

# Scala Autumn 03 news

Construction & architecture news for the public sector



**in this issue:** Civic Building of the Year shortlist, Rethinking Construction - the next steps, New permanent recruitment solutions, The Prudential Code, Better public libraries, Off-site fabrication, Exemplar school design.



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# Scalanews

Construction & architecture news for the public sector



**Well that was it**, I hope you framed it, or placed a copy in the safe as an investment, or just enjoyed it as usual, it was the last edition of **Scalanews** as we knew it.

It is true to say that the decision to change was arrived at only after much debate within the Council with many members not wanting to change the winning formula, and a winner it was! It is clear that the simple no frills, low key, yellow format was much loved and the fear of losing its entertaining ability to present dry subject matter in an easily digestible way caused a great deal of anxiety.

However, the opportunity exists to raise our game and drive SCALA forward by increasing its influence at the highest level in government and the construction industry where presentation is now so important. It's time to move on and address the twenty first century with a publication which will continue to keep its readers well informed on all current professional issues in the old magazines highly developed and unique style, but by improving production quality, can become a platform or showcase for all its members to promote the work and publicise the achievements of the public sector, so regularly ignored by the established national construction press!

Like the SCALA Yearbook, which is also being updated, and the introduction this year of the 'Civic Building of the Year' award, the new publication will give those working in the public sector a real opportunity to show what is being achieved in design and development and to report on the success of the innovations so often pioneered, but rarely credited, to the public sector. With over 40% of the funding for development projects for the construction industry still being provided from the public purse many would say a high quality publication serving those working in this sector is a necessity and well overdue!

Farewell to the 'Yellow Duster' it served us well. I hope you enjoy this new edition, the first of the future.

**Nigel Badcock**

SCALA President

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**Hays Montrose**

Scalanews is published by SCALA Ltd. (Reg. No. 2527462) with the aim of Serving Construction & Architecture in Local Authorities. For further information and to contribute to articles and comment please contact:

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SCALA is grateful for the sponsorship of **Hays Montrose** and the **Local Government Task Force** enabling the sharing of knowledge and information with members and partner organisations involved in providing construction and architecture services to the Public Sector. Contact details for our sponsors are:

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SCALA W: www.scala.org.uk

ACA W: www.ACArchitects.co.uk

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**Cover picture:** High Performance Centre - Birmingham City Council



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and File Completion,  
Practice Notes & Guidance,  
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National CPD Programme,  
Regional Events,  
Member Web Site,  
Guide to the Management  
of Planning Supervision

# Editorial comments



I hope that readers, both old and new, enjoy the new all colour professionally produced Scalaneews.

The circulation is now over 2000 and includes not just SCALA, ACASLA and ACA members but also those in the industry supporting the new 'Constructing Excellence' initiative through the Local Government Task Force (LGTf).

SCALA has worked energetically with our partners to network throughout the industry with publications, workshops and special events. Scalaneews is the only quality magazine to focus exclusively on construction and architecture in the public sector. It's members and readers represent professionals in all disciplines from both the public and private sectors who help to provide many of the publicly financed building projects under construction today, comprising almost half of the total industry workload.

Your views matter so please contact me to add to the debate and be part of a team effort with common aims and objectives. By working more closely with SCALA, our partners and other stakeholders in the industry you will help to achieve better buildings and solutions over the lifetime of a project.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to Scalaneews over the last 6 years and to the team who have provided the foundations for the future. In particular Hays Montrose, the LGTF and Lansdowne Publishing who are helping to make your voice heard more effectively across the industry.

**Bernard Wyld**

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# 6 Civic Building of the Year Award



**Nigel Badcock**

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**The idea** for the 'Civic Building of the Year' award arose from the desire of the editorial panel responsible for selecting the Yearbook schemes to give more credit to architects responsible for the high quality public buildings and development projects currently being produced.

After all, a local authority project, the City Learning Centre in Brislington, Bristol, had just been announced as the Prime Ministers Award for Better Buildings. Selection and consideration for the award would be from the entries submitted for the Yearbook, the only publication which reports the work of local authorities and which could now highlight the best of the many quality schemes submitted.

It is interesting to note how the Yearbook has changed over the years. Originally it had fewer schemes and many worthy articles on subjects of current interest to members (in the days when 'current interest' lasted over a year). As the workload of local authorities increased publishers became more interested in the magazine as an advertising vehicle and were willing to pay SCALA handsomely for the privilege of producing it. It took on a glossy A4 format with more schemes, fewer articles and a lot more advertising. There then followed something of a lull during the early '90s when workloads began to fall and advertising revenue followed suit. Since then it has gradually developed in partnership with a new publisher

and this year will see the fruits of that long term relationship with a re-design by Lansdowne Publishing.

With the Yearbook going from strength to strength and the membership being enlarged by new initiatives such as the partnering arrangements with the ACA and closer links with ACASLA, the timing looked ideal to launch the 'Civic Building of the Year' initiative. As a result, a record 96 submissions for the Yearbook were received with the standard of design being higher than hitherto, with 51 schemes being selected for publication.

The editorial panel's primary criteria is the quality of building design. However, they also take into account the need to show the great diversity of public building expressed through high quality photographs. Sadly, in some cases a good scheme is represented by such poor photos that it is unacceptable for publication.

The introduction of the 'Civic Building of the Year' award has this year given the panel the important additional task of selecting the winner and, at the risk

of appearing trite, the overall high standard has made this process extremely hard. A short list of ten was selected from which, following site visits, the winner and schemes worthy of 'Highly Commended' will be selected. The ten short listed schemes are:- Each of these schemes is an example of a commitment to excellence in design. Together they represent the extraordinary diversity of work being done in the Public Sector. ■



The Awards will be announced at the Presidential Dinner following SCALA 2003 on 17th October at The Centre for Life in Newcastle. SCALA is grateful for the sponsorship of NPS Property Consultants Ltd. for their support of the 'Civic Building of the Year' award in 2003. ■

These 3 secondary schools all display successful but different approaches to the challenge of modern education design in terms of quality, flexibility and the use of IT.



**Blythe Community College - Northumberland County Council**



**Challenge College - Bradford MDC**



**St Thomas of Aquin's High School - City Of Edinburgh Council**



**High Performance centre - Birmingham City Council** - a creative response to the need to house sporting activities with specific dimensional requirements



**St George's Toilets and Beach Huts - Portsmouth City Council** - an example of thoughtful controlled design and detailing of simple buildings.



**Pathfield Special School - Devon County Council** - a design using colour and light to create a stimulating environment for the users.



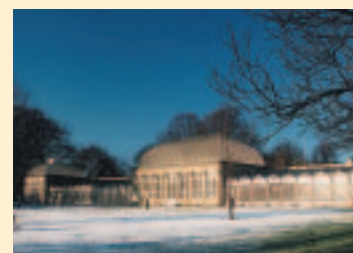
**Radley Court - Birmingham City Council** - a residential development for the elderly with a creative visual design approach and a strong commitment to a 'readable plan' for the users.



**Hull Museums Quarter Orientation Centre - Kingston upon Hull** - a successful controlled response with a challenging refurbishment and extension brief.



**Duke of York's Square - Royal Borough of Chelsea** - a model of urban regeneration and mixed use providing a new open space focus to King's Road.



**Botanical Gardens - Sheffield City Council** - a challenging scheme for the restoration of the 1830's Paxton Pavilions.

# 8 New permanent recruitment solutions



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07785 377614 or  
email [richard.gelder@hays-montrose.com](mailto:richard.gelder@hays-montrose.com)

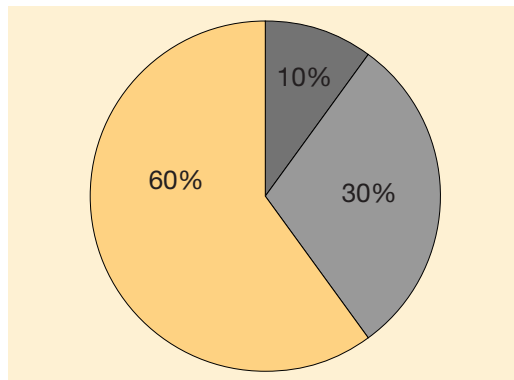
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[www.hayspersonnel.com](http://www.hayspersonnel.com)

**The major challenge** facing our industry is skill shortages. Richard Gelder, Public Sector Director of Hays Montrose explores new permanent recruitment solutions to help overcome the shortage.

Skill shortages have caused local authority managers to report severe difficulties in the recruitment of permanent staff. Following a sharp employment decline in the early 1990's, skills shortages have increased over the last few years, with notable skill gaps now established in many areas - most prominent for building control, but also for architectural technicians, landscape and senior architectural roles.

Driving this shortage is an increase in projects across the public and private sectors, which has resulted in a 30% increase in architectural jobs registered through Hays Montrose. With fewer graduates following degrees in technical disciplines, there is an increasingly smaller pool of candidates for an increasing number of positions.

The current applicant market consists of three broad categories. 10% are actively looking for a new role, as they are unhappy with their current employer or conditions. 30% are semi-active applicants, meaning they are happily employed but are registered with agencies and search specialist job websites for 'the right job' with more money and better opportunities. The remaining 60% are content with their current roles, so are non-active in the job market.



In today's market, traditional methods of permanent recruitment, such as local newspaper and journal advertising, have become less effective. With only the

active applicants looking at newspapers and journals, the number of potential applicants is already limited. With increased competition for their skills, applicants often compare the salaries of jobs advertised and apply for positions based on salary alone.

So, as skill shortages affect service delivery, new and innovative methods of recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff are being adopted.

A key aspect of this is the use of recruitment agencies for permanent recruitment services - a change from the traditional use of agencies for temporary staff during peaks in workload.

The main driver behind using agencies for permanent recruitment is access to applicants. As the majority of potential candidates are never actively looking for work, the main challenge in recruiting staff is to access those who are semi-active or non-active in the job market.

With a database of applicants often built up over a period of years, agencies are able to capture applicants through a range of solutions utilising these contacts.

At Hays Montrose, a bespoke mailing tailored to applicants registered on our database can be specifically designed with your logo to promote your organisation and vacancy. It will provide greater details on the pros of working for your organisation, a detailed description of the role and the benefits of the entire package on offer.

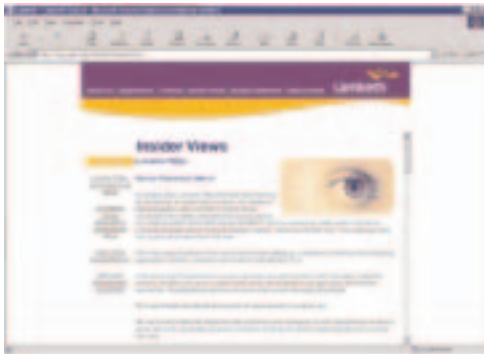
Direct telephone networking of a vacancy and organisation by a specialist Hays Montrose consultant to an agreed target number of specific candidates can also increase responses.

Apart from our database, Hays Montrose's website [www.hayspersonnel.com](http://www.hayspersonnel.com) can be used to promote individual clients by developing recruitment microsites.





These are tailor-made recruitment websites for ongoing recruitment campaigns, which allow a client to post an unlimited number of vacancies on a site designed to their corporate guidelines.



These websites are further promoted with eshots (electronic mailings) to the applicant database, which encourages on-line applications and offer better control of response management.

Individual jobs can be posted on [www.hayspersonnel.com](http://www.hayspersonnel.com), outlining the full details of a vacancy, highlighted with a client's logo. These jobs are additionally posted on other relevant major job

sites to ensure maximum exposure and promote equal opportunities.

[www.hayspersonnel.com](http://www.hayspersonnel.com) registers over 220,000 job searches per week from around 100,000 individual visitors. This includes 150 new architecture applicants who email their CV's to us and between 400 and 500 architecture applications for permanent and temporary architecture jobs registered on the site.

Agencies are also used for advertisement and response handling. Hays Montrose is the leading recruitment advertiser in the majority of property journals. We immediately respond to every enquiry from our advertisements to guarantee maximum capture from candidate enquiries. Capturing responses quickly and organising immediate interviews is a critical factor in the success of a recruitment campaign.

Regardless of your permanent recruitment needs, the range of solutions offered by agencies to recruit suitably qualified and experience staff can allow you to manage a successful recruitment process. ■

"Hays Montrose is the leading recruitment advertiser in the majority of property journals."

## Scaladiary

### September

- 10 Y&H Region meeting at York  
(contact Steve George Tel: 01482 612481)
- 15 Midlands Region meeting  
(contact Andrea Heinlein Tel: 0115 915 8009)
- 19 S&SE Region meeting at Southampton  
(contact John Bean Tel: 023 8083 2404)
- 25 NW Region meeting in Salford  
(contact David Mycock Tel: 0161 911 4130)
- 26 Eastern Region meeting at Norwich  
(contact George Roberts Tel: 01603 223447)

### October

- 3 SCALA Design Forum meeting at DfES, Conf. Room 1, Caxton House, 6-11 Tothill St., London  
SCALA Policy Committee  
SCALA Practice Forum  
SCALA Council all at IPF Ltd. 27 Queen Anne's Gate, London. NB: Before Council there is a presentation by Nigel Barr of J.R.Knowles on the LA Partnering Toolkit starting at 1.30pm.

- 15 ACA Council meeting  
(contact Fiona Griffiths Tel: 020 8325 1402)
- 16 SCALA AGM in Newcastle  
Notice of meeting in adjacent column
- 17 SCALA 2003 in Newcastle - see advertisement

### December

- 5 SCALA meetings in London as 3 October
- AMP network regional workshops on - October 13, 23 & 30 London, 20 Warwick, 21 Nottingham, 22 Bury, 27 Durham, 31 Bury St. Edmunds, November 3 Exeter and 6 Llandrindod Wells (for further information contact David Bentley on 07710 368711).
- CIPFA/SCALA 32nd. Series of BV&QF workshops on Construction & Property Services comes to you on - September 17 Durham, 18 Burton on Trent, 19 S. Midlands, 22 Preston, 23 Buiith Wells, 23 & 24 Scotland, 24 Taunton, 25 Wakefield & Winchester and 30 London (for further information contact David Bentley on 07710 368711).



#### Notice of SCALA AGM:

To be held at 6pm at Jury's Inn Hotel, Newcastle, on Thursday 16th October prior to SCALA 2003. Location plan at [www.scala.org.uk/events.htm](http://www.scala.org.uk/events.htm)

See Discussion Forum on the website for Minutes of last AGM and Agenda

# CIPFA Scala BV&QF Homepage

To find out more about the **CIPFA BV&QF** please contact:



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## Come Partnering - Hoe Down or Showdown?

Everyone seems to be entering into partnering or partnership contracts of one sort or another and platform speakers are constantly singing the virtues of a partnering approach.

But, is it as easy as they make it sound? It is clear that partnering can reap benefits for those involved, but how are those benefits realised, and more importantly, which are the areas that create difficulty in setting up a partnering approach?

For the next two Construction and Property series we have teamed up with the Local Government Task Force to examine partnering/partnerships in more detail. This series will look at Pre-Contract approaches whilst our next series, which will commence in November, will look at Post Contract management. We were keen to provide an extremely practical approach and have invited a varied range of speakers to explain what worked and what didn't work, in their own experiences.

In addition to the usual slide handouts for the day, each delegate will receive a CD Rom of all of the presentations for the series together with a questionnaire completed by each speaker on their pre-contract approach, providing an essential reference to pre-contract partnering methodologies.

The dates, venues and guest speakers for each event are set out below:

### 16th September - Peterborough

*Guest speakers -* Building related partnering in Middlesbrough (Middlesbrough are one of the Rethinking Construction Beacon Councils) and, Housing planned maintenance in Coventry with Wates Construction.

### 17th September - Durham

*Guest speakers -* Building related partnering in Norfolk (Again Norfolk are one of the Rethinking Construction Beacon Councils) and,

*17th Sept Cont...* A framework agreement for Design Services and Property Maintenance Management within Cambridgeshire as a vehicle for outsourcing of the existing Property Manager Services.

### 18th September - Burton on Trent

*Guest speakers -* Partnering within New Build and Maintenance within Cheshire and, Partnering for New Build, Maintenance and Professional Services within Derbyshire.

We will start each event with our traditional update session providing the usual comprehensive guide to current issues in the world of Local Government and Construction and Property. This will be followed, before and after lunch, with two guest speakers each providing a step-by-step account of their own experience of the pre-contract process.

The final session of the afternoon will take the form of a facilitated question and answer session providing delegates with a chance to explore areas of interest in more detail with the guest presenters.

We feel the day will provide an essential and practical guide to the varied approaches when entering into partnering contracts.

We believe these events will be very popular and have introduced a number of additional venues to accommodate numbers. As with all our construction events, we will endeavour to keep the numbers to a maximum of 30 to encourage practical involvement by all attendees. ▶

**19th September - Stratford-upon-Avon**

*Guest speakers* - Partnering within Dorset examining how the approach has developed over a number of contracts and, Outsourcing the Capital Delivery Framework between Hertfordshire and Mace including all professional disciplines and the developed contracting framework.

**22nd September - Preston**

*Guest speakers* - A collaboration on Professional Services between Surrey County Council and Mouchel and, A framework agreement for Design Services and Property Maintenance Management within Cambridgeshire as a vehicle for outsourcing of the existing Property Manager Services.

**23rd September - Builth Wells**

*Guest speakers* - Building related partnering in Norfolk and, Maintenance and Repair of Corporate Buildings within Northampton Borough Council.

**24th September - Taunton**

*Guest speakers* - Housing planned maintenance in Coventry with Wates Construction and, Partnering for New Build, Maintenance and Professional Services within Derbyshire.

**25th September - Winchester**

*Guest speakers* - Partnering within Dorset examining how the approach has developed over a number of contracts and, A collaboration on Professional Services between Surrey County Council and Mouchel.

**25th September - Wakefield**

*Guest speakers* - Building related partnering in Middlesbrough and, Outsourcing the Capital Delivery Framework between Hertfordshire and Mace including all professional disciplines and the developed contracting framework.

**30th September - London**

*Guest speakers* - Building related partnering in Norfolk and, Outsourcing the Capital Delivery Framework between Hertfordshire and Mace including all professional disciplines and the developed contracting framework.

“We feel the day will provide an essential and practical guide to the varied approaches when entering into partnering contracts.”

*(Please note that the Wakefield and Winchester events are on the same date and this is not a typographical error)*

I do hope that you will be able to attend. If you wish to book, please fax the attached form to Eve Billings on 020 8667 8580. Please note that for this series subscribers will receive four free places and additional places are £125 plus VAT. We do anticipate that demand for the workshop will be high and would recommend that you book as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

If you have and further queries or comments about the workshop programme please contact me on 07710 368711 or e-mail David.Bentley@ipf.co.uk or

Chris.Brain@ipf.co.uk. If you have any booking or venue queries please contact Eve Billings on 020 8667 8581 or e-mail Eve.Billings@ipf.co.uk.

We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Yours sincerely



**David Bentley**

**Lead Advisor**

Construction and Property Services 

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- Improve the procurement, management and development of freelance professionals working for local authority architectural and technical functions.
- Support the development of a partnership between all stakeholders, working towards continuous improvement, mutual understanding and developing best value.

View your recruitment from a different perspective... for more information or copies of our temporary recruitment best practice guide please call Richard Gelder on 07785 377614 or e-mail [richard.gelder@hays-montrose.com](mailto:richard.gelder@hays-montrose.com).

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# Rethinking construction - <sup>13</sup> the next steps

## Just when does an initiative become an institution?

Launched in the wake of the 1998 Construction Task Force report, the Rethinking Construction initiative is now nearing its fifth birthday. So has it become institutionalised?

Well if the question is, “has it been accepted by the construction industry,” the answer is a definite “possibly”. Whilst the larger contracting, supplier, and client organisations have probably heard of Rethinking Construction it is unlikely that most of the smaller organisations have yet been engaged. The extent to which change and improvement have been embodied in the daily operational arrangements for most people in the supply and construction process is questionable, and many of the professional institutions still view us with suspicion. So there is undoubtedly a way to go before the work of Rethinking Construction is complete.

Is Rethinking Construction still lean and hungry enough to drive that change process, or has it simply become a talking shop, relying on a select band of operators? Are their results, as exemplified by Demonstration Project and KPI's, really capable of being extrapolated to deliver results for the industry on a whole? And is Rethinking Construction itself still delivering its functions in the most cost effective and efficient way?

These are all genuine issues and are not being shirked in the current move to “Constructing Excellence”.

There is undoubted logic in combining the Rethinking Construction operation with that of Construction Best Practice. Both organisations are committed to driving change. Both issue guidance and are to a large extent fishing in the same proverbial pond. Whilst Rethinking Construction has its regions, CBP have their clubs.

And the Rethinking Construction sector specific component parts of the LGTF, HF, and M4I, have their counterparts in the sectoral focus of CBP.

So the decision last year to combine the two operations, was an easy and entirely logical one. But what has proved much more challenging has been the shape, structure and focus of the new combined operation, which comes together under the banner of Constructing Excellence.

A new chairman, Peter Rogers, and deputy, Bob White, are already in place, and a new Chief Executive is currently being appointed. A key decision already taken has been to keep the existing brand identities. These are recognised and respected by contractors, suppliers, consultants and clients alike. For its part the LGTF will continue to lobby the government and allied organisations for change that will help local authorities, as well as providing practical support for public sector practitioners. It will also continue to develop its role in assisting the ODPM on wider local authority procurement issues. After all, good procurement is good procurement whether or not it is construction focused.

In practical terms the formal company of “Rethinking Constructing Ltd” will be wound up over the next months. It will be replaced on 1st April 2004 by the new Constructing Excellence organisation. That's the easy bit, getting the focus and maintaining the initiative is more challenging, and that challenge will not be shirked.

SCALA has taken the bold step of moving to the new modern format of this, its inaugural magazine, and the LGTF is delighted to be its sponsor. The old yellow edition was an invaluable tool, containing up to the minute guidance for local authority practitioners. But in presentational terms, it was starting to show its age. This exciting new format will be every bit as valuable as its predecessor, but will also portray local authority practitioners as the excellent professionals that they are.

So our motto as both SCALA and the LGTF go forward must be “Cherish the old, but embrace the future.”

And watch this space! ■



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## 31 series workshops

### Financial Skills For Dummies?

Presented by Philip Gidman and Christopher Lees

“A third source of funding is through direct revenue financing but this is heavily dependent on the availability of revenue resources.”

The presentations by Philip Gidman and Christopher Lees, consultants with IPF, were an introduction to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the likely impact on construction and property services. The code is being developed by CIPFA for the ODPM with the aim of relaxing the financial controls over local authorities being available in draft form for consultation on the CIPFA website.

One element of the current capital finance system is an ability to borrow determined annually by the Government. Central Government gives annual borrowing approvals called Basic Credit Approvals (BCA's) and Supplementary Credit Approvals (SCA's). These account for approximately 30% of current capital expenditure and can be supplemented by the sale of assets, which are 100% usable in the general fund, with some 'set aside' necessary in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

A third source of funding is through direct revenue financing but this is heavily dependent on the availability of revenue resources. If funded through council tax the gearing effect means that for every 1% of additional expenditure the Council tax will go up by 4% (as a crude national average). This is because the tax only comprises about 25% of local authority income and is the only part over which they have direct control. The remainder, comprising grants, business rates and the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), are determined by the Government.

So, what does the Prudential Code aim to do? The main proposals are:

- The abolition of credit approvals which removes many controls over capital spending
- A requirement to set limits for borrowing - members will set these limits
- Local authorities required to comply with the Code
- The s151 officer and district auditors given powers to ensure compliance with legal requirements
- Reserve powers for the Government

A number of issues are raised by these proposals including the training needs of members and officers to take on these devolved responsibilities, the extensive powers of the chief financial officer (s151) and the way in which the Government might exercise the reserve powers. The latter is currently seen as a macroeconomic issue, as part of a possible need to control borrowing nationwide, with powers over individual authorities only used if borrowing limits are exceeded.

Formal feedback from the consultation period, which finished in May, is not yet available. The code has been 'roadtested' by 36 local authorities and is due to be finalised in September. Legislation is already in place in Scotland and subject to legislative approval in England and Wales operation will commence on 1 April 2004.

Prudential indicators in the Code aim to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The information to be provided by these is as follows:


#### Capital Expenditure

- Forward estimates of capital expenditure for 3 years
- Actual capital expenditure after the year end
- Capital financing requirement- the underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose

#### External Debt

- Borrowing and other long term liabilities
- Authorised limit for 3 years (absolute limit of what is affordable)
- Operational boundary for 3 years (prudent limit of what is affordable)
- Actual external debt at year end

#### Treasury Management

- Compliance with Treasury Management Code as at present
- Upper/lower limits for both variable and fixed interest rate exposure for 3 years
- Upper/lower limits for maturity structure of borrowing for forthcoming year
- Principal sums invested for longer than 364 days 

A number of important issues are raised, particularly in respect of determining what is affordable and prudent as this is still partially dependent on funding outside of local authority control, particularly the effect of the RSG on council tax and the housing subsidy on rent levels. On the plus side the aim is to give authorities the freedom to determine their own capital spending priorities, emphasising the link with the Best Value Improvement Plan, with no league tables for borrowing levels planned. Authorities will have individual responsibility for maintaining a prudent spending regime and will have to bear the revenue implications of spending in excess of that figure.

The current divide between capital and revenue expenditure will be less important as affordability will be calculated on the entire revenue stream of the council and ultimately determined by an acceptable level of council tax and housing rents. Revenue streams will be able to be used to finance capital projects, the whole package giving greater freedom plan in the future with a longer term view of finances. With these new freedoms also comes greater responsibility, including whether authorities will commit to setting council tax levels over the same 3 year expenditure period as the Government is calculating borrowing limits.

Prudence is essential, and as many of us know just because it can be afforded doesn't necessarily make it a sensible buy. Over the medium term borrowing should just be for capital purposes with good treasury management the key to success.

A number of process and governance issues are covered by the Code. The full council must set expenditure limits while the important responsibilities of the s151 officer are explained in detail. Other issues such as the process for recommending the prudential limits, reporting performance, the link to asset management and the extent of consultation are left to the individual authority reflecting the ethos of the document.

Some major matters are still unresolved. These include the detail of depreciation charges for capital

assets and capital accounting. Also the revenue resource link between the RSG, and how this will be managed within the new regime, and the borrowing permitted against expenditure (currently BCA's and SCA's). There is a large gap to fill and many authorities have only started to think about this and the impact of the Code generally. It is important that the Prudential Code is not just seen as an accountancy matter as the greater financial freedom it gives will have far reaching implications which present the opportunity for real change.

This is a major relaxation in expenditure control by the Government and the following action points were highlighted:

- The Code heralds the largest change in local government finance for over a decade
- There is not long to go until April 2004!
- Need to get to grips with the Code now
- The Code will only yield benefits in a medium term planning context
- Engage with those outside of the Finance Department
- Define process and governance issues

A list of action points follows for asset management issues:

- The Code will assist authorities to determine the resources available- but will not assist in determining spending priorities
- 'Joining up' asset management plans and the medium term financial strategy
- Establishing priorities
- Prudential borrowing may lead to more 'owned' and less 'leased' properties (it is not known whether the 10 year leasing rule will be abolished)

The Code emphasises the need for every local authority to have a comprehensive approach and an overall strategy linking strategic planning and finance, capital and revenue budgets while also incorporating asset management information and project management and option appraisal skills. To help achieve this the 7 essential elements for success were listed as: ▶

“Prudence is essential, and as many of us know just because it can be afforded doesn't necessarily make it a sensible buy.”

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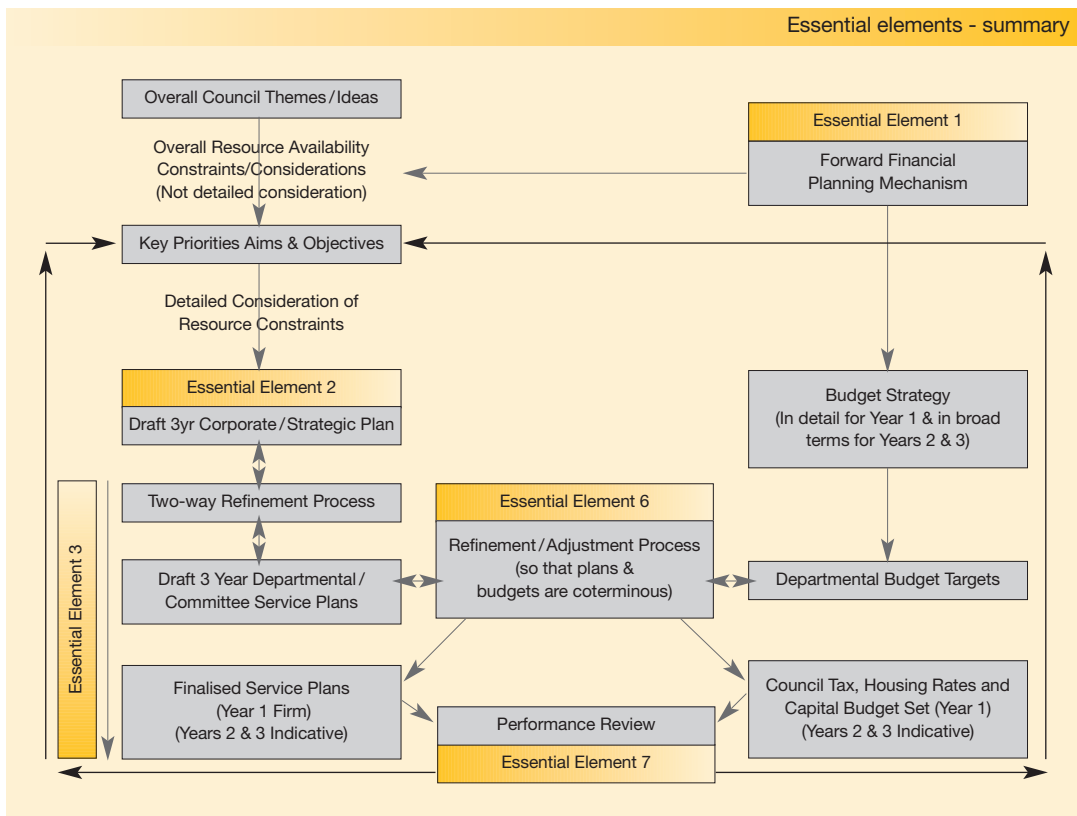


1. A financial planning mechanism which provides the forward years financial information necessary to inform strategic and service planning.
2. A corporate strategy which makes clear the priorities and aims of the organisation.
3. A service planning structure which translates the priorities and aims (the overall Strategy) into measurable actions at the point of service delivery.
4. A planning structure which links all plans together to ensure that resource restraints are either directly or indirectly considered in all plans.
5. An aligned timetable which requires plans and budgets to be developed in parallel.
6. A system of performance review to inform future strategy, targets and budget allocations.
7. A budget process which informs and which is informed by the strategic and service planning processes.

In conclusion, the Prudential Code is a 'finance code' which has council wide implications, including capital asset management. Joining up is essential, in all respects! Despite it's imminent application awareness levels are low and it is essential that training takes place across all disciplines and at member level if the additional freedoms promised are to be translated into practical advantages for all the stakeholders.

Details of the next series of joint CIPFA and SCALA workshops will be found on the CIPFA homepage and in the SCALA diary. ■

“The Prudential Code is a ‘finance code’ which has council wide implications.”



## from the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment



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### Better Public Libraries

Public Libraries have been part of our way of life for over a hundred years. Free access to books and other information has long been the cornerstone of our culture of learning and, as social and economic trends move increasingly towards the information society, free public libraries are becoming more and more important to ensure equality of opportunity and the economic health of the country.

Public libraries are special places. Places where ideas and information from all over the world come together, and where communities interact in ways that are becoming increasingly rare. The name of the new library in Norwich, The Forum, demonstrates this function well, bringing the people of the city closer to each other, and closer to the world.

Over the last couple of decades, however, we have seen a period where library use and investment has declined as libraries face challenges on a number of fronts.

High Street bookshops are becoming places where people are encouraged to linger. Rather than wrapping books in plastic for reading after purchase, sofas are provided, sometimes even coffee and food, to persuade customers to take their time. The transformation of consumption into a leisure activity at bookstores reaches its zenith in some of the larger shops where late night readings by the author often take place. This increased level of comfort and entertainment, coupled with the increasing affordability of books, has left libraries questioning their role.

Many libraries have expanded into the provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and have seen their number of users increase as a result, especially amongst the young. However, as

computer ownership and home access to the internet becomes increasingly common, then this function will soon be under threat.

One of the main weaknesses, and the barrier to greater use for many potential users, is the stuffy, out-moded design and poor location of many library buildings. Many of the library buildings inherited from the Victorian Era, of which there are many, deliberately convey an atmosphere of rigorous, monastic learning where the librarians are seen as the controllers of knowledge and conduct. Contrast this with bookshops conveniently located in the main high streets and shopping districts where comfortable surroundings and customer orientated staff create a friendly inclusive atmosphere.

Rather than give up, many library services have responded to the challenge by recognising where their weaknesses lie and learning lessons from the commercial sector. Many libraries are deliberately remarketing themselves in the mould of high street bookstores, taking many design cues from the retail world and in the process creating an environment where people comfortable and relaxed.

In many cases, this has involved the relocation of the library to main high streets where they seamlessly fit into the surrounding retail uses and become an integral part of people's everyday lives, rather than a remote bastion of intellectual elitism.

The implications of this new approach to library service provision upon the design of libraries are significant and are listed opposite.



Traditional Library Architecture	Modern Library Architecture
Neo-Classical pattern-book	Modern free-style
Imposing steps and entrance halls	Street-level, retail entrances
Needs of disabled people unmet	Good disability access
Domes and rotunda	Atriums and top-floor cafes
Galleries and mezzanines	Escalators & lifts
Clerestory light	Atrium light
Restricted access to books	Open access to books & other materials
Bookshelves requiring ladders	Bookshelves at human scale
Temple of knowledge	The 'living room in the city'
Institutional furniture	Domestic or 'club' furniture
Stand alone building	Shared space with other services
Hierarchical design & circulation	Open-plan design & circulation
Canonical stock-holding	Contemporary cultural market-place
Individual study carrels	Seminar rooms and computer suites
Defensive space	Networked space
Librarians as knowledge custodians	Librarians as knowledge navigators
The rule of silence	The culture of mutual respect
Child-free	Child-friendly

(Ken Worpole, The Future of Public Libraries, in Better Public Libraries, CABE, 2003)

“Public libraries are special places. Places where ideas and information from all over the world come together.”

One example of this innovative, retail-inspired, approach is the Idea Store concept developed by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Tower Hamlets faces a series of significant social problems. 24% of the residents needed help with basic skills, will at the same time 72% of the population have never used the library services on offer. Many of these, of which ethnic minority residents make up significant number, were quoted as saying that the existing libraries appeared cold, unfriendly and exclusive. Tower Hamlets are using a radical new design for their libraries as a means of bridging this gap.

The first Idea Store to open, on the major shopping thoroughfare of Roman Road in Bow mirror the retail store approach, both in their location, on the high street, and also in their open building style. They are open 7 days a week for 71 hours and since opening last year, visitors' figures have trebled and issues are up by 65% and rising.

The Idea Store concept was developed by Tower Hamlets in association with designers Bisset Adams,

who also designed the one at Bow. Tower Hamlets are now rolling the model out with two more Idea Stores in the Borough, this time designed by Adjaye Associates in response to the Bisset Adams concept.

The model has proved so successful that it has inspired the recently opened Forest Gate Library in the neighbouring east-end London Borough of Newham, designed by Newcastle architectural practice, FaulknerBrowns. ▶



Whitechapel Idea Store

“However, whilst good practice abounds, there are still some libraries which do not live up to the high standards expected by their communities.”

It should be recognised that there is no one solution to library design. Libraries in areas of high unemployment may need to be designed around the need to accommodate ICT training and act as an extension of the local careers service, while libraries in new suburban residential areas are more likely to concentrate on providing services for parents with young children such as story-telling sessions and homework clubs. Libraries in urban areas with a growing proportion of single-person households (an international demographic trend) are likely to be designed to act as meeting places and club-rooms as well as providing library services.

However, the one over-riding feature that is common to all libraries, and if they are to succeed needs to be nurtured, is the role that they have in generating a focus for civic engagement.

Shortlisted for the 2003 Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award, the new Bournemouth Library, designed by the Building Design Partnership, has been described as 'a public living room' for the residents of Bournemouth.



Bournemouth Library

Funded via the Private Finance Initiative, this project is formed as a horseshoe on two open, informally arranged levels, with the reader areas overlooking the central exhibition space and enjoying views over Bournemouth Gardens. The glazed north side provides a window to the town, visually connecting all the people in the building with their local surroundings and vice versa.

As well as providing a first class facility for the residents of Bournemouth, the new library has acted as a catalyst for the regeneration of the surrounding

district. A new public square will be created in front of the library, funded by the South West Regional Development Agency and also by the freeholder of the library who sees that the improvements will build upon the economic revival experienced in the locality since the opening of the library lead to a virtuous cycle of investment and higher land values.

The libraries at Tower Hamlets, Newham and Bournemouth, and many others, represent a step-change in the design of libraries and give hope for the future of this important building type. However, whilst good practice abounds, there are still some libraries which do not live up to the high standards expected by their communities.

With that in mind, CABE, in partnership with Resource, the national Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, produced *Better Public Libraries*, a document aimed at both those responsible for procuring and designing new libraries, or improvements to existing ones.

Not intended to be a pattern book for a successfully designed library, the document is calculated to both inspire and inform. The first part of the document is an essay by one of our most prolific and respected writers on public realm issues, Ken Worpole, entitled *The Future of Public Libraries*. This section is designed to encourage more imaginative solutions to some of the challenges faced by libraries both now and in the future.

The second part provides a directory of information and guidance so that anyone building a new library or simply refurbishing and updating an existing building will be able to do so better informed. Examples of best practice from all over the country are also included in order to encourage people to speak to those who have managed to overcome the problems associated with such a project and to visit completed buildings to see what is possible to achieve.

We hope that the document will provide a valuable resource and will help to ensure that the libraries we build today will not only stand as monuments to our collective commitment to learning and equality of access to information, but will help achieve better informed, more cohesive communities. ■

# Exemplar school designs <sup>21</sup>

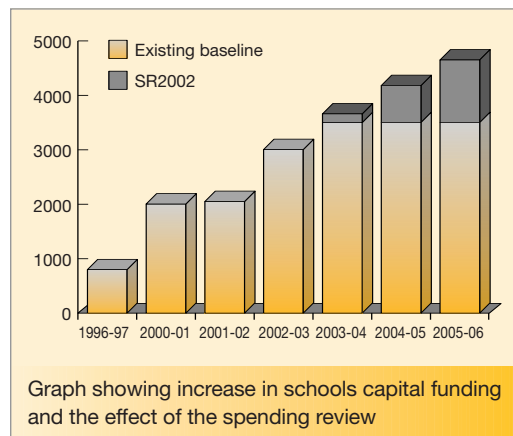
**The DfES recently selected** 11 design teams to develop exemplar school designs for a range of primary and secondary school scenarios. The designs will be a starting point, demonstrating schools for the future in organisation, curriculum and management terms in buildings.

They will explore opportunities to rationalise the ways in which buildings are constructed and procured to maximise on the potential programme and secure economic benefits with improved quality of design. Ultimately the exemplar designs may be used by others, either to adapt to suit a particular school community or to develop modular or manufactured building elements. The aim is to influence thinking and encourage innovation to support educational excellence!

As part of the briefing process for the design consultants, the teams met in Birmingham on 9th and 10th June with a range of advisors including staff from the DfES Schools Building and Design Unit, head teachers and technical experts for two days of themed workshops. The head teachers are acting as clients using real, but anonymous sites, to represent the types of site conditions that are commonly experienced. They are helping to stretch the educational vision as basis for the design response. I was privileged to attend as an interested observer and found the issues raised and the animated discussions very pertinent and of wider interest. My personal account of some of the key points follows.

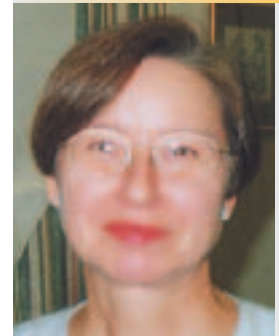
The exemplar school design initiative is closely associated with the Government's thinking about procurement in relation to the additional funding of £2.1 billion for school buildings by 2005/06 of which £1.2 billion will be PFI credit. The construction industry's capacity to deliver this volume of work, bearing in mind similar major pressures to spend on construction in other areas such as housing and health is recognised as a major concern. It is expected that the £2.1 billion will be spent in contract packages of around £50 to £150 million, using local joint venture arrangements - to be supported by a national joint venture company, which is still to be formed. As part of this strategy, off-site construction is seen as a major plank in ameliorating the capacity and efficiency problem and is

one of the key issues to be addressed by the exemplar school designs. The discussion centred very much on the form off-site construction could/ should appropriately take: volume solutions, modular elements, what level of standardisation? Had the lessons from the post war experience in this field been learned?



The exemplar school designs are to be developed within the cost guidelines issued by the DfES in March. The industry's off-site construction capabilities are not sufficiently developed and therefore off-site solutions were unlikely to be cheaper but should have benefits in terms of reduced time, better finishes and importantly, in reducing disruption to schools. For the purpose of the design teams' remit, they will be able to assume large enough production runs. The cost guidelines currently make it difficult to take into account whole life costing. The question whether reduced running costs would allow an increase in capital cost was answered by 'it may possibly be considered at the margins'. The costing for the exemplar designs will be used for benchmarking.

One of the key issue regarding value for money is the current low use of school buildings, apparently only in the order of 14% of available time in a year. Extended schools, better community use, combination with compatible uses, all offer opportunities the teams



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## 22 Exemplar school designs

“Don’t write off great ideas without discussing them, use option appraisals and Design Quality Indicator tools to make a case!”

will explore. There are models of 10 hour days and all year schools for example in America.

The exemplar designs have to be as much about educational and pedagogic philosophy as about design, although the latter is an important means to their end of achieving educational excellence. The purpose of the initiative is to stretch ideas and imagination and offer a lead to many LEAs who are perceived as lacking in strategic vision. Critical influences will be the Government’s work force agenda, which envisages many more adults in the school community helping to deliver the curriculum, e.g. in the form of class room assistants, paraprofessionals such as IT technicians, but also mentors from the community and parents. This and an informed guess as to the future nature and application of ICT are seen as key determinants for the schools of the future.

The DfES area guides offer some flexibility as to the location of areas associated with the core teaching spaces such as IT and storage. It was noted that many teachers probably prefer to have the maximum space associated with their individual classroom. However, the workforce agenda will require much more varied and flexible spaces to facilitate different teaching and learning styles, for example in ‘lecture theatre’ mode for whole year groups or in spaces suitable for teaching in small groups with the help of classroom assistants. Also spaces are needed for staff to prepare, assess and mark which are separate from social areas, as well as facilities for teachers and pupils to pursue individual learning, ICT specialist teaching and other facilities, including extended community use. Wide



Alfred Slater School - LB of Southwark

corridors and foyers are needed together with incidental areas and halls that allow for multiple uses and aid informal supervision. All of this in an environment conducive to learning for everyone, whatever their needs, with good lighting, ventilation, acoustics, colour, texture and signage. The aim is to create a distinctive building with a unique sense of place, at the right scale and sympathetic to its context which is energy efficient, adaptable and with a long life.

The issue of security and usefulness of CCTV proved a controversial subject, but its use was fully endorsed by the head teachers present. Despite this the costs of CCTV are not allowed for within the basic cost guidance.

Predicting the future for ICT proved rather elusive: Do we still need wiring and how much? We talk about inter-active whiteboards, video conferencing, broadband, wireless connection, blue tooth technology - a fundamental need for flexibility and adaptability. These will be exciting aids, but should not detract from the fundamental importance of key qualities of the physical environment which are good light, acoustics and ventilation allowing learners and teachers to see, listen, hear and concentrate. There is much technical guidance and advice and growing amounts of associated research providing evidence of correlation with educational achievement.

With the many constraints within which the exemplar designs have to be developed there was a concern that the more radical, innovative ideas might get lost. The encouragement was ‘Don’t write off great ideas without discussing them, use option appraisals and Design Quality Indicator tools to make a case!’

It struck me that a record of the process of the evolving exemplary designs might be at least as interesting and relevant as the final outcome of the designs.

A key test will be whether the designs meet the expectations of children as expressed in a competition run by the Guardian 2 years ago:

‘We’d like a beautiful school with glass dome roofs to let in light, uncluttered class rooms and brightly coloured walls,... a comfortable school with sofas and beanbags, cushions on the floors, tables that don’t scrape our knees’. ■

The results of consultation by the DfES on issues raised above are illustrated below:

<p><b>Q1.</b> Do you agree with the case for a new approach to managing the extra capital investment available in 2005-06?</p>	77% Agree	9% Don't know	14% Disagree
<p><b>Q2.</b> Do you agree that we should aim to collaborate better with other funding and decision-making bodies to help achieve wider policy goals?</p>	83%	3%	14%
<p><b>Q3.</b> Do you agree that we should target secondary renewal funding on geographical areas, covering local natural groupings of schools, even where these would cross local authority boundaries?</p>	52%	19%	29%
<p><b>Q4.</b> Do you agree that we should develop exemplar designs as a starting point to ensure consistently high standards of design for all new schools?</p>	79%	9%	12%
<p><b>Q5.</b> Do you agree that a dedicated national body could help support local plans?</p>	54%	18%	28%

## Scalaletters



My name is Alexa George; I'm a first year student at the Birmingham School of Architecture.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to your Study Day in Birmingham in May. I really enjoyed myself. I've put together a few thoughts about my time with you, and how future events might benefit architecture students.

I know that SCALA would like to include students in future events, which is a great opportunity, but I do think that different parts would be useful for different groups of students. However, the Study Day is during the build up to exams and hand-in's in May when third and sixth year students may not be able to come.

I really enjoyed both days but the highlight of the Study Day was the visit to the new Selfridges building designed by Future Systems. It was a privilege to be allowed to enter the building before the general public.

I also enjoyed the presentation the previous evening of samples of delegates approach to architecture. The speakers were interesting but the topics discussed were beyond anything I have learnt about as a first year architecture student. However, I did enjoy the discussion on pre-fabrication in the afternoon.

SCALA events are an opportunity for students to meet public sector architects and learn about some of the issues that arise from working in the local authority sector. The first day (visiting buildings, and discussing 'live projects') is useful for first or second year students when they can see as many buildings as possible. The visit and architectural presentations would be very useful to students who may not have considered the local authority sector and who may be attracted to it for their year out training.

The second day I think would be useful to students who are working on RIBA part 2 as they will have the knowledge to understand, and perhaps have an opinion on, the topics discussed.

Once again thank you for the invitation. I am sure that SCALA should invite students from the local school of architecture to its annual SCALA event and Study Day. I'm afraid we have no money and cannot pay but we may be the SCALA members of the future. ■

"I know that SCALA would like to include students in future events, which is a great opportunity."

# 24 Scala Study Day

“accelerating delivery, achieving quality” - 16th May 2003



Jeff Gibson

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## Report on afternoon workshop “Offsite fabrication”

The workshop was well attended, with over 20 delegates contributing to the debate.

Opening remarks and initial discussion identified that “offsite fabrication” covered two distinct and different situations:

1. offsite fabrication and manufacture, in essentially volume terms, of standardised units, e.g. bathroom modules, and
2. offsite fabrication of one-off assemblies on an ad-hoc project-specific basis.

The issues surrounding the occurrence and development of these two options are different.

Whilst the concept of offsite fabrication has been around a long time (there was reference to this approach being evident and utilised in the Georgian period), the construction industry has clearly not embraced it to any great extent (examples of offsite fabrication are still the exception rather than the rule), and the group spent some time endeavouring to identify why, notwithstanding the acknowledged benefits, this was so.

Factors identified included:

1. **Education** - there was a view that professional training, whilst rightly focussing on the development of unique design solutions (in visual terms), could usefully raise awareness of how this might still be achieved (avoiding the tag of boring and repetitive), yet with a greater utilisation of standard componentry - the example of how the automotive industry achieves wide variation in visual and performance terms whilst utilising a high number of standard components was readily cited.
2. **Bad press** - some previous examples of offsite fabrication, particularly standardised solutions, e.g. concrete panel high-rise, etc., have not generally enjoyed a positive reputation, to the

point of being regarded (with hindsight) almost as failures, rather than the best the industry had to offer at that time.

The legacy of perceived failure (particularly in terms of durability and maintenance - not actually born out in all cases, viz domestic ‘pre-fabs’) was seen as a major contributor to a general lack of confidence in the concept, and an associated reluctance to ‘go there again’.

Some members of the group thought that the general ‘negative’ feeling was engendered by a lack of understanding and appreciation of what offsite fabrication, as a delivery mechanism, could achieve - almost a fear of the unknown - particularly when dealing with issues of adaptability and flexibility in one-off situations.

It was however noted that the industry has no problem in providing/using offsite fabrication as a temporary solution - i.e. site cabins!

3. **Industry Culture** - The construction industry, notwithstanding initiatives such as “Rethinking Construction” etc., is still seen as fundamentally fragmented and traditional in its’ approach, still generally rooted in master/servant adversarial contract relationships, with the associated lack of common ownership, perceived lack of control (particularly by sub-contractors), and an overriding focus on the minimisation of risk, and the consequent stifling of innovation
4. **Investment/workload** - the industry has always experienced, to a varying degree, a history of ‘boom or bust’, being a principal national economic moderator, lacking long-term stability and certainty of forward workload (although Government funding now being provided over longer forward periods is starting to address this).







Murray Grove Housing Development

A prize winning development in Hackney constructed using factory built pods hoisted on to a steel frame.

**Client:** Peabody Trust

**Architect:** Cartwright Pickard

**Main contractor:** Kajima UK Engineering Ltd.

**Structural engineer:** Whitby & Bird

**Module manufacturer:** Yorkon

This does nothing to encourage the investment necessary (by clients or contractors) to establish research and development programmes, or manufacturing facilities.

One exception ought to be the housing market, both public and private. Volume house builders clearly work to well-developed standard designs, for which there is always a demand, but the group were unable to identify why the principals of offsite fabrication and standardisation have not been significantly pursued (with a few notable exceptions), beyond suggesting that the continued traditional approach just reflects (conservative) market requirements

Sustainability was generally considered to be an area where offsite fabrication should be able to make a major positive impact.

Clearly, it can be expected that the transfer of activities from a dirty, weather-reliant, potentially dangerous building site to the controlled environment within a factory or assembly shed would reduce both fabrication and installation costs, would reduce waste, would be safer, and would result in much higher quality.

However, with issues such as transport, the view was that tangible benefits could be more difficult to identify, and may not even exist (e.g. raw materials still have to be delivered somewhere - site or factory?, physical limits on transport of fabricated elements, etc.).

The debate expanded to consider the basic definition of sustainability, and how far down the supply chain sustainability considerations should extend, e.g. should the 'equation' apply just to site (or offsite) operations, or go further back, even to the point of origin?

Views expressed were wide and varied, but no consensus emerged.

Overall, the group concluded that greater uptake of offsite fabrication was a necessary way forward for the industry (at any level), by virtue of the substantial benefits to be achieved in terms of cost, speed, safety, waste and quality, particularly in the light of the current knowledge of the use and performance of (new) materials, in new manufacturing technologies, and through the opportunities presented by todays IT solutions.

The barriers to change were not considered to be in any way inherently insurmountable, but required a concentrated effort across the board (led by government, linked to funding?) to effect the necessary culture change - very much a simultaneous bottom up and top down approach. ■

“Sustainability was generally considered to be an area where offsite fabrication should be able to make a major positive impact.”

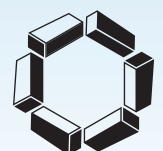
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# Scala Practice Progress <sup>27</sup>

## Notes of the **SCALA Practice Forum meeting** held on 11 July 2003 chaired by Graham Morley in the absence of Jeff Gibson

Due to an alternative meeting, for the SCALA 'great and the good' elsewhere at the offices of IPF, 27 Queen Anne's Gate, London, it was a small but select group who attended the meeting of the *Practice Forum* on Friday 11 July.

Attending the Forum by invitation was John Murray. John was formerly the Borough Architect with the London Borough of Haringey and is currently conducting **research into local authority architects**, in particular the number of architects and their changing employment roles within the various departments. John carried out a similar survey in the 'heady' days of the latter half of the 1970s, shortly after local government reorganisation in 1974. The results will provide, therefore, a fascinating insight into the changing roles and responsibilities, standing and influence, of the main players in local authority design and construction during the last quarter of the 20th century. A period during which, most of us would have been involved and played our part.

John's initial approach was via a questionnaire distributed through the *Scalanews*. During discussion, however, it became apparent that this would only reach a limited number of architects.

Due, in the main, to the fact that following the movement away from architect departments to more general, property departments, a number of local government architects may have chartered surveyors as their heads. As these are more likely to be members of COPROP these architects would be unaware of the questionnaire. Similarly, those architects employed in education, planning and housing departments would be missed.

To ensure a wider distribution of the questionnaire, John is now considering a direct approach to all local authority chief executives, asking them to forward the questionnaire to their most senior architect for completion and return.

John anticipates having an interim report ready for the next meeting of the *Practice Forum* on 3 October, with a view to final conclusions for the following meeting on 5 December. In the meantime, John would like me to pass on his sincere thanks to all the 37 members of **SCALA** who had completed and returned the questionnaire by the date of the meeting.

The date of **the next meeting** is Friday 3 October 2003 at 27 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster. ■

For further information contact:

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### **Design Practice interests:**

Legal and insurance matters

Best Value

AMP's

EGAN Issues

EU Issues

Benchmarking

Contract documents

Human rights and equal opportunities

Procurement and commissioning

Business management

ICT, CDM

Etc.

# 28 Scala Design Debate



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**Design Forum interests:**

Design excellence  
Sustainability  
Maintenance Return  
Inclusion  
BSI  
Flexibility  
Study Day  
Skills database  
New construction techniques  
External partners  
Etc.

## Notes of the SCALA Design Forum meeting held on 11 July 2003 chaired by Stuart Brown in the absence of Mukund Patel

The **Study Day in Birmingham** was well attended this year but there remain some concerns over venue and location. Also, it was felt that with support it may be possible to increase the number of exhibitors and possibly select some that reflected the theme of the day.

A lively debate took place around possible themes for the **2004 Study Day** particularly Exemplar Designs, Schools for the Future, Energy/Sustainability, Classrooms of the Future and the role of the architect in all this with a desire for a more design oriented package. Could exemplars be exhibitors, indeed could one exemplar (Nottingham) be considered as a new venue with interesting possibilities for architectural visits.

The shortlist of buildings for '**Civic Building of the Year Award**' was presented and it was confirmed that all inspection visits should be complete by early September. It is intended that a plaque capable of either fixing or being freestanding with suitable SCALA wording would be the likely award format. There was continued debate over advertising in the **Year Book** but it was recognised that quality was likely to improve and feed through to **Scalanews**.

In the absence of Mukund Patel, Lawrence Cooper gave a precis of Mukund's recent presentation on behalf of the **DfES** to a fellow society. This had covered secondary schools, the role of the pathfinder/projects and their timescale, the linkage to education standards improvement, the theme of pathfinder 2 projects in relation to community and aided schools development.

The proposed JV Company and its challenge to develop local JV partnerships, off site construction and quality enhancement was discussed together with indicative funding levels over the longer term to achieve ambitions for secondary school replacements.

On the **future of AMP's** Lawrence Cooper referred to the current NPS/Atkins role in assessment and audit on area, condition, suitability and sufficiency, cost accuracy.

It is possible that future development will include modernisation criteria, scoring for need, a reduction in bureaucracy and a closer linkage to AMP's in the bidding process.

Stuart Brown referred to discussion and requests to access the DFES database to develop comparative study of current accurate information to form the basis of the next **SCALA Maintenance Return**. He was encouraged to pursue this further as it was seen as a highly relevant development of SCALA maintenance studies.

Detailed **technical reports** were received from Eli Kienwald and Mike Philips covering 'Well Built', Fensa, Part L, Part F and Product Standards.

Reference was made to new **CABE** documents on - 'Moving to Excellence in Design and Construction' and the 'Response to Sustainable Communities'. CABE were also to shortly re-issue the flyer for SCALA 2003 to cover the change in government responsibilities which had resulted in a change of keynote speaker.

A report by Bob Rogers on a proposed **design procurement exchange** was debated and referred for further consideration to Council.

The **date of the next meeting** is Friday 3 October 2003 at 11.00a.m. at the DfES in Tothill Street, Westminster.



This is a service for readers of Scalaneews allowing you to seek advice and guidance on those awkward and time consuming contractual and legal issues which are such a feature of the industry. Rob Tate, author of the SCALA and LGTF 'Guide to Standard Forms of Construction Contract', has kindly offered to share his experience and expertise with you and looks forward to hearing from readers.

## Contracts, Contracts

**The range of contracts available to us to tailor to the needs of each project is ever increasing!**

Two or three editions ago I wrote concerning the LGTF/SCALA "Guide to Standard Forms of Contract". In the last edition of this journal I referred to the way in which the law affects those standard forms, in respect of contractual terms implied by the courts, custom and statute. This week a public sector client was so taken by the concept of partnering that he wrote a paper extolling its virtues and sent it to me for comment. The gist was partnering was faster, cheaper and involved no disputes or claims. Egan's objectives, of course, were somewhat different: "Partnering involves two or more organisations working together to improve performance through agreeing mutual objectives, devising a way of resolving any disputes and committing themselves to continuous improvement, measuring progress and sharing gains". It's about improving the product and motivating all involved to that end by ensuring fair remuneration. It isn't about one party getting more for less. Still less, about any party avoiding the implications of its own poor management.

So, we need to get our motives right. We also need to be clear on our objectives for a project in its context. That inevitably involves deciding on the best procurement route and then the appropriate form of contract - where the SCALA/LGTF Guide comes in. The real point is, as I pointed out to my public sector client, that there is no panacea. It's a matter of the right horse for the course.

In respect of partnering, the RICS publication "Contracts in Use - A Survey of Building Contracts in Use in 2001" (prepared for the RICS by Davis Langdon and Everest) showed partnering agreements representing 0.6% of contracts by number and 1.7% by value of project procurement methods - amounting to just under 50 of the contracts surveyed. At an FPS conference I spoke at recently a delegate pointed out that his authority had let a significant number of

contracts based on the New Engineering Contract. Despite his feeling that the use of partnering agreements and contracts had increased over the last two years the figures show that partnering is still a minority sport. However, it's a sport with a number of variants and a lot of potential.

The RICS survey showed that, when partnering is the chosen procurement route, as well as agreements/contracts specifically drafted for use in partnering, there are a number of partnering arrangements for use in connection with standard forms of contract. The most notable of these are the "JCT Non-Binding Partnering Charter" and the "New Engineering Contract Option X12: Partnering Option (2001)". The survey also noted the use of other, unspecified, binding partnership agreements and non-binding partnership or alliance provisions used in conjunction with standard forms. These all add up to a wide range of choice for procuring through partnering, involving partnering contracts, binding and non-binding agreements for use with a variety of traditional standard forms, all for use in "one-off" partnering projects or serial strategic partnering. In respect of the latter, the JCT are currently drafting a framework agreement for serial contracting, intended for use with JCT standard forms - an important addition to the most utilised range of standard forms. The RICS 2001 survey showed 91% of all contracts surveyed were JCT forms, which was the same as its 1998 survey and higher than all previous surveys.

Whilst the LGA contingent on the JCT continues to press the JCT to produce a partnering contract, currently the only show in town is the ACA's PPC 2000 - and a jolly good show it is too. Rather than being satisfied with declarations of intent to be nice to each other, the ACA has produced a contract which embodies the partnering ethos in a contractually binding agreement potentially involving all the project parties. It implements Egan objectives through a team-based multi-party approach - integrated design/supply/construction process - supply chain ▶



**Rob Tate**

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Rob Tate is an architect, a Past President of SCALA and a former Head of Property Services at the London Borough of Enfield. He is a construction consultant, expert witness and a member of the President's Panel of Adjudicators of both the RICS and Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

“The most brilliant design remains just that, a design, unless turned into reality by building operations.”

partnering - incentives - risk management - and non-adversarial problem resolution. Interestingly, the “Partnering Adviser” role in the contract is ideally suited to adjudicators, who may not, therefore, become redundant despite the non-adversarial problem resolution! To my mind, one of the most important features is the inclusion of both the Client’s Project Brief and the Constructor’s Project Proposals within a contract to which the Parties include the Client, Contractor and the Consultants. This is more than the Employer’s Requirements/Contractor’s Proposals combination in a “design and build” contract, and seems to me to provide a link between the Client’s initial aspirations for the project and the end product, which is lacking in a traditional procurement format. As the SCALA/LGTF Guide says “The most brilliant design remains just that, a design, unless turned into reality by building operations... The transition from a successful design to a successful building requires the selection of a contract which reflects the aspirations of the Parties and meets the demands of the project.” In overtly addressing risk and incentives PPC 2000 requires users to consider carefully the key criteria for the project and the key risk areas unique to the project - the importance of which considerations is emphasised by the SCALA/LGTF Guide.

However, PPC 2000 may not be the only show for much longer. At the FPS conference I referred to earlier Knowles Management launched their Public Sector Partnering Contract. It is currently in final draft and is scoped to cover a partnering agreement, contractor design or employer design, sub-contracts and professional services. The concept is that there are no procedures set out in the contract itself, which deals with the rights of the Parties only. The procedures are dealt with in a web-based “Procurement Toolkit” which is described as “a best practice approach driven by the team to promote lean principles, cultural change and consistency in order to deliver best value.” The suite of documents, therefore, has three main compatible elements: (1) an interactive process map (the toolkit) which contains - (2) partnering/good business techniques and pro formas - (3) a user friendly contract. Quite how this will work will, no doubt, be clear when it is published in November. Currently, it is undergoing final testing on live contracts.

Meanwhile, back at the JCT... a new “major form” contract has been published. From where I sit in JCT Council and being currently involved in a significant number of education projects in the £15-30m bracket, this is a refreshing new form. The JCT Major Project Form is shorter and simpler than the “traditional” JCT forms. It assumes and builds on the experience of parties who carry out major contracts. It is suitable for significant projects in terms of size and complexity and for experienced users who require limited procedural provisions in the contract form and who have their own in-house procedures. “Accessories” to follow will include a related sub-contract and schedules of amendments introducing a third parties rights option. The key features include: providing for further design by the Contractor, with appropriate risk allocation - naming of consultants and sub-contractors that must be used by the Contractor for specific elements - site access is given to the Contractor, rather than possession, anticipating that the Employer may require others to carry out work at the same time as the Contractor - it provides a definition of Practical Completion (it is surprising, or perhaps not, how often the parties views on PC feature in disputes) - there are provisions for acceleration and payment of bonuses - it utilises the “Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999” in order to give specific rights to a Funder and also to purchasers. You wouldn’t believe how many spots this hits for me at the moment!! Still, its early days yet and we will have to see how it goes.

The emphasis on shortness and simplicity exhibited by both the new Knowles and JCT contracts will be a refreshing development for the keep it simple and in the drawer brigade!

Well, it would seem then that if one is prepared to analyse the requirements and key criteria for each specific project and then tailor the procurement route and contract to suit, there is an increasing range of contracts available to you. The SCALA/LGTF Guide lists fifteen, but there are others and then there are the new publications referred to above. Given that array, it would be surprising if you continually used the same standard form... wouldn’t it...? ■

The SCALA/LGTF “Guide to Standard Forms of Building Contract” is available by e-mail in pdf format. If you wish to be sent a copy please e-mail me at [info@scala.org.uk](mailto:info@scala.org.uk) - Ed.



Above: The Centre for Life  
Front cover: Gateshead Millennium Bridge

# THE URBAN VISION

## SCALA 2003 NEWCASTLE

### 17 OCTOBER 2003

Yvette Cooper, Under Secretary of State at the ODPM, will challenge architects to 'live a little dangerously' in pushing forward the Government's recently launched Sustainable Communities Plan.

Hear of English Partnership's plans to implement the Sustainable Communities Plan and details of the new imaginative CUBE Space programme from Jon Rouse, ideas for new housing development from Wayne Hemingway of Red or Dead fame and Cllr. Mike Henry of Gateshead MBC. Also the aims and objectives of the new European funded PETUS Project from Professor Phil Jones of the Welsh School of Architecture. Mike Britch from NPS Property Consultants will conclude by showing how innovation in the delivery of public services can help achieve 'The Urban Vision'.

Be present when the first SCALA 'Building of the Year' award is presented for an outstanding piece of public architecture at the Presidential Dinner, the SCALA social event of the year where you can also experience the 'hands-on' interactive facilities at the Centre for Life. Join the coach trip on Saturday and see why Newcastle and Gateshead were short listed for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2008 and enjoy the stunning developments in the area.

## PROGRAMME FOR SCALA 2003:

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

The **PRESIDENTIAL DINNER** starts with pre-dinner drinks at 7.30pm on Friday evening and includes the presentation of the **SCALA BUILDING OF THE YEAR AWARD**. On Saturday the coach will leave the Jury's Inn Hotel at 9.30am for a **COACH TRIP** to see the stunning developments in the area.

### FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER

- 09.30 Registration, tea/coffee and viewing of stands
- 10.00 Welcome and introduction by the Chair  
**NIGEL BADCOCK** President of SCALA
- 10.10 **YVETTE COOPER** Under Secretary of State  
ODPM Keynote Address
- 10.30 **ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS** On implementing  
the Sustainable Communities Plan
- 11.10 Tea/coffee and viewing of exhibitors stands
- 11.30 **PROF. PHIL JONES** Welsh School of Architecture  
Practical Evaluation Tools for Urban Sustainability
- 12.10 **JON ROUSE** Chief Executive of CUBE  
The Work of CUBE Space
- 12.50 Question and answer session followed by lunch  
and viewing of exhibitor stands
- 14.00 **WAYNE HEMINGWAY** 'Streetwise Fashion Guru'  
Fashionable and Affordable Homes
- 14.30 **Cllr. MIKE HENRY** Leader of Gateshead MBC  
Championing Design in the 21st Century
- 15.00 Tea/coffee and viewing of exhibitors stands
- 15.20 **MARK LINTELL** and **REBECCA KNIGHT**  
of Land Use Consultants  
Tyne Gorge Urban Landscape Study
- 15.50 **MIKE BRITCH** Managing Director  
NPS Property Consultants  
Innovation in the Delivery of Public Services
- 16.20 Question and answer session
- 16.30 Summary by the Chair and conclusion of the event

## SCALA 2003 DELEGATE BOOKING FORM

booking details	cost	quantity
SCALA & ACA members booking by 19 Sep	£165	
SCALA & ACA members booking after 19 Sep	£190	
Non-members	£190	
Additional delegates from the same office	£100	
Retired members	£85	

### other conference booking details

Single/double/twin B&B Thursday night*	£75
Single/double/twin B&B Friday night*	£80
Presidential Dinner Friday evening	£35
Saturday morning coach trip	£15

\* Delete as appropriate

Accommodation is at the Jury's Inn Hotel in Newcastle (location plan on [www.scala.org.uk/events.htm](http://www.scala.org.uk/events.htm)) adjacent to the Centre for Life which is where both the event and dinner take place.

Please indicate any special dietary requirements or comments below

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Please do not include payment with your booking as you will be invoiced separately. All prices are subject to VAT at the standard rate. Please note that booking cancelled up to 30 August will be subject to a cancellation charge of £70 and that no refund can be given after that date.

# SCALA 2003 THE CENTRE FOR LIFE NEWCASTLE 17 OCTOBER 2003 THE URBAN VISION



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