



PRESS RELEASE – Tuesday 30th March 2010

TIME TO ACT ON ADAPTATION

Leading planning and sustainable development charity, the Town and Country Planning Association^[1] (TCPA), has strongly welcomed the report published today by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) ‘*Adapting institutions to climate change*’.^[2]

The report sets out a powerful list of recommendations, including a ‘climate adaptation test’ for all institutions to assess their resilience to the threat of climate change.

Dr Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner of the TCPA said:

“The Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution’s report strengthens and builds on the recent publication by the Environmental Audit Committee on the importance of planning and adaptation to climate change. We are very pleased that the TCPA’s study ‘Helping to deliver Climate Change Adaptation through the UK Planning System’^[3] has been used to develop the findings and recommendations within this report.”

“The report’s recommendation to give a duty to local authorities to advance adaptation and be held accountable is particularly welcome. However, while there is a clear national policy drive towards the importance of adaptation in planning for climate change, there continues to be a huge disconnect between the policy and what is happening at the local level. The TCPA believes that the culture, skills, knowledge and data necessary to help local authorities deliver this major step change in planning has yet to be realised. Central Government needs

to ensure there is a robust framework with the necessary support in which planners can deliver the resilient communities we so desperately need.”

The TCPA is Lead Partner in the European project ‘Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns’ (GRaBS) project^[4] – which sees 14 partners across eight European Union member states exchanging experience and knowledge in order to improve regional planning policies to enable the delivery of adaptation measures through the use of green and blue infrastructure. The project started in September 2008, recognising that adaptation was an integral part of the sustainable development agenda, and its outputs have been central to the TCPA’s understanding of the issues. The outputs include Adaptation Actions Plans, a Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment Tool and a Case Study Database. The TCPA also runs Study visits across Europe with the next one taking place in Freiburg in June 2010. See www.grabs-eu.org for further information about the project, which has been co-financed by the European Union Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme^[5].

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Notes to Editors

1. The **Town and Country Planning Association** (TCPA) is an independent campaigning charity calling for more integrated planning based on the principles of accessibility, sustainability, diversity, and community cohesion. The TCPA puts social justice and the environment at the heart of the debate about planning policy, housing and energy supply. We inspire government, industry and campaigners to take a fresh perspective on major issues including climate change and regeneration. www.tcpa.org.uk.
2. **The Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution** (RCEP) is an independent standing body established in 1970 to advise the Queen, Government, Parliament, the devolved administrations and the public on

environmental issues. Although funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Royal Commission is independent of Government Departments. The Commission delivers its advice in the form of reports, which are submitted to the Queen and to Parliament. Details of the report, '*Adapting institutions to climate change*' can be found here on their website: <http://www.rcep.org.uk/reports/28-adaptation/28-adaptation.htm>

3. The TCPA study for the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, '**Helping to deliver Climate Change Adaptation through the UK Planning System**' can be found on their website here: <http://www.rcep.org.uk/reports/28-adaptation/documents/TCPA%20workshopreport.pdf>
4. **History of the GRaBS project proposal** - Working with the two initial partners in the early part of 2007, the TCPA developed an outline GRaBS project proposal, which was presented to UK local and regional government in order to gauge interest in and relevance of both the project idea and the proposed European wide exchange of experience and knowledge. The TCPA decided to offer to take on the Lead Partner role for the new project and together with the **University of Manchester**, the **City District Geuzenveld Sloterveer** (Amsterdam), the **London Borough of Sutton** and **Southampton City Council** began the process of extended European partner search. The aim was to find partners with a range of interests, cultures, experiences and needs, located in a range of climate zones. Towards the end of 2007 the **Province of Genova, Etnambiente**, the **University of Catania** (Italy), the **City of Malmo** (Sweden), the **Municipality of Kalamaria** (Greece), the **Regional Environment Centre for Eastern Europe** (Slovakia), the **Northwest Regional Development Agency** (NWDA), the **Region of Styria** (Austria) and **CORPI** (Lithuania) joined the project as partners.
5. **INTERREG IVC Programme** – the INTERREG IVC Programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2007-2013. It aims, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe.