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# **Planning to Live with Climate Change**

*Refreshing the New Vision for Planning: 2009-2014*

## **Consultation Report February 2009**

*This draft Consultation Report on “Planning to Live with Climate Change” has been prepared by the RTPI Planning Policy & Practice Committee in discussion with the Executive Board in late 2008 and early 2009, as the basis for consultation with the RTPI General Assembly and the wider membership in spring 2009. It has been developed from an Interim Report on Refreshing the New Vision for Planning that was prepared by the RTPI New Vision Task Group in late 2007 and early 2008 and then restructured and supplemented with further material by the Planning Policy & Practice Committee and General Assembly debate on the development of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Professional in mid-to-late 2008.*

PLANNING POLICY AND PRACTICE @ RTPI: 2009

# **Planning to Live with Climate Change**

## **Draft Consultation Report : January 2009**

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# **Planning to Live with Climate Change**

## **Consultation Report: February 2009**

### **Summary: Planning to Live with Climate Change**

Human civilization is entering a new era. Most social and economic decisions throughout our history have been taken with little concern for the use of finite natural resources. We have now reached a point when we must provide for the needs of future generations as well as our own present needs. We must change the way we use natural resources both globally and locally to become truly sustainable and to avoid threatening the survival of humankind and other world ecosystems. Traditional growth and development models now need to be reconsidered at every level to ensure sustainable development. Sound analysis demonstrates that urgent action is needed to tackle climate change and can secure economic as well as social and environmental benefits.

This review of The New Vision for Planning suggests how everyone engaged in spatial planning should adapt their professional approach to plan for living with climate change, to advise and work in partnership with others and to campaign for fundamental change to shape a sustainable new future for humankind. It points the way ahead for the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in extending a culture change in our approach to sustainable development, both nationally and internationally.

### **The Challenge**

Climate change threatens our survival. Recent studies have shown that we have about 5 to 7 years - the timescale of this document - to change our ways before accelerating trends in environmental degradation lead to irreversible and chaotic change that could challenge the very basis of our way of life and ability to plan. Global warming would hit us at home as well as abroad. Consequential economic change threatens our security both locally and globally. Environmental and economic changes threaten the well-being of communities, families and individuals. Social changes on a global scale will unavoidably lead to increasing deprivation amongst poorer communities and increasing social and economic polarity worldwide.

### **Options for the Future**

*“Planning to Live with Climate Change”* introduces the challenges of climate change to our vision for planning as an over-arching priority. It revisits the key issues of sustainable development, spatial planning, value-driven planning and action-orientated planning at the heart of the RTPI’s original *“New Vision for Planning”*. It then develops the original agenda for change into an Action Plan that seeks to realign the responsibilities for planning, improve the capabilities of planning, focus on the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century professional and identify the actions that the RTPI must take to tackle what is emerging as a new world order. This document challenges you, the spatial planner, to propose individual and collective actions that you can take over the period 2009 – 2014 that will make a difference and asks how the RTPI and its partners should contribute towards effective delivery.

### **Climate change**

Conventional approaches to planning for sustainable development have tended to balance a range of competing considerations, in ways that sometimes assume they are of equivalent weight. Our need to respond to climate change suggests that these approaches cannot continue. Where there is a challenge to the survival of human civilisations and/or ecosystems, measures to mitigate climate change should have priority over the balance that is conventionally sought between economic, social and environmental factors in planning for the specific needs and circumstances of a particular area. The challenge to survival might, for example, be defined in relation to international and national targets for reducing the carbon and related greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming.

### **Sustainable development**

The 'New Vision for Planning' called for clear planning frameworks to engage people and integrate action to achieve sustainable development. The 'UK Sustainable Development Strategy' has focused on living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and using sound science responsibly to achieve sustainable development. Spatial planning aims to balance economic, social and environmental issues and link them with integrated transport systems, community governance and new technology. Whilst government priorities may change over the lifetime of this document, these objectives are likely to endure.

### **Spatial planning**

The new vision proposed that planning should be spatial, sustainable, integrated and inclusive. The RTPI's 2007 report 'Effective Practice in Spatial Planning' found an evolving understanding of spatial planning that involves "place shaping and delivery at the local and regional levels". Spatial planning should aim to enable a vision for the future of regions and places that is based on evidence, local distinctiveness and community derived objectives and translate this vision into a set of policies, priorities, programmes and land allocations together with the resources to deliver them.

### **Value-driven planning**

The RTPI Education Commission aimed to develop education, skills and life-long learning to raise standards of professional competence. There is now a need to extend the continuing culture change in planning to promote change in the management of governments, councils, companies and agencies that are involved in spatial planning. There is an increasing clash of values about the social, economic and environmental issues raised by development and their spatial implications, particularly as between the challenge posed by climate change and the challenges posed by economic growth and social polarity.

### **Action-orientated planning**

The Agenda for Action in the New Vision should be extended to promote sustainable development, to tackle climate change and to secure global survival. The RTPI should establish itself as the voice on spatial planning and become a "campaigning profession". It should strengthen its commitment to community engagement, particularly through Planning Aid, and its programme of consultation across a wide range of public, private and voluntary partners. It

should also consolidate its position as the primary professional and academic accreditation body for a wide range of practitioners.

## **Action Plan**

### ***The role of partners***

The Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” is built on the New Vision for Planning and is focussed on **professional leadership, vision and delivery** to promote fundamental shifts in practice in response to local and global change. The RTPI is uniquely placed to support civic leadership and establish professional competence, technical capabilities and inclusive processes.

Key shifts in the practice of spatial planning amongst all the partners involved in promoting sustainable development should include:

- **Realigning the responsibilities for planning.** This should resolve conflicts within sustainable development and realign the powers and responsibilities of the professionals, governments, community organisations, public sector agencies, the private sector developers and operators and the local and global companies involved in spatial planning. Action is required to undertake planning at the right scale and to secure a new accountability for central agencies so that decisions are taken at the lowest possible level consistent with good outcomes. Action is also required to align the agenda of the private sector with the agenda of the public sector so that investment decisions can be effectively integrated to achieve commonly agreed objectives.
- **Improving the capabilities of planning.** This should address the increasing complexity of urban and rural development at all levels and the need to realign the responsibilities for planning. The RTPI has a lead role to influence government and to support individual planners in developing their own competencies in spatial planning. Action is required to promote research and to manage knowledge for spatial planning at all levels. Action is also required to advance effective practice in spatial planning to work with associated professions and practitioners by consolidating the on-going shift from “blueprint” regulatory models towards more flexible “outcome focused” models of spatial planning.
- **Fostering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century professional.** This should encourage professionals in spatial planning to be multi-disciplinary, globally responsible, socially ethical and, above all, progressively campaigning. The RTPI should become a campaigning profession and support planners in extending the current “culture change” in planning. It will need to approach this leadership role at both the strategic and the operational levels with public, private and voluntary sectors and with companies, local communities and individual people. Planners are good at managing change, at finding synergy amidst competing demands and at synthesising complex situations into integrated policies and programmes of action.

### ***The role of the RTPI***

The RTPI will need to translate the Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” into its Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan to complement the actions that will be required by professional planners, central and local government, public and voluntary sector agencies and

the private sector. It will need to adapt its organisation and operation to promote spatial planning and engage its members and partners in tackling global economic, social and environmental issues. It will also need to engage the commitment of its members and partners to deliver practical action.

The RTPI should set its own action plan to achieve its wider objectives including:

- Action to **promote international planning** to facilitate the major contribution that spatial planning can make to address issues that are essential to the survival of civilisations and ecosystems such as climate change, economic stability and urban and rural poverty.
- Action to **achieve planning at the right scale** to advocate decision-making at the appropriate level for each decision which may be at the international, national, regional, subregional or local level of spatial planning.
- Action to **secure a new accountability for central agencies** to counter the increasing responsibility which is being given to non-elected agencies and to private service monopolies that combine to separate communities from decision-making processes.
- Action to **align the agenda of the private sector** to encourage companies to align their agendas to wider economic social, environmental goals as part of their commitments to sustainability and corporate responsibility.
- Action to **strengthen checks and balances within the voluntary sector** to ensure that the expertise and values of voluntary sector interest groups are not undermined and to strengthen and promote the role and value of Planning Aid.
- Action to **re-empower local governance** to support policies to strengthen effective spatial planning and to secure accountability and long-term commitment to each particular locality.
- Action to **re-engage local communities** to advocate the importance of planning local communities as a key means of re-energising local democracy.
- Action to **adapt and improve the skills and ethics of spatial planning** to face the challenges of climate change and sustainable development in exercising the RTPI's role as the custodian and developer of initial professional training, life long learning, skills and professional standards.

## **Conclusion**

The RTPI must promote a debate about the fundamental shift that is needed to put climate change at the heart of sustainable development. "Planning to Live with Climate Change" advocates a "climate change priority" to change the conventional approach to planning for sustainable development where there is a challenge to the survival of civilisations and/or ecosystems. Measures to mitigate climate change should have priority over the conventional balance between economic, social and environmental factors in planning for a particular area where it is essential to achieve targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that threaten global survival.

***Planning to Live with Climate Change: Consultation Report***  
*RTPI Planning Policy & Practice Committee: February 2009*

The Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” advocates a new focus on **professional leadership, vision and delivery** to promote change in response to the challenge of climate change and the threat to global survival. It is built on a review of the original proposals for realigning the responsibilities for planning and improving the capabilities of planners in the New Vision for Planning. It develops fresh ideas about the new professionalism that will be needed to tackle climate change and promote spatial planning. It identifies the action the RTPI must take to achieve them but, above all, it challenges the spatial planning profession to consider it must act to deliver critically important change to tackle the challenge of climate change.

# **Planning to Live with Climate Change**

## **Consultation Report: February 2009**

### **1 Introduction**

1. Human civilization is entering a new era. Most of the key social and economic decisions throughout human history have been taken with little concern about the rate at which natural resources are consumed. But we have now reached a point when responsible decision-making must ensure that we provide for our current needs as well as ensuring our long term ability to provide for the needs of future generations. We must make radical changes to the way we use natural resources globally and locally if we are to avoid becoming increasingly unsustainable and to avoid threatening the survival of human civilisations and ecosystems across the globe. The traditional processes of growth and development now need to be reconsidered at every level to make way for truly sustainable development.
2. The planning profession has the opportunity and the responsibility at this turning point in world change and development to take the lead in tackling climate change through sustainable development both nationally and internationally. Planners have and can further develop the skills and experience to work creatively with associated professions and practitioners to find synergy and synthesis amidst the many complicated issues in sustainable development and to suggest realistic visions and workable solutions for future sustainable development. They also have the skills and experience to work with the local communities involved to secure commitment to shared proposals for change.
3. Spatial planning is well-placed to diagnose emerging needs and to help local and global communities to agree responsible visions for the future and deliver the necessary actions to realise them. This review of *The New Vision for Planning* suggests how everyone engaged in spatial planning should adapt their professional approach to plan for living with climate change, to advise and work in partnership with others and to campaign for fundamental change to shape a sustainable new future for humankind. It points the way ahead for the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) in leading a culture change in our approach to sustainable development, both nationally and internationally.

### **2 The Challenge**

4. Climate change threatens our survival both locally and globally. The Stern Report<sup>1</sup> and other studies<sup>2</sup> suggest that we have about 5 to 7 years - the timescale of the action plan proposed in this document - to change our ways before the rapidly rising trends in major natural environmental changes become too major or chaotic to allow them to be managed or reversed with the means we currently have at our disposal. Current human civilisation has emerged in an era characterised by relative stability in climate systems, in

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<sup>1</sup> Stern Report on the Economics of Climate Change 2006: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\\_reviews/stern\\_review\\_economics\\_climate\\_change/stern\\_review\\_report.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report 2007: [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4\\_syr.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf)

which the predictability of our physical environment and our access to resources has liberated humanity to plan, construct and develop the many complex urban societies that now encompass the majority of the human population.

5. The risks of global warming include widespread flooding and coastal inundation for many of the world's leading cities, significant changes to the climatic stability and productivity of key staple food and resource producing regions and increases in the frequency, damages and cost of extreme weather events. These changes are likely to escalate the costs of world water, food and energy supplies and the more significant and less predictable they become, the greater is the likelihood of desperate shortages that could lead to rapid increases in world poverty, mass migration and warfare to settle competing claims for scarce vital resources. These threats will hit us at home as well as abroad.
6. Economic change threatens our security both locally and globally. The economic crisis that swept the world in 2008 has shown us how unstable our wealth and security had become. Whatever the individual causes of this crisis, we have witnessed a rapid loss of confidence and a downturn in economic activity in the construction, finance, business and retail sectors, which has then undermined demand in the manufacturing sector and prompted a widespread rise in unemployment.
7. These environmental and economic changes threaten the well-being of communities, families and individuals both locally and globally. Social changes appear likely to lead to increasing deprivation amongst poorer communities whilst having relatively less impact on wealthier communities and increasing social polarity. The risks are that increasing poverty in the developing world combined with rapid urbanisation and inadequate infrastructure provision will challenge the environmental and economic resources of many countries and prompt conflict. The developed world too faces similar challenges in different terms that could nonetheless create profound social distress.
8. So is this just scare-mongering or a harsh reality that most of us find difficult to take seriously? Even if the reality is far less than worst-case fears, we know that these environmental, economic and social issues could ultimately threaten our basic needs, our prosperity, our peace and security and, ultimately, the survival of human civilisations and natural ecosystems. Surely, there is now good reason to adopt the "precautionary principle". We need sustainable development to secure survival.

### **3 Options for the Future**

9. This fundamental review of the RTPI's New Vision for Planning attempts to grapple with the challenges of climate change, adverse economic change, social polarity and disruption to civilisations and ecosystems. It introduces the challenge of climate change at the outset and revisits the key issues of sustainable development, spatial planning, value-driven planning and action-orientated planning that were at the heart of the original New Vision for Planning when it was first published in 2002. It then develops the original agenda for change into an Action Plan that seeks to realign the responsibilities for planning, improve the capabilities of planning, focus on the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century professional and identify the tasks that the RTPI itself should be taking to tackle the issues of what is emerging as a new world order at every level. It challenges spatial

planners acting individually or through the various organs of the RTPI to identify what can be done.

10. "The New Vision for Planning: An Agenda for Action" was launched in 2002 and provided a stimulus for wide-ranging reforms in the scope and culture of planning including the statutory adoption of "spatial planning", including the introduction of the Scottish National Spatial Planning Framework, the Wales Spatial Plan, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in England and Wales and the renewal of the RTPI itself. The original version of the New Vision promoted four key defining themes that planning should be spatial, integrative, inclusive and sustainable. Two further themes argued that planning to be value driven and action orientated. A wider approach to spatial planning replaced the traditional approach to land use planning and expanded the role and reach of the profession.

### **3.1 Climate change**

11. Climate change must now be recognised as a key driver in sustainable development. Indeed, a "climate change priority" is needed to change the conventional approach to planning for sustainable development. Where there is a challenge to the survival of civilisations and ecosystems, measures to mitigate climate change should have priority over the balance that is usually sought between economic, social and environmental factors in planning for the specific needs and circumstances of a particular area. The challenge to survival might, for example, be defined in relation to international and national targets for reducing the carbon and related greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming and threaten survival.
12. The RTPI must promote national and international debate about a fundamental "paradigm shift" in thinking and action that is needed to put climate change and the survival of civilisations and ecosystems at the heart of sustainable development, spatial planning and project delivery. It must review our scientific understanding of global warming, assess the potential social and economic consequences and develop the role of spatial planning in mitigating and managing the impact of climate change. The original New Vision for Planning called for effective and creative planning to secure the sustainable development of communities and nations but it did not identify climate change as a priority issue. This is now the primary task of refreshing the New Vision.
13. Climate change is now recognised as a global issue driven by energy use, land use change and other human activities, leading to changes to the atmosphere and increases in carbon dioxide and related greenhouse gas emissions. The Stern report suggested that global greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by 2% per year by 2015 – only 7 years from now – if a potentially catastrophic increase in global temperatures of more than 2°C is to be avoided. The recent Hadley Centre Report for the UK Meteorological Office<sup>3</sup> seems to suggest that it will be necessary to cut global carbon emissions by 3% per annum from 2010 to avoid a global temperatures rise of more than 2°C which is widely recognised as the level of significant risk of the worst effects of sea level rise and drought.

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<sup>3</sup> Hadley Centre Report on Climate Change to the UK Meteorological Office, September 2008

14. The RTPI must take a clear and bold position to promote a positive and realistic response to the challenges of climate change on behalf of the planning profession and advocate it through debate with government, related professions and the general public. The initial focus should be on how to facilitate the movement towards more sustainable energy generation and use and on how to develop more sustainable forms of communities which are based on lower energy and de-carbonised systems of movement. The UK government has set a target of an 80% cut in carbon emissions by 2050 and set up a Department of Climate Change and Energy to coordinate action to tackle climate change, energy policy and the move towards a low carbon economy. The RTPI should continue to engage the resources of the planning profession at the national, regional and local levels.

### **3.2 Sustainable development**

15. The New Vision for Planning called for clear planning frameworks to integrate action and engage people across key sectors, locations and scales to achieve sustainable development. Spatial planning aims to balance the key economic, social and environmental elements of sustainable development in each area according to its particular needs and circumstances, link them with integrated transport systems and set them into the wider context of governance and technology. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy focused on the principles of living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and using sound science responsibly to achieve sustainable development.
16. One of the key recommendations of the New Vision for Planning was that Regional Economic Strategies should be integrated with Regional Spatial Strategies. The principle of integrating spatial planning and economic development has now been accepted in England through the Sub National Review (SNR). The Scottish National Planning Framework and the Wales Spatial Plan embody a similar approach, but more can yet be done. It will be important to ensure that this integration does not result in the marginalisation of social and environmental issues as mere derivatives of an economic agenda. The RTPI will continue to press for a truly joint policy framework for the preparation of Integrated Regional Strategies and national spatial plans and planning frameworks. It will continue to press for the development of truly spatial National Policy Statements for infrastructures under the Planning Act 2008. Above all, it will continue to highlight the need for integration at the scale of the UK and the European region.
17. The social consequences of environmental degradation and economic decline must be given greater priority and local communities must be engaged more effectively in planning for sustainable development. Community development policies and programmes need to be more closely integrated with other plans and programmes at the regional and local levels at the formative stage to achieve sustainable development. The post 2008 economic downturn and the threats of climate change are likely to intensify the problems of deprivation and the need for regeneration in the areas that are still recovering from the economic recession of the early 1990s as well as generating new problems and opportunities as a new round of economic restructuring in sectors such as finance becomes apparent.

18. The original New Vision for Planning highlighted the need to shift the focus on the environment to positive action to complement negative planning controls and to realise the economic and social potential of restoring lost habitats and removing inherited blight. The concept of “green infrastructure” is now accepted as part of planning but it is not yet widely applied in practice. The need for resourcing and evaluating environmental projects still needs to be addressed, for example, by reviewing the way that discounting practices in effect devalue and write-off the long term benefits of sustainable approaches to development. The need to tackle the challenges of climate change must now be brought up to the top of the agenda.
19. Transport provision has become a universal challenge that threatens the quality of life in many local communities in addition to adding to unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. This challenge cannot be solved by new high-tech integrated transport systems alone. New development must be better related to transport infrastructure and access requirements must be a critical determinant in locating new development. A systematic approach is now needed to manage demand for travel to help achieve sustainable transport as part of sustainable development. Demand management in transport will need to be complemented by similar policies to manage demand in the use of energy and other natural resources that are non-renewable and where uncontrolled rises in demand lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions that are not effectively managed using current price signals.

### **3.3 *Spatial planning***

20. The New Vision for Planning proposed in 2002 that planning should be spatial, sustainable, integrated and inclusive. The report of the RTPI’s Effective Practice in Spatial Planning project, “Shaping and Delivering Tomorrow’s Places: Effective Practice in Spatial Planning”, found in 2007 an evolving understanding of spatial planning that involves “place shaping and delivery at the local and regional levels”. It suggested that spatial planning should aim to enable a vision for the future of regions and places that is based on evidence, local distinctiveness and community derived objectives and translate this vision into a set of policies, priorities, programmes and land allocations together with the public sector resources to deliver them. It should then create a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes economic, environmental and social well being and coordinate and deliver the public sector components of the vision with other agencies and processes.
21. Spatial planning is now built into the heart of the RTPI charter, into government legislation, policies and planning practice. It is the ‘core business’ of the planning profession. Essential elements include new practice in local government linked with Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and other agency plans using a common evidence base shared amongst partners and the public through emerging Multi Area Agreements in England or national spatial plans and frameworks in Wales and Scotland. Spatial planning needs better integration between strategies, policies and resources at the regional, subregional and local levels to achieve effective resource coordination. Development management must play a key role and more training for planners, including an MBA and courses on project and programme management, will be needed to provide new skills.

22. The original New Vision for Planning argued that the integration of economic, social and environmental issues should be at the heart of a sustainable approach to development both in the long and in the short term. This review of the New Vision has identified a widening gap between the rhetoric of “sustainable planning” and the reality of plans and policies that are branded “sustainable” but perhaps only really succeed in balancing two rather than three of the economic, social and environmental aspects of development in a particular area. For example, the tension between short term economic objectives and long term environmental aims may be reinforced by tension between the implications of economic and social change.
23. The original New Vision for Planning explained how planning seeks to integrate all aspects of the development of communities and localities but that the corporate decisions which determine the location of new developments are already taken as matters of principle before the local community, politicians and ‘planners’ are involved. This review of the New Vision has focussed on the need to address the increasing fragmentation of the institutional roles and capabilities to deliver programmes and projects. The Sub National Review in England proposed a closer integration between spatial planning and economic development at the regional, subregional and local levels. It could broaden the scope of spatial planning and strengthen the mechanisms for delivery again drawing on similar approaches in Scotland and Wales.
24. The original New Vision for Planning also explained how society is becoming increasingly interactive and flexible in travel, relationships and communications whilst local community identity and engagement in development plans is fragmented by cultural differences and social exclusion. All members of society must be able to take part in spatial planning if it is to be truly inclusive. The process of planning is concerned with balancing the costs and benefits of alternative decisions for different interests and the achievement of net community benefit. There is a growing democratic deficit as social fragmentation and institutional structures distance decisions and decision-makers from local people. The RTPI has therefore worked with government and others to extend the role of Planning Aid in supporting individuals and communities to find a more effective voice in place shaping and spatial planning for their areas.

### **3.4 Value-driven planning**

25. The RTPI appointed an Education Commission alongside its work on the original New Vision to develop the foundation of education, skills and life-long learning that is vital to maintaining and raising standards of professional competence. This review of the New Vision has identified a need to extend the continuing culture change for planners which it instigated to promote a culture change in the management of the governments, councils, companies and agencies that are also involved in spatial planning. There is a need to shift governments away from preoccupations with quantitatively measuring the inputs and outputs of planning processes to qualitatively assessing the outcomes of planning activity. Despite the cynicism that can prevail, planning makes a major contribution to the well-being of society.
26. There is an increasing clash of values about the social, economic and environmental issues of development and their spatial implications. The most significant conflict will be between the challenge of climate change and the challenges of economic growth and social polarity. If we fail to join forces across the globe to counter the effects of climate

change, we will face an “ultimate market failure” as a result of rapid, compound and adverse environmental, economic and social changes which could amount to global catastrophe. We have a moral responsibility to continue to put the short-term in the context of the long-term, to point out the potential for market and other single dimensional policy failures, to promote integrated and spatial policy development and project evaluation and to shape all our research, education and skills programmes in the context of long-term needs and requirements.

27. The RTPI promotes spatial planning at the national and international levels and so it needs to address the needs and responsibilities of the planning profession in the UK and abroad. This means that the UK planning profession must tackle climate change, economic change and social change in a global context as well as a UK context if it is to meet its global responsibilities. Similarly, it must look at future trends and their possible implications as a basis for action in both the short term and the long term, nationally and internationally. The way that the planning profession approaches spatial planning in the UK must recognise the challenges for spatial planning at an international level and adopt approaches to spatial planning that can enable planners abroad to work in complementary ways to address common issues and achieve common goals.

### **3.5 Action-orientated planning**

28. This review of the New Vision for Planning has revisited the original Agenda for Action to see where priorities should be reassessed and where proposals for action need to be extended or adjusted. It has identified a primary need for the RTPI to promote the need for sustainable development to tackle the challenge of climate change and the threat to the survival of civilisations and ecosystems on a global scale. The RTPI should establish itself further as the recognised voice of spatial planning and it should become a “campaigning profession”. It should also audit the effectiveness of current national policy objectives, broaden the scope of spatial planning across all aspects of sustainable development, adopt a new urban agenda for urban expansion, urban centres and suburban regeneration and improve the integration of rural planning with the management of natural systems and natural resources.
29. The RTPI should improve its national and international standing and build both local and global networks to disseminate good practice in spatial planning, to influence governments and international agencies, to strengthen professional inputs on international issues and to engage in joint action with associated professions to direct attention and resources to the challenge of climate change. It should strengthen its commitment to community engagement, particularly through Planning Aid, and its programme of consultation across a wide range of public, private and voluntary partners to improve effective practice in spatial planning. It should also consider conducting specific campaigns to promote spatial planning and to advocate action to address the challenges of climate change.
30. The RTPI should establish its position as the primary professional and academic accreditation body become for a wide range of practitioners across the expanding spectrum of spatial planning. In particular, it should maintain the impetus of the Education Commission to raise the quality of planning education, to encourage the development of new planning courses, to review the current membership structure, to develop a careers advisory service, to support young planners, to extend the scope of

continuing professional development, to review the ethical context of planning practice and to create a programme of external fund raising for RTPI activities.

## **4 Action Plan**

31. The Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” has been developed from the New Vision for Planning. It has been built on a review of the original proposals for realigning the responsibilities for planning and improving the capabilities of planners. It has gone further in developing fresh ideas about the new professionalism that will be needed to tackle climate change and to promote spatial planning in the 21st Century and in identifying the action that the RTPI itself will need to take. The Action Plan is still being developed. It will need to be changed to respond to issues raised in consultation. The consultation process will include a challenge to individuals and groups of spatial planners to identify the actions that they can take themselves, with their employers or with the RTPI. It will have to be aligned to the RTPI Corporate and Business Plans.
32. **A new focus on professional leadership, vision and delivery to promote and guide change** is now required which is unlikely to be provided by governments with their shorter term perspective and their administrative and financial constraints. The RTPI is uniquely placed to provide the renewed leadership that is needed to support civic vision and leadership and to establish effective professional competences, technical capabilities and inclusive processes that can tackle the challenges of the future.
33. The primary role of planning in the 21st Century will be to provide professional leadership to governments, local government, business and communities in responding to the challenges of climate change by identifying and promoting vision at the strategic level and delivery at the operational level. The action to realign the powers and responsibilities of planning and to improve the professional and technical capabilities of planning will all contribute to defining the 21st Century professional.

### **4.1 Realign the responsibilities for planning**

34. The key shift that is needed to address the conflicts and contradictions of sustainable development is to realign the powers and responsibilities of the professionals, governments, community organisations, public sector agencies, private sector developers and operators and local and global companies that are involved in various ways in spatial planning.
35. Action is required to undertake planning at the right scale and to secure a new accountability for central agencies so that decisions are taken at the lowest possible level (the principle of subsidiarity) and so that decisions, resources and action are coordinated centrally and delivered locally. Action is also required to align the agenda of the private sector with the agenda of the public sector so that investment decisions can be effectively integrated to achieve commonly agreed objectives.
36. It will be necessary to strengthen the checks and balances in the voluntary sector by ensuring that its expertise and resources are fully utilised whilst also ensuring that its objectives complement and support the aspirations of local communities. It will also be

important to re-empower the governance structures of local authorities and to re-engage with local communities to ensure that spatial planning embodies sufficient democratic accountability and community support.

37. Professionalism is being revolutionised by the dramatic expansion of freely available information on the internet, the fundamental shifts in the roles of national, regional and local government and the increasing devolution of responsibilities for public sector action to various public and semi-public agencies. Professionals in spatial planning are also finding themselves increasingly involved in working with professionals and practitioners in associated disciplines in economic and social development, transport and infrastructure provision, building design and environmental conservation.
38. Last but not least, planners are becoming increasingly aware of and involved in spatial planning issues at an international level. Action is needed by the RTPI and other professions to develop new approaches to professional responsibility in global issues such as climate change, economic restructuring, social polarity, natural resource conservation and world poverty. This will necessitate working alongside government and business to ensure complementary action on common problems to think globally and act locally. The RTPI's involvement with UN Habitat, the World Urban Forum, the Global Planners Network (GPN), the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON) and the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) is already demonstrating a lead on these issues.

#### **4.2 *Improve the capabilities of planning***

39. An effective response to the increasing complexity of urban and rural development at all levels requires a significant improvement in the capabilities of planning as well as a progressive realignment in the responsibilities for planning. The RTPI has a lead role to identify what capabilities and skills are required, to influence governments and also to support individual planners in developing their own competencies in spatial planning.
40. Action is required across the planning profession to promote research and to manage knowledge on the expanding scope of spatial planning at all levels. Research and knowledge management should aim to support the formulation of shared development strategies that meet the needs and characteristics of particular areas and the priorities and preferences of local authorities, local people and local businesses. This will necessitate action to build the capacity of local communities to engage effectively in spatial planning for their areas and to generate social capital amongst the various public, private and voluntary partners and stakeholders in the area to work together towards commonly agreed aims.
41. Action is also required to advance effective practice in spatial planning to work with associated professions and practitioners by consolidating the on-going shift from "blueprint" regulatory models towards more flexible "outcome focused" or "performance-based" models of spatial planning. It will also be important to continue raising professional standards in spatial planning by developing a long-term educational programme to meet the future needs of a broader profession and its associate practitioners in an internationally globalising society.

42. The RTPI must develop understandings of professional ethics amongst its members and the members of associated professions by ensuring that all voices are heard in debates about ethical issues and that the different value systems of the various partners and stakeholders involved in spatial planning are reconciled within a shared approach to common problems. It will also be important to improve the performance of spatial planning by focussing on the outcomes of planning policies and programmes rather than the inputs and outputs of planning interventions.
43. Finally, the RTPI must mobilise for action by translating this Action Plan into the specific tasks and projects that will need to be incorporated into its Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan to direct the necessary resources to agreed priorities for delivery. This will mean involving the membership in considering the priorities and resources for action between the competing interests of member services and the wider responsibilities of the profession in helping to address international as well as national, regional and local issues. The various organs of the RTPI such as the General Assembly, the Regions and Nations and the Networks and Associations will need to be engaged in the delivery of the Action Plan as well as monitoring the effectiveness of its results.

### ***4.3 The 21st Century professional***

44. The 21st Century professional in planning will need to be multi-disciplinary, globally responsible, socially ethical and, above all, progressively campaigning. Planners should say what is needed to achieve sustainable development and effective responses to climate change without fear or favour. These shifts in professionalism will be the hall-marks of all the professionals who become engaged in the ever-widening scope of spatial planning. Equally, the RTPI will need to lead the change in professionalism by becoming a campaigning profession and by supporting planners in broadening the current process of “culture change” in planning. It will need to approach this leadership role at both the strategic and the operational levels of spatial planning by the public, private and voluntary sectors and by companies, local communities and individual people who become engaged in planning and the development process.
45. The multi-disciplinary professional will need to understand and work with associated professionals and practitioners who are also involved in spatial planning. There is a multiplicity of different values systems in spatial planning not only for planners themselves but for all the other professionals and practitioners involved. We must all consider “how can we live together ? – how can we recognise common destinies, respect each other’s views and work together to secure the survival of civilisations and ecosystems ?” The key challenges for the multi-disciplinary professional in spatial planning will be to provide leadership and to share ownership in solutions to the problems and opportunities of climate change, economic recession and social polarity across the world.
46. The globally responsible professional will need to understand and act upon the complex relationships between the needs and circumstances of their own areas and the wider national and international context of climate change, economic restructuring, social polarity and global survival. But planners are good at managing change, at finding synergy amidst competing demands and at synthesising complex situations into integrated policies and programmes of action. The RTPI is determined to extend its

international agenda to encourage and support the practice of spatial planning across the world to tackle these major changes.

47. The socially ethical professional must remember that the role of the planner is to find the right balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of an area in the wider public interest and also within the wider global interest which now includes the challenge of climate change. The planning profession must continue the current “culture change” in developing spatial planning and place shaping within new development and particularly within existing development. In an ever more dynamic world, planners must also commit themselves to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and help to extend the knowledge and skills of associated professions and practitioners in spatial planning.
48. The progressively campaigning professional must take up the cause of promoting truly sustainable development to help address the challenge of climate change, economic restructuring and social polarity across the world and to help secure global survival. The RTPI must now move away from its current “value-free” stance on planning issues to become a “campaigning profession” that is ready and able to strengthen spatial planning at all levels and advocate a new professionalism that is based on much broader values both nationally and internationally.

#### **4.4 *The role of the RTPI***

49. The RTPI will need to translate the Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” into the action it must take forward itself through its Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan to complement the actions that will be required by professional planners, central and local government, public and voluntary sector agencies and the private sector. It will need to take hard decisions to adapt its organisation and methods to promote spatial planning and engage its members and partners in delivering a programme of action to tackle global economic, social and environmental issues.
50. The RTPI will need to engage the commitment required from its members and partners to deliver practical action to tackle climate change and safeguard the survival of civilisations and ecosystems in developed and developing countries. It must not be afraid to stand up to people who oppose change and it must promote and celebrate progress in national and international sustainable development. It will also need to develop its broad coalition with governments, business and other professions world-wide to deliver the programme of action for international sustainable development. It must demonstrate that it is taking the lead in delivering on climate change, economic adversity and social polarity to earn respect from other partners before exhorting them to take complementary action.
51. The original New Vision for Planning set out the RTPI’s Manifesto for Action which incorporated key objectives for sustainable development to resolve the competing interests of economic development, social inclusion, environmental conservation and integrated transport. It focused on the processes of change within urban and rural communities at the local, national and international scales. It advocated shifts in the roles and responsibilities of central government, central agencies, the private sector, the voluntary sector, local governance and local communities and it emphasised the need to secure professionalism in providing planning advice.

52. In taking this forward to form a new Action Plan, the RTPI must recognise that:
- Current arrangements for planning locally and globally are not capable of taking effective decisions, particularly in linking plan making to plan delivery and further 'statutory' change is needed.
  - Despite assertions about 'evidence-based' policy, our technical resources and capabilities are inadequate, particularly in addressing the urgent challenges presented by climate change.
  - Planning decisions are increasingly challenged by investors in development and by people who become alienated by the effects of development.
53. An effective response to these challenges will require a new focus on **professional leadership, vision and delivery** to promote and guide change which is unlikely to be provided by governments with their shorter term and administrative constraints. The RTPI is uniquely placed in view of its mandate and its experience to provide renewed leadership in setting out the Action Plan that is required to support civic vision and leadership and to create effective professional competences, technical capabilities and inclusive processes to tackle the challenges that now face the 21st century professional.
54. Action is required to **promote international planning**, where we will draw out the major contribution that spatial planning can make to address issues that are essential to the survival of global civilization and ecosystems such as climate change, economic stability and urban and rural poverty reduction. This means that the RTPI will:
- Support the Global Planners Network (GPN) and other groups of spatial planners across the world to develop and share policy and practice.
  - Stand for and advocate the proposition that spatial planning enables communities to develop equitable visions for their sustainable futures in partnership with other professional bodies for planning.
  - Support the identification of the global planning capacity that is necessary to deliver sustainable strategies.
  - Develop and promote a 'tool kit' of policy and practice tools and techniques to support climate change adaptation.
  - Undertake research and work in partnership with governments and research bodies to support these actions.
  - Ensure that the professional learning outcomes of spatial planning education respond to the critical nature of climate change in driving change in policy and practice.
  - Influence planning curricula in tertiary education to this end via the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), Council of Head of Planning Schools (CHOPS) and education partnerships.
  - Develop international benchmarking around training and curriculum development in spatial planning.
  - Influence overseas policy and practice in spatial planning through the accreditation of overseas professional training providers.
  - Generate debate and disseminate advances in policy and practice through the Planning Education and Research Network (PERN).

55. Action is required to **achieve planning at the right scale** where we will advocate decision-making at the appropriate level for each decision which may be at the international, national, regional, subregional or local level. This means that the RTPI will:
- Engage in political and policy dialogue to ensure the best means of delivering spatial planning objectives through plan-making and plan-implementation.
  - Continue to campaign for the development of national planning frameworks, drawing on its United Kingdom Spatial Planning Framework research stream and from experience in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and other jurisdictions.
  - Lead and support the development and integration of locationally specific national policy statements under the Planning Act 2008.
  - Lead and support the development of marine spatial planning.
  - Lead and support the development of integrated regional planning in England.
  - Lead and support the ongoing development of regional and sub-regional partnerships and plans for sustainable futures.
56. Action is required to **secure a new accountability for central agencies** where we will counter the increasing responsibility which is being given to non-elected agencies and private service monopolies that has reinforced the separation of communities from the decision-making process. This means that the RTPI will:
- Advocate formal and informal accountability and engagement mechanisms under which stakeholders can positively and efficiently engage with central and unelected bodies' policies and programmes.
  - Work in partnership and seek to influence the agendas of key government departments and agencies, in UK and devolved administrations.
  - Seek better means of integrating agency programmes to ensure effective community engagement and support and the best balance of community benefit at the regional, sub-regional and local level.
57. Action is required to **align the agenda of the private sector** where we will encourage entities to align their agendas to wider social, environmental and sustainable economic goals as part of their commitments to corporate responsibility. This means that the RTPI will:
- Develop and promote tools and techniques to support private sector planners in practice, delivering climate change adaptation and sustainable development outcomes.
  - Work in partnership with and seek to influence private sector peak bodies pursuing climate change adaptation and sustainable development outcomes (including UK Green Building Council, UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, CBI, BWEA)
58. Action is required to **strengthen checks and balances in the voluntary sector**, where we will ensure that the expertise and values of voluntary sector interest groups are not undermined and particularly seek to strengthen and promote the role and value of Planning Aid. This means that the RTPI will:
- Advocate and support the deployment of positive community engagement in spatial planning.

- Develop and promote tools and techniques to support practice, delivering climate change adaptation and sustainable development outcomes.
  - Work in partnership with and seek to influence broader built environment professional bodies including CIC, ICE, RIBA, RICS, Landscape Institute, IHBC, CIH, CIOEH.
  - Work in partnership with and seek to influence voluntary sector environment and conservation bodies including RSPB, CPRE, National Trust, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth.
  - Ensure that Planning Aid is recognised as a key source of spatial planning advice in the voluntary sector, underpinned by the voluntary effort of spatial planners.
59. Action is required to **re-empower local governance** where we will support policies to strengthen effective spatial planning as a critical element in its accountability and its long-term commitment to and identification with a particular locality. This means that the RTPI will:
- Develop messages emerging from the Effective Practice in Spatial Planning research stream.
  - Develop messages emerging from the Outcome Indicators research stream, supporting local government to identify and communicate the positive benefits of planning.
  - Work in partnership with government improvement and development agencies and local government representative bodies to this end.
  - Work with government departments with responsibility for local government to support the message that spatial planning empowers local governance and is key to achieving the vision of local, sub-regional and regional partnerships (for example through Sustainable Community Strategies, Local and Multi Area Agreements).
  - Advocate and support the development of infrastructure plans and programmes at the local level.
  - Develop a competency framework for spatial planning in local government to assist in staff and service development.
  - Further develop and promote Planning Aid as a key conduit between local government and hard-to-reach communities and individuals to ensure that their views are considered in plan making and development management decision making.
60. Action is required to **re-engage local communities** where we will advocate the importance of planning 'ones own community' as a key means of re-energising local democracy. This means that the RTPI will:
- Work with governments at all tiers and through Planning Aid to advocate meaningful mechanisms of community engagement in plan making and development management decision making.
  - Support Planning Aid and the development of Community Planning practice as a positive means to enable communities to develop a vision for their own future and convey that vision into local government.
  - Better enable Planning Aid to work with communities to develop local understanding of and responses to climate change and to promote sustainable development outcomes.

- Develop local political understandings of the role and potentials of spatial planning through the work of the Politicians in Planning Association (PIPA).
  - Empower citizens to understand and use planning and community engagement in planning as a tool, by developing planning components of civics education, particularly in the 14-19 curriculum, in partnership with governments and secondary education providers.
61. Underpinning all of these actions, action is required to **adapt and improve the skills and ethics of spatial planning** to face the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. It is the RTPI's role as the custodian and developer of initial professional training, life long learning, skills and professional standards for spatial planning to improve the skills and ethics of spatial planning at all spatial scales and in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. This means that the RTPI will:
- Undertake relevant research directly and through partnerships and foster research driven by others to inform the development of planning policy and practice.
  - Ensure the effective integration of skills across different components of governments and local government.
  - Influence the Homes and Communities Academy (formerly ASC), PAS, IDeA, Sector Skills Councils and equivalent bodies throughout the UK to ensure that built environment sector professionals share the skills necessary to respond to climate change and deliver sustainable development.
  - Continuously monitor and develop tertiary education curricula through education partnerships.
  - Continuously monitor and develop the requirements of the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC).
  - Review personal development plans and continuing professional development (CPD) logs to diagnose the need for additional training.
  - Introduce special CPD requirements for training in climate change which is appropriate to individual planners' practice requirements.
  - Provide greater direction on climate change and sustainable development to conference and training providers and the organisers of regional CPD programmes .
  - Provide clearer and simpler access to practice advice and guidance on climate change and sustainable development in partnership with governments and with education, training and skills providers,
  - Promote the use of the RTPI's Planners in the Workplace (PiWP) and Learning Partners initiatives to support workplace learning and skills development through individual employees' and employers' commitments.

## **5 Conclusion**

62. The RTPI's work in refreshing the New Vision for Planning began with a wake-up call to the planning profession to respond to the urgent challenge of climate change, economic slowdown and the increase in social polarity both nationally and internationally. It drew attention to the threat to the survival of civilisations and ecosystems if we continue to use non-renewable natural resources and to generate greenhouse gas emissions at the present rate. It went on to highlight the imperative to adopt truly sustainable development within the next 5 to 7 years to avoid an irreversible move into chaotic and

inherently unmanageable adverse change that would be hard to predict with any certainty.

63. Planners have and can develop the skills and experience to work with associated professions and practitioners to find synergy and synthesis amidst the many complicated issues in sustainable development and to suggest realistic visions and workable solutions for future development. Spatial planning is well-placed to diagnose emerging needs and to help local and global communities to agree responsible visions for the future and deliver the necessary actions to realise them. The challenge of climate change must now direct the practice of spatial planning advocated in the New Vision for Planning.
64. The RTPI must now promote a debate about the “paradigm shift” that is needed to put climate change at the heart of sustainable development. “Planning to Live with Climate Change” advocates “climate change priority” over the conventional approach to planning for sustainable development where there is a challenge to the survival of human civilisations or natural ecosystems. Measures to mitigate climate change should have priority over the usual local balance between economic, social and environmental factors in planning for a particular area where it is essential to achieve national and international targets for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming and threaten survival.
65. The Action Plan for “Planning to Live with Climate Change” advocates a new focus on **professional leadership, vision and delivery** to promote and guide change to respond to the challenge of climate change and the threat to global survival. It is built on a review of the original proposals for realigning the responsibilities for planning and improving the capabilities of planners that were put forward in the New Vision for Planning. It develops fresh ideas about the new professionalism that will be needed to tackle climate change and to promote spatial planning in the 21st Century and it identifies the action that the RTPI itself will need to take to initiate change.

## 6 Get Involved

66. Now is your chance to get involved. If you are an RTPI member or a member of an RTPI network or association, tell us how you would like to see this vision for planning to live with climate change developed further. To find out what the current New Vision says and to contribute to its further development, go to:

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/296/23/5/3>

You will be asked to participate in our **professional challenge**, to shape how planning should respond to climate change to deliver a more sustainable world, by proposing actions that you, your organisation and the RTPI can take.

You can feed back your response in two ways:

Nations, Regions, Networks, Associations and Planning Aid are being asked to consider this document in a process that will feed into a **debate in the RTPI General Assembly** on **22 April 2009**. Encourage the part of the RTPI that you normally

associate with to take part in this debate and please help the process by encouraging your GA representatives to participate in the debate and providing them with your ideas by **14 April 2009**. You can do this directly, or responses can be sent via the RTPI offices at Botolph Lane, London, using the click link on the RTPI website.

- You can also **contribute as an individual** if you wish, also by **14 April 2009**. Responses should be sent via the click link on the RTPI website.
67. Following the General Assembly debate, a Consultation Report will be made available on the website to RTPI members. The Executive Team and the Executive Board will work together to take the issues raised in the consultation process in preparing a final version of the Consultation Report. A Communications Plan will also be prepared to guide the dissemination and follow-up action on Planning to Live with Climate Change.
  68. Views are sought on the key changes to the New Vision that are proposed in the Draft Consultation Report but not on the foundations of the New Vision itself which the Executive Board and the Policy and Practice Committee consider remain sound.
  69. Views are sought on the key ideas in the Draft Consultation Report but not on the language or style of its drafting. Once the content of Planning to Live with Climate Change is settled, the presentation of its messages will be adjusted to the needs of various different audiences.
  70. Views are also sought on specific questions raised in debates by The Policy and Practice Committee on the preparation of the Draft Consultation Report.

### **1. Action Challenges**

- 1.1 What over-arching priorities should be set for the development of action by the RTPI executive across policy, practice and partnerships and education and life-long learning?
- 1.2 What specific priority actions can your nation, chapter, region, association or network undertake?
- 1.3 What RTPI staff, volunteer and financial resources might you need to carry out your actions?
- 1.4 What external partnerships or bids for external resources might you need to carry out your actions?
- 1.5 What changes can you make to your day to day work as a planning professional to help deliver the priorities and objectives in the Draft Consultation Report?

### **2. Evidence**

- 2.1 What additional evidence should be reported on to support Planning to Live with Climate Change and develop members and stakeholders' understanding?
- 2.2 How should this evidence be presented?

### **3. Nations, Regions, Networks and Planning Aid**

- 3.1 What changes will help to ensure that Planning to Live with Climate Change is seen as generally applicable by spatial planners, whilst also specifically applicable within the policy contexts of the nations of the UK and Ireland?
- 3.2 What specific changes are needed to ensure that the document is applicable to Scottish Chapters and English Regions?
- 3.3 What specific changes that could be recommended on the particular specialist expertise or professional affiliations of the Networks and Associations?
- 3.4 What specific changes could be recommended to improve the application of Planning to Live with Climate Change to planners working with communities through Planning Aid?

#### **4. External Audiences**

- 4.1 Which audiences outside the RTPI should be targeted when Planning to Live with Climate Change has been finalised?
- 4.2 . Which particular priority audiences should be specifically targeted?
- 4.3 What key messages should be communicated to these priority audiences?
- 4.4 How should the document and its messages be presented to these priority audiences and what dissemination styles and methods should be used to engage them?