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Dear Nicole

Age and Experience: developing the strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population

The Royal Town Planning welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on a strategy for a Scotland with an ageing population, which the Institute considers has important implications for many aspects of land use planning in the future.

The RTPI is the UK body chartered to represent the planning profession and offers these comments from the point of view of a diverse and policy neutral professional body committed to supporting devolved government in Scotland. The Institute has approximately 1900 members in Scotland working across all sectors of central government, local government, government agencies, the voluntary sector, private consultancy, the development industry and academia. Since devolution, the Institute has empowered its RTPI in Scotland Office, together with its Scottish Executive Committee, with the responsibility for working with government and public bodies generally for the improvement of the planning system in Scotland. This is in accordance with its charter obligation to work for the public interest.

The ageing agenda is increasingly recognised as an important challenge in many European countries. The Institute agrees with the assessment of the need for a wide ranging approach addressing both opportunities and problems associated with trends in population age structure as noted in 'Setting the Scene'. Issues around ageing will impact on most areas for which the Scottish Executive is responsible and will have particular relevance for the land use planning system, where they will need to be taken into account in planning for appropriate physical infrastructure. In responding to this consultation, the Institute's has focused on the questions set out in section 3.5 on 'Housing, transport and surroundings'.

Response to Questions 3.5 'Housing, transport and surroundings'

The Institute considers that the issues of ageing as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the consultation questionnaire 'What do you think?' should be addressed by the planning system at strategic and local levels; through appropriate

development management schemes and in close partnership with other sectors.

In 2002 the Institute set up a Working Group to examine the implications of the ageing population for spatial planning policy and practice in the UK. The Group considered the response required of Government in terms of amending policy guidance; incorporating issues associated with the ageing population into the statutory development plan and development management systems; and the impact of the ageing population on key aspects of planning most likely to be affected. A final report by the Working Group was published in 2004 and is available on the Institute's website at: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/resources/publications/Ageing/ageing.pdf> .

The future age and household structure of Scotland's population will have important ramifications for many aspects of land use planning covered by policies and guidance including housing, shopping, transport, leisure and recreation, and design. These will be reflected in requirements for land use provision and it is suggested that the differential impacts of land use policies on specific age groups should be systematically assessed and built into planning advice and guidance. The Welsh Assembly published its 'Strategy for Older People in Wales' in 2003 and this report together with similar work in Ireland and other European countries suggest the need to incorporate planning for an ageing population at all levels of government. In Wales for instance, consideration of the needs of elderly people has been built into advice on sustainability appraisals. It would be useful for more specific policy guidance and advice to be incorporated into future Scottish Planning Policy Guidance and associated Planning Advice Notes on matters such as land for housing, sport, physical recreation and open space; and transport and planning.

The Institute agrees with the Scottish Executive's assessment that ageing populations will have particular implications for housing provision in terms of housing demand, land allocation and housing design. These will include the need for specialist housing and sheltered accommodation; and ensuring the provision of private housing suitable for older people. There are specific needs for clarification of the relationship between 'affordable housing' and 'retirement housing'; dealing with the cost implications for developing housing schemes with major communal elements and associated management support as in retirement villages; and matters of detailed provision and design in application of parking and similar standards for housing schemes that will be occupied primarily by elderly people.

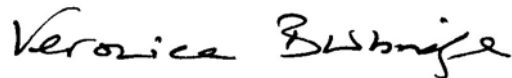
The Institute's own report suggested that all planning authorities should consider preparing guidance and development briefs possibly in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance and work through planning agreements to develop appropriate facilities. Planning agreements might also be used to make retail facilities, town centres and transport more accessible to a wider range of people. The Institute's report also suggested that a significant policy

aim should be to promote' lifetime neighbourhoods generating a variety of housing provision and range of support relevant to a spectrum of ages and stages in a family cycle.

The focus of policy responses to issues of ageing has widened considerably in recent years. The emphasis given to various strands of policy response will vary depending on the regional context e.g. between urban and rural areas and flexibility of approach taking local considerations into account will be essential. It will also be important to ensure that closer links are forged between land use planners and other service providers. Community planning partnerships should provide a useful framework for such a joined up approach; ensuring closer monitoring of the process of age related change and encouraging timely and proactive decision-making to enable the development plan to respond to needs identified in the community plan with appropriate policies and land use allocations.

The Institute trusts that these comments are of assistance and has no objection to its comments being made available to the public in the usual way. Should you wish any clarification or further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me at our Edinburgh office: 57 Melville Street Edinburgh, EH3 7HL phone: 0131 226 1959, or email: veronica.burbridge@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely



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