there is still a lot going on for NIPA to participate in and we will ensure we have a voice.

### **The world of NIPA**

5. At the last AGM changes to the governance of NIPA were approved and have now been implemented in three ways:
- a. An election was held for a three-year term for chair of the board of NIPA
  - b. I conducted a refresh of the Council of NIPA, inviting any member to apply – there were 46 applications for the 25 places. resulting in 15 new members of this body responsible for setting the strategic direction of NIPA
  - c. I then extended the membership of the Board of NIPA from seven to 10; this time there were 16 applicants for the three places and after interviewing each candidate I appointed James Good of Berwin Leighton Paisner, Carly Vince of EDF, and Michael Wilks of Suffolk County Council
6. Having made changes to the governance of NIPA, this year, with the support of the Board, I would like to focus on member communications. I am drawing up a paper for discussion with the Board to cover the following:
- a. Participation in government consultations;
  - b. Communication of round table discussions;
  - c. Board and council minutes;
  - d. A regular members' bulletin;
  - e. A young (or new entrant) NIPA section, which has been proposed by Turley;
7. Once the Board has discussed and improved my paper, I hope to consult members for comment and then roll out the proposals that are agreed.

8. Also, an improved website is under development and should be launched at or before our annual conference next month. This will include a member forum area so that NIPA members can exchange information directly – we aren't planning to have it moderated, but you never know.
9. We have something of a financial surplus at present and so you will be hearing from Keith Mitchell who is spearheading an initiative to commission
10. Our conference is taking place on 29 June at Clifford Chance once again, and our dinner is scheduled for 23 November at the Plaisterer's Hall.
11. I hope that you continue to enjoy and value being members of NIPA. In line with my wish to improve communication I would welcome any feedback at any time.

**Angus Walker**  
**Board Chair**  
**12 May 2016**