RTPI
Royal Town Planning Institute

RTPI RESEARCH PROGRAMME

2019 - 2021

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Foreword

As a professional membership body, a charity and a learned institute, the RTPI has a unique opportunity and responsibility to promote the research needs of spatial planning in the UK, Ireland and globally.

For many years, not only have we added to the evidence base through in-house research and policy analysis, but we have also funded and supported targeted research projects of relevance to practitioners and policymakers.

It is clear that town planning today is as crucial to society as it has ever been, and this is reflected in the ambitious scope of our latest research programme covering the next three years.

In shaping the programme, we spoke to our members and stakeholders to ensure we address perennial and new planning issues, including the planning profession itself, reflecting the Institute's commitment to ensuring a diverse pipeline of planners.

Our research will also look into the resourcing of public sector planning, as we work to build a case for the value of planning and to restore its place at the top of the corporate hierarchy of local authorities.

I am delighted that, through this research, the RTPI will continue to play a vital role in advancing understanding of many of the critical problems we face as a society and how planning can help to mitigate and solve them.

Victoria Hills, MRTPI, FICE

Chief Executive of the Royal Town Planning Institute

Cover image: Susan Yin

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1. Introduction

From January 2017 to September 2018 the RTPI led an extensive engagement exercise on the future of its research programme. The goal was to inform our research strategy; to define our aims and principles of research along with the focus of our future projects. Another goal was to design a new research framework for the planning profession which can be used by practitioners, research institutes, academics, and funding bodies to engage in (or prioritise) research activities in the UK and abroad.

This document sets out our key research priorities for the period 2019 – 2021. In doing so, it defines our aims and principles of research and provides a list of topics and thematic areas currently critically relevant to planning research. To avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to make sure important questions are addressed, research coordination is important. To that end, we hope that our list of topics and thematic areas can serve as a framework (or agenda) to other institutions involved in planning research.

In investigating the research needs of our members and other stakeholders we found that planners in general place a high value on robust evidence. However, a number of crucial issues have emerged, such as a perceived lack of co-ordination between different types of planning research, poor dissemination of outputs, and a lack of studies dedicated to some of the most pressing current challenges faced by planners and the public at large.

Our research programme seeks to address these issues. It also seeks to think about the role of the RTPI in the context of fast-changing research and policy environments. As an institute in charge of delivering, commissioning and linking different types of planning research together, we are in a key position to help address both perennial and new planning challenges. Hence, a final aim here is to define our Ethos and to articulate our vision for the next three years.

The rest of this document is structured as follows – after a brief description of the background underpinning our new research programme and a short overview, we set out our six aims of research. We then proceed to introducing the three main principles guiding our research and the twenty-one criteria that we have developed to assess future projects.

Based on our 2017 Membership survey and our 2018 Consultation we then propose a list of 10 topics and 10 key research areas which, we believe, will be critical to planning research in the next three years. Following from this, we discuss our key research priorities for 2019 and we introduce our new research agenda. Finally, the document considers the role of the RTPI within the current research environment and looks at various ways of promoting and delivering our research programme.

By way of ending this introduction, we would like to warmly thank all our members and all the external stakeholders who dedicated time to answer our survey and those who participated in our consultation. We are also very grateful to the RTPI Nations and the English Regions for coordinating our engagement exercise. Finally, the Policy, Practice, Research and International Team would like to extend its gratitude to the Policy, Practice and Research Committee, the Board of Trustees, and ultimately all RTPI members for enabling fascinating research activities to take place at the Institute.

The unprecedented levels of participation and enthusiasm generated by our engagement exercise on the future of planning research demonstrate that planners value not only the production of sound evidence, but that they are also eager to tackle the most pressing challenges of our time in innovative and sometimes provocative ways – a sign that planning as a profession has not lost sight of its vocation.

Professor Aude Bicquelet-Lock

Deputy Head of Policy and Research

2. Background and overview

2.1. Our engagement exercise

Over the last 21 months, RTPI members and other key stakeholders involved in (or affected by) planning research were asked to comment upon the aims, principles and potential future topics to be investigated or commissioned by the institute (either single-handedly or in partnership with other institutions). Members and stakeholders were invited to express their views via various channels of participation, stated below:

- Our 2017 Membership Survey, which included a question on the top five areas members would like to see the RTPI working in.

- Focus groups with members across RTPI regions and nations (14 groups in total, involving over a hundred members).

- Table discussions at the RTPI's General Assembly in January 2018.

- Interviews with 22 key RTPI external stakeholders.

- Discussions with the Membership & Ethics and Education & Lifelong Learning committees. A total of 25 members.

- Discussions with all relevant RTPI departments.

- Online and offline consultation with RTPI Learning Partners, RTPI accredited Planning Schools, Independent Consultants' Network, large consultancies, Planning Aid Coordinators, International Committee representatives, and members who could not attend focus groups involving direct participation from more than 50 additional members.

The results of our 2017 Membership survey and of our 2018 Consultation have been published earlier in two separate documents[1]. A high level of consistency between respondents and consultees' responses is apparent across the two sources, for instance, participants tended to cite similar priority research areas (e.g. Housing, Brexit, Climate change). Results also reflect a broad spread of opinions regarding possible research endeavours, but no absolute consensus regarding the ranking of priorities emerged from our engagement exercise.

2.2. Developing recommendations

The recommendations which have informed our research programme are aligned with our aims and principles of research and with the development of our new corporate strategy. Our lists of future topics of research (that is – our 10 topics, our 10 key research areas and the research projects we have decided to carry forward in 2019) have been selected with the aim to strike a balance between subjects currently high on the political agenda (e.g. responding to declining high streets) and long-standing planning issues (e.g. green belts).

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[1] A full analysis of our 2018 research consultation can be found in the RTPI Research paper – Research Programme 2019-21: Key findings and stakeholder consultation (October 2018).

Our future research topics have also been selected to strike a balance between advancing knowledge about *planning* and advancing knowledge about *planners* (see, for instance, our future research on the 'number of planners'). In line with our third key principle of research – fostering Representativeness and Inclusiveness – the selection process among different topics has been carried out in collaboration with the RTPI Nations and the English regions.

Our research strategy will aim to balance the need to be both pro-active and re-active. This means that we will try to follow our research agenda while keeping spare capacity to quickly respond to key emerging policy issues and challenges. Finally, our research efforts will explore the effectiveness of current policies while trying to provide an evidence base for influencing new policy directions.

2.3. Continuity and novelty

Key research topics identified under our previous programme are still critically relevant to advancing and deepening knowledge on significant planning issues. This is particularly the case with our *Better Planning* agenda which seeks to demonstrate how planning can successfully address major social, economic and environmental challenges. Also still relevant to important policy debates is our *Value of Planning* agenda – which aims to promote a more considered debate on the relationship between planning and economic growth.

Research activities under those two agendas will continue under the new research programme. Hence, issues around Housing, Smart cities-regions (now renamed 'Spatial governance and infrastructure planning') and Climate Change will be prioritised in the next three years.

In parallel with the previous research programme, the 2019-21 RTPI research programme introduces some new elements intended to address gaps where planning research is currently underdeveloped and where various types of collaboration can either be newly established or reinforced. Detailed below are the new aspects of the 2019-21 Research programme;

2.4. New in the 2019-21 research programme:

A focus on planning and on *planners*

A new feature of our research programme is a renewed focus on *planners*. We will explore, for instance, issues pertaining to the future of the profession by working in close collaboration with our Education team, RTPI Learning Partners, and accredited planning schools.

A unified approach to research

One of the key aims of our research (detailed in the following section) will be to make planning research accessible to a wider audience and to produce research outputs tailored for various 'planners' (i.e. practitioners, policymakers and academics)[2].

An extended scope of research

Our new research programme will make a distinct effort to integrate the RTPI Nations and Regions

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[2] Our willingness to adopt a 'unified approach to research' is also set out in our forthcoming position paper: Clearing a path between Planners, planning policy and Academics – Perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of Planning Research.

in our research projects. We will also aim to relate our research endeavours to the international research agenda and to the UN sustainable development goals.

Recurring pieces of research on 'planning discourses'

This research programme introduces research on discourses around planning – more precisely, political discourses and social media analysis of public perception of planning – which will be repeated yearly.

A 'New Research Agenda'

Finally, our new research programme introduces a new research agenda (detailed further in section 7). Running alongside Better Planning and the Value of Planning this new research agenda will aim to address global Growth, Security, Health and Governance challenges and will seek to offer practical solutions from a planning perspective. This research agenda will be structured around three main streams of research:

A. Resilience and Adaptation
B. Health and Inclusive Planning
C. New Governance Models and Regulatory Frameworks

2.5. Overview of the 2019-2012 Research Programme

1. Continuity with previous research programme	2. New research agenda	3. Other research	4. Recurring research
Better Planning - Housing affordability - Smart City-Regions - Climate Change **+ *Value of Planning***	- Resilience and adaptation - Health and inclusive planning - New governance models and regulatory frameworks **+ *Value of Planners*** Planning as a profession (including education and future planners)	Topics and themes identified in 2017 and 2018 consultation	Planning discourses (political and social media analysis)

3. Aims of research

The section below sets out the aims of our research. It outlines the overall purposes of our projects along with our aspirations and expectations regarding the long-term outcomes of our research. The rationale for each aim is explained. Each aim is equally important to the delivery of our research programme.

1

Advancing, influencing and deepening knowledge on planning issues

The overarching purpose of our research programme is to advance knowledge across various planning activities in order to ensure that policymakers and practitioners, at all levels, have access to the research they need. Therefore, our programme has a particular focus on evidence which can inform a wide variety of stakeholders involved in (or affected by) planning research in a robust, thorough and innovative way.

2

Promoting and disseminating RTPI research as widely as possible

To reach the general public and to develop our reputation, we were encouraged by our members and consultees to make sure our research is not merely interesting but has impact. This means focusing on originality, clear analysis, recommendations and policy asks. Part of this includes reaching out to our members, but also to the press, policymakers and to the wider built environment sector. Particular strategies for improving research impact that emerged from our engagement exercise and that we are particularly keen to implement include (1) producing a set of strong position papers based on clear analysis and (2) producing tailor-made outputs for different audiences.

3

Informing campaigning activities

Planning research presents many opportunities to address key contemporary policy challenges around, for instance, inequality and social justice. When possible, we were encouraged by our members and other consultees to campaign and actively lobby on critical planning recommendations which can explicitly enhance life-quality and well-being of the general public. Decisions to engage in campaigning activities in light of our research outcomes will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

4

Championing new technologies and horizon scanning

A frequent argument expressed during our engagement exercise was the need for research to take the 'long view' and to look to the future of planning. The impact of new technologies (e.g. social media, big data and artificial intelligence) was also raised as a critical factor cutting across all research areas. Hence, an important aim of our 2019-2021 research programme will be to position the RTPI at the forefront of original — technologically and methodologically — innovative research.

5 Promoting UN Sustainable Development Goals

Some of our members and consultees rightly pointed out that planning is not a specific issue to the UK and that the UK-system is part of a wider system of urban governance. We were strongly encouraged to continue our efforts to make our research projects internationally relevant. In order to keep positioning the RTPI as a leader in international planning research, we will aim to continue our efforts to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the New Urban Agenda (see also our research principles below).
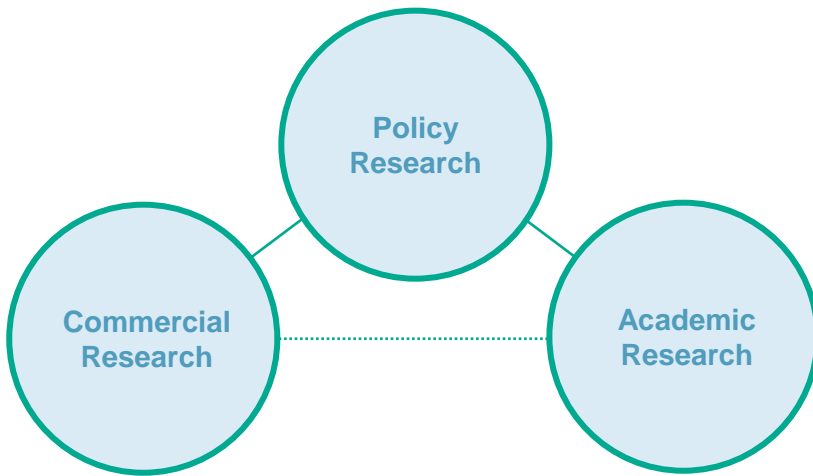
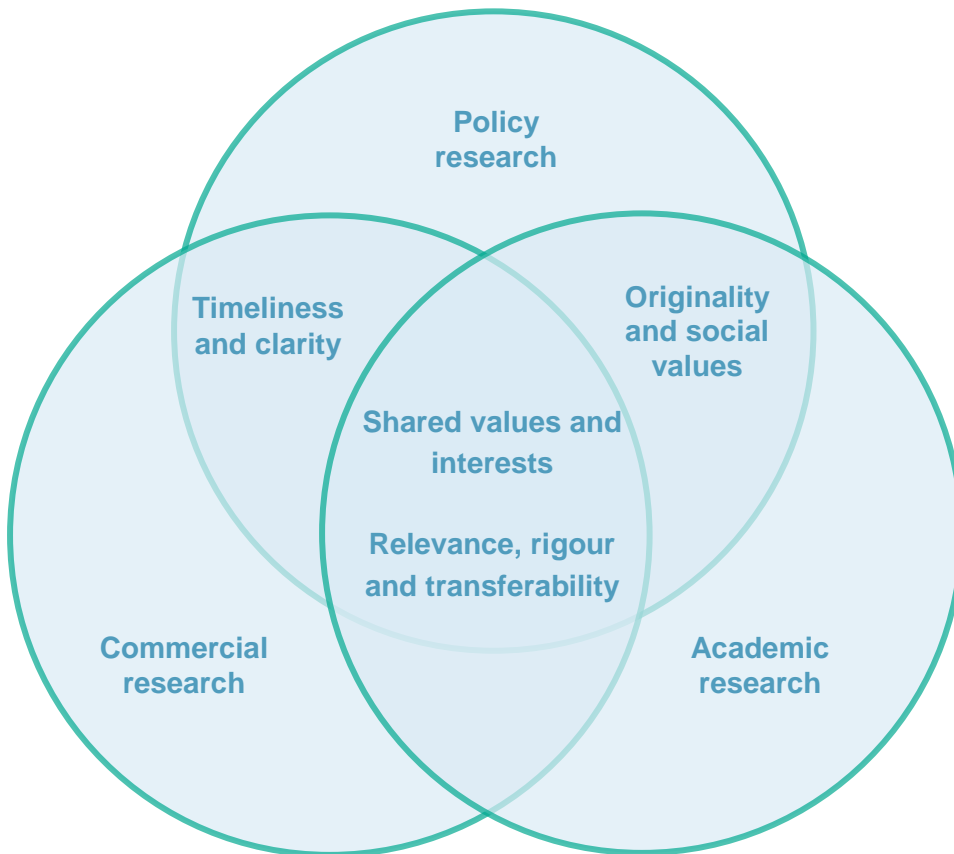## **6** Developing a unified approach to research

The last objective of our 2019-21 RTPI research programme is to address the needs of the various stakeholders involved in advancing knowledge or involved in the design and implementation of planning research. Supporting the view that our research ought to speak to a variety of audiences and that planning research in general ought to be both inclusive and relevant to multiple actors, we will aim to strengthen collaboration between planning professionals, academics and policy makers.

To illustrate this point, Figure 1 below shows how different categories of planning research are currently conceived. Figure 2 demonstrates how they ought to be conceived and how they are being envisaged in our research programme.

Figure 1: Current conception of planning research

Figure 2: Planning research - shared values and interests

4. Principles of research

Our Principles of Research define the way we engage with research activities. They are designed to encapsulate our values – what we consider as 'good practice' – and to act as a guide for future activities. Comments from members and other consultees showed strong support for Relevance, Rigour and Representativeness as our core research principles. Support for these principles was accompanied by suggestions to either nuance the definition or extend the scope of the principles. Taking these suggestions into account, we suggest that – where possible – research projects to be taken forward during the next three-year period fulfil the following criteria:

1 Addressing relevant research questions

Studies carried out, commissioned or supported by the RTPI should aim to tackle pressing planning issues, high on the political agenda. They should also aim to demonstrate how they could potentially improve the political context for planning and how they contribute to 'long term thinking' about society. They should strive to have an outcome in better practice, that is, to relate to professional development and, where possible, draw on the expertise of practitioners that make up the RTPI membership. Where applicable, they should be guided by an explicit reference to social goals (such as justice and fairness) and demonstrate how they relate to the international policy and research agendas. Finally, studies carried out, commissioned or supported by the RTPI should result in clear and accessible reports and other outputs.

2 Promoting original and rigorous research

As a learned society and Institute in charge of developing the knowledge base of professionals and establishing an intellectual basis for planning, the RTPI is committed to use, produce and promote rigorous evidence. Hence, research projects, carried out, commissioned or supported by the RTPI should be conducted in an ethical way. They should promote robustness and trustworthiness at all stages of the research cycle and provide a strong evidence base to inform recommendations on major policy issues. They should contribute, in an original way, to the study of an under-researched topic (unlikely to be studied in a similar way somewhere else).

3 Fostering representativeness and inclusiveness

We strongly support a 'unified approach' to research and encourage representation and participation of all the Nations and English regions in our research activities. Hence, research projects should aim to be relevant to different regions and Nations and take into account regional and national variation. Where applicable, they should acknowledge regional and national disparities when drawing up policy recommendations and speak with a common voice on cross-border issues. They should also promote synergies within research activities (i.e. encourage collaboration between research conducted by local planning schools and supported by regions and/or Planning Aid).

Research activities should also aim to encompass and/or speak to a variety of 'planners' (including planning professionals, policy-makers and academics), consider gender as well as ethnic diversity, and engage with a variety of social groups. When possible, they should

consider both urban and rural areas and take into account both public and private sectors.

Principles checklist

Below is a 'long summary' of our principles of research and a framework (or guide) for future research activities. Although the decision to carry out (or not) a particular piece of research is a qualitative rather than a 'tick box' exercise, research commissioned or undertaken 'in house' either by the PPRI team and/or by the Nations and the English regions will carefully consider the following questions:

Relevance: will the project….

1. Promote planning?

2. Improve the political context for planning?

3. Have an outcome in better practice?

4. Contribute to 'long term thinking' about society?

5. Relate to the international policy and research planning agendas (esp. the New Urban agenda and the SDGs)

6. Relate to the wider policy objectives of the RTPI and influence policy recommendations?

7. Relate to other activities carried out by other departments, teams, and committees at the RTPI?

8. Be guided by an explicit reference to social goals (such as justice and fairness)?

9. Result in clear and accessible reports and other outputs?

Rigour and originality: will the project….

10. Contribute, in an original way, to the study of an under-researched topic about/related to Planning?

11. Be conducted in an ethical way?

12. Promote robustness and trustworthiness at all stages of the research cycle?

13. Provide a strong evidence base to inform recommendations and the RTPI position on major policy issues?

14. Deliver value for money

Representativeness and inclusiveness: will the project….

15. Be relevant to a range of different regions and take into account regional variations?

16. Acknowledge regional disparities when drawing up policy issues and speak with a common voice on cross-border issues?

17. Speak to a variety of planners (including planning professionals, policy-makers and academics)?

18. Consider both urban and rural areas?

19. Consider gender and ethnic diversity?

20. Engage with a variety of social groups?

21. Take into account both public and private sectors?

5. Content of research

Previous sections have described how our research programme was developed along with our main research objectives and our core values or 'principles'. This section presents the future content of our research programme. In light of feedback from the 2018 Consultation and the 2017 Membership Survey, we have identified 10 broad areas of research and various different focuses for each of them. The following summarises key findings and sets out potential research avenues for the next three-year period.

HOUSING	Housing is a very broad topic with many dimensions relating to planning. Future research may have more than one strand related to different elements of housing. The following are some of the main issues identified by members which could provide the basis for future research: • Affordability – i.e. how can planning help meet affordable housing needs? • Local authority housebuilding – i.e. what is the role of planning in promoting public sector-led housebuilding and land assembly? **Other possible topics** of research include: housing and land supply; under-occupation; design; permitted development; development finance and viability; diversity of housebuilders; community-led housing; environmental standards; land market reform and land value capture; location of development.

'Brexit' was the number one topic members chose for RTPI to focus on in the 2017 membership survey, with 30% including it in their top five issues. This was considered to be a particularly large issue by members in Northern Ireland, both in the survey and in the focus groups. It was also cited as a major issue in a range of other discussions. **Possible future avenues for research** on Brexit include: exploring the impact of Brexit on planning; EU withdrawal and the future of environmental regulations.	**EU WITHDRAWAL & THE FUTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION**

CLIMATE CHANGE & MITIGATION	Climate change was also a priority in the previous work programme, and came out as the 5th most important issue to members in the 2017 survey, with 20% citing it. **Possible future avenues for research** on climate change include: • Resilience and disaster planning – i.e. how to prepare and respond to climate change and other hazards. • Measuring impact of climate change policy – i.e. developing ways of evaluating how national and local policies have worked. • Issues around coastal planning (i.e. exploring the role of planning and impact on recreation, environmental protection, flood defences).

Devolution was the 9th most important issue for members in the 2017 survey (17%), whilst strategic planning was cited by 13%, and regional planning by 6%. Issues under this broad category also came up in most of the member and stakeholder discussions.

Possible future avenues for research on spatial governance and infrastructure planning include: issues around cross-council cooperation (e.g. duty to cooperate, cross-boundary working groups); the impact of devolution; regional planning and integration of spatial planning with national and regional priorities; data infrastructure; strategic and long-term thinking; infrastructure planning and delivery; investment and funding for development; transport planning; integrated housing and transport planning; the future of mobility.

SPATIAL GOVERNANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

HEALTH, INCLUSIVE PLANNING & AGEING

Health was cited as a top issue by 4% of members in the survey. In our consultation, discussions of planning for health were sometimes closely related to discussions of planning for an ageing population, which was cited as a top issue by 11% of members in 2017, and inclusive planning which was cited by 2%.

Possible future avenues for research on health, include: upstream interventions for health and wellbeing (viz. how to link health and planning programmes); evaluating the impacts of policy around health (viz. a multi-dimensional evaluation of planning); evaluating dementia-friendliness of new communities and policy; exploring the impacts of ageing population; exploring the needs of children in the built environment and how to engage children in planning.

Given the context of years of cuts to planning departments and deregulation, there is widespread interest in the future of planning in the public sector. Resourcing of public sector planning was raised as a top issue by 18% of members in the 2017 survey. Local plan making was raised by 15%. There was also significant interest in the operation of planning authorities, with 15% citing local plan-making as a top issue, 10% citing planning conditions and 11% citing local authority planning performance. All of this was also widely reflected in discussions throughout the consultation.

Possible future research projects on planning and the public sector include:

- Leadership – i.e. what is good leadership in public sector planning? How can it be promoted? Are planners at the top table in local authorities? What kind of local authorities have planners at the top table?

- Planning fees – i.e. exploring what the 20% fee increase in England is being spent on.

- Other issues around capacity and skills in the public sector; public sector planning abroad; local plan making; planning performance; collaboration across department; planning performance; politics and politicians in planning; institutional learning and memory.

PLANNING & THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE & THIRD SECTOR

PLANNING EDUCATION & THE PLANNING PROFESSION

Issues around planning education and the planning profession came up in a wide range of discussions. The profession was also a priority for the 2011 and 2014 research strategies.

Specific areas of research include:

- Planning careers – understanding why people enter or exit pathways into planning at various stages (e.g. school, undergraduate, masters, after graduation, later career). What attracts and alienates potential planners?

- The future of the planning profession – changing ways and patterns of working, the influence of technology, new specialisms etc.

Others– the values and ethics of the planning profession; exploring the skills needed for modern planning; assessing the effectiveness of existing CPD.

URBAN PLANNING & THE FUTURE OF CITIES

Members cited several issues relating to urban planning in the survey and in the consultation, including rapid urbanisation, regeneration, town centres and the future of retail.

Specific areas for possible research include:

- Town centres – how can they adapt to a changing economy?

Others - regeneration (especially, issues around peripheral towns); declining communities; spatial disparities; planning post-Grenfell; growth of cities and issues around informal development: planning for university campuses in different areas (e.g. cities, market towns).

RURAL PLANNING

Rural planning was raised at a range of the focus groups, in particular in the North East, South West, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Specific future research areas in relation to rural planning could include:

- Rural economic issues – e.g. poverty, exclusion, inequality, and accessibility, and what has and has not worked to improve these.

- Developing rural strategies – e.g. exploring joined up thinking for the countryside

Others - lifelong housing in rural areas (i.e. considering inter-generational dependency); the impact of planning on rural communities (e.g. how planning helps or hinders local events, traditions, and sustainable development); the future of farming: how can planning stop damaging land uses; how planning can support farming diversification (e.g. tourism and social enterprise).

Exploring ways to involve local communities in planning was raised in a number of discussions, and 12% of members who responded to the 2017 Membership Survey raised neighbourhood and community planning[3] as a top issue.

Potential future research topics related to community planning include:

- Public participation in planning – e.g. what do communities want from planning engagement?

- New approaches to consultation: how will consultation change in the 21st Century?

Others - the role of community planning groups; looking at what other countries are doing to promote community planning; evaluating and monitoring neighbourhood plans.

COMMUNITY & NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Key subject areas	*Key thematic strands*
1. Housing	1. Planning and the economy/growth
2. EU Withdrawal and the future of environmental regulations	2. Planning and technology
3. Climate change and mitigation	3. Horizon scanning and very long term planning
4. Spatial governance and infrastructure planning	4. Social Justice and equity in planning
5. Health, inclusive planning and ageing	5. Governance, politics, local government and regulatory frameworks
6. Planning and the public sector	6. Engagement and participation in planning
7. Planning education and the planning profession	7. Planning at the local, regional, national and transnational scale
8. Urban planning and the future of cities	8. Demographics and population needs in planning
9. Rural planning	9. Ethnocultural, immigration and gender issues in planning
10. Community/neighbourhood planning	10. Planning as a profession

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[3] We understand Community Planning as the a process by which diverse community members contribute toward formulation of the goals, objectives, planning, fund/resource identification and direction of documented local planning policy. See https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/community-planning.

6. Research priorities for 2019

We are currently carrying out (or partnering in) research projects covering a wide range of topics falling within several of the research areas mentioned above. The 2019-21 research programme will try to fill the gaps where RTPI research is currently underdeveloped but it will also build upon the achievements and success of the previous programme (especially the Better Planning agenda and the Value of Planning). This section presents in turn (1) our current research activities carried out under the previous work programme, (2) our New Research Agenda for 2019-2021 and (3) our new research projects for 2019.

6.1 Current research activities

Better Planning I: Housing Affordability

- **Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE):** We are currently a partner in an independent research centre set up to provide robust evidence to inform housing policy and practice across the UK. We have been involved in a review of the value of design at the neighbourhood scale, as well as a paper on land and planning issues. In the next 12 months we will likely be involved in several other projects, focusing on design and placemaking and/or the land market and/or social housing.

- **Local authority direct provision of housing phase 2:** In partnership with four English regions (South-East, West Midlands, North West, and North East) we have commissioned follow-up research on the 2017 UCL-led project. Publication due in Spring 2019 with practice advice to follow in Summer 2019.

Better Planning II: Smart City Regions (now Spatial Governance and Infrastructure Planning)

- **Great North Plan:** We have commissioned Peter Brett Associates to do this research on spatial framework to explore how individual plans for places across the North can be aligned to maximise the region's potential. This research is being funded by RTPI North West, North East and Yorkshire. Publication due in early 2019.

- **Overcoming barriers to integrated infrastructure planning in city-regions and counties:** We are currently commissioning this research to support research into current practice and ambitions for integrated infrastructure planning in three case study areas: one English combined authority, one English county council, and one Scottish city-region. Publication due in Spring 2019.

- **Better planning for transport:** This is a guide on how to integrate planning and transport. We are developing it in collaboration with Charted Institute for Highways and Transportation. Publication due in early 2019.

Better Planning III: Climate Change and Mitigation

- **Climate justice:** To capture the role spatial planning plays in ensuring 'just' responses to climate change, the RTPI is exploring the concept of 'climate justice' and will publish a position paper in early 2019. It will examine how the concept can inform UK planning practice and

policy, and lay out the RTPI's programme of work around the subject for 2019.

○ **Planning for a Smart Energy Future:** This commissioned research (sponsored by RTPI South West) will develop practical advice on how the planning system can support the roll out of smart energy systems in the South West of England and in the rest of the UK. Publication due in Summer 2019.

Other Projects

EU Withdrawal and the future of environmental regulation

○ **Brexit phases 2 and 3:** The aim of this commissioned research is to generate proposals for environment and planning legislation post-Brexit to support our lobbying work. Round table events have been held nationally. Publication due in early 2019.

Planning and the public sector

○ **Chief Planning Officers phase 2:** This internal research project is exploring the impact of having chief planning officers at the top table in local authorities. Publication due in early 2019.

Rural housing delivery in Wales: How effective is rural exception site policy?

○ This project examines the effectiveness of this policy to deliver affordable homes in rural Wales. Publication in January 2019.

6.2. New Research Agenda for 2019-2021

Our new research agenda focuses on large scale, strategic and global questions around future demographic change, governance, legislative frameworks and the capacity of planning to influence sound decision-making. It will be structured around three main strands of research:

I. Resilience and adaptation: This strand of research will look at how planning can respond to new economic, political and security challenges at different levels (local, national and international). It will explore and assess resilience and adaptation strategies.

○ *See for instance our forthcoming pieces of research on the 'future of town centres' and the 'future of refugee camps'.*

II. Health and inclusive planning: This strand of research will look at how planning can help address pressing global health challenges (e.g. air pollution, obesity, and mental health). It will also consider issues around planning successfully for minorities – including women, social groups and an ageing population.

○ *See for instance our forthcoming research on 'Dementia II and Town Planning' and our forthcoming research on 'Planning for air quality'.*

III. New governance models and regulatory frameworks: This strand of research will look at current political and governance models and the way they are currently being challenged. It will consider innovative and sometimes 'disruptive' solutions put forward by planners.

○ *See for instance our forthcoming research on the 'Green Belts'.*

6.3. New research projects for 2019

Ten new research topics have been identified under our new Research Agenda for 2019. Research projects will be either commissioned via a tendering process or carried out by our by officers at the RTPI.

Town centres	Careers: supply and demand for town planners / career choices of young people
Potential research question: What strategies for regeneration of town centres and high streets would best encourage growth and prosperity in a time of austerity?	**Potential research question**: What are the numbers and trends in the supply and demand for town planners and what planning skills are needed in the marketplace?
Green belts	**The future of refugee camps**
Potential research questions: In which cases should there be a strategic review of the Green Belts? How consistently are green belts are matching up to their statutory purposes?	**Potential research question**: What medium and long-term strategic issues relate to planning refugee camps, both in the coordination and actual response phases of a crisis?
Number of planners	**Public perception of planning**
Potential research question: How many town planners are there in England – and how many should there be?	**Potential research question:** What is the public perception of planning on social media? Are there any parallels or links with political discourses around planning?
The value of planning: measuring planning outcomes	
Potential research question: How to put in place monitoring and performance frameworks that measure the success of planning interventions such as the quality of places?	

New Practice Advice Notes

Our practice advice represents the RTPI view of good practice on a particular planning topic or skill. They can also cover the behaviour and attributes of being a chartered member of the RTPI, such as ethics and professional standards. Our practice advice does not aim to change existing policy or make recommendations to Government as our policy work often does. It focuses on highlighting best practice and uses case studies to do this. It aims as far as possible to cover the existing legislative frameworks across the UK, with the principles of good practice being applicable across the world.

Dementia and town planning	Planning for air quality
Following the positive response to our 2017 dementia and town planning practice advice, we will update the advice in Spring 2019 to include new information on some of the case studies and highlighting developments in this emerging field.	As part of our Better Planning: Climate Change project we will publish practice advice on how planners can work to improve air quality in early 2019. It will concentrate practical solutions and tools along with highlighting best practice case studies.

Mental health and town planning
As with the above, we are considering examining if a built environment that meets the needs of people living with dementia also works well for people living with other cognitive conditions like autism.

6.4. Summary

Ongoing research	*New research*
Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence	Town centres
Planning for Community-Led Housing	Green belts
Local Authority Direct Provision of Housing Phase 2	Number of planners
Great North Plan	Measuring planning outcomes
Overcoming barriers to integrated infrastructure planning	Supply and demand for town planners and career choices of young people
Climate Justice	The future of refugee camps
Planning for a Smart Energy Future	Dementia and town planning
Brexit Phases 2 and 3	Planning for air quality
Chief Planning Officers Phase 2	Mental health and town planning
Working in the Public Interest	Public perception of planning

7. Delivering our programme: the role of the RTPI in planning research

In this section, we consider how to deliver and implement our research programme. In doing so, we reflect upon the position of the RTPI within the research environment and our role in promoting, connecting and advancing various strands of planning research. As a learned society and institute in charge of developing the knowledge base of professionals and establishing an intellectual basis for planning, we are in a unique position to provide evidence to planning practitioners. We are also in a unique position to help develop and foster strategic partnerships for knowledge exchange between the various stakeholders involved in the production, dissemination, implementation and assessment of planning research.

1 Funding planning research

One of the main ways in which the RTPI currently contributes to planning research is by commissioning research on specific issues. We are currently funding planning research spanning across a wide range of topics and geographical areas – from climate change to delivering large-scale housing sites in the South West. We also often work in partnership with funding bodies and/or other organisations (e.g. the National Planning Forum and the County Councils Network) to co-commission work. This provides our research suppliers the opportunity to connect to a large network of planning specialists.

Our new research programme will continue to provide a range of funding opportunities to enable individuals and groups to pursue innovative and robust planning research. This is particularly important because the type of research that we promote influences not just practitioners, politicians or academics but also the communities and individuals whose future will be affected by the areas we research.

2 Connecting, advising and endorsing planning research

In addition to funding a wide variety of projects, we also regularly undertake other activities crucial to supporting planning research. This includes commenting on, feeding into and endorsing projects undertaken by other research institutes or organisations. Most recently, for instance, we have advised on a project exploring public spaces as places of social inclusion, exclusion and integration with particular reference to migrant and minority needs. We have also endorsed projects around health impacts of urban transformations and around upstream involvement in urban development.

Our efforts to connect and advise on planning research are also often articulated around the following activities – participating in meetings, workshops and brainstorming events; contributing to advisory boards or advisory groups; offering feedback; facilitating knowledge exchange; helping to disseminate findings and translating their utility to non-specialist audience; providing meeting and event spaces free of charge; giving advice on policy issues and making in-kind contribution of staff time.

In delivering our new research programme we will pursue our efforts to connect, advise and endorse planning research when we are not directly funding it ourselves. We believe that if we want to tackle the multiple challenges and demands facing planning, we need to support research in different ways and assist research endeavours as much as we can.

3

Promoting collaboration

Planning research often goes beyond the needs of planners. Hence, our research programme can be conceived of as a global initiative aiming to tackle place-related challenges. To engender confidence among communities, investors, politicians and among all those who, along with planners, have a long-term interest in how places are managed, sustained and developed, we need to think about planning research as a 'unified' or 'integrated' effort.

As mentioned already, we actively encourage and support partnerships between academics, policymakers and practitioners in order to advance planning knowledge on critical issues. We believe that in order to thrive, collaborative efforts between planners, academics and policymakers need to be tied around common epistemic values and shared interests. These efforts should be articulated and promoted in forums which encourage cross-fertilization, communication and dissemination[4].

Our new research programme (in particular the research principles that we have developed) continues our efforts to bridge the gaps between different strands (or categories) of planning research. In parallel to those efforts, another way of promoting collaboration is to foster partnerships with other built environment professional bodies (i.e. RIBA, RICS, ICE). We believe that, at its best, planning can address the most pressing environmental, economic and social challenges of our time. However, collaborative efforts (i.e. uniform data gathering, mapping public spaces, bringing different professionals in research together) will be needed to deliver sustainable solutions to the challenges that lie ahead.

4

Acting as a 'knowledge broker'

Academics, policy makers and practitioners all generate expert planning knowledge, but each of these professions are made up of different kinds of expertise and networks, operating to different rhythms and in different contexts. As in other areas where science, practice and policy interact, barriers to exchange and knowledge transfer relate to the basic tension between the scholarly aspirations of research work and the context-specific drivers of practice and policy.

We, at the RTPI, often operate as 'knowledge brokers' (or 'boundary spanners') – that is, we provide ways of bridging research and practice. For instance, we help demonstrate the utility of academic research for policy-makers, help practitioners' research to translate into academic research and vice versa. We have introduced two new linked initiatives which aim to do this.

Firstly, we have a new, biennial, category within our Planning Research Awards, to which current practitioners will be eligible to submit research proposals. Winning entrants will

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[4] This argument is developed further in our position paper: Clearing a path between Planners, planning policy and Academics – Perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of Planning Research.

receive £5k of funding towards their research, alongside the support of an RTPI planning school. The results will be announced at the UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference – an independently organised academic conference at which we present the Planning Research Awards. This will further promote networking between practitioners and academics, and encourage their attendance at the wider conference. Second, in collaboration with the University of Liverpool (the hosts of the Planning Research Conference for 2019), we are planning a new, RTPI-managed and branded 'strand' of presentations at the Planning Research Conference. This will provide a platform for research which is clearly relevant to planning policy and practice but has been produced outside of the academic planning research community[5].

5

Keeping the dialogue on research collaboration open

Barriers between research, practice and policy often relate to the lack of open conversations between researchers and practitioners. Researchers can struggle to target their efforts effectively where there is a lack of open dialogue from practitioners about issues they are facing.

Our new research programme will continue our efforts to engage in open discussions about new ways of supporting access, increasing use and fostering ongoing collaboration between various 'types of planners'. This will be done, in particular, through engaging our members in our research activities and continuing our efforts to assess the research needs of the various stakeholders involved in planning research. For planning research to provide practical and creative solutions to issues such as housing, climate change and rapid urbanisation, it must be open to new ideas such as the transformational impact of new technology in helping communities to engage with and shape change. In keeping the dialogue on research needs and research collaboration open we hope to encourage 'unlikely' collaborations, stimulate debates, and promote the development of 'disruptive' solutions to the pressing challenges that lie ahead.

6

Safeguarding the quality of research

The issue of research quality emerged in a number of the contributions in our engagement exercise. Some of the respondents suggested that much planning research produced outside academic circles relied upon poor quality evidence, weak methods and needed to be supported by a much stronger research base than is currently available.

Our new research programme takes the view that 'communities' involved in planning have a common interest in the production, promotion, and use of rigorous research. This means thinking about data quality, promoting robustness at all stages of research and carefully considering the appropriateness of the methods used to execute the research.

Crucially, this also means thinking about issues of transferability, that is – the degree to which the results of research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Robust research is crucial to providing a strong evidence base to inform recommendations and practice advice or to advance theoretical or conceptual knowledge about planning. We

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[5] In a similar vein, it is also worth noting that we have been invited to serve as member of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 to assess 'the wider use' and benefit of research (Sub-panel 13: Architecture, Built Environment a nd Planning).

carefully consider the quality of research in all our endeavours, be it research that we commission, carry out in-house, projects that we endorse or run in collaboration with partner organisations. Safeguarding the quality of research is not simply an exercise to protect our reputation, but is also a way to ensure that planning policy is based on sound and robust evidence.
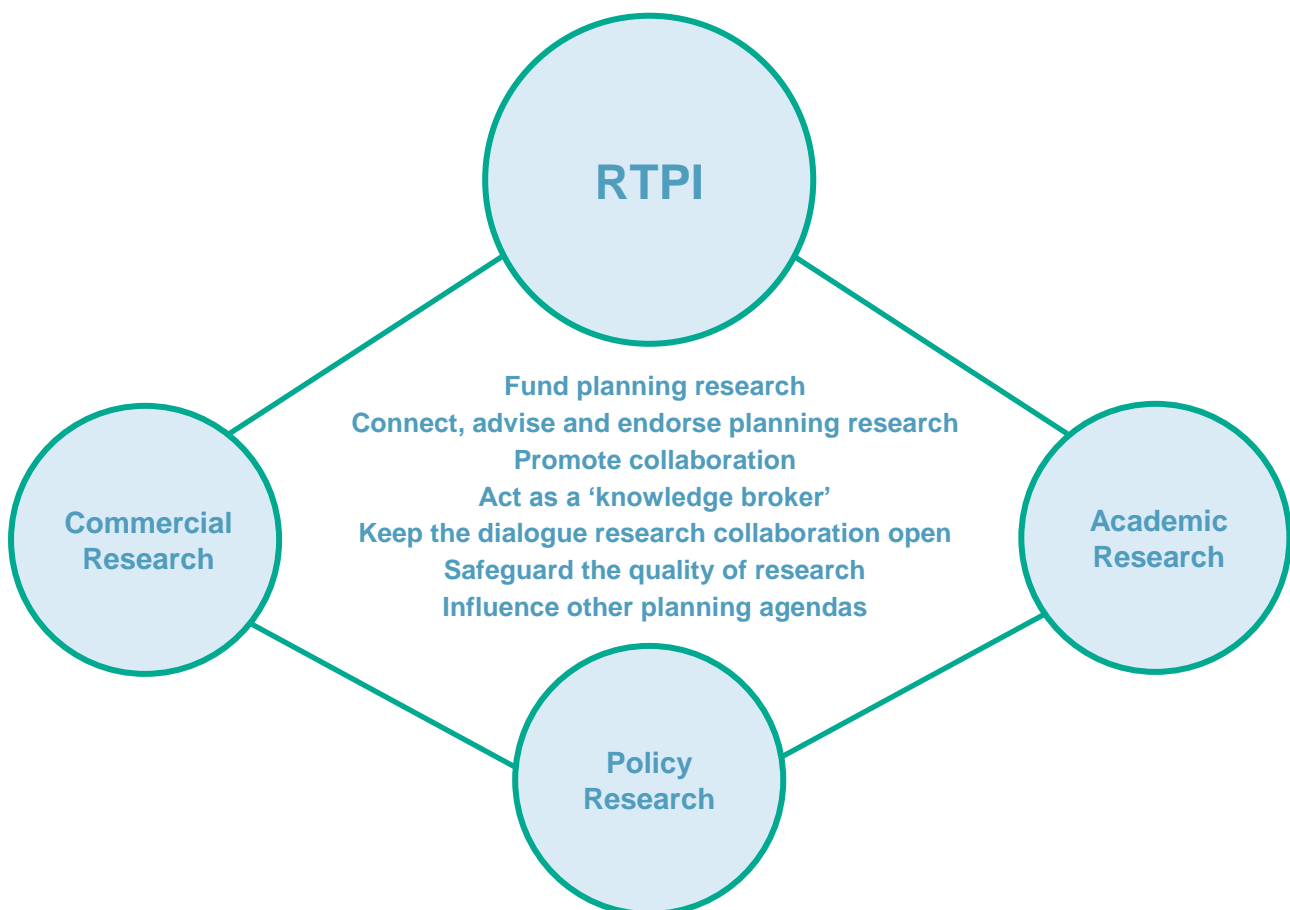
7 Influencing other planning research agendas

We hope that our research programme can encourage research carried out by planning schools, and guide the agendas of UK and international of funding bodies. Planning and wider built-environment departments and/or research groups are obvious stakeholders who might have an interest in following and/or addressing some of the questions raised in our programme.

However, we hope that the scope of our influence will not be limited to planning 'communities' strictly speaking and that we will grab the attention of scientists, social scientists and practitioners involved in peripheral planning activities or in totally different research areas. From thinking about settlements patterns to assessing the latest evidence on the impact of technology on health and transport habits, planning encompasses a wide field of activities and research. By guiding and driving other research agendas – especially the ones at the boundaries of planning research – we hope to bring forward innovative ideas and 'disruptive recommendations' to address the most pressing challenges of our time.

Figure 3: Summary of the RTPI research programme 2019 - 21

RTPI

Commercial Research

Academic Research

Policy Research

Fund planning research
Connect, advise and endorse planning research
Promote collaboration
Act as a 'knowledge broker'
Keep the dialogue research collaboration open
Safeguard the quality of research
Influence other planning agendas

8. Appendix

8.1. The RTPI's Policy, Research, Practice and International team

Richard Blyth, FRTPI

Head of Policy, Practice Research and International and responsible for Policy, Practice and Research Committee.

Prof. Aude Bicquelet-Lock

Deputy Head of Policy and Research

Visiting professor at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Urban Environments, University of the West of England.

Interests: Research Methods (esp. text mining and social media analysis); public policy (esp. planning, health and education); European and International politics.

James Harris

Policy and Networks Manager

Interests: Transport (and Network); Strategic Planning; Regeneration; Infrastructure; Sustainability; Climate Change; Technology; Location of Development.

Tom Kenny

Policy Officer

Interests: Housing (and network); Housing affordability; CaCHE (ESRC UK Housing Evidence Centre); Land market; Environmental management; Community-led development.

Sarah Lewis MRTPI

Planning Practice Officer

Interests: Practice advice notes, RTPI archive publications, dementia/ageing population, CPD – links to Education team, Ethics and equality, Air quality.

Dr Michele Vianello

International Policy and Research Officer

Interests: Role of planning in global policy, SDGs delivery in the UK and globally, planning in humanitarian response, the 'humanitarian-development nexus'.

Dr Daniel Slade

Research Officer

Interests: Climate change resilience and mitigation, local governance and service provision, the RTPI Research Awards, infrastructure (particularly smart grid technology).

Merlin Tolley

Policy and Networks Adviser

Interests: regeneration, infrastructure, community engagement, sustainable transport and public policy.

Sam Robins

Research Assistant

Interests: Food security, human rights, public housing, sustainable development, climate change and GHG reduction.

8.2. List of RTPI accredited schools

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Birmingham City University
- Cardiff University
- Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- Heriot Watt University
- Joint Distance Learning Consortium
- Leeds Beckett University
- London South Bank University
- Newcastle University

- Oxford Brookes University
- Plymouth University
- Queen's University, Belfast
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Ulster University
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- University College London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Botswana

- University of Brighton
- University of Cape Town
- University of Dundee
- University of Glasgow
- University of Hong Kong
- University of Liverpool
- University of Manchester
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of England
- University of Westminster

8.3. Our research partners

- 3 Dragons
- Alzheimer's Society (endorsement)
- Arup
- Centre for Planning, Education and Research
- County Councils Network (part funder)
- DPT Urban Design
- ESPON
- Fortismere Associates
- GLA
- Global Planners Network
- GVA
- Hardisty Jones Associates
- Hatch
- Heriot Watt University
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEA)

- Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) North
- JOHT Resources Ltd
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Levett-Therivel
- MHCLG
- National Planning Forum
- Nick Wright Planning
- PAID
- Peter Brett Associates (PBA) now a part of Stantec
- Planning and Environmental Bar Association (PEBA)
- Regional Development in Northern Ireland: Perspectives from the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON)

- Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
- Welsh Government
- Bartlett School of Planning UCL
- Durham University
- LSE
- Northumbria University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Plymouth University
- Ulster University
- University College Cork
- University of Cambridge
- University of Glasgow
- University of Liverpool
- University of Manchester
- University of Newcastle
- University of Sheffield
- University of the West of England

8.4. At a glance: the RTPI research programme 2019-2021

Research Agendas			
Better Planning	**Value of Planning**	**New Research Agenda**	**Value of Planners (new)**
Strand 1: Housing Affordability CaCHE (ongoing) Local Authority Direct Provision of Housing Phase 2 (*ongoing*) *Strand 2: 'Smart City-Regions' now 'Spatial governance and infrastructure planning'* Great North Plan (*ongoing*) Overcoming barriers to integrated infrastructure planning in city-regions and counties (*ongoing*) Better planning for transport (*ongoing*) *Strand 3: Climate Change* Climate Justice: position paper (*ongoing*) Planning for a Smart Energy Future (*ongoing*)	*Planning and the economy/growth* Measuring Planning Outcomes (*new in 2019*)	*Strand 1: Resilience and adaptation* Future of town centres (*new in 2019*) Future of refugee camps (*new in 2019*) *Strand 2: Health and inclusive planning* Dementia and Town Planning (*new in 2019*) Planning for Air Quality (*new in 2019*) Mental health and town planning (*new in 2019*) *Strand 3: New Governance Models and Regulatory frameworks* Green Belts (*new in 2019*)	*Planning education and the planning profession* Supply and demand for town planners, career choices for young people (*new in 2019*) Number of planners (*new in 2019*) Position paper: Clearing a path between planners, planning policy and academics – perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of planning research (*new in 2019*)

Recurring research

Political discourses on planning (to be introduced in 2019)

Public Perception of planning (to be introduced in 2019)

Other research

EU withdrawal	*Rural planning*	*Planning and the public sector*
Brexit Phase 2 and 3 (*ongoing*)	Rural housing delivering in Wales (*ongoing*)	Chief Planning Officers Phase 2 (*ongoing*)

Subject and Thematic areas to be explored further in 2019-21

Subject area: Community/Neighborhood Planning

Thematic area: Engagement and Participation in Planning

Thematic area: Social Justice and Equity in Planning

Thematic area: Planning at the Local, Regional, National and Transnational scale

Thematic area: Horizon scanning and very long term planning

For more information about the RTPI Research Agenda visit:

rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/research

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