



PRESS RELEASE – Thursday 25th March 2010

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FACING OUR COMMUNITIES IN THE 21st CENTURY?

Leading planning and sustainable development charity, the Town and Country Planning Association^[1] (TCPA), welcomes the Environmental Audit Committee report on 'Adapting to Climate Change', published today, which stresses that adapting to climate change needs to become as much of a priority as cutting greenhouse gas emissions^[2].

The TCPA and the Planning and Climate Change Coalition^[3] is cited throughout the report, having given evidence at the Committee's inquiry in December on whether Government is on the right path to effectively embedding climate change adaptation, and risks from future climate change impacts, into Government programmes, policies and decision making.

Dr Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner of the TCPA (who gave evidence at the EAC inquiry) said:

"Adapting our towns and cities to the impacts of climate change is one of the greatest challenges society faces today. This report sends out a clear message that we need an urgent step-change in performance if our communities are to become resilient to the extraordinary changes in storm frequency, flooding, sea level rise and temperature rises expected over the next 20 to 100 years."

The EAC report recognises that local authorities need greater levels of support; that planning officers need more resources and skills and there needs to be political commitment to be able to consider adaptation objectives in decision-making; and that the Government must take leadership in raising awareness of the issues. These key

points reflect recommendations made by the Planning and Climate Change Coalition in their Position Statement published in October last year.

Dr Hugh Ellis added:

“The adaptation agenda has profound implications for urban development. Innovative spatial planning will be critical in introducing the measures required to help make our urban areas less vulnerable to a changing climate – measures such as green open space, green roofs, and sustainable urban drainage systems. The question is how quickly the Government will take on board the recommendations of the EAC report to help ensure our communities are ready for the challenges ahead.”

The TCPA is Lead Partner in a European funded “Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns” (GRaBS) project^[4] – 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^[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 report published today by the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) is its Sixth Report of Session 2009–10 HC 113. Details of all the Committee's press releases together with its Reports, oral evidence and other publications, are available on the Committee's website at: http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/environmental_audit_committee/eacpn250310.cfm.
 3. The **Planning and Climate Change Coalition** includes over 30 organisations and individuals. Formed in July 2009, it is a joint initiative between the TCPA and Friends of the Earth which aims to make recommendations for new strategic planning guidance on climate change in England, bringing together PPS1 (planning and climate) and PPS22 (renewable energy); to build consensus amongst a wide range of stakeholders on the benefits of new guidance; to work with Government to ensure the fastest possible implementation of the new guidance. The Coalition position statement was launched in Parliament on 27 October 2009, and is available at: www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/pccc_position_statement.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.