

RTPI NEWS

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The Queen rewards retail planning services in new year honours list

Consultant planner and RTPI member Dr John England receives an MBE for helping people get to grips with practical applications of government policy tests on town centres, Nancy Hammonds discovers

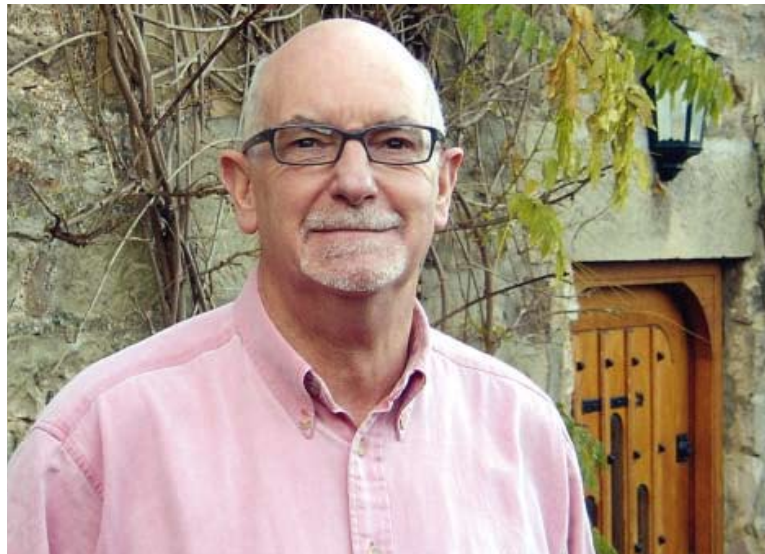
An experienced town planner from North Yorkshire, Dr John Richard England, has been made an MBE by the Queen in her 2010 new year honours list in recognition of his services to retail planning.

England, a member of the RTPI for 37 years, is a director of one of the largest independent planning consultancy firms in the north of England, England & Lyle. He formed this chartered town planning consultancy in Darlington in 1995 with Ian Lyle. Later, they were joined by their third partner, Jeremy Good. The firm is now a limited company with eight planners.

England is recognised nationally for his expertise in retail planning and town centres. He has extensive experience in consultancy work for local authorities, developers and retailers and has widened his field of experience further recently in advising clients on retailing in market towns.

The focal point for his work is in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where he conducted a town centres and retail study to inform the evidence base for the local development framework and to highlight issues and recommendations in market towns. Work has also involved need assessments and policy advice on retail and other town centre uses covering all the main towns in the East Riding. He also collected evidence for the local authority when it was involved in a call-in inquiry for a proposed retail and leisure development in Beverley.

In an interview about his royal accolade England said: "Over recent years, I have developed a detailed knowledge of the practical application of the policy tests in PPS6 *Planning for Town Centres* in my work for clients on retailing and town centres.



England: work has covered policy advice, studies and need assessment



My reputation in applying PPS6 for the benefit of my clients is the main reason I have been awarded an MBE

"I believe that my reputation in applying PPS6 for the benefit of my clients is the main reason that I have been awarded an MBE," he explained. "But in part I think that it is because I have always tried to take a professional approach in providing clients with independent advice on complex policy issues, particularly in my work for local authorities."

PPS6 has now been replaced by PPS4 *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth*. England notes: "It is a happy coincidence that the new PPS4, with its revised policy guidance on town centres, has been published at the same time as my award. I look forward to being able to apply the experience I have gained in retail planning to help clients understand the new policy tests."

England has followed in the footsteps of his father into the honours list, albeit in a different field of expertise. Ken England was awarded an MBE in 1978 in recognition of his

services as a chief superintendent for Durham Police.

John England grew up in Stockton-on-Tees and attended Newcastle University. He began his career in local government planning, mostly with the former Cleveland County Council, where he was a group leader in policy planning. He later joined consultancy WS Atkins' regional office in Middlesbrough in 1987 as head of planning.

It was during this period that he became interested in retail planning consultancy and in 1997 he was awarded a PhD by Newcastle University for research on retail impact assessment, which he carried out part-time. Soon after he followed this up by writing the UK's first book on the subject. *Retail Impact Assessment — a Guide to Best Practice* was published in 2000 by Routledge.

England lives with his wife in Richmond, North Yorkshire, where he continues to specialise in retail planning consultancy for developers, retailers and local authorities across the UK. Last year, he was appointed to the national board of Action for Market Towns in England, whose 1,600 market towns have been hard hit by the recession.

With unemployment overall in the region rising by a third more than in the UK as a whole, shop vacancies have increased and empty shops are getting harder to let. Action for Market Towns is providing research, lobbying and helping to promote the sharing of good practice between towns, working locally with town partnerships and town councils to bring renewed vitality to town centres.

Nancy Hammonds is editor of RTPI News and the institute website at www.rtpi.org.uk