



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 2020

(as at 20 November 2019)

www.natplanforum.org

The National Planning Forum Ltd

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Registered office: The Croft, 81 Walton Road, Aylesbury, HP21 7SN

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 full 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. During 2019, the Forum's Management Committee has continued to develop a long-term vision for the Forum and to regularly monitor activity and finance.
4. 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;
5. The Forum's website (www.natplanforum.org) is maintained directly by the Secretary and presentations from all events are available to download immediately after the events have happened. The mailing list of member organisation representatives is continuously updated ensuring that the Forum remains GDPR compliant.
6. 24 organisations committed to join the refreshed Forum and have either paid or agreed to pay the annual subscription. In addition, the Forum attracted main sponsorship from ARUP for an on-going, three-year period.
7. In 2019 the Forum arranged, promoted and held three successful events with a fourth event scheduled for immediately following the AGM in December:
 - February – Urban Design London
 - June – Grosvenor
 - September – The National Trust
 - December – ARUP

The Forum is extremely grateful to these organisations for having hosted Forum meetings during the year.
8. In addition, the Forum once again co-hosted two seminars with The Heseltine Institute, Locality and the National Trust during Regen 2019 which was held in Liverpool in November on:
 - The North – Economic Futures
 - Community-led Regeneration and Economic Development
9. Following the publication of the joint research commissioned by the Forum with the RTPi in 2017, there have continued to be 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. In October the Forum published and widely publicised an invitation for research proposals for projects of around £5,000. The intention is that the programme supports projects of contemporary relevance that research, analyse and develop best practice in spatial planning with a particular emphasis on cross-sectoral working and improving delivery on the ground. The intention is that projects will provide a written, illustrated report for publication and lead to a presentation and discussion at a Forum event.

10. Following the AGM decision, an application seeking charitable status for the Forum was prepared and submitted to the Charity Commission. Following lengthy deliberations, the Charity Commission responded with a large number of queries which are being worked through currently by the Secretary, in conjunction with the accountants, prior to a revised application being made in 2020.
11. The Forum has also launched an associate membership class for business/consultancy companies which allows them to participate in meetings but which would not entitle such organisations any voting rights within the Forum.

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 are sometimes 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.
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;

- Continues to provide better follow through in terms of access to presentations and reports of proceedings directly to members 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 2020 seeks to build on the energy and experience which the Board of Directors and the Management Committee have shown 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 2020 are:

- Arranging Forum events that contribute to the discussion about current issues and best practice in planning. Four Forum meetings are proposed for 2020. The first Forum meeting of the year will be held in February and three further meetings will be held in June September and December 2020. Alternative formats for the meetings, such as workshops and round table discussions will be considered where appropriate. 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 and outlining current research and future scanning ideas and thinking.
- 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 would 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.
- Continuing to grow an associate membership class for business/consultancy companies.
- Seeking to raise the profile of the Forum and its activities through the planning, environment and development press. 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.

2019-20 BUDGET

| | <i>Budgeted 19-20 £</i> | <i>Actual 19-20 to date £</i> | <i>Budgeted 20-21 £</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Income | | | |
| Subscriptions income (1) | 5,500 | 4,500 | 4,500 |
| Associate subscription income (2) | 3,750 | 100 | 2,000 |
| Sponsorship income (3) | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Interest | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10,250 | 5,600 | 7,500 |
| | | | |
| Expenditure | | | |
| Secretarial (4) | 7,000 | 3,269 | 7,000 |
| Website general maintenance (5) | 600 | 836 | 850 |
| Promotion/Awards | 500 | 0 | 250 |
| Forum meeting expenditure (6) | 200 | 0 | 200 |
| Board & Man Comm expenses (7) | 200 | 13 | 200 |
| Forum travel (7) | 500 | 54 | 300 |
| Accounting/tax/SAGE system (8) | 700 | 792 | 850 |
| Publications | 500 | 0 | 0 |
| Insurance | 280 | 280 | 280 |
| Contingency | 1,000 | 0 | 500 |
| Total | 11,480 | 5,244 | 10,430 |
| | | | |
| Supporting Planning Fund (inc research & bursaries) | 10,000 | 0 | 10,000 |
| | | | |
| Income over Expenditure | -11,230 | 356 | -12,780 |
| | | | |
| Reserves | | | |
| Bfwd (at beginning of 2019-20 year) | 71,772 | | |

NOTES TO BUDGET:

- (1) 19-20 budget was based on a single subscription rate of £250 x 30 organisations. 22 organisations have committed and 18 of those have paid their subscription to date. 2020-21 budget is based on a similar membership level;
- (2) Based on 8 business consultancy firms paying £250 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. Budget for 2020-21 reflects need to cover cost of expenses to attend meetings where necessary;
- (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