

(Annex 1)

The response by the Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland to the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Inquiry into Facing Up to Climate Change.

Please note that in the main we have responded to these questions in terms of the responses required by planners operating the planning system. We have provided a note of actions by the Institute where appropriate.

General Questions

Do you perceive the changing weather patterns in the UK and globally as affecting you and/or your organisation?

1. *Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework* sets out the challenges for the Built Environment, and we agree with this analysis. Whatever the actual causes of climate change, the need for a different and more resource-conscious approach to land use, energy production and consumption and water management are fundamentals in spatial planning. These objectives should be addressed in line with the sustainable development duty established for the National Planning Framework and for strategic and local development planning in the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 whereby Minister and planning authorities must exercise functions with the objective of contributing to sustainable development.
2. Changing weather patterns may have major implications for future patterns of development across Scotland and for the detailed design of such developments. Development planning will have an important role to play e.g. in avoiding areas of flood risk, landslip and coastal erosion, in the amelioration of heat islands through greater use of green infrastructure, and through closer integration of land use and transport strategies to encourage greater use of public transport, cycling and walking. In addition, energy and heat requirements of new developments will need to be considered and more effort will be required to address issues relating to existing building stock and the retro-fitting of energy saving technologies, and emissions reduction more generally.

What are the impacts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act on the goals and activities of your organisation in terms of investment and exposure to risk?

3. Planning authorities will need to respond to the general duties for public bodies as set out in the Act. Of particular interest to planners are the sections dealing with permitted development rights in domestic properties and microgeneration in non-domestic buildings; the requirement for any Local Development Plan to include policies requiring all developments to include greenhouse gas emission policies; and the requirement for Scottish Ministers to prepare a sustainable land use strategy by 2011, and every five years thereafter, setting out objectives in relation to sustainable land use and proposals and policies for meeting those objectives in a way which will contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to sustainable development. We consider that the land use strategy should provide an integrated approach to urban and rural issues.

4. The Act sets out clear targets and reporting obligations but the real challenge will be in making the changes that enable these targets to be achieved. Meeting these targets by 2020 will require huge levels of political and public support. Carbon reduction projects will require increased prioritisation within current and future capital programmes if the necessary changes are to be achieved, and will require effective co-ordination of legislative, environmental and financial drivers.
5. This new legislation reflects the need for innovative policy responses at different scales. As noted in the *Stern Report* and in *Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* the planning and management of the built environment has a key role to play in addressing climate change issues within a sustainable development context, and there is a clear expectation that spatial planning will play an important part in mitigation and adaptation efforts.

What do you plan to do in response to these factors over the next 5- 10 years?

6. The planning system has both a direct and an indirect role to play in response to these factors. It will influence actions by the public and the development industry through planning applications, development plans and planning guidance material. However, as noted below, land use allocations will not in themselves make a huge impact on emission levels and close co-ordination will be necessary with other stakeholders.
7. Planning policies relating to climate change are set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (SPP). This notes the need for development plans to promote both a locational and site specific pattern of development which reduces the need to travel and encourages active travel and travel by public transport. Development plans should also require the siting, design and layout of all new development to limit likely greenhouse gas emissions. Retro-fitting energy-saving technologies and encouraging public take-up in existing housing stock will also be major concerns.
8. Energy efficient, microgenerating and decentralised renewable energy systems will all be components in the move towards reducing emissions, but the energy-efficient design of buildings will also make a significant contribution to reducing emissions. All have implications for the design of retro-fitted and new buildings and the planning regime.
9. Location, siting, orientation, design, materials and insulation are important factors in the energy efficiency of buildings. Under section 72 of the *Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009* Local Development Plans must require all new buildings to be designed to reduce (by a specified (and rising) proportion) projected greenhouse gas emissions, through the installation and operation of low- and zero-carbon generating technologies.
10. Actions should also include further consideration of combined heat and power schemes, heat recovery systems, the implications for waste disposal strategies, and the development of heat networks and a market for heat. Sufficient energy for electric transport systems and vehicles will require new macro-generating capacity of abundant clean energy. The National Planning Framework should address the location of plant and infrastructure.
11. The shift to a low-carbon economy is a major economic opportunity as well as a necessity and the planning system should play a part in supporting new initiatives to encourage job creation in this area whilst ensuring that the thrust for economic benefit is not counter-productive in terms of the central purpose of protecting the biosphere and the environment it supports.

12. Climate change adaptation tools for policy makers include *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*. Most public sector plans, programmes and strategies which are likely to have significant environmental effects must be subject to an SEA. Recent guidance published by the Scottish Government Environmental Assessment Team (March 2010) sets out background information and provides guidance on the consideration of climate change factors at different stages within the SEA process. SEA, EIA and applications, as appropriate should include a 'carbon audit', set out in a standardised manner clearly understandable to the public.

Action by the RTPI

13. The RTPI launched its *Seven Commitments on Planning to Live with Climate Change* in June 2009. These commitments address:
 - behavioural change;
 - actions to adapt existing places;
 - working towards responsive legislation and policies;
 - improving current practice;
 - celebrating best practice;
 - providing an information base on best practice; and
 - developing climate change education and skills.
14. An up-date of activities under these headings is available on the RTPI website at: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2624/23/5/3>
15. Other recent work by the Institute includes the RTPI in Scotland Annual Conference in 2008 which addressed *Spatial Dimensions of Climate Change*. A short report of this event, with some of the presentations, is available at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2360&ap=1>. In addition, a report of international views on climate change was published for World Town Planning Day 2009 and is available at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3090&ap=1>.
16. New skills and accessible information systems for members will be required. The Institute will work with others (including the Universities and the Improvement Service) to provide training opportunities, and will develop information systems such as the Energy Saving Trust's *Sustainable Energy in the Built Environment: Best Practice for Scottish Planners*. The 2010 revision of this work has now been completed and is available via our website at: <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Scotland-Welcome-page/Business-and-Public-Sector-in-Scotland/Local-Authorities/Planning-policy>
17. The RTPI is addressing its own carbon impacts in heating and lighting, business travel, waste disposal and recycling.

How integrated is your response with other organisations in similar or related fields?

18. The *National Planning Framework* and Strategic and Local Development Plans provide frameworks for the integration and delivery of activities relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation across all sectors of the economy. Close links between the *National Planning Framework*, the *Marine Spatial Plan*, and the *Sustainable Land Use Strategy* should be developed to address fully issues including renewable energy generation, food supply, and water management.

19. At the level of the Strategic Development Plan, the *InterMETREXPlus Greenhouse Gas Regional Inventory Project* by the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan Committee recognised that land use allocations alone will not make a huge impact on emission levels: however, it identified the Strategic Development Plan as having the potential to play a key *ringmaster* role in influencing other stakeholders, and in ensuring that the necessary policy levers are pulled harmoniously in order to produce effective actions.
20. At regional and local levels there is a need for close integration of land use and transport policies and actions. The Scottish Government's SPP states that:
 - authorities should ensure that the local transport strategy and development plan are complementary, and work with Regional Transport Partnerships to ensure consistency between the development plan and regional transport strategy; and
 - the planning system should support a pattern of development which reduces the need to travel, facilitates travel by public transport and freight movement by rail or water, and provides safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling.
21. It is also expected that reductions in emissions will also be achieved through changes in vehicle technology. The planning system must support the installation of infrastructure to support new technologies, including the provision charging points for electric vehicles and the provision of fast broadband.
22. Other areas of needed policy integration include links between water management, waste disposal and planning policies (to encourage the efficient use of water resources and the use of combined heat and power), links with design, building and technology (to use design which encourages energy efficiency), and links between environmental policies and planning (to ensure protection of peat carbon sinks; to support woodland creation; to support local food production; and to protect green networks for species migration; and the wider protection and support of biodiversity).
23. The RTPPI and professional planners work closely with other professional groups linked to architecture, surveying, building control, engineering, landscape architecture and the built and natural environment. We work closely with Scottish Government, SNH, SEPA and SNIFFER, and with the voluntary sector through the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS).

What are the main barriers to change for you and/or your organisation?

24. Key barriers relate to finance, increased understanding, education, advice and training, and the (lack of) co-ordination of activities. The levels of commitment to action by individuals, politicians, developers and communities will depend on an understanding of the imperatives and on 'carrots' as well as 'sticks'. Many of the necessary societal and economic changes lie outside the parameters of the planning system.
25. Members of the planning profession will require additional training, for example in the appropriate installation and use of energy production and saving, water-saving and waste reduction technologies.
26. A recent report *Adapting to Climate Change* by the House of Commons' Environmental Audit Committee following their own Inquiry <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmenvaud/113/113.pdf> concluded that:

- *local authorities need greater levels of support;*
- *planning officers need more resources and skills;*
- *new developments should only be permitted if they are suited to future climates;*
- *there needs to be political commitment to be able to consider adaptation objectives in decision-making; and*
- *the Government must exercise leadership in raising awareness of the issues.*

27. Investors and developers need increased certainty in the planning process. Planners should espouse certainty and confidence in their commitment to and application of planning policy and in their support or otherwise for individual proposals and impact mitigations. Planning procedure and integration with other regulatory regimes should be clear and efficiently applied, through co-ordinated working and guidance to applicants, regulators and the public.