

PLANNING Horizons

Why planners need to be at the forefront of responses to climate change and demographic change

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) was established 100 years ago. In one sense, we face many of the same challenges now as we did a century ago – the need for quality affordable housing, improved public health, and how to balance economic development with the protection of the environment.

In other respects, we are confronted by a wholly new set of challenges, such as climate change, demographic shifts (including an ageing society), the rise of 'lifestyle diseases', and increasing competition and inequality in a globalised world.

The RTPI's *Planning Horizons* papers, published during the Institute's Centenary Year in 2014, take a long-term as well as global view of planning and the contribution it can make to some of the major challenges we face in the twenty-first century.

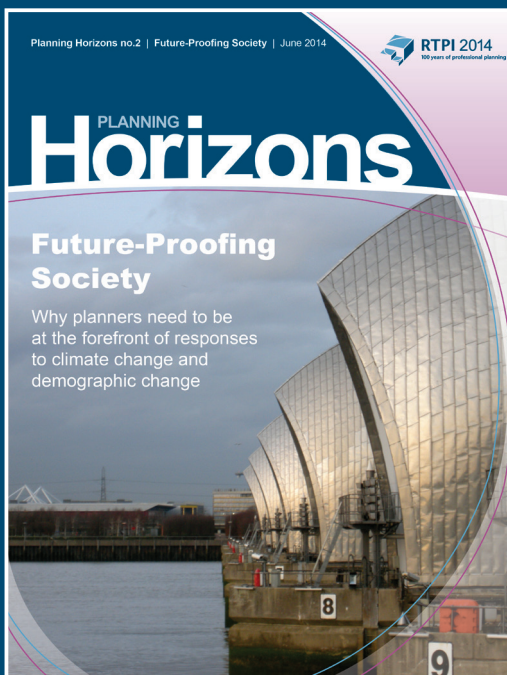
Two twenty-first century challenges that threaten our future: climate change and demographic change

The challenges of climate change and demographic change are so significant and long-term that they will require widespread and fundamental changes in the way our societies are organised and managed. On its own, planning can't resolve these challenges, but their scale and scope emphasises why urban and rural planning is such a crucial part of the solution.



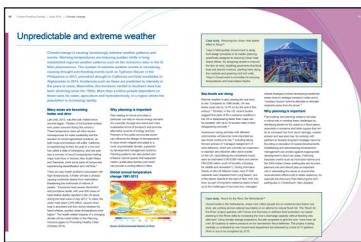
How planners are responding to these challenges suggests ways that policy- and decision-makers more broadly can make our societies more resilient – effectively to help 'future-proof' our societies for the twenty-first century.

This second paper in the *Planning Horizons* series focusses on elements of climate change and demographic change and considers the consequences for planning systems and planners around the world. It presents suggestions on how planning can help and why it is crucial in how our societies respond to these challenges.



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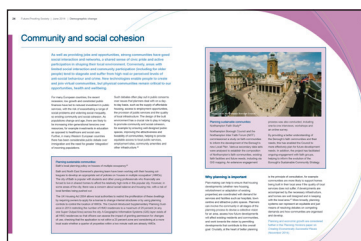
Future-Proofing Society focuses on three aspects of climate change – extreme weather, water provision and energy supply – and three aspects of demographic change – population growth, ageing populations and social cohesion.



- Increasingly extreme weather patterns, higher temperatures and rising sea levels are impacting upon water availability, energy supplies as well as where we should build homes.



- To lessen the scale of future challenges, we need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by reducing our consumption and shifting to renewable sources, whilst ensuring sufficient energy supply for a growing population.



- A growing population coupled with a shift to smaller households is intensifying the need for homes in many cities, while other cities face declining populations. Changing age structures and widening social inequality creates challenges for social cohesion.

Thinking and acting spatially

How we respond to these challenges will be critical to the sustainability and survival of many communities and ecosystems. This will require much greater attention to how we organise and use land, how we transport ourselves, how we live and work in communities, how we generate and distribute energy, and how we use water – all in a coherent and coordinated way.

In many ways this returns urban and rural planning – both in the sense of regulating development but also creating and implementing strategies for sustainable development – to its traditional purposes and values, to create better living environments for all people.

The full report can be downloaded from the RTPI website at: www.rtpi.org.uk/planninghorizons

The *Planning Horizons* series

The five RTPI *Planning Horizons* papers are:

Thinking Spatially (June 2014)

Future-Proofing Society (June 2014)

Promoting Healthy Cities (October 2014)

Creating Economically Successful Places (November 2014)

Making Better Decisions for Places (November 2014)

About the RTPI

With 23,000 members worldwide working in the public, private, charitable and educational sectors, the RTPI is the largest professional institute for professional planners in Europe.