



THE NATIONAL PLANNING FORUM LTD

The cross-sector network for key organisations engaged in spatial planning

Local Government | Professions | Business | Planning in Government | Third Sector

Evaluate | Explore | Exchange

Business Plan 2019-20

(as at 1 November 2018)

www.natplanforum.org

The National Planning Forum Ltd

Limited Company No 11118336

Registered in England and Wales

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Forum occupies a unique position by bringing together organisations representing those working in planning, in business, local government, the professions, the third sector and planners in government, to explore both agreement and difference across the sectors in developing a “fit for purpose” spatial planning system. It is not a consultative body, because its individual members are themselves consultees, advocates and lobbyists; and, although it has on occasions advocated a particular position, its main role is to foster and explore cross-sectoral experience and issues.
2. It operates according to the following principles:
 - A company limited by guarantee established for the principle purpose of enabling its members to evaluate, explore and exchange information about town and country planning in order to achieve quality outcomes that enhance productivity, well-being, the environment and sustainability for the benefit of the wider public. To this end the Forum holds events, undertakes research, publishes information and reports, liaises with, and works with, professionals within the built environment sector and collaborates with other individuals and organisations.
 - Membership is open to national and representative organisations with an interest in town and country planning operating within one of the five categories of (a) business, (b) professional associations, (c) government agencies, (d) third sector organisations and (e) local government. The Board is responsible for ensuring a degree of both balance and equality of representation across the sectors;
 - All members will be entitled to vote at the annual general meeting
 - The Board of Directors will be appointed by the Forum members and they will appoint from their number a chairperson, a vice-chair and a treasurer
 - The secretary will be, ex-officio, a non-voting member of the Board
 - The Management Committee will be appointed by the Forum members and will include representation from each of the five sectors
 - An annual general meeting will be held to receive the annual accounts, set the annual subscription rate; approve changes to the rules, elect directors and the management committee and approve a Directors’ report
 - The Board will present for approval to annual meetings of the membership:
 - An annual report
 - A statement of accounts
 - A proposed activity plan and budget; and
 - A recommendation on the annual subscription level needed to fund the business plan

- The Management Committee will be responsible for the day to day operation and programme of the Forum in all its aspects.

THE PAST YEAR

3. At the end of 2017 the Forum finally received confirmation that its formation and Articles had been accepted by Companies House.
4. During 2018, the Forum's Management Committee has continued to develop a long-term vision for the Forum, including discussions about moving forward to charitable status. It has also regularly monitored all activity and finance.
5. The Forum has:
 - A Management Committee comprising five sector representatives who agree and take responsibility for the programme of Forum meetings;
 - An on-going work programme that is monitored against performance at each meeting of the Board and the Management Committee;
 - A formal accounting system, together with an agreed set of financial protocols;
 - A set of agreed job descriptions delineating the split of responsibilities between the Board and the Management Committee;
 - A detailed risk register, which will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis;
 - A forward-looking investment policy;
6. In March 2018 a permanent Secretary was appointed for an initial period of three years, following advertisement and a selection procedure.
7. At the end of January 2018 the Forum's new website (www.natplanforum.org) was launched and the mailing list of member organisation representatives was reviewed and updated alongside the requirement to ensure that the Forum was GDPR compliant. Presentations from all events are now available for download from the website, which is now maintained directly by the Secretary.
8. To date, 24 organisations have committed to join the refreshed Forum and have either paid or agreed to pay the annual subscription. In addition, the Forum has attracted main sponsorship from ARUP for a three year period.
9. In 2018 the Forum has arranged, promoted and held four successful events with a fifth event scheduled for immediately following the AGM in December:
 - February – AECOM
 - April – CULS
 - July – The National Trust
 - September – Historic England

- December - ARUP
10. In addition, the Forum is hosting two seminars with The Heseltine Institute during Regen 2018 which is being held in Liverpool in November. This is a new departure for the Forum and will hopefully provide a greater exposure to the Forum's work outside London and the south-east.
 11. Following the publication of the joint research commissioned by the Forum with the RTPi in 2017, there have been discussions with a number of organisations about topic areas for future research and the Management Committee has spent some time deliberating how best such research work can be supported and project managed in the future.

THE FUTURE PROGRAMME

12. In recent years the NPF has held well attended Forum events with programmes that have generally been well received and have enabled participants to hear from, and engage with, well-informed presenters discussing up to the minute issues.
13. It remains the case that there is nowhere other than the Forum that provides the opportunity for a wide range of organisations engaged in the business of planning, both large and small, and covering the five sectors, to discuss issues together in an environment focussed on the role of planning and its effectiveness. Such events sometimes being held under 'Chatham House rule' conditions. Often the value of Forum meetings is for the individual organisation members who attend (who may not be those who regularly engage with the senior echelons of the planning world) and those for whom the Forum is an opportunity to take the temperature of the planning world, as a whole; to see the bigger picture and to receive feedback on the success of particular initiatives or programmes. There is a particular opportunity for younger or more junior staff of member organisations to participate in Forum events, not only contributing but broadening their horizons and taking advantage of the networking opportunities.
14. To continue its successful role in the future, the Forum needs to ensure that its programme:
 - Remains topical and is attractive to members – creating a buzz and a sense that not being there means missing out;
 - Attracts the leading, best, most informed, engaged and controversial presenters on the most important and challenging topics;
 - Delivers quality rather than quantity, and encourages debate and discussion within the Forum with a chance to hear all sides of the argument;
 - Provides better follow through in terms of access to presentations and reports of proceedings directly to members and through the website;
 - Improves communication and engagement with more regular news updates and use of social media;
 - Uses its USP of a cross-sectoral network, which embraces a vast range of experience, to provide support, input and thought leadership to the wider world of town and country

planning, without usurping the roles of its individual members, particularly in their lobbying and member-support activities.

15. The work programme proposed for the period 2018-19 seeks to build on the energy and experience which the Board of Directors and the Management Committee have shown over the last year in re-stating the role and reputation of the Forum, whilst ensuring that robust administrative systems are in place to achieve an efficient, low-cost operation, improving the service to members and providing support to the wider planning world.

16. The work programme's priorities for 2018-19 are:

- Continuing the work of firmly establishing the Forum by embedding first class administrative, management and financial systems; growing the membership and establishing good relationships with sponsors.
- Arranging Forum events that contribute to the discussion about current issues and best practice in planning. Four Forum meetings are proposed for 2019. The first Forum meeting of the year will be held on 26 February at the offices of Urban Design London. And three further meetings will be held in June, September and December 2019. The themes for each event will be announced closer to the dates; but the intention will be to continue providing topical, thought-provoking speakers discussing up-to-the minute issues, providing updates on new legislation, outlining current research and future scanning new ideas and thinking. In addition, the Forum will continue to publicise the Cambridge University Land Society at the annual Dentons event on 19 March.
- Maintaining the Supporting Planning Fund with the object of offering exciting opportunities for the Forum to contribute to continuing and new research and project work with a focus on projects that will deliver a practical application/outcome and to support new and emerging best practice and policy development where a cross-sectoral approach is a key component.
- Seeking charitable status for the company as the next step in the on-going transformation of the organisation.
- Promoting a class of associate membership for business/consultancy companies which would allow them to participate but would not entitle such organisations any voting rights within the Forum.
- Establishing a new class of individual associate membership (by invitation only) to those who share the Forum's aims.
- Seeking to raise the profile of the Forum and its activities through the planning, environment and development press.

2019-20 BUDGET

	<i>Budgeted 18-19 £</i>	<i>Actual 18-19 to date £</i>	<i>Budgeted 19-20 £</i>
Income			
Subscriptions income (1)	7,500	5,125	5,500
Associate subscription income (2)	0	0	3,750
Sponsorship income (3)	10,000	1,000	1,000
Interest	0	0	0
Total	17,500	6,125	10,250
Expenditure			
Secretarial (4)	7,000	5,134	7,000
Website general maintenance (5)	200	600	600
Promotion/Awards	1,500	0	500
Forum meeting expenditure (6)	200	0	200
Board & Man Comm expenses (7)	200	0	200
Forum travel (7)	500	289	500
Accounting/tax/SAGE system (8)	600	102	700
Publications	500	0	500
Insurance	350	270	280
Contingency	1,000	0	1,000
Total	12,050	6,395	11,480
Supporting Planning Fund (inc research & bursaries)	10,000	0	10,000
Income over Expenditure	-4550	-270	-11,230
Reserves			
Bfwd (at beginning of 2018-19 year)	68,927	68,927	

NOTES TO BUDGET:

- (1) 18-19 budget was based on a single subscription rate of £250 x 30 organisations. 24 organisations have already committed and 21 of those have paid their subscription. 2019-10 budget is based on a similar membership level;
- (2) Based on 14 business consultancy firms paying £250 each and 5 individuals paying £50 each;
- (3) Based on 1 consultancy paying £1,000 as main sponsor;
- (4) Agreed annual fee for secretariat services;
- (5) Agreed annual cost of hosting and maintaining website;
- (6) Costs are less now that NPF members have been able to provide free venues for meetings and some free catering;
- (7) Costs associated with hosting meetings of both Board and Management Committee when free accommodation is not available;
- (8) Travel expenses for secretariat and for speakers at meetings who are unable to re-claim expenses from other sources;
- (9) Preparation of end of year accounts for Companies House and annual cost of SAGE accounts software