

## BPF ACTIVITIES – WINTER 2010-11

### Construction

- have convened a joint working group with the Construction Clients Group to influence an anticipated formal review of the CDM Regulations
- are producing a guide to the contribution of clients to construction skills (Q3 2011)
- are publishing a guide to obtaining utility connections to developments (Q2 2011)
- have responded to a consultation on changes to the Scheme for Construction Contracts

### External affairs

- organised a successful dinner and conference on residential investment
- began organising speakers and a new venue for our annual conference, which in 2011 will be at the Northumberland, next to Trafalgar Square, on 25 May, with the title *Investment in the age of austerity*
- began making arrangements for our annual dinner on 1 November, which will again be in the Dorchester Hotel

### Scottish Property Federation

- hosted private political dinners with front bench MSPs from all four major Scottish parties ahead of the Scottish elections
- successfully contributed to seeing off Large Retailer Business Rates Levy in Scotland
- lobbied against the removal or reduction of empty property rate relief, securing written Scottish Government confirmation of its intention not to do this in the near future
- launched a manifesto for property for the Scottish elections, which has had positive coverage in the media and positive industry interest
- hosted three major conferences and receptions that included some 500 delegates and a number of leading industry sponsors – again receiving positive media, political/Government and industry coverage and feedback
- engaged with the Scottish Government and Holyrood politicians on the key issue of transfer of SDLT to Holyrood
- have, among major issues, made significant contributions to key debates with the Scottish Government and senior business leaders on the implementation of energy efficiency measures on existing property stock in Scotland, on research into the future of development charges in Scotland and on infrastructure investment
- gave formal verbal evidence to the Scottish Parliament on legislative proposals to convert 'ultra' long leases to ownership
- submitted some 16 formal policy statements to Scottish authorities and Holyrood

**Here's a brief overview of what we've been up to in the last three months, and in many cases are continuing to work on (the clue is in the tense). We:**

### Finance and investment

- have held numerous discussions with, and circulated briefing papers to, other industry stakeholders and EU and UK policymakers, with the aim of ensuring that real estate businesses are not incorrectly treated as 'financial' businesses under proposed rules to reform the OTC derivatives market, which would have dire consequences for the industry
- have responded to the Office of Tax Simplification's (OTS) interim report on its review of tax reliefs, highlighting the importance to the UK property industry of the REIT and PAIF regimes and strongly encouraging the OTS to not restrict their scope in any way
- continue to monitor the potential impact on real estate businesses of the EU directive on alternative investment fund managers
- have submitted, as part of the Property Industry Alliance, a letter to the Treasury urging a relaxation of the barriers to entry to the UK REIT regime
- contributed to the Real Estate Equity Securitization Alliance's efforts to convey the views of the property industry to accounting standard setters, specifically in respect of lease accounting
- are working with members, other industry stakeholders and the Department for Energy and Climate Change to find practical solutions to problems raised by the way in which the Carbon Reduction Commitment treats property held in trust structures

### Commercial

- responded to an Office of Fair Trading (OFT) consultation on competition rules affecting land agreements
- organised a high profile morning seminar on the state of the high street; the event attracting over 140 delegates and the BPF receiving widespread media coverage on the issue
- are continuing to lobby with the BCSC against possible amendments to the Freedom Bill that would allow the right for interest groups to protest on quasi private spaces (i.e. shopping centres)
- are also supporting the British Parking Association in its efforts to have a ban on clamping on private land overturned – also contained in the Freedom Bill
- are currently working with PWC to develop a simple matrix outlining the processes and implications for commercial landlords faced with restructuring/insolvent tenants
- have been engaging with KPMG to help shape the second CVA proposal of JJB Sports; as a result, the proposal has feedback provisions included
- are continuing to engage with CLG over the secondary legislation for the property owner BID levy
- helped shape the third edition of the RICS Service Charge Code on behalf of landlords
- will attend a number of high profile speaking engagements on insolvency
- attended an Insolvency Service meeting on the Insolvency Rules, and are working up our response to an accompanying consultation on the issue.
- have worked with the EPF to help counter the European Retail Service Initiative

## Residential

- held our annual Residential Dinner and Conference, with over 200 attendees at each event
- launched Invest to Rent: Meeting London's housing needs through institutional investment, produced jointly with London Councils to promote institutional investment in the private rented sector as a means to solve London's housing needs
- attended round table events with housing charities and interest groups to share views and intelligence on the Government's housing benefit reform programme
- conducted a survey of over 1,300 landlords to ascertain their views on housing benefit reforms
- successfully lobbied with others for the Government to scrap plans to reduce housing benefit payments by 10% for those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance for over 12 months
- continued to press for improved rent arrear protections for landlords with housing benefit tenants, winning a commitment from Government that improvements would be made
- engaged with Government on potential simplification of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) relicensing
- organised a half day 'teach in' event in March for residential members on the subject of sustainable retrofit / renewables
- hosted the Rent Service at a meeting of our smaller residential landlords and continue to try to improve the engagement between the Rent Service and small residential accommodation providers
- met with the DWP Minister Lord (David) Freud
- submitted a paper to ministers on reforming housing planning obligations in the transition from PPS3 to the National Planning Policy Framework

## Insurance

- are continuing to engage with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) on the subject of future flood insurance cover for property in the UK
- took part in a roundtable discussion dinner with AXA Insurance on the subject of flood insurance
- responded to a Defra consultation on the future funding for flood defences and met with the lead civil servants working on the issue
- organised a well attended breakfast seminar on the subject of flood risk with a panel comprising representatives from the Environment Agency, Axa Insurance, BPF and a leading MP

## Regeneration and development

- submitted a response to the white paper on local growth
- are planning a seminar on infrastructure and growth with Network Rail
- held a successful event with Tesco to launch *Revisiting the Impact of Large Foodstores on Market Towns and District Centres*
- are preparing a submission to the DCLG Select Committee on the future of regeneration
- are looking at the issues around the possible reintroduction of enterprise zones
- invited John McCready to the last Regeneration Committee meeting so he could engage with us on the Government's property plans

## Planning

- produced a distilled brief for the second reading of the Localism Bill and amendments, and are continuing to work with CLG on the forthcoming details
- responded to the CLG consultation on the proposed changes to planning fees
- held a successful event on the Localism Bill with John Howell MP
- set up various working groups on particular elements of the Localism Bill and the wider growth agenda
- continued to work with CLG on community infrastructure levy (CIL), particularly following the proposed changes in the bill
- have taken part in CLG sounding boards on the proposed duty to co-operate and neighbourhood planning
- are continuing work with fellow stakeholders on heritage issues
- are in discussions with CLG about including businesses in the proposed neighbourhood planning provisions
- are responding to the CLG consultation on the Community Right to Buy
- are continuing work with CLG on the proposals for pre-application consultation

## Sustainability

- have launched a set of common industry metrics with other Green Property Alliance organisations, which have been referenced by EPRA and the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change
- have responded to the consultation on wider simplification of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (March 2011)
- have commenced work on a third iteration of the *Carbon Reduction Commitment Guide for Landlords and Tenants*
- have held a second industry workshop on the Global Reporting Initiative construction and real estate sector supplement
- have responded to the consultation on the revised supplement to PPS1 on climate change, which the Government issued prior to the general election
- have attended recent Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) ministerial workshops concerning simplification of the Carbon Reduction Commitment
- have responded to a formal consultation issued by DECC on the likely impact of complying with Citiworks vs Leipzig Airport ECJ ruling
- are proposing to issue a sustainability strategy focusing on existing non-domestic buildings
- are scoping a project to examine carbon incentives and policies in parallel and to make recommendations to Government for improvements, under the aegis of the Green Property Alliance
- are convening a Commercial Property Forum to advise Government on the formation of a non-domestic model of Green Deal Finance
- have made representations on the Energy Bill currently before Parliament