



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

Corporate Strategy 2010 – 2014



Objectives for the RTPI 2010 - 2014

- 1. Empowering Communities**
- 2. Developing and Shaping Planning Policy and Practice**
- 3. Developing Knowledge and Raising Standards**
- 4. Delivering for, and Supporting, Members**
- 5. Prioritising Membership and Attracting new Members**
- 6. Effective Governance**
- 7. Efficient and Effective Business Practices**

The tests that will be applied to all the RTPI's activities

- 1. One Institute**
- 2. International**
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
- 4. Resources**
- 5. Reputation and Leadership**
- 6. Sustainability**
- 7. Robustness**

The RTPI's Mission

This statement has been approved by the RTPI's Executive Board as the basis for a mission statement for the RTPI. This needs to be refined during the period of the Corporate Strategy but it does sum up what the RTPI stands for and what it does.

Everything we do is inspired by our mission to advance the art and science of town and country planning for the benefit of the public.

We champion the role of spatial planning – planning that gives people a real say in shaping the places where they live and work - and ensure that sustainability is at the heart of everything we do.

We achieve this by:

- promoting spatial planning and what it can do for people;
- campaigning for better planning;
- leading, developing and supporting the planning profession;
- championing Institute membership and its value to society;
- setting professional and ethical standards;
- building public awareness, understanding and support for planning with access to the system for everyone;
- influencing the development of planning policy and legislation;
- advancing the theory of spatial planning;
- linking spatial planning theory with practice;
- working in partnership with others.

The Purpose of the 2010-2014 Strategy

The 2010-2014 RTPI Corporate Strategy develops the framework provided for the RTPI and for the activity of planning in the RTPI's *New Vision for Planning* (www.rtpi.org.uk/item/296&ap=1) published in 2001. However, it is designed to address one of the most challenging times in the RTPI's history. It has been prepared at a time when the RTPI continues to experience a significant period of change, when it has achieved some notable successes and when the issues which planning addresses are high on national and local agendas, but when the path set out by the 2001 New Vision is still

some way from being completed and when basic questions about the roles and effectiveness of planning are being discussed. This period of change combined with extreme uncertainty about the contexts within which the Institute will be operating in the first year of this five year Strategy – let alone in later years – has tempered the way that the Strategy has been written.

At the heart of the Corporate Strategy are seven strategic objectives and seven cross-cutting themes against which potential courses of action for the RTPI will be tested. The Strategy is drafted on the basis that it will be assessed and developed as necessary at the end of each year to establish whether these objectives are still relevant and effective and whether the external and internal environments have changed sufficiently to demand a re-think of the Strategy.

The purposes of the RTPI's Corporate Strategy are to:

- set out clear and focussed corporate objectives for the whole of the RTPI, regardless of geographical sphere of influence;
- establish sound guidelines within which decisions on priorities, resource allocation, work streams and other initiatives will be taken;
- set down a strong framework for the processes of business planning within the RTPI, including the business plans for RTPI Scotland, RTPI Cymru and Planning Aid;
- address current issues relating to the external and internal operating environments of the RTPI.

Contexts for the Corporate Strategy

This section sets out the contexts within which the RTPI's Corporate Strategy has been written and, importantly, within which it will operate.

Contexts for Planning

Economy

The economy in the United Kingdom is still in recession at the start of the five year period for the RTPI Corporate Strategy. This is not, however, a short-term phenomenon and its effects and repercussions will continue throughout the period of this Strategy. This has a range of implications for our ability to improve and regenerate urban and rural areas and to address some of the deep seated economic disparities facing the UK. It also has clear implications for the RTPI and its work. Most directly, it has led to a period of budget

restrictions within the RTPI as the Institute's commercial partners suffer from reduced profitability and members re-assess their ability to pay for membership following reduced income or redundancy.

All of these factors have given rise to real challenges for the RTPI – not least in maintaining a level of service for its members - but have also given rise to the necessity for it to show leadership in debates and in actions.

Environment

This Corporate Strategy is also coming into operation at a time when environmental policy is higher up the political agenda than it has ever been. The RTPI and planning practice have a duty to show the dimensions of this issue. For example, the effects of climate change on migration, on the spread and prevalence of disease and on access to basic resources and to the widening gap between those who have – and may squander – such resources and those who do not. UN-HABITAT Director General, Dr Anna Tibaijuka, told the 2007 RTPI Planning Convention that, “concerns in the North about climate change, can be motivated by a desire to keep things the way they are, mean little to people for whom the dystopia has already arrived, and for whom keeping things the way they are holds little appeal.”

The RTPI has an equal duty to demonstrate the central role of planning in addressing these crises. For example, the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change, simply cannot be achieved without strong, inclusive, informed and effective planning. This is already being shown by those within the profession who are exploring ways in which spatial planning may play a much fuller role in addressing this key global issue. There is the need for the RTPI to provide leadership through thought and through example in this debate.

Society

The United Kingdom is struggling with issues of racial and ethnic integration, with a growing gap between richer and poorer, with a disparity in the ways that different groups can access services and with unhealthy lifestyles indicated by, for example, levels of obesity. Globally, the almost unbelievable rapidity of urbanisation calls for improved ways of planning – a need brought into sharp focus by the fact that a much too significant proportion of those moving into urban areas do so into slums.

On this international scale, the practice of planning has had some success in demonstrating the roles that it can and should play in addressing an unequal society but in the UK, spatial policy is too often not considered as part of the solution in this issue.

Government, law, regulation and policy

Governments internationally and in the UK are seeking solutions to significant questions about the relationships between different communities and government; about the optimum level for the governance of different functions; about the nature and effectiveness of community involvement in policy making and decision taking and about the balance between regulatory control and the freedom to act within guidelines. All these major debates also lie at the heart of effective spatial planning.

Contexts for the RTPI

In the five years preceding this Corporate Strategy, the RTPI has continued the period of fundamental change that started with work on the *New Vision for Planning* published in 2001. Since 2005 the RTPI has achieved some fundamental and beneficial changes. Some of these are set out below and they demonstrate that one key context for this Strategy is that it sits within a period of significant – but unfinished – change for the Institute.

Membership

There have been far reaching changes in the routes into **membership** with, for example, the introduction of an Associate Member route into full membership. There has been a significant **increase in membership** numbers – from some 17,000 to over 22,000 - accompanied by a recognition of the need to tackle implications of the **membership demographic and profile**. This has been accompanied by the development of a much wider range of **member services**, such as ‘Planners in the Workplace’ and the opportunity for **member involvement** with the introduction of a directly elected junior vice President and the major growth in Networks and devolved activities.

Education and Skills

The last five years have been marked by radical changes in **education policy** with the introduction of a partnership approach to accreditation, a one-year accredited Masters degree, and the mentored Assessment of Professional Competence (APC), along with the publication of both a learned journal and a Library Series.

Governance and Devolution

There have been fundamental changes in the system of **Governance** with, amongst other things, an Executive Board made up of 15 Trustees and the creation of a General Assembly. In parallel, there has been the **devolution** of activity and degrees of responsibility with the development of RTPI Scotland

and RTPI Cymru and the new English Regional structure, and strengthening support in Ireland.

Activities and Focus

The period has been marked by a very significant development of **Planning Aid**. There has been increased involvement in informing, guiding and **lobbying** the political process across all forms of government in the UK accompanied by increased involvement in the development of the RTPI's own **policy** stances and of an increasingly valued input into the policy development of others.

Resources, Business, viability and Performance Management

A radical shift in the sources of **funding**, with, for example, the proportion of income derived from membership subscriptions falling from 65 per cent in 2000 to 46 per cent in 2008 – whilst income rose from £4 million to just under £8 million in the same period. This has resulted from, and has been matched by, a developing emphasis on **business planning**, performance and risk review and reporting and moves to bring a greater **commercial rigour** to activities, including **outsourcing** some of them.

Position, status, influence, communications

The RTPI has significantly raised the **profile** of both planning and of the Institute in the media. This has resulted from an investment in the professionalism of the RTPI's **communications**, including a new website and a conscious **positioning** of the RTPI within the range of organisations operating in the same field.

The Core drivers of the RTPI

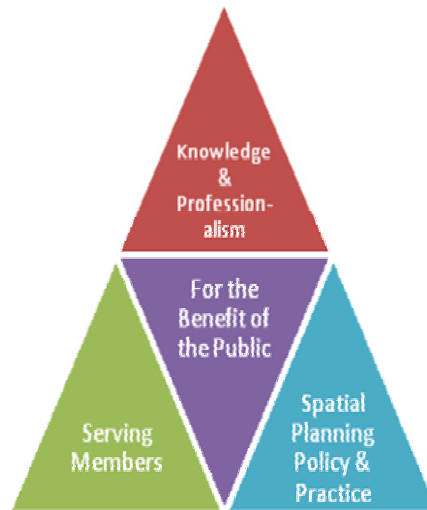
The only object of the RTPI set out in the Royal Charter is *to advance the science and art of planning (including town and country and spatial planning) for the benefit of the public*. Thus, the first core driver for the RTPI is to act for the public benefit. This driver must influence everything that the RTPI does.

There are three other core drivers which direct the work of the RTPI. These are:

- Developing knowledge and setting, raising and enforcing professional standards;
- Serving its members; and

- Supporting, disseminating and developing spatial planning policy and practice.

All actions, proposals, resource costs and initiatives would also be tested to see where they fell within a triangle formed by these core drivers with its overall charitable objective of acting for the benefit of the public at the centre of these. Those actions, proposals, resource costs and initiatives which only address one or two of these drivers will be given the lowest or no priority.



Objectives for the RTPI

Seven objectives have been identified for the RTPI to achieve during the period of this five year strategy. The strategy will be reviewed each year both to see whether these objectives are still correct and the degree to which they have been achieved in the year.

1. Empowering Communities

To fulfil the RTPI's objective of benefitting the public by ensuring that all planning activities engage fully and effectively with the communities they are intended to serve, including acting through initiatives such as Planning Aid, to enable the all those who want to contribute to, and are affected by, planning to play an influential and informed role in shaping their environments. These groups include local communities, the development industry, the voluntary sector and commerce.

2. Developing and Shaping Planning Policy and Practice

To demonstrate the potential and value of spatial planning through supporting and driving forward effective practice and through research and lobbying, and to work with decision makers to develop more effective and practicable policies, practices, institutions and legal frameworks with which to achieve this potential.

3. Developing Knowledge and Raising Standards

To provide a unique contribution to the evidence base of spatial planning, to develop a learning and reflective profession, and to strengthen the recognition of professional membership as a bench mark for knowledge and probity

4. Delivering services for, and supporting, members

To provide a valued service for, and leadership to, RTPI members and to develop further methods of achieving this by listening and responding to member feedback and by valuing and supporting active members' contributions in a more structured and responsive way.

5. Prioritising membership and attracting new members

To make the RTPI an attractive and valued membership organisation in all it does, to seek to attract those in practice who are not members, and to make planning as a career both more widely understood and seen as an exciting career choice

6. Effective Governance

To develop systems and practices of governance that are certain, consistent, transparent, of quality, purposeful, decisive effective and of value.

7. Efficient and Effective Business Practices

To develop and implement business practices and systems that: support sound decision making at the correct level of management; provide timely and relevant management information; that link established priorities to resources; and that develops and rewards staff capabilities.

Testing the RTPI's programmes

All actions, proposals, programmes, resource costs and initiatives in pursuit of any of the Corporate Objectives will need to meet the seven cross-cutting tests set out below. These seven tests are as important as the objectives themselves.

1. One Institute

Making sure that actions strengthen a unified RTPI message across its UK nations, regions, branches and networks and strengthen working across all elements of the RTPI, including Planning Aid.

2. International

Contributing to the RTPI's support for international knowledge development and its international relations.

3. Equality and Diversity

Addressing directly both external issues related to race, ethnicity, social division, and access and internal issues of membership profile and the representative nature of the RTPI.

4. Resources

Judging each action and initiative against its financial, staff, environmental and opportunity costs, the availability of skills and its potential income generation/savings.

5. Reputation and Leadership

Contributing to the RTPI's positive reputation and its role as a sector leader; raising the profile of planning and of the Institute and maximising the reputations and standing of both. Serving to position the RTPI clearly in a competitive market.

6. Sustainability

Looking at the effect on both planning's commitment to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and to the mitigation of and adaption to climate change (external) and on the RTPI's own 'footprint' (internal).

7. Robustness

Robustness in the face of a rapidly changing economic and political situation – including changes in political power nationally and in devolved administrations.

A key part of the RTPI's strategic and business planning process is the identification of the methods and measures to be used in assessing the success, or otherwise, of the RTPI in meeting its objectives. These measures will be identified in detail in the Business Plan which stems from this Corporate Strategy and, as an integral part of this process, the RTPI will

operate a programme management system. Measures will be expressed in terms of:

- Desired outcomes;
- Responsibility for delivery; and
- Performance indicators.

Measuring success

2014, the end date of this Strategic Plan, is the Centenary Year of the RTPI (founded as the Town Planning Institute). A number of events to mark this Centenary and to show the power of good planning are being planned. One of the best ways to celebrate one hundred years of professional planning in the UK is to have an Institute that has built on the zeal of its founders to be radical, trusted, professional and interventionist. The statements below start to spell out how the RTPI will measure the degree of its success over the next five years. These positions may take longer than one five year period to achieve but they are positions to be aspired to.

1. Empowering Communities

Building on the approaches developed through Planning Aid, the RTPI will lead moves to develop a new relationship between local communities and planning practitioners, built on trust, acknowledgement of where skills and knowledge lies and on a rigorously professional approach. Community involvement in making planning policies and taking planning decisions will be seen as the beneficial and constructive process that it is. Involvement will mean that the full range of voices will be heard on any issue and planning will act as, and be seen as, the activity that enables and fosters such involvement.

A key part of this will be ensuring that new legislation and policies not only embed meaningful community engagement in their procedures, but are themselves introduced with the benefit of community input.

The RTPI will work with a wide variety of partners, including those from the development and investment industries, from environmental, housing and other voluntary sector groups, from other professions and from business and enterprise to ensure not only that the value of planning in acting as a solution is recognised but that, far more importantly, the quality of the places that are created serve the needs of those communities. As part of this objective, the RTPI will be supporting planners working with communities at a global scale.

2. Developing and Shaping Planning Policy and Practice

The Institute will have a clear set of policies, priorities and objectives for shaping planning policy, practice and legislation in the UK and internationally developed through its members and positive research. These will enable the Institute to focus its resources on addressing the issues that matter most to its members and secure practical improvements to the contexts in which they work.

Planning as an activity will be seen to be at the heart of governance at all levels in order to manage the physical changes necessary to meet the developing needs of society and economy within environmental capacity and respecting natural and cultural resources and heritage. Planning policy will address the key issues facing the UK and the world, including poverty and inequality, the quality of places, environmental justice and climate change and sustainable and inclusive economic development using a developing range of techniques and knowledge but based on the traditional strengths of planning in engaging in positive strategic thinking.

3. Developing Knowledge and Raising Standards

A working party will have reviewed the report of the Education Commission and identified a programme of work and priorities to refresh and take that thinking forward. This includes a strategic approach to accreditation and the integration of the Life Long Learning strategy into a published paper on the learning and professional development continuum within the profession. A further working party will have reviewed and consulted on a revised Code of Conduct designed to both reflect thinking on new professional ethics and on the values espoused by the RTPI.

4. Delivering services for, and supporting, members

The RTPI will have developed a range of support and other services that meet the stated needs of its members. It will have implemented its Active Member strategy. Greater publicity will be given to the opportunities for members to be involved in the work of the Institute and that members will find their involvement professionally satisfying and developmental. There will be a stated programme of getting member feedback about the overall work of the RTPI, about members' priorities, and about individual initiatives.

5. Prioritising membership and attracting new members

All those who are working in planning will see the value and necessity of belonging to a strong, effective and efficient Institute. The RTPI will have addressed the profile of its membership to make it more representative of the communities that it serves in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and age. The RTPI will have continued to develop its routes into membership to broaden

access for those who are involved in planning – broadly defined – and will have welcomed the involvement of a much larger number of planners from around the world.

The RTPI will have developed its work demonstrating the value and excitement of planning as a career by working in schools and with careers services.

6. Effective Governance

The RTPI recognises that, if the above outcomes are to be achieved, then its Governance and the involvement of its members in governance must be characterised by decision making of the highest quality and consistency, by absolute probity and transparency, by rigorous debate culminating in publicly and privately collective decisions, and by being purposeful and decisive.

The achievement of this standard of governance requires the involvement of people with high-level skills and experience who are not self-serving. The RTPI will have invested in attracting and supporting such people from within and outside the membership.

7. Efficient and Effective Business Practices

The picture of success set out above will not be easy to achieve at any time but is particularly hard in a time of financial constraints and uncertainty. The RTPI recognises that the values at the heart of all its work are best achieved by adopting a business approach to maximise the effective use of increasingly limited resources by investing in those people with the skills and knowledge to drive the achievement of the RTPI's agenda, by having the unquestioned facility to inform prioritisation and decision making within the Institute by providing financial and other information and by assessing risk.