



Annual Report 2007

Review of the year

Alastair Stark, Convenor, Scottish Executive Committee

2007 was a pivotal year for the RTPI in Scotland. With the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act finally on the statute book, there appeared to be time to draw breath before tackling the many consultations on the operational details of the new plan-led system. However, it turned out to be a particularly eventful period.

Graham U'ren (Director) and Shirley James (Administrative Assistant) left the Institute after almost a decade of sterling service. Veronica Burbridge, formerly Policy Officer, was promoted to National Director, and Annette O'Donnell is now the RTPI in Scotland Administrator. Charles Strang is the new Scottish Planning Policy Officer and James Henderson is the Communications Officer. After protracted negotiation, a new 5-year lease has been signed on our premises at 57 Melville Street in Edinburgh, allowing access to much-needed extra floor-space.

That these changes have been accomplished so smoothly is due in great measure to the support of RTPI's London staff, and in particular to Debbie Sorkin, Director of Programmes and Services. An unintended consequence has been to improve liaison and understanding between the Edinburgh and London offices, to great mutual benefit.

The Scottish Executive Committee and its Subcommittees, Task Groups and Chapters have all been active, involving around 100 volunteers in a wide range of governance, policy, conference and CPD activities. Relationships have been maintained with the Scottish Society of Directors of Planning,

the Scottish Planning Consultants Forum, the Scottish Young Planners Group, the

four planning schools, the Scottish Government and sister professions; and a public profile has been established through newspapers and television.

The eyes of the outside world were on the changing political scene. The new SNP minority administration renamed the Scottish Executive as the Scottish Government, with new structures and a fresh emphasis on climate change and affordable housing, but unchanged ambitions for the planning system. Local Councils saw an influx of new Councillors representing multi-Member wards with predictable settling-in difficulties in many areas.

The big planning story of the year has been Donald Trump's proposed golf resort in Aberdeenshire. Scottish public opinion quickly became sharply polarised on the appropriate balance between economic development and environmental protection. For planners, it raised issues of the weight accorded to the development plan and how to respond to highly-charged public opinion. The RTPI found itself defending the role of planners and sound planning principles and procedures, whilst avoiding being dragged into a major political row.

In conclusion, the RTPI in Scotland successfully negotiated a difficult year, finishing in a strong position to tackle the challenges of 2008.



Organisation and Structure

Scottish Executive Committee

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The Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) has responsibility for the Institute's affairs in Scotland. Throughout 2007 the SEC has continued to promote the Institute's relations with central and local government, related professional bodies, pressure groups and the general public, dealing with planning policy issues in Scotland, and supporting members and the Chapter system in Scotland.

The SEC's volunteers form a full Committee and two Sub-committees, all meeting quarterly. The Committee's membership comprises elected Corporate, Student or Licentiate and Technical members, Chapter representatives and Scottish members of the Institute's General Assembly. Additional members may be co-opted as required.

The **Events, Training and Communications Subcommittee** deals with events organised by the RTPI in Scotland, professional training needs and communication issues in Scotland. During 2007, the Committee contributed to: the design and management of national events held in Scotland; work on the revision of the website; planning education; the development of the RTPI's Learning Partners Initiative in Scotland; the production of an information leaflet; and, the development of the RTPI in Scotland's Communication Strategy.

The **Planning Policy Subcommittee** allows for detailed discussion of policy issues and enables the Institute in Scotland to take a more proactive approach in dealing with planning policy issues. During 2007, the Committee guided the Institute's work on planning reform; considered the implications of the new Scottish Government's programme; discussed current policy consultations; and, finalised the RTPI in Scotland's policy position statement on Planning and Affordable Housing. Specific issues, such as, culture change, development management, development planning and the National Planning Framework, were remitted to task groups augmented by invited co-optees.

Activities and achievements

The Strategic Plan 2006 – 2008 provides the framework for annual operational plans in taking forward the Institute's work in Scotland in relation to: planning reform and planning policy; communications; Chapters; unifying the profession; training and professional development; governance; and management. The main activities and achievements in 2007 are outlined as follows.

Planning Reform and Planning Policy

The Institute met with Des McNulty MSP, Rhona Brankin MSP, and Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change. The Institute also met with the

Scottish Government's Chief Planner and his staff several times during the year regarding the implementation programme for secondary legislation and related consultations.

Policy Consultation Responses

The Institute has continued to respond to consultations on planning reform. This work has been led by Task Groups established on Development Management, Development Planning, the National Planning Framework, and Culture Change and Community Involvement. Three joint Chapter events were held to discuss Scottish Government consultations on the proposed Development Planning Regulations.

The Institute's responses to consultations included formal responses to Scottish Government consultations on: statutory guidance on sustainable development; the development of the National Planning Framework, including key issues and strategic environmental assessment; the development of the new Planning Performance Assessment Framework; proposals for a marine and coastal National Park; Strategic Development Planning Authorities; and designation orders and statutory guidance. The Institute also made contributions to a UK response on the Planning Gain Supplement.

Policy Development

The Institute produced a policy position statement on *Planning and Affordable Housing* and participated in a number of Scottish Government policy review advisory groups, including: the Ministerial Advisory Group on Marine and Coastal Strategy; the Advisory Group on the National Planning Framework; and the Flooding Issues Advisory Group.

Communications

The Institute appoints representatives to a number of external bodies and organisations such as the National Trust for Scotland, the Saltire Society and the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust.

It has also continued to participate in a wide range of consultative and project groups, fora and networks, which this year included: the Scottish Council Development and Industry; the Built Environment Forum for Scotland; the Landscape Forum; the Professional Futures Forum; the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Architecture and the Built Environment; the National Trust for Scotland; the Construction Industry Council; Historic Scotland's Building Conservation Architecture Liaison Group; the Scottish Borders Council Design Award Scheme; Partners for Regeneration; the Scottish Transport's Strategic Projects Review Planning Reference Group; and the Scottish Renewables Microgeneration Working Group.

Meetings were held with individual representatives from organisations including: Communities Scotland; Homes for Scotland; Greenspace Scotland; Architecture and Design Scotland; and, CoSLA. And meetings were also held with sister professional groups and with other planning related bodies including: the Scottish Society for Directors of Planning; the Scottish Planning Consultants Forum; the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust; and Planning Aid Scotland.

Scottish Planner

During 2007, the Scottish Planner devoted considerable content to planning reform outlining the timetable for implementation and the nature of forthcoming Government consultations and including contributions from Scottish Ministers with planning responsibilities and comment from MSPs. Other subjects covered included: public participation in planning; planning education; the work of the Scottish Young Planners Group; e-planning; issues relating to climate change, energy efficiency, housing and design.

The Sir Patrick Geddes Annual Memorial Lecture

The annual Sir Patrick Geddes memorial lecture was held in June 2007 in Edinburgh. Richard Wakeford, Director-General Environment at the Scottish Government delivered a well-received lecture on *Wanted: Visionary Planners to Apply Levers for a Sustainable World*. The event was introduced by Robin Harper MSP and was kindly sponsored by the Scottish Government.

The Annual Conference

The RTPI in Scotland's Annual Conference was held at the Royal Society, Edinburgh on Friday 16th November 2007. The theme of this year's event was *Fulfilling Planning's Potential*. The conference was kindly sponsored by the Scottish Government, RPS and MacDonald and Company.

Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning

The Institute assisted the Scottish Government with the organisation of the 11th annual Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. 36 nominations were received and the winner will be announced in March 2008.

Other events

The first Scottish Planners' Ball was held on 14th September 2007. The Ball was sponsored by Mactaggart and Mickel and was attended by over 170 members of the Institute and their guests.

Media Liaison

The Convenor, RTPI in Scotland, contributed to BBC Radio Scotland News Drive and BBC Reporting Scotland. Planning issues on which comments were requested by the media included: current shortages in availability of planners; housing needs assessments; the codes of practice for Councillors; housing in the countryside; and the Menie Estate planning application.

Parliamentary Liaison

The Institute provided oral and written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Communities Committee Inquiries on Community Engagement (draft Planning Advice Note) and on Planning for Waste Management (draft Scottish Planning Policy 10); and the Environment and Rural Affairs Committee Inquiry on the Marine Environment. The Institute also contributed written evidence to the Environment and Rural Affairs Committee's Inquiry on Flooding and Flood Management.

Presentations

The Institute gave a presentation to the Parliamentary Cross Party Group on the Scottish Economy. Presentations were also given to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman staff and Scottish Archaeological Link.

Unifying the Profession

The Institute encourages members to participate in its work through a number of different fora.

The Scottish Young Planners Group

The fourth Scottish Young Planners Group Conference was held on 29th March 2007 at the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh on the theme of *Planning, Profit and Public interest*. The event

was attended by over 170 young planners in Scotland. Sponsorship was kindly provided by the Scottish Government, the Improvement Service, Judd Farris and Taylor Woodrow.

Sector Groups

The Institute supported and attended meetings of the Scottish Planning Consultants Forum, the Scottish Planning Education Forum and the Scottish Society of Directors of Planning.

President's Visit

President Jim Claydon came to Scotland in November and visited Dundee where he met staff at the City Planning Department and staff and students at the University. The President also gave a presentation at the annual conference and visited the RICS Scotland office to discuss issues of mutual interest across the professions.

Training and Professional Development

The Institute is a member of the Scottish Planning Education Forum together with representatives from planning schools in Scotland, the Scottish Society of Directors of Planning, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Planning Development Programme and the Scottish Government. During 2007 the Institute has assisted in developing a joint initiative and action plan to promote a more effective approach to planning education and training in Scotland.

Chapters

During 2007, the Institute supported the seven Chapters in Scotland in providing CPD events. The Chapters are building a reputation for providing topical CPD subjects with quality speakers encouraging an inter-disciplinary and professional exchange of experiences and audiences.

The 2007 CPD Programme for **Edinburgh Lothians Borders Fife Chapter** consisted of 4 events with an average attendance of 20-30 people. These events included: an active and participatory 'curling bonspiel' which provides a great opportunity at the beginning of the year for Chapter members to get to know each other and network; a workshop event on Sustainable Development enabling City of Edinburgh Council to present the current position on 'Edinburgh Standards for Sustainable Buildings'; a site visit and inter-disciplinary event at the Quatermile sponsored by Gladedale; and the AGM and presentation by Planning Aid (Scotland).

During 2007, the **West of Scotland Chapter** held a total of 10 events on a range of CPD subjects including a talk by Louise Bachelor, the BBC's environment correspondent, and a visit to the BBC Scotland HQ at Pacific Quay in Glasgow.

The **Grampian Chapter and the Central Chapter** each organised six events. The Grampian Chapter continued its involvement with the North East Allied Professionals Group for which the Chapter organised a joint event on *Aberdeen Harbour – Investing in Success*.

The **Highlands and Islands Chapter** was reconvened in April and held a number of events including *Buildings at Risk: Problem Buildings or Problem Owners*; a guided tour of the Eden Court redevelopment; and a site visit to the Farr Windfarm.

SEC members 2007

Convenor

Alistair Stark (ex officio General Assembly)

Senior Vice Convenor

Roger Kelly (ex officio General assembly)

Junior Vice Convenor

John Esslemont

Immediate Past Convenor

Alan Morris

Corporate Members

Ian Angus

Bill Lindsay

Alice McGlone

Deborah Peel

Catherine Quigley

Emma Richardson

Student Member

Annemaree Wood

Chapter Representatives

Claire Milne (Central)

David Suttie (Dumfries and Galloway)

Nicola Hay / Andrew Sim (East of Scotland)

Stefano Smith (Edinburgh Lothians Borders Fife)

Catherine McCrum (Grampian)

Neil Huggan (Highlands and Islands)

John Esslemont (West of Scotland)

Sector Representatives

Mick Stewart, Scottish Society of Directors of Planning

John Warren, Scottish Planning Consultants Forum

General Assembly Members on the SEC

Alan Morris

Kevin Murray

Emma Kirk (Student Member)

RTPI in Scotland staff team

National Director: Graham U'ren (to Jun 07); Veronica Burbridge (from Jul 07).

Administrator: Annette O'Donnell.

Scottish Planning Policy Officer: Veronica Burbridge (to Jun 07); Charles Strang (from Nov 07).

Communications Officer: Shirley James (to Oct 07); James Henderson (from Nov 07).