



PRESS RELEASE – Friday 14th May 2010

TIME FOR NEW MINISTERIAL TEAMS TO FOCUS ON EXTREME WEATHER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The new Ministerial teams at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) are welcomed by the TCPA^[1], however the planning charity has called for a new focus on the challenges of social and environmental justice.

TCPA Interim Chief Executive Kate Henderson said:

"Adapting our towns and cities to the impacts of climate change is one of the greatest challenges society faces today. The environmental experience in the Ministerial appointments made over the last few days are welcomed by the TCPA. Caroline Spelman and Chris Huhne, with their Ministerial teams, have a real opportunity to shape policy which reduces carbon emissions and positively builds community resilience to extreme weather events, such as heat waves and flooding."

"Many of our communities remain completely untouched by the kinds of positive solutions on green open space, energy demand reduction and renewable energy that would help show that climate change is both real and manageable. Through our international climate change adaptation project, GRaBS, we look forward to working with the new Government to share best practice and practical solutions to the climate change challenge. There is a pressing need to strengthen the national framework so that it truly reflects the overwhelming public interest in reducing carbon emissions and enabling adaptation."

The Rt Hon. Caroline Spelman MP has been appointed Secretary of State for Defra. She was previously the Conservative Shadow Communities Secretary, as well as covering the environment portfolio, gaining experience of both planning and environmental issues.

Ms Spelman is joined by James Paice MP who has a sound background in agricultural policy and worked as a Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt Hon. John Gummer when he was Minister of Agriculture and then Secretary of State for the Environment.

The Rt Hon. Chris Huhne MP has been made Secretary of State for DECC. He was previously the Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesperson, but prior to this was their spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Mr Huhne has long been vocal in his political career on the challenges of climate change and the urgency of the need to tackle them.

He is joined by Charles Hendry MP and Gregory Barker MP. Mr Hendry has extensive experience for the role having long held the Conservative energy portfolio. Mr Barker was appointed Shadow Environment Minister in December 2005 and was closely involved on behalf of the Conservatives with the passage of the Climate Change Act in 2008, when he also became Shadow Climate Change Minister.

The TCPA is Lead Partner in a European funded “Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns” (GRaBS) project^[2] – which sees 14 partners across 8 European Union member states exchanging experience, knowledge and assistance on delivering adaptation through the use of green and blue infrastructure. The project kicked off 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. 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^[3].

- Ends -

Contacts:

Fiona Mannion, TCPA (Lead-Partner)

Tel: 020 7930 8903

Email: Fiona.mannion@tcpa.org.uk

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
2. **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** (NWRDA), the **Region of Styria** (Austria) and **CORPI** (Lithuania) joined the project as partners.
3. **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.