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Board of Trustees

COP26 UPDATE

Report from the Director of Scotland, Ireland and English Regions

FOR NOTING

The BOT is asked to note the COP26 update.

1. Introduction

This paper provides a summary to the BOT on impact and activities undertaken by the Institute in the run up to and during COP26.

2. Background

The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC took place from 1-12 November in Glasgow. The themes of COP26 were:

- Adaptation and resilience
- Energy transition and clean growth
- Nature based solutions
- Accelerating the move to zero-carbon road transport.
- Financing the transition

At its outset COP26 had set the following goals:

Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach

Countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets that align with reaching net zero by the middle of the century. To deliver on these stretching targets, countries will need to:

- accelerate the phase-out of coal
- curtail deforestation
- speed up the switch to electric vehicles
- encourage investment in renewables.

Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats

The climate is already changing and it will continue to change even as we reduce emissions, with devastating effects. At COP26 we need to work together to enable and encourage countries affected by climate change to:

- protect and restore ecosystems

- build defences, warning systems and resilient infrastructure and agriculture to avoid loss of homes, livelihoods and even lives

Mobilise finance

To deliver on our first two goals, developed countries must make good on their promise to mobilise at least \$100bn in climate finance per year by 2020. International financial institutions must play their part and we need work towards unleashing the trillions in private and public sector finance required to secure global net zero.

Work together to deliver

We can only rise to the challenges of the climate crisis by working together. At COP26 we must:

- finalise the Paris Rulebook (the detailed rules that make the Paris Agreement operational)
- accelerate action to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society.

3. RTPI Engagement

As discussed previously by the BOT, the RTPI was keen to engage with COP26 to:

- increase understanding of the role planners and planning can play in tackling climate change internationally and across each of the 4 UK Governments, the Irish Government and other national government internationally
- influence the COP26 discussions and debate, elevating the position of planning in tackling climate action
- increase the profile of planning, planners and the RTPI
- identify and highlight good planning practice to international audience and UK governments

Trustees who attended the summit were the President, Vice President and Climate Change Champion Trustee along with Ryan Walker, Young Planner of the Year and RTPI Scotland Convenor Barbara Cummins. They were supported by the Chief Executive, Director of Scotland, Ireland and English Regions; Director of Wales, Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England; Director of Communications; Head of Policy and Research and RTPI Scotland Policy, Practice and Research Officer Robbie Calvert. Their role was to represent the Institute at events and meetings in and around the summit, entailing:

- monitoring events for any issues or notable announcements or comments
- participating in events by asking questions, putting over relevant points in discussion and promoting planning and the Institute's lines
- networking and highlighting the value of planning and the role of the RTPI to other delegates and people engaged with COP26
- highlighting the Institute's engagement in COP26 by documenting, taking photographs (including selfies and photos with others) that can be used in social media.
- supporting the delivery of the RTPI's fringe event

Engagement included:

- The President had access to the Blue Zone and attended various meetings, events over that period.
- We attended around 40 events taking place in the Green Zone.

- Discussions took place with a number of key stakeholders including Maimunah Sharif, Executive Director of UNHABITAT; Kelley Moore, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Association of Planners; Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales; Julie Hirigoyen, Chief Executive, UKGBC; Fiona Simpson, Chief Planner, Scottish Government; Anna McMorrough MP; Xavier Brise, CEO, Sustrans; Ojay McDonald, ATCM; Prof Greg Clark; Sarah Shaw, Head of Planning, Glasgow City Council; and Climate Northern Ireland

4. RTPI Events and Publications

Some highlights include:

RTPI Event at the COP26 Fringe

A COP26 fringe event was held on “The Race to Zero: Plan the World We Need”. This hybrid face-to-face and webcast event was organised by RTPI in partnership with the Global Planners Network, Commonwealth Association of Planners and ISOCARP. Speakers in the room included:

- Maimunah Sharif, Executive Director of UNHABITAT
- The President
- Kelley Moore, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Association of Planners
- Martina Juvara, ISOCARP

Video presentations were given by Leo Asuncion, President, American Planning Association; Martin Lewis, CEO, The South African Council for Planners; Dan Huang, President, Canadian Institute of Planners; and Darren Crombie, National President, Planning Instituted Australia.

Urban Planning after Covid-19

This research paper was published in the run up to COP26 and amplified at the RTPI COP26 event. It examines how planning can contribute to the calls for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the current health and economic crisis. It reviews the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic across the themes of housing, urban production and consumption and travel in global cities and reflects on their implications for fostering a just, inclusive and sustainable recovery.

UKGBC Virtual Pavilion

RTPI was a delivery partner in the UK Green Building Council virtual pavilion which was live through the summit. This was curated by a coalition of 40+ delivery partner organisations across the built environment sector, to give the sector a strong voice at COP26 and had an exhibition, installations and events series. Two of the UKGBC Virtual Pavilion event had RTPI input:

- We curated the event on UK Green Building Council virtual pavilion event - “How do we build holistic net-zero and resilient places of the future?” which the Chief Executive chaired, and the President presented to.
- Simon Kennedy represented young planners on the event on “Empowering young people to become the climate-aware built environment professionals of the future: What do we need to do now?”

72nd World Town Planning Day Joint Statement

The RTPI and the Global Planners Network published a joint statement “A Plurality of Voices for Effectively Planning Our Way Out of the Climate Crisis during the summit which calls for urgent action

to timely turn the tide of a rapidly unfolding climate crisis compounded by biodiversity-loss and increasing social inequality.

Communications

A COP26 was put on the RTPI website to highlight any RTPI activities around COP26 and to act as a 'library' of any publications, events or media channels that have been recorded as part of our work on COP26. It includes 8 blogs that were published during the summit.

Social media channels such as Twitter and LinkedIn across the Institute highlighted meetings, events and publications throughout the summit.

5. Next Steps

At the time of writing the content of any agreement approved at COP26 was not certain. However once this has been published there will be a need to reflect on the implications it has for planning and for the Institute and then to agree any actions that may need to be taken.

6. Recommendation

The BOT is asked to note the COP26 update.

7. Health and safety implications

Risk assessments were undertaken for the engagement with the COP26 summit and for the RTPI event.

8. Equality and diversity implications

The activities on COP26 provided opportunities to promote the ambitions of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy and to stimulate debate and discussion around the issues faced by minority groups. In particular, the proposed fringe event will be a collaboration of partners from the Global North and the Global South enabled diversity and inclusivity to be a golden thread throughout our activities.

9. Financial implications

There is an allocated budget for COP26 activities.

10. Communications Implications

See report.

11. Governance and Compliance implications

There is no immediate governance, data protection or legal implications of the proposals contained in the report.

12. Jurisdiction and devolution implications

This report covers all RTPI jurisdictions across the UK and Ireland. It also touches on the Institute's international activities.

13. Corporate Strategy - Climate action

The RTPI's COP26 activities are aimed at supported climate change and zero carbon ambitions and urging others to do tis also. The Climate action plan was taken into consideration when making decisions around travel to and from, and within, the summit.

14. Corporate Strategy - GROWPLAN (Corporate Strategy)

The COP26 activity supported Corporate Strategy ambitions in raising the profile of planning and the Institute in an international setting.

15. Corporate Strategy - Digital Transformation

The actions aim to make best use of technology, especially in webcasting the RTPI COP26 event.