

# Shaping the Future of Scotland:

## A Planning System to Support Sustainable Change

### Shaping the Future of Scotland

Nothing stands still. There is always a need to look ahead. That is why planning is important. A properly resourced planning system, working within the right framework, is key to achieving ambitions for sustainable development, economic growth and successful places for people across Scotland. It can highlight pressures for change, identify opportunities and build appropriate safeguards. It can provide the long term, pro-active vision for Scotland through integrating and future-proofing development. And it can allow people across Scotland to have a say in the future of the places where they live, work and relax.



**This manifesto sets out the four cornerstones of planning which should be key priorities for any future Government. These are the need to:**

1. ensure that the planning system has a central role in providing **visionary, integrated, cost saving and democratic** approaches to shaping the future of Scotland.
2. support the planning system to have a key role in helping to deliver **outcomes** such as sustainable development, economic growth and successful places.
3. provide the right **framework** for planning at national, regional, local and community levels to help deliver sustainable change.
4. provide adequate **resources** to deliver good planning and to ensure that we have a skilled and experienced workforce now and in the future.

Planning is all about improving the quality of life for people and communities. This manifesto therefore focusses on how planners, planning and the planning system can do this.

This does not require radical or fundamental transformation but, rather, can be done by building upon the significant change and progress that has been made to planning over the last few years. However, it does call for more **confident** planning. This requires political commitment, professional excellence and effective community engagement. If planning is given the political support it needs and deserves, planners and politicians will be better placed to deliver the spatial context for a sustainable, forward looking Scotland.

A world-leading, facilitative and plan-led planning system is within our grasp, so I urge all involved in the election campaign for the Scottish Parliament, and those who are elected to it, to take these messages on board and work with us to shape the future of Scotland.

We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the manifesto with you. If you want to do this please contact Craig McLaren, National Director of Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland on 0131 229 9628 or email us at [scotland@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:scotland@rtpi.org.uk).

**David Suttie, Convenor, Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland  
March 2011**



**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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### 1. ENSURE THAT THE PLANNING SYSTEM HAS A CENTRAL ROLE IN PROVIDING VISIONARY, INTEGRATED, COST SAVING AND DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES TO SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SCOTLAND.

**Planning looks to the long term and integrates activity. It can help to achieve sustainable change.**

**There is a need to:**

- ensure that the planning system is used as a **key mechanism to achieve the ambitions of Scotland's people and communities** through setting out a long term vision for the future of Scotland.
- appoint a **Cabinet Secretary** with overall responsibility for **planning and establish a Planning Committee for the Scottish Parliament** to ensure political commitment to planning at a national level.
- ensure that there is professional input to planning through establishing a new national **Scottish Planning Forum** acting as a sounding board on issues and by retaining a professionally qualified **Chief Planner** at Director level in Scottish Government and within local authorities.

- improve **links between planning and key programmes** for infrastructure, economic development, regeneration, housing, transport and rural development through Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning.
- ensure that policy and investment decisions recognise that good planning is '**early intervention**' which can save costs in the long term by anticipating future issues.
- commit to the redefined role for **councillors in planning**, and support them to undertake this effectively.

#### CASE STUDY 1

**Planning in Action: The Grassmarket** public realm improvement in Edinburgh involved the re-design of the streetscape to reinforce the historic and architectural character of the area after extensive and innovative public engagement.

### 2. ENSURE THAT THE PLANNING SYSTEM HAS A KEY ROLE IN HELPING TO DELIVER OUTCOMES SUCH AS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUCCESSFUL PLACES.

**Although the planning process is important, we must realise that it is geared to producing successful places. This 'end product' is what planning is for. There is a need to:**

- achieve **sustainable development** – our 7 commitments on climate change show how the planning system can help achieve climate change targets, develop renewables and build sustainable communities.
- use the planning system when promoting and delivering **economic growth**. CBI Scotland recently said that "An effective land-use planning system is vital for economic growth<sup>1</sup>". Planning can provide for employment opportunities, allocate land for housing, take holistic approaches to town centre regeneration and promote economic development.

- ensure that the **value of successful places** is recognised in policy and investment decisions.
- establish new mechanisms and approaches to provide **resources to deliver infrastructure**, looking at how public sector agencies can make best use of their land and property assets and how we can better phase development finance and return.
- identify **new tools, powers, incentives and interventions** that allow planners to pro-actively support development, regeneration and economic growth.
- measure the success of planning through the quality of **outcomes** it provides, as well as the speed of decision making.

<sup>1</sup> CBI Scotland "Energising the Scottish Economy: A business agenda for reform and recovery, June 2010

## CASE STUDY 2

**Planning in Action: Whitelee Windfarm** at Eaglesham Moor is the largest onshore windfarm in Europe. The 140 turbines contribute enough electricity for 180,000 homes. It was delivered through the planning system supporting early and pro-active community engagement. This resulted in only a small number of objections and in community benefits such as a visitor centre and pathways that provide education and recreation facilities.



### 3. PROVIDE THE RIGHT FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL AND COMMUNITY LEVELS TO HELP DELIVER SUSTAINABLE CHANGE.

**The planning framework, which has undergone significant change recently, needs to bed down. It can positively and pro-actively influence the development sector to deliver sustainable development, economic growth and better places. There is a need to:**

- build upon the existing **National Planning Framework** by developing a 3rd edition which incorporates the National Land Use Strategy, marine spatial planning and the spatial dimensions of infrastructure and resource planning.
- ensure that **guidance, advice and interventions** from Scottish Government provide direction whilst allowing local planning authorities to make decisions based on their needs and circumstances.
- build on the **plan-led system** through producing visionary Strategic and Local Development Plans, as well as pro-active Supplementary Planning Guidance, to provide the framework for delivering sustainable change.
- build on changes made to **development management** and support the implementation of new parts of this such as Local Review Bodies.
- **engage communities effectively** in planning processes, especially through early participation in the development plan process and in the neighbour notification process for planning applications.
- support **people and communities to participate fully** in planning through continuing to resource Planning Aid Scotland to provide advice, training, mentoring and education programmes through its professional volunteers and staff.
- ensure that **planning decisions** are taken at a level where professionally qualified planners can use their expertise to frame recommendations that balance local and strategic needs and short and long term issues.



## CASE STUDY 3

**Planning in Action: Clyde Gateway** is delivering regeneration within communities in the East End of Glasgow and parts of South Lanarkshire. The existence of local Development Plans, which outline development criteria and which are also used to build up detailed Masterplans, have enabled a 'fast-track' process to be applied by the two local authorities and so speed up planning issues within Clyde Gateway.

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### 4. PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO DELIVER GOOD PLANNING AND TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE A SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED WORKFORCE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

Planning authorities have had to deal with reductions in resources whilst taking on additional responsibilities. We need to make sure we don't lose the expertise and experience currently contained in the planning service. And we need to attract fresh talent to planning now and in the future. Given this, there is a need to:

- monitor the impact of changes being made to the planning system and respond to this in resource allocation, so as to ensure that there are adequate resources to **deliver** the planning service.
- review **planning fees** and ensure that these are not used as a tax on development but to resource and support the delivery of the planning service for the public good.
- support officers and councillors to **improve their effectiveness** through continuing the planning development programme.

- **learn from success** and invest in research and analysis to ensure we have better understanding of what works and what challenges we face in the future.
- **safeguard funding for accredited degree courses** to ensure a continuing supply of planning graduates.
- provide support for **planning graduates** to find jobs and experience.

#### CASE STUDY 4

**Planning in Action: Scotia Homes'** mixed use development in Rothienorman used planning to enhance the existing built fabric of the original village. It successfully integrates into the existing settlement and provides a mix of housing, to meet a wide range of needs, and space for business.

## About Us

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2,200 members in Scotland and a UK membership of nearly 23,000.

### We:

- support policy development to improve approaches to planning for the benefit of the public
- maintain the professional standards of our members
- support our members, and therefore the majority of the planning workforce, to have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver planning effectively
- maintain high standards of planning education
- develop and promote new thinking, ideas and approaches which can improve planning
- support our membership to work with others who have a role in developing places in Scotland
- improve the understanding of planning and the planning system to policy makers, politicians, practitioners and the general public.

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