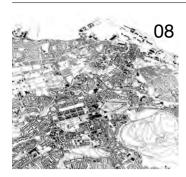
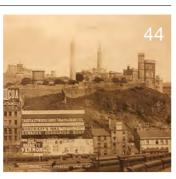


CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 **SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025**









Contents

- 03 Editorial: Jenny Munro
- Convenor's Comments: What does 'wellbeing' mean for you? - Laura Robertson

06 RTPI Scotland's Journey

- 07 The Scottish Planner at 200 Editions: Reflections from an Early Editor - Aileen Grant
- 08 RTPI Scotland: Origins, Impact, and 25 Years of the Scottish Executive Committee - Graham U'ren
- The Scottish Chapters: Promoting, Supporting and Influencing Planning and the Profession - Graham U'ren, Craig McLaren and Marie-Isabelle Marshall
- All Change: Policy, Politics and Planning Reform since the 100th Scottish Planner - Cliff Hague
- RTPI Scotland: Moving On Up Dr Caroline Brown
- Alternative Pathways to Chartership: Empowering Future Planners through the Associate-APC - Dr Sepi Haiisoltani
- 15 Scotland's International Planning Potential

16 Hot Topics

- 17 1988 and All That: Now That's What I Call Planning - Dr Caroline Brown
- 18 Upper Dens: Dundee Defines Success David MacDougall
- Planning for All: A Perspective on the Journey to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Machel Boques
- Empowering Play: Building a World-leading Framework for Children's Play in Scotland - Marguerite Hunter Blair and Cherie Morgan

- The Chief Planning Officer: A Force for Good - Pamela Clifford
- Home at the Heart: Town Centre Living Agenda - Heather Claridge
- The Environmental Impacts of Onshore Wind **Development:** The Shortcomings and Future Role of Habitat Management Plans - Niamh Coyne
- Highlands' Past, Present and Future Tim Stott
- 25 Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme: Enhancing Health and Equity in Scotland's Communities - Irene Beautyman

26 Future Planners, Skills & Education

- 27 From National Parks to National Awards and Beyond: Reflections from a Former RTPI Young Planner of the Year - Anne McCall
- Shaping Tomorrow's Scotland with the Scottish Young Planners' Network - lan Scott
- Meet our Future Planners: 2024 Bursary Recipients - Antonia Georgieva, Beth Pennycook, Euan McIntosh and Tomás Coelho
- Dusting Off the Cobwebs: The Origins and Ambitions of the Scottish Young Planners' Network - Fiona Clandillon
- Neurodiversity in Planning: Perspectives from a Young Planner - Darius Jack
- RTPI Scotland's Intern Project Officers: Where Are They Now? - Anne Krippler, Daniel Fawcett, Nick Springthorpe and Shabnam Afshar
- Landmarks and Milestones: Reflections of a Soon to Be Not-So-'Young Planner' - James Hewitt
- 37 Education for Everyone Dr Caroline Brown
- Change and Opportunity in Planning Education: A Heriot-Watt Perspective - Dr John McCarthy

⊘ EDITORIAL

- Planning Education at the University of Glasgow: A New Era in a Long Tradition - Dr Andrew Hoolachan
- 40 Leading the Way: A Plethora of Planning Opportunities at the University of Dundee -Kirstv Macari
- **UWS Launches Scotland's First Workplace BSc** (Hons) Town Planning Programme - Sohail Ahmad

42 Celebrating Collaboration

- 43 HOPS, HOPS, HOORAY! Celebrating 25 Years of Heads of Planning Scotland - Trevor Moffat
- 44 The Cockburn Association: 150 Years of Civic Engagement - Terry Levinthal
- 45 **2025:** The Year of Delivery *Kate Houghton*
- The Key Agencies Group: Collaboration and Quality
- 47 The National Planning Improvement Team: A New Collaborative Approach to Improvement -Susan Rintoul
- The Collaborative Future of Digital Planning in Scotland - Nissa Shahid
- Updates: RTPI, Scottish Government, Planning Aid Scotland
- 53 RTPI Contacts

Scottish Planner Issue 200

ISSN 1353-9795

The RTPI is a registered charity. Scottish Registered Charity No. SC037841 Registered Charity No. 262865

Registered office:

Royal Town Planning Institute 41 Botolph Lane London EC3R 8DL

Design: www.lucyreid.co.uk

Welcome to the 200th issue of the Scottish Planner!

Putting this issue together has truly been a thought-provoking experience, providing an opportunity for reflection, celebration and setting aspirations.

Delving into past Scottish Planners filed away in the RTPI Scotland office, I quickly discovered that there is more than one "first" Scottish Planner. Over the last 50 years the publication has appeared in various guises, including as an "RTPI Scottish Branch Newsletter". a "Scottish Planning News", and a previous series of "The Scottish Planner" published between 1981 to 1987. All were put together and published by dedicated RTPI Scotland Branch volunteers.

As you can see from the front cover of this 200th issue, the Scottish Planner as we know it today has evolved over the last 37 years. The first issue, published in April 1988, was a 12-page "bumper edition" which continued under the careful management of volunteer editors such as Aileen Grant and Mike Hetherington until the late 1990s. By 1999, the editorship had passed to the RTPI Scottish Director and by March 2000 it had become the "Journal of the RTPI in Scotland".

By the 100th issue in August 2004, The Scottish Planner had undergone a facelift and was regularly 16 pages long. Coinciding with Sir Patrick Geddes' 150th birthday, the issues throughout that year all carried articles about Geddes and his legacy.

In this 200th bumper issue of the Scottish Planner, you will find articles that capture the history and stories of the RTPI in Scotland. including our young planners and accredited planning schools. There are articles that reflect on what we were talking about in the first April 1988 issue and in the 100th bumper issue in 2004. You can read these issues for yourself by clicking on the links provided.

It is also important to flag that the 200th issue of the Scottish Planner is not the only cause for celebration. We also take the opportunity to celebrate the achievements and milestones of other organisations who help to shape the planning profession and built environment. These include:

- · 60 years of planning education at the University of Dundee
- · 25 years of the RTPI Scottish Executive Committee
- 25 years of HOPS
- 150 years of the Cockburn Association

Without further ado, I am delighted to invite you to join me as we look backwards, forwards and even sideways at the journey so far, including the challenges faced, achievements won and our aspirations for the future in this 200th Scottish Planner.

Jenny Munro

RTPI Scotland Policy, Practice and Research Officer

Special thanks to Graham U'ren who kindly provided material about the history of the Scottish Planner for this editorial

CELEBRATING ISSUE №200 CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 **SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025**



CONVENOR'S COMMENTS



LAURA ROBERTSON MRTPI. RTPI Scotland Convenor, Senior Planner at Aberdeen City Council

What does 'wellbeing' mean for you?

Wellbeing is the theme of my RTPI Scotland convenorship in 2025: wellbeing of place, as well as the wellbeing of the planning profession. I am excited to use this year to enhance and highlight different approaches that can and have been taken across Scotland to achieve wellbeing outcomes.

am a little apprehensive given this is my first Convenor comments and it is for the 200th edition of the Scottish Planner. This is a pretty big deal and an honour to be writing something for you all. This bumper issue is about looking at the past, present and future, looking back and looking forward.

This has given me an opportunity to do the same for my career. Like many in this profession I 'fell' into planning. Now don't get me wrong, it was the best 'fall' I ever had (and I do fall a lot!!) but it was not planned. I had been accepted for primary teaching and was happy with my choice when my mum, a retired primary teacher, uttered three words to me.... "are you sure??...." My response of "NO"... I think surprised us both. Luckily a friend was studying Town and Regional Planning at the University of Dundee and she was really enjoying it, so I thought - oh that sounds good, I like geography let's give

it a go. And the rest as they say... is history.

My first job was in the Local Plan team at Aberdeenshire Council, where we were lucky enough to be at the start of the process and got to write a plan and its policies, allocate sites and be significantly involved in a local plan inquiry. The process involved formal Inquiries, written statements, attending hearings and defending the Council's position. At the time it was hard, but what an experience for the first few years of my career. At this time there were a few in the team who were also young planners just fresh into their careers. We learnt together, sat together and moaned together, laughed and helped each other out. We also benefitted from the wisdom of the more mature team members who had the experience and knowledge we lacked. The whole team

worked hard but also enjoyed the social side of things, to wind down. We were all a similar age (well one was a bit older, he knows who he is) and had no ties or real responsibilities. Two people that I met in my first 4 months of my career are still two of my closest and dearest friends and since then I have been lucky enough to meet more

What I learnt in this job (along with lots of planning skills obviously) was the importance of supporting each other, connections and wellbeing, bouncing ideas off each other and hearing discussions. We were there for each other and some of those sessions were exhausting, draining and it was a busy time. But we looked after each other.

During covid we lost this. The online was fine and meant we could keep working, but the support, interaction and learning by 'lugging

'For me, wellbeing is going

into' conversations and having wee planning debates, was all lost. This made me worrv about how new araduates would be learning, forging connections, being supported and included into the teams. This is why

I have chosen wellbeing as my topic for this year as RTPI Scotland's Convenor. This comes in so many forms - taking a five-minute break to go outside and breath in some air, having a pint with friends, talking to someone, reading a book, being supported when someone has shouted at you, looking around and taking it all in, listening to the birds, smelling the freshly cut grass and feeling the wind on your face. For me, wellbeing is going to the gym, getting outside, running in the hills, and having a good old catch up with friends. We need to look after ourselves and each other.

This year, with my focus on wellbeing, I want to get out and meet the chapters. So, I challenge you to find something for me to come and do. Something that you see as enhancing and delivering wellbeing. I leave it open to you and it really can be anything, so please surprise me.

There are challenges ahead of us in the planning profession with the continued stretching of local authority funding and efforts to retain experienced staff and knowledge across the board. There are new types of developments coming through the system with technologies we have never dealt with before. The new Local Development Plans and the additional requirements for them, adding to the work pressures and the skills we have to learn. It is a quick learning curve for us all, but planners have the tools and the resilience to do this. There are a lot of pressures and uncertainties for us all but if we work together and support each other we will adapt as always. This is why your wellbeing is

In terms of the future. I am delighted to see all the new planners coming through the system, via the existing degree providers, the new Town Planning Workplace Learning degree at the University of the West of Scotland and the bursaries being offered by the Scottish Government. This shows the many different routes out there to get into planning and the large number of applicants reveals that there is the desire to move into planning. We need to support these new planners, learn from them and see and feel their enthusiasm. I am honoured to have chaired the Scottish Young Planners' Conference this year. It is always filled with challenging questions, fantastic speakers and lots of laugher. I'm very hopeful for the future of planning and the amazing things we will do.

Be kind and look after each other. SP

CONVENOR'S COMMENTS





₹ RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



AILEEN GRANT is an Artist. former planner and former Scottish Planner editor

RTPI Scotland's Journey

This section of the 200th issue looks back on the RTPI's physical presence in Scotland, how planning policy and the profession have evolved over time and our aspirations for the future.

- 07 The Scottish Planner at 200 Editions: Reflections from an Early Editor
- RTPI Scotland: Origins, Impact, and 25 years of the Scottish Executive Committee
- 10 The Scottish Chapters: Promoting, Supporting and Influencing Planning and the Profession
- 12 All Change: Policy, Politics and Planning Reform Since the 100th Scottish Planner
- RTPI Scotland: Moving On Up
- **Alternative Pathways to Chartership:** Empowering Future Planners through the Associate APC
- Scotland's International Planning Potential



The Scottish Planner at 200 editions:

Reflections from an Early Editor

Aileen Grant is an Artist, former planner and former Scottish Planner editor who spearheaded the publication as we know it today. Aileen reflects on her contribution to that first edition, the issues it raised and its continued relevance to the profession.

wasn't the very first editor of the Scottish Planner. In the 1980s two attempts were made to start some kind of newsletter for Scottish RTPI Members, but these were short-lived, I felt there was a need for something that looked professional, something to raise the profile of the profession in a positive light. I discussed ideas with a good friend who worked in publishing, and we put together a proposal and persuaded the Executive Committee to make a budget available. I was therefore the first Editor of the Scottish Planner in roughly the form that continues today.

The budget paid for a community publishing company - Commpress - to do the layout and sell advertising space. I was a volunteer editor, persuading people to write stories, editing, proofreading and stuffing magazines in envelopes. I had an enthusiastic team around me - we usually met in my front room. The sendout was done from Rutland Square where the RTPI rented a small office space from the RIAS.

The context was right for raising the Scottish profile. It was 1988 and the Glasgow Garden Festival was about to happen. RTPI were jointly supporting a small building with an array of TV monitors - called "The Environment Show" working with the RIAS and others. At that time there was a growing movement to bring in a Scottish Assembly despite - or because of - the failure of the 1979 referendum. This was a time when many professions were trying to highlight Scottish distinctiveness.

As well as the Garden Festival, the "big news" in those days was the push for regeneration in "peripheral estates", the idea of urban wildlife. But we tried not to be too



"Several decades on from

central belt-focused and took stories about forestry and the first wind farm proposals in Orkney, Sustainability, new initiatives for public engagement, climate change and of course the emergence of Planning Aid for Scotland as a new organisation were all covered. We encouraged Members to write articles - a good form of CPD - and they flowed in.

I was always very keen that the Scottish Planner should not be viewed as my thing, and when I ran into volunteer fatigue after 6 years, I was delighted when Mike Hetherington took

it forward. Succession-planning! I can't quite believe that this is Issue no. 200 - congrats and bravo to everyone who has contributed over the years in so many different ways.

Several decades on from my editorship I can reflect on how many issues then are still issues now. Politicians still seem unable to grasp how the planning system works and continue to see things in black and white. Working out win-win collaborative solutions is not in their vocabulary. One curiously depressing thing is how words such as "sustainability" and "ecosystem" are frequently used out of context, losing that vital connection to nature. Recent changes such as the introduction of Local Place Plans are very positive, but support for communities to engage properly in this new system is needed to make this work.

It's 12 years since I worked as a planner. I now live in a remote community and work as a painter and printmaker. However, I still use my planning skills and knowledge from time to time - there's no escape, really. We live in an age when volunteering is necessary to secure community wellbeing and resilience. I've organised a community polytunnel and go tree planting in the woodland. Getting things done remains important for community resilience. Planning is such good training! SP



Left: Blue Lochan. Maol Chean Dearg. by Aileen Grant Below: The Trees Reach Out, by Aileen Grant



CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 **SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025**

Z RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



GRAHAM U'REN FRTPI, former Director of RTPI Scotland

Z RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY

future form of government in Scotland.

Over the next year or so, the terms of the

Westminster became clear with the intention

to bring devolution both of legislative powers

(RTPI Director of Member Services in London)

and of executive government into force by

May 1999. By the time the bill was enacted

as the Scotland Act 1998. Michael Napier

and I had started to work together with

Scottish Branch office bearers, the Chair

of the Scottish Planning Policy Panel and

Council members for Scotland (including the

only three national Presidents from Scotland

by that stage, Cliff Hague, Kevin Murray and

Vincent Goodstadt) to establish an integrated

and devolved form of representation for the

The Scottish Executive Committee

As a result, the Scottish Executive Committee

(SEC) was established on the authority of the

Council of the Institute (later to become the

General Assembly) and came into being on

1st January 2000 under terms of reference

agreed by the Council in July 1999, in time to

Institute in Scotland.

Scotland Bill submitted to Parliament in

Responding to Devolution

RTPI Scotland: Origins, Impact, and 25 years of the

Scottish Executive Committee he RTPI's presence in Scotland has come a long way since the formation of a Scottish Branch at its first annual meeting in 1930. Graham U'ren FRTPI, former Director of RTPI Scotland. This followed a resolution at the tenth annual looks back at the RTPI's origins in Scotland, RTPI country meeting of the Institute held in Edinburgh in 1928, and a Scottish Branch Scotland's journey over the decades and its impact Committee continued to represent the which continues to this day. Institute's interests in Scotland for the next 50 years (see "A Celebration of Planning in Scotland - Essays to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the RTPI in Scotland, 1914 -1989" for a comprehensive history of these In the 1980s, the Institute recognised that there was a need to prepare policy responses to the former Scottish Office of the UK Government from

200 editions of 'The in the RTPI."

post was given the title of Director of the RTPI in Scotland to further raise the public profile of the Institute. However, he reported to a Scottish Planning Policy Panel and did not have comprehensive authority for the Institute's presence in Scotland. In 1997, still at an early stage in a career which has subsequently had such a significant impact on planning in Scotland, Craig decided to move on - his next position being as CE of the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF).

The Directorship of the RTPI in Scotland. now based at 57 Melville Street in Edinburgh. was taken up by myself, at the opposite end of my career at the time, having spent 14 years as a director under the old two tier system of local government which had existed from 1975 to 1996.

By now, the referendum in September 1997 confirmed the support for devolution

perspective. This led to the appointment of based on general competence for devolved a self-employed consultant, a position held government in Scotland with specified by Linda Welsh for several years, although reserved powers to the UK Parliament, and submissions continued to be made through the new Labour Government had made RTPI HQ in London and not under authority of provision in its legislative programme. The the Branch. Institute decided it would have to respond with more effective engagement with the

Creating Impact

Further change came about in 1993 when, on the initiative of the then Chairman, Paul Gregory, the Scottish Branch Committee made a case to London that there should be a full-time Scottish Planning Policy Officer and a public office for the Institute in Scotland. This position was taken up by Craig McLaren who, together with the Branch Administrator, staffed the RTPI's first office in Scotland at 23 Northumberland Street in Edinburgh. (Prior to this, the part-time branch administrator had worked from a rented room in the RIAS offices at Rutland Square.) Craig's policy

inform the next round of elections. The SEC was to be serviced by the Director with full responsibility for planning policy. By analogy with the formula for devolution in the Scotland Act, the scope of competence of the Scottish Executive Committee was to be relatively wide, but specifically excluding education, membership and professional conduct which were reserved to RTPI HQ.

The new formal structure, supported by an initial full-time staff of three, allowed a strengthening of Scottish member participation not only through the SEC but also through support to the, then, six chapters.

Strengthening the Role of RTPI Scotland

It is perhaps significant that, at the time of the new arrangements to reflect devolution.

"It is perhaps significant that, at the time of the new arrangements to reflect as it has ever been."

the Institute's Scottish representation at national level was as strong as it has ever been with three Scottish presidents in a short space of time and up to 6 Council members. These included several leading contributors to the major review of the corporate strategy that began around 2000 with the Institute concerned about threats from public perception, lack of government engagement and competition from other institutions. This led to the publication of "The New Vision for Planning" (2001) and the launching of the Education Commission, together with a governance review of the Institute.

The management review which then followed in 2005 concluded with the changes under a "Fitness for Purpose" programme. This ensured that Scotland was well represented. with the result that staff resources were increased and the Director became a member of the HQ management team. Clearly this was a step along the way to the form of nations and regions management that exists today.

As well as celebrating 200 editions of "The Scottish Planner", it is also timely to celebrate 25 years of the SEC and devolved decision making in the RTPI. SP

Sources for this article include an RTPI in Scotland briefing paper in 2007, back issues of the Scottish Planner and the writer's personal archives.

www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland Scottish Planner | Issue 200 9 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025

₹ RTPI SCOTLAND'SJOURNEY







GRAHAM U'REN FRTPI, former Director of RTPI Scotland, CRAIG MCLAREN FRTPI, National Planning Improvement Champion at the Improvement Service, and MARIE-ISABELLE MARSHALL MRTPI, Senior Planner at Dumfries and Galloway Council

RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY

The Scottish Chapters: Promoting, Supporting and Influencing

Promoting, Supporting and Influencing Planning and the Profession

Editor's note: RTPI Scotland could not have the impact and influence that it has if it were not for our volunteers who give up their valuable time to help us deliver our member services. The RTPI Scotland Chapters are particularly vital to ensuring that the benefits of RTPI membership reach right across the length and breadth of Scotland. It would not be a proper celebration of the 200th issue, if we did not reflect on the origins of the Chapters and their important work.

Chapter Origins

by Graham U'ren

The question of getting closer to members across the geographical expanse of Scotland had been under discussion for some time. In January 1983, the Scottish Planner (in its former guise) carried a letter from a member entitled "Does the Scottish Branch cover too large an area?" and the term "chapter" was used in the suggested solution.

The following year, the Institute introduced much stronger CPD obligations for members and created a fund to grant aid training programmes in the branches. The Scottish Branch committee responded with a plan to create a framework of area coordinators to deliver a programme of CPD events across Scotland, By 1987, the Branch events programme was being delivered from five centres. The more active local members in these areas created informal organising groups and by the end of 1988, the Institute had approved a formal network of six chapters for Scotland similar to that of the RIAS, overseen by the Scottish Branch committee which had a post for a chapter

Graham U'ren FRTPI, former Director of RTPI Scotland, Craig McLaren FRTPI, National Planning Improvement Champion at the Improvement Service, and Marie-Isabelle Marshall MRTPI, Senior Planner at Dumfries and Galloway Council and Outgoing Convenor of the RTPI Dumfries and Galloway Chapter Committee, reflect on the history, evolution and continued impact of the RTPI Scottish Chapters.

coordinator. Later, the six became seven when Dumfries and Galloway split from Glasgow and West of Scotland.

Chapter Evolutions

by Craig McLaren

From the early 2010s the chapters became an ever increasingly important part of the RTPI Scotland infrastructure and offer with the seven chapters all providing CPD programmes for their local areas. The number of events organised may have differed across chapters, however each and every event was important in being designed to support local needs, interests and good practice. Indeed, in this time a number of the chapters moved beyond the traditional role of organising events with some providing the local representation at local forums including design reviews and inter-professional networks.

A major change came during the Covid outbreak and the subsequent lockdowns. The fact that face to face events could not be held spurred on many of the chapters to make best use of the newly available technology to hold online webinars. These were important in continuing to connect planners in what was a difficult time. They also proved to be very successful given their accessibility beyond the chapter area and this led to record levels of attendees at chapter webinars,

demonstrating some of the common issues and challenges found across Scotland, and sometimes beyond. The importance of face to face networking had not been lost with the return of in person events. These remain a very important piece of chapters' work to help planners from across sectors to meet up, network and get to know one another.

The continuing success of the chapters very much depends upon RTPI members who see the value in locally based CPD and in having a local presence, and, who are willing to give up their time to help organise this. They do an amazing job on very tight budgets and we should be grateful to all who have contributed.

Dumfries and Galloway Chapter reflections

by Marie-Isabelle Marshall

Dumfries and Galloway is sparsely populated but it provides timber and renewable energy to Scotland and beyond, dairy and sheep products, and landscape features show it to have been important in the changes to farming from the 17th century. The region is beautiful with a very varied landscape of coast, hills, rivers and lakes.

People come here to retire as the countryside is so good for the soul. Today the many small settlements and their communities have taken on some ambitious projects to

protect or develop land and provide routes and community facilities including housing for local people. While they may not get a great deal of recognition nationally, the people who live and visit in the region really do benefit from local effort.

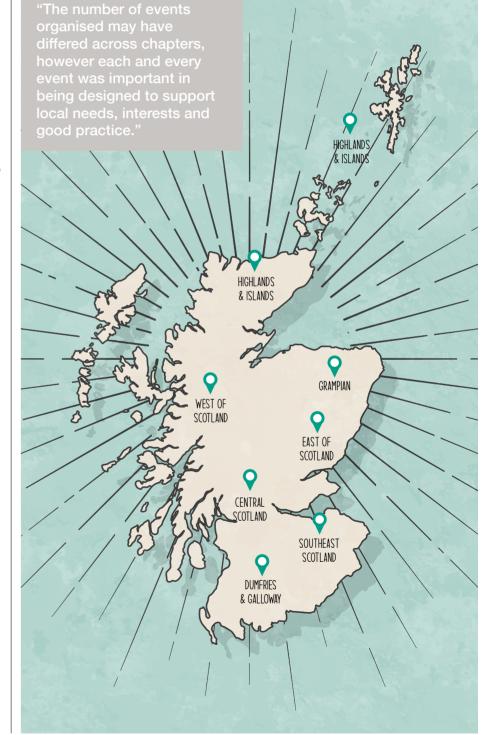
The Dumfries and Galloway Chapter of the RTPI has been in existence for at least 3 decades as a very small chapter with evening events mostly having taken place in Beeswing. Howard Young seems to have been an early convenor, then David Suttie for 12 years followed by Sue Hudson, Catherine Elliot, Shona McCoy and a brief shared convenorship with Pat Hannah and then me, Mizzy Marshall. Although the chapter has always been made up of many of the Council's qualified planners, a small number of private consultants and architects, mainly local to Dumfries, have also been closely involved and have taken part regularly in events over the years.

It has often been difficult to recruit people to the chapter committee, only a few people who have been long serving. Chapter events over the last 10 years have been influenced by the development activities that are characteristic of the region's economy, and by the changing policies and practices introduced by Scottish Government.

The chapter has had in-person talks and visits to timber sawmills, hydro-electric schemes, historic centres and buildings, archaeological sites, and informative led tours of bridges. There have been many talks and presentations about hutting, geology, long distance paths, landscape matters and legal updates as well as an occasional focus on materials such as building stone and glass.

In the dim past there were social events that explored the economic viability and success of the conversion of commercial uses to hospitality! However, from 2020 more events have become webinars and online so they included more talking and fewer actions, although the opportunity for discussion has attracted people from further away.

Some of our speakers have been simply excellent and have popped up wearing different hats over the years. Perhaps words are in the waters of the Esk and the Nith and the Ken-Dee valley and the Fleet and the Cree or influenced by the historic presence of Robert Burns and J M Barrie. SP



10 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland

Z RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



CLIFF HAGUE MRTPI. Freelance Consultant and Emeritus Professor at Heriot Watt I Iniversity

CELEBRATING ISSUE №200

Z RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



DR CAROLINE BROWN MRTPI. RTPI Director of Scotland and Ireland

All Change: Policy, Politics and Planning Reform since the 100th Scottish Planner

Cliff Haque MRTPI. Freelance Consultant and Emeritus Professor at Heriot Watt University, discusses policy changes, political developments and the challenges facing planners since the 100th issue of the Scottish Planner.

n the 100th issue of the Scottish Planner, I contributed an article which reflected on the contesting perceptions of planning in the 1970s - as either an essential integrative role with a bearing on all other local government functions, or as an unnecessary and retrograde burden! In many respects, planning has come a long way since the 1970s, but these sorts of debates continue today.

The 100th Scottish Planner appeared in August 2004, just months after the first National Planning Framework, a non-statutory document which looked ahead to 2025. Since then, we have had three more iterations of the NPF, which is now embedded in every development plan. There have also been two Planning Acts.

In 2024 the Scottish Parliament declared a housing emergency. Since 2004, global average surface temperatures have continued to increase, though Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions have reduced from 71.46 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent to 40.61 in 2023. These bare facts set the parameters for what has been a turbulent period for the profession in (and beyond) Scotland.

Two Acts in 15 years signify ongoing political dissatisfaction with our planning system. The ground for the 2006 Act was set by the 2005 White Paper 'Modernising the Planning System', from the then Labour/ Liberal Democrat Scottish Executive. It both reiterated and foretold the contestation that is at the heart of planning.

It sought to make "the system more efficient" while setting "sustainable economic growth" as the top priority. Both phrases echo the priorities of the development industry, and the wider attempts to structure public services



A de-regulated future in one of Scotland's World Heritage Sites

across the board around the priorities and methods of big businesses. But the White Paper also sought to give "local people better opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them" and to boost affordable housing. To reconcile the tensions, the leitmotif was "culture change": change mindsets amongst the public and planners so that planning would be seen to be facilitating development.

Why then, with such ambitions, was the system subjected to a far-reaching review a little more than a decade later? There had been a change of government at Holyrood, but more fundamentally the same tensions remained. Indeed, they had been accentuated by the repercussions of the 2007-08 financial and economic crisis. The development industry and the Scottish Government desperately needed a recovery, while research in 2017 for the Scottish Government on 'Barriers to community Engagement in Planning' revealed that, though planners broadly believed the system was fair, "community and third sector leaders have an overwhelmingly negative perception of the system".

Meanwhile austerity policies hit planning departments hard. RTPI research revealed that staff in planning departments in Scotland had been cut by a quarter between 2009 and 2022, with a 38% reduction in the budget for planning services between 2010 and 2022.

The consultation on, and parliamentary passage of, the 2019 Act brought these conflicting expectations to the surface, threatening at one stage to derail the legislative proposals entirely. Numerous amendments were carried with the government lacking a majority, until the SNP's Bill was bailed out by Conservative MSPs. Much of the detail was deferred to later direction from Victoria Quay. Planning was given a statutory purpose, but with the nonsensical compromise that the purpose would not apply to development management.

Consultation on NPF4 drew over 750 responses to 70 open questions. The inclusion of Planning Policy within the NPF upped the stakes. There was a strong push for greater clarity around terms like "should" or "be supported". Importantly, NPF4 asserted the primacy of the climate emergency and the nature crisis. This reflected the growing environmental awareness and concerns across Scotland.

Delivery on NPF4's ambitious aims was always in question. Now, in early 2025, as we continue to await further guidance on implementing the climate and biodiversity policies of NPF4, the UK government has fiercely attacked environmental considerations in the English planning system. Its "planning reform" will potentially put planning south of the border at odds with NPF4. This will result in pressures from outwith and from within Scotland to deregulate planning here and prioritise short-term economic benefits. Challenging times for Scottish planners lie behind - and ahead. SP

RTPI Scotland - moving on up

Dr Caroline Brown MRTPI. Director of RTPI Scotland and Ireland, looks back at the RTPI's physical presence in Scotland and reveals RTPI Scotland's new home

TPI Scotland has had an office in Edinburgh for many years, and shortly after this issue of the Scottish Planner is published, we'll be moving to a new location. Before I tell you about where we are moving to, I thought this might be a good time to revisit our previous homes.

After sharing offices in Northumberland Street for a while, the Institute moved into its own space at 57 Melville Street in 1998. This is an elegant town house designed by Robert Brown in 1814 and built in 1825, and the Institute had rooms on the ground floor and basement. I'm sure many members will remember visiting the Institute there, close to St Marys Cathedral with its high ceilings and fancy plasterwork. Our Office Manager, Annette O'Donnell, has shared her recollections:

RTPI Scotland had recently established its office at Melville Street when I joined the team.

It provided many opportunities to interact with members and various committees that frequently used the large meeting room. It was before online working so people would often travel long distances and Melville Street provided an excellent base.

I have many happy memories of the time spent there in a vibrant and congenial workplace.

The Institute moved from Melville Street in January 2011, to its current location on the ground floor of 18 Atholl Crescent, another elegant Edinburgh town house at the West End of the city centre. Moving to Atholl Crescent was a significant downsizing of the space occupied by the Institute, and there was a lot of work to archive and rationalise the papers, books and filing cabinets ahead of the relocation. Lots has changed since we moved in, not least the transition to hybrid working following on from Covid.

When I joined the Institute in 2023, I knew that the lease at Atholl Crescent was due to expire in 2025, and last year



'We are now able to Scotland will be moving to new premises this summer."



began a search for alternative premises. The Scottish Executive Committee was very helpful in discussing possible options - and we considered everything from no office at all, relocating outside Edinburgh, serviced offices and everything in between, including staying put. That discussion helped to shape the search and evaluation of options, with an emphasis on city centre, accessibility and affordability.

We are now able to announce that. after over 14 years in Atholl Crescent, RTPI Scotland will be moving to new premises this summer. The new office will be at 121 George Street, built in 1909-11 and the last work of architect Sydney Mitchell. The building is large and imposing - with granite arches at ground level and a two-tiered mansard roof. It was designed as an office building for the United Free Church of Scotland. The Church still occupies part of the building with the upper floors now let to a variety of charities, third sector organisations and small businesses. Our new abode will be on the fourth floor, with a direct view of Edinburgh Castle. The set-up will be slightly different too - with an open plan office and two small meeting rooms. The days of large in-person meetings are behind us - so it makes sense to have smaller spaces set up for hybrid meetings. If we do need a bigger meeting room, 121 George Street has several ground floor meeting rooms that we will be able to use - and the new building offers other additional facilities including a reception, secure cycle parking and a lift. More importantly, the new building is wheelchair accessible - something we could not accommodate in Atholl Crescent.

At the time of writing, we are still a few weeks away from moving - but the removal company is booked, and we hope that we'll be up and running in the new office before too long. We'll let members know when we are open for visitors! SP

SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 CELEBRATING ISSUE №200 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025

Z RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



DR SEPI HAJISOLTANI MRTPI IHBC, Planner (Conservation) at Aberdeen City Council

₹ RTPI SCOTLAND'S JOURNEY



JULIA FROST MRTPI
Planning Director at Scott Hobbs
Planning

Alternative Pathways to Chartership:

Empowering Future Planners through the Associate-APC

Dr Sepi Hajisoltani MRTPI IHBC, Planner (Conservation) at Aberdeen City Council, reflects on her journey to becoming a Chartered Planner through the RTPI's Associate membership route.

y career in the built environment began after my undergraduate studies in Architecture at a local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in

Iran, where I worked as a community architect on conservation and regeneration projects. This experience sparked my interest in managing change and finding the balance in urban development projects, leading me to pursue further academic studies. I moved to

the UK in 2010 and started a multidisciplinary course called "Building and Urban Design in Development" at the Development Planning Unit (DPU) of the Bartlett, UCL. This course was exceptional, particularly due to the diverse mix of students from various backgrounds, not solely from design or planning. This diversity enriched my understanding of the theory and practice of imagining and building just cities and communities and made me appreciate the value of hearing different perspectives.

My growing interest in policy and planning solidified during this time. However, my course was not accredited by any professional institutions, leaving me uncertain about how to approach job applications. I didn't fit neatly into the categories of a practicing architect, urban designer, or town planner in the UK. It took only a few job applications for me to understand that being a member of a professional institution significantly enhances one's chances of securing a role. I realised that membership and the goal of achieving Chartered status are highly valued by potential employers and most importantly are essential for navigating a career path.

Securing my first position in the planning

sector took some time. I eventually started a temporary role in the Development Management Team of Aberdeen City Council. With no prior practical UK planning experience, I found the work and the wider planning process in Scotland fascinating. I started in the Application Support Team, validating various planning consents, before moving to the Householder Team and later transitioning to the Local Team, where I worked on key projects as part of the City Centre

Route to Chartered membership through the Associate pathway

| FIDERATIONAL | Plansky | Plansky

Masterplan. Throughout this time, I gained experience in the Development Management Service, and my previous background in architecture and conservation was recognised

Very early in my career as a town planner, lacking accredited planning education in the UK, I began working towards RTPI Associate Membership, which proved invaluable in helping me navigate this new sector. It provided reassurance that my previous professional experience was recognised and a clear

path toward gaining partial qualification and eventually achieving Chartered membership. Associate membership allowed for that professional continuity so the move towards planning did not feel like starting from scratch. It also granted access to professional networks and events, allowing me to immerse myself in UK planning practice. I connected with many members including other associates and chartered members who have done the Associate-APC. Learning about their success and also their diverse backgrounds both from the UK and overseas encouraged me to pursue this route. I learned that the planning sector is not short of planners with some interesting backgrounds - anthropology, geography, environmental studies or architecture and

design. Each of them has a valuable perspective to offer in their planning role.

I firmly believe that as a sector, it is critical that we remain flexible and inclusive in welcoming those with multidisciplinary backgrounds to consider a career in planning. The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) reinforces the significance of collaboration among different backgrounds to improve lives and foster sustainable, liveable, and productive places.

I appreciate that defining a process for associate membership that is welcoming, accommodates everyone and yet respects other routes to Chartered Membership remains challenging. In my experience, the Associate APC is a process that requires perseverance

and, for those who have been successful in getting their Chartered status through this route, is a massive achievement that needs to be recognised and celebrated. I consistently seek opportunities to advocate for the importance of this category of membership within the Institute and the broader sector and encourage those considering a career in planning to explore this pathway. By diversifying the routes to RTPI membership, RTPI Scotland has grown its membership by just over 23% in the last 30 years. Let's continue and enhance this trend. SP

Julia Frost MRTPI, Planning Director at Scott Hobbs Planning, reflects on her year as RTPI Scotland Convenor in 2019 and the RTPI Scotland International Group which she founded in the same year.

he year 2019 was such a fascinating year to be RTPI Scotland's Convenor: the enactment of the new Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which I witnessed and helped influence, the celebration of 25 years of the RTPI Scotland office at a Parliamentary Reception which I chaired, and the 70th Anniversary of World Town Planning Day featuring a "Through the Years, Across the Globe" event at Dundee University which I helped organise and chair.

I was also privileged to deliver presentations in Hong Kong to both Hong Kong University and the Hong Kong Institute of Planners on their 40th Anniversary, where I spoke on the Scottish Planning System, the work of Planning Aid Scotland and the value of RTPI membership worldwide. My theme for the year was 'professionalism' – helping ensure that the planning profession is a respected voice.

It is important that respect for the planning profession is not just confined to Scotland and the UK; it must have global reach. That is why my convenorship year also

saw the establishment of the <u>RTPI Scotland</u> International Group.

Scotland's International Planning Potential

This informal group has membership from across Scotland's planning spectrum, including the current Chief Planner Fiona Simpson. It includes planners in private practice, public sector, academia, third sector and has representation from the Scottish Young Planners' Network. All have an interest in planning internationally, with some members working on international planning projects. Its members often sit on the judging panel for RTPI's International Award for Planning Excellence.

Scotland is part of international conversations through participation in organisations such as UN-Habitat, the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), and the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU). In an increasingly interconnected world, international collaboration is essential for a forward-thinking planning profession. RTPI Scotland's International Group provides a valuable forum for knowledge exchange, learning, and professional growth.

The group has organised a number of events including:

- 'The Feminist City and Gender Equality' with Sarah Shaw (Head of Planning at Glasgow City Council), May East (an international urbanist and practitioner specialising in gender-sensitive cities); and Ana Paricio (Inclusive Urbanism and Housing Researcher, Barcelona Regional). The conclusion if you design a city that is safe for women it is safe for everyone making places more inclusive and creating spaces to flourish.
- 'Meeting rural challenges in Norway and Scotland: houses, services and sustainability – with a focus on 2nd homes

 their impact on local rural housing markets and innovative responses to address the challenge' with speakers from both Norway and Scotland.

Other past activities and initiatives of the group can be found on the RTPI Scotland International Group webpage.

The Group welcomes participation from all members interested in global planning issues. Whether you have international experience, knowledge to share, or just an interest in international planning and keen to learn from others, you're welcome. If you'd like to become a member, please contact me at jf@scotthobbsplanning.com or via LinkedIn. SP





14 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 sww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland scottish Planner | Issue 200 scottish Planner



DR CAROLINE BROWN MRTPI. RTPI Director of Scotland and Ireland

Hot Topics

This section of the 200th issue looks back at what planners were talking about when the first Scottish Planner was published in 1988 and considers where we are now on issues such as inclusivity, wellbeing, the environment and planning for children.

- 17 1988 and All That: Now That's What I Call
- **Upper Dens:** Dundee Defines Success
- Planning for all: A Perspective on the Journey to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Empowering Play: Building a World-Leading Framework for Children's Play in Scotland
- The Chief Planning Officer: A Force for Good
- Home at the Heart: Town Centre Living Agenda
- The Environmental Impacts of Onshore Wind **Development:** The Shortcomings and Future Role of Habitat Management Plans
- Highlands' Past, Present and Future
- **Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme:** Enhancing Health and Equity in Scotland's Communities

1988 and all that: now that's what I call planning

Dr Caroline Brown MRTPI. RTPI Director of Scotland and Ireland takes a jaunt through the bookshelves to recall what we were reading at the time the first Scottish Planner was published.

s part of the reminiscing prompted by this issue, let us look back to the books and publications that planners were reading. Let us rifle through the archives of several well-established planning journals, explore the biographies of well-known planners and academics and pick through the bookshelves to see what we can find.

The RTPI President in 1988 was Francis Tibbalds, a founding member of the architects in planning group. Although Tibbalds had not yet published his book 'People-friendly towns', 1987 was the year that Danish architect Jan Gehl's book 'Life between buildings' was published in English. Gehl and Tibbalds shared an interest in designing for social interaction, and Gehl emphasised the importance of observation as a tool for design - developing techniques for empirical studies of people in spaces and place.

The European theme came through

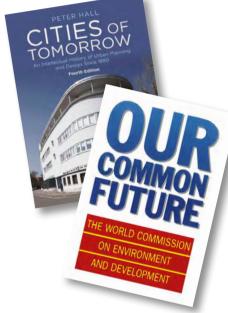
strongly in 1988. A lot was happening: the strands of European integration were being forged ahead of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty; and the first Environmental Impact Assessment Directive had been issued. Town Planning Review vol 59(2) presents a number of articles on different European planning systems, covering England, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany – but I found numerous other scholars writing about planning approaches in different cities and countries, not just in Europe. It's around this time too that the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) was founded by Klaus Kunzmann. Patsy Healey and others, undoubtedly an important development in research efforts on European planning.

One of the most surprising finds in the literature was the work on microcomputers, with a special issue of Environment and Planning B (vol 15, no 3) devoted to the subject. It was only 10 or so years since



the theories, studies, data

computers had become available - but the contributors write about the use of microcomputers on transport planning, infrastructure planning, regional planning and rural planning with examples from Sri Lanka and the US. There's discussion too of GIS plus the likely impacts of microcomputers in local authorities' planning departments. Guest Editor Anthony Gar-on Yeh ends his editorial with 'Continued professional development courses in microcomputer technology and applications, organized by universities and professional institutes are needed to equip planners to utilize new developments in microcomputer hardware and software fully' (p. 239). That sentiment still seems to hold today as we grapple with the many possibilities of digital planning and Al.



There is no time to discuss in detail Peter Hall's book 'Cities of Tomorrow an intellectual history of urban planning and design in the 20th century' first published in 1988, or the 1987 World Commission on Environment & Development which gave us the Brundtland definition of sustainable development. And, there is really no time to go into any of the other interesting papers I found, like Haynes' work on urban distributions of lung cancer mortality and Burgess et al's research on greenspace.

It was interesting to go back to 1988 and find that – like today – planning academics were working on many of the same issues. It's a reminder too that our work today is built on the theories, studies, data and methods developed in the past, and that we all stand on the shoulders of giants. SP



DAVID MACDOUGALL, Retired Depute Chief Planning Officer of Dundee District Council

CELEBRATING ISSUE №200



MACHEL BOGUES, RTPI Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Manager

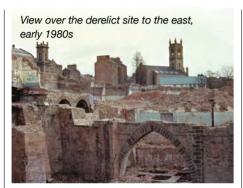
Upper Dens: Dundee Defines Success

David MacDougall, Retired Depute Chief Planning Officer of Dundee District Council, looks back on the Upper Dens renewal project which won the RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup in 1987.

triumphant "Well Done Dundee" blazed across the front page of the first Scottish Planner in April 1988. It was an extremely proud moment to see that headline, although it did not match the pride of being awarded the RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup for the Upper Dens urban renewal project; a project that almost did not happen.

During the post-war period, Scotland had undergone massive deindustrialisation. Dundee was no different and in the 1980s a great number of former jute mills, including Upper Dens Mills, stood empty. The political imperative was to fill the building with new manufacturing jobs. Despite numerous attempts, no industrialist was interested in a multi-level space on a steeply sloping site. The only solution to save the category A listed building from demolition was conversion to housing. This did not make the politicians happy – "Who on earth wants to live in a factory?" was the reaction. The officer at the forefront of trying to find a solution reminded the Convener of his visit to Leningrad where the opulence of palaces such as the Hermitage astonished him. Lenin himself ordered that these buildings and their contents be protected as representing the skills and energies of the workforce. Local councillors were eventually persuaded that these Upper Dens factory buildings could be exploited for the benefit of the community by providing much needed inner-city housing.

Once the principle of conversion to housing had been accepted, the question of delivery had to be determined. The Council led discussions with the Scottish Development Agency and local Housing Associations to explore the use of compulsory purchase powers as a means of saving the building and securing its reuse. The threat of CPO prompted the owner of the site to enter negotiations with the consortium of Housing Associations. These





"Time has passed, but the enduring success of the Upper Dens development is testament to the importance of planners."

were successful and cleared the way for the development to proceed.

The 2.6 hectare industrial site was purchased by Hillcrest Housing Association in 1983 and developed in partnership with two other housing associations, Gowrie and Servite. The redevelopment of the giant mill complex was one of the largest urban regeneration projects in the UK. The

associations appointed local architects, Baxter Clark and Paul to design an overall scheme for the steeply sloping and terraced site. The site was developed with new build houses and flats ranging in height from one to eight storeys for a range of different household types and sizes.

The lower end of the site included the listed jute mill and this was converted to flats using its four floors and roof space. The overall scheme included a large public open space behind the mill. As the housing associations could not carry the cost of providing the public landscaping, the Scottish Development Agency funded this part of the scheme which featured the former mill stream and water retained at different levels.

The ground level open space centred on the cooling pond with further areas of open space created within the development at the upper level. To complement the development, a public art strategy was implemented. More recently these artworks became part of the City Centre Public Art Trail at its extreme north east. In turn, that has become part of the Stobswell Public Art Trail. The public artworks now look their age but with the cooperation of the lead Housing Association and the Stobswell Forum, the local neighbourhood representative structure, the artworks are to be refurbished.

Time has passed, but the enduring success of the Upper Dens development is testament to the importance of planners setting a vision and leading the development of strong partnerships to secure high quality place-making. SP

This article was written with input from Gregor Hamilton, Head of Planning & Economic Development (City Development) at Dundee City Council

Planning for all: A Perspective on the Journey to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Machel Bogues, RTPI Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Manager, discusses the journey towards making planning more open, inclusive and accessible.

he late, great African American writer, activist, and thinker James Baldwin wrote in a 1962 essay for *The New York Times*: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." It is a quote that challenges us to look honestly at both the present and the challenges we face, while also critically reflecting on the past to understand how we have arrived at this moment.

Two hundred Scottish Planner issues over 37 years provide a near-perfect passage of time for such reflection – long enough to offer real value in looking back at how things have changed, yet recent enough that our collective memory has not been obscured by the mists of time.

Looking back at the first issue, one is immediately struck by the level of activity and interest in considering how planning and planners would need to respond to a changing Britain. Attention was given to reports published by the RTPI and RTPI Scotland on planning for multi-racial communities, though there was some disappointment that these 1983 reports had not found the audience they deserved.

There was also celebration of funding provided by the Equal Opportunities Commission for work on gender and planning, as well as support for the activities of The National Women and Planning Working Party in developing an understanding of "planning for the 52%."

Reflecting on that moment, one is left with the impression of a planning profession that was beginning to come to terms with the need for change. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the country was navigating a relatively new legislative landscape. The introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 led to the formation of the Equal Opportunities Commission, while the Race

Relations Act 1976 sought to address racial discrimination. Alongside these legislative shifts there was increasing activism, with campaigns for feminist housing, safe spaces for women and action against rape in marriage. Additionally, the 1981 uprisings of Black British youth in Brixton (London), Toxteth (Liverpool), Handsworth (Birmingham), Chapeltown (Leeds), and Moss Side (Manchester) were prompted, in part, by the aggressive use of stop-and-search tactics by the police.

"Looking back at the first issue of The Scottish Planner, one is immediately struck by the level of activity and interest in considering how planning and planners would need to respond to a changing Britain."

Where Are We Now?

Since the first issue of the Scottish Planner was published, work around gender in planning has continued. In 2003, the RTPI produced a <u>Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit</u> though this is now rarely used. In <u>2020</u> and <u>2021</u> the RTPI published in two parts research on Women and Planning. These papers revealed that women in the profession still feel their opportunities for promotion are limited due to their gender, and close to half reported experiencing sexist or inappropriate comments at work.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. The National Women and Planning Working Party has been replaced by <u>Women in Planning</u>, a vibrant national network that champions

gender equality across the profession.
Additionally, there is renewed interest in developing planning through a gendered lens, with contributions from WSP and Combined Yorkshire Authorities. In 2022 Glasgow became the first UK city to declare itself, in planning terms, a Feminist City. This energy is mirrored by demographic shifts within the profession. The RTPI's State of the Profession Report 2023 estimated that 40% of planners are now women, and RTPI membership continues to approach gender parity.

When it comes to race, the picture is similar. Much of the energy and effort from the 1980s and 1990s has not necessarily translated into long-term changes in practice, yet the demographics of the profession continue to evolve. The State of the Profession Report estimates that 5% of planners come from racialized backgrounds; RTPI membership compares favourably, with just under 10% of members identifying as African or Asian. The last five years has also seen the emergence of the BAME Planners Network who champion diversity and inclusion in the planning profession.

Looking Ahead

What, then, do we take away from this moment of reflection? It serves as a valuable reminder that change is a process – one that often unfolds gradually and unevenly. Since the first issue of the Scottish Planner, much has changed, particularly in terms of demographics. However, there is still work to be done to ensure these changes are not temporary. We must continue building on the progress made to develop lasting good practice. SP





MARGUERITE HUNTER BLAIR OBE, CEO at Play Scotland, and CHERIE MORGAN, Director of Projects at Play Scotland

MHOT TOPICS



PAMELA CLIFFORD MRTPI. Chief Planning Officer at East Avrshire Council and Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland

Empowering Play: Building a World-leading Framework for Children's Play in Scotland

Marguerite Hunter Blair OBE, CEO at Play Scotland, and **Cherie Morgan,** Director of Projects at Play Scotland. discuss the enhanced status of a child's right to play in decision making in Scotland since devolution.

lay Scotland is the national play organisation and children's charity founded to champion children's right to play under UNCRC Article 31. Formed in 1998, just before the opening of the Scottish Parliament, Play Scotland has worked closely with politicians from all political parties, public bodies, parents, practitioners and educators to improve and increase play experiences for every child.

Children have an innate motivation to play, driven by their curiosity to explore and join in the world around them. Anyone who has observed children in supermarkets or on their way to school will have noticed that children can and do play everywhere and anywhere. But it falls to adults to ensure the provision of spaces and opportunities that meet the needs of children of all ages. abilities, interests and cultures.

In 2007 Play Scotland convened the Scottish Play Commission. It heard evidence and compiled a state of play report which raised the profile of the importance of play and the need to plan strategically for play. At the launch

of the Play Commission recommendations in the Scottish Parliament (2008), the Minister for Children and Young People, Adam Ingram MSP, announced a £4 million fund to strengthen the play sector. This was the first significant funding for play in Scotland and was warmly welcomed by the sector. However, it was vital to continue the campaign for a national play strategy and national measures to



children in supermarkets or have noticed that children

help local authorities assess and improve children's play opportunities, for accessibility, affordability, inclusion, quality and children's satisfaction. A petition calling

for a statutory duty for play was launched in 2012, and Play Scotland was called to give evidence to the Petitions Committee at the Parliament. This led to the development of the Play Strategy for Scotland Vision and Action

The Play Strategy called for all children and young people to have sufficient time and space to play within their community and

contact with nature in their everyday lives. It was clear in the Action Plan that consideration needed to be given to the planning and design of public spaces to support clean, safe and welcoming spaces for children and young people to gather and play near their homes.

Building on the Play Strategy, Play Scotland continued to campaign for a legal duty for play sufficiency in planning and children's participation in placemaking.

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced a legal duty on local Planning Authorities to ensure the engagement and empowerment of children and young people in planning for play opportunities. This legal framework for play in planning was further strengthened by the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 which provides a legal duty for play.

The national spatial strategy, National Planning Framework 4, also recognises the importance of planning for play, with Policy 21 intended to encourage, promote and facilitate spaces and opportunities for play, recreation

Alongside these exciting developments in realising children's rights to play, Play Scotland was asked to Chair and collaborate in the development of 'The Play Vision Statement and Action Plan 2025 - 2030'. You can download the full Action Plan and the children's version from the Scottish Government website. Building on the Play Strategy 2013, it aims for play opportunities for all children by 2030. Founded on a Play Theory of Change, the three primary drivers are: Places: Parents: Practitioners.

So in 2025, Scotland can now boast it has a world-leading legal framework for play. Having partnered with local authorities in delivering the first Play Sufficiency Assessments in Scotland, Play Scotland is thrilled to see the impact of these policies as they enable and listen to children and young people's voices on plans to improve their play opportunities and the places where they live. SP

uring recent decades the corporate It was seen that having a Chief Planning presence of planning within local Officer at the top table could help provide a authorities has weakened. That long-term vision and deliver on the Council's was until the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 Strategic Plan objectives and priorities. This introduced a provision that each planning influence and involvement at the corporate authority in Scotland must have a Chief level was one of the key aspects that Planning Officer. RTPI Scotland was attracted me to the new role.

> Having been in the post for almost a year, a key part of my role has been to ensure that planning is at the forefront of local authority planning and investment plans, positioning planning as an enabler and influencer of corporate priorities in terms of place-making, economic growth, infrastructure delivery and health and wellbeing outcomes. Some of the

> > real strengths of the role are about making connections, seeing the bigger picture and being able to influence and shape strategic development proposals such as the Avrshire Growth Deal or the UK investment in the Palace Theatre. These have been valuable skills to add to corporate

decisions, together with establishing good working relationships with other Senior Officers. Being part of the fortnightly meeting of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) helps to further strengthen this, helping to ensure that the Council takes planning and place into account when making strategic decisions about investment, asset management, resources and integrated service delivery. When budgets are being cut or resources divided out, a planning voice on CMT is critical; planning can deliver major cost savings for Councils, by understanding the spatial implications of decisions made in other services, and through the adoption of







preventative interventions associated with place-making.

A Chief Planning Officer should be about ideas, innovation and conversation. A force of energy lifting people's eyes to the stars and asking, "What is this place going to look like?" SP

The Chief Planning Officer: A Force for Good

Pamela Clifford MRTPI, Chief Planning Officer at East Ayrshire Council and Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland, reflects on the essential role Chief Planning Officers play within local authorities, and how their seat at the top table contributes to better decision-making, collaboration and place-making.

an experienced planner at the top table in better informed planning

- ensuring that the spatial decisions and making the

or too late down the line. East Ayrshire Council was one of the first Councils to embrace the new Chief Planning Officer role, led by their Chief Executive Eddie Fraser. A new Chief Planning Officer post was created at a Senior Officer level to form part of the Corporate Management Team.

of Chief Planning Officers in local authorities

brings an important opportunity to provide a

holistic overview for proactive planning and

place-leadership and support the ambitions

behind NPF4's Place and Town Centre First

Principles. It encourages other service areas

think about planning first as opposed to last.

and other professionals within Councils to

fundamental in promoting and lobbying for

the introduction of Chief Planning Officers

Planning Bill's process through Parliament.

Restoring the status of the Chief Planning

emphasise the multiple benefits of having

in the lead up to and throughout the

Officer in local authorities helps to

local authorities.

- ensuring that the

spatial implications

authority functions

thus making better

informed planning

making the system

The appointment

are considered,

decisions and

more effective.

Planners are

collaborators

of other local

20 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland Scottish Planner | Issue 200 21



HEATHER CLARIDGE MRTPI, Director of Design at Architecture and Design Scotland

MHOT TOPICS



NIAMH COYNE, Graduate Planner at Highland Council

Home at the Heart: Town Centre Living Agenda

Heather Claridge MRTPI, Director of Design at Architecture and Design Scotland, discusses the remarkable benefits of town centre living, the obstacles faced by its proponents, and the important ongoing work to encourage more people to embrace living in the heart of their towns and cities.

decade on from the introduction of the 'town centre first' principle. Scotland continues to focus on its town centres in decision-making. Yet, the stark reality of thousands of shop closures including many larger retailers in the last few years - coupled with the lingering effects of a post-pandemic landscape underscores the urgent need for a refreshed approach to town centre regeneration. The imperative is clear: breathe life back into our town and city centres and attract more residents. This is the very essence of Scotland's town centre living agenda, a key component of the National Planning Framework 4, and the local living principles.

The agenda goes beyond mere economic revitalisation, it is about social and environmental outcomes. As highlighted by a joint study from Scottish Futures Trust (SFT), Scottish Land Commission (SLC) and Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS), investing in town centre housing can trigger a powerful ripple effect: enhanced safety, vibrancy, resource efficiency and local business growth. But what truly makes town centre living appealing? And how do we cultivate these desirable spaces?

Research undertaken for SFT in 2022 reveals several 'push and pull' factors influencing people's choice of where to live. These include proximity to work and study, the quality of the physical environment, access to green spaces, diverse services and transport options, and high-quality housing. Conversely, issues like pollution, crime, and perceived safety can act as significant deterrents.

To delve deeper into these issues and explore examples of completed town centre living projects, the Scottish Government commissioned a series of roadshows in early 2024, managed by Scotland's Towns Partnership in collaboration with SFT, SLC and A&DS. These roadshows, held across Scotland,



"investing in town centre housing can trigger a powerful ripple effect: enhanced safety, vibrancy, resource efficiency and local business growth."

served as a platform for sharing best practices in repurposing buildings and sites and exploring new opportunities. With over 25 examples of town centre living projects presented, stakeholders and practitioners engaged in discussions and shared insights about barriers, practical advice and exemplars.

From the discussions, five key themes emerged that are important to the success of the town centre living agenda. The first theme, 'leadership and collaboration', is required for strong partnerships between the public, private, and third sectors. Secondly, 'holistic planning and placemaking' was highlighted to ensure approaches are tailored to reflect the unique character and needs of each place and community. The third theme.

'funding and resources', emphasised the importance of combining diverse funding and investment models. Fourthly, 'local engagement and partnerships' came through as a key component for building trust and ensuring that projects reflect communities' characteristics. The final theme, 'risk mitigation', identified the need for innovative fiscal levers, policy tools, and a shared vision which enables projects.

Further insights were gathered from conversations held in autumn 2024 by A&DS and SFT, focusing on private sector perspectives. These interviews, with leading developers, underscored the importance of nationally aligned policy frameworks, public investment in infrastructure such as public realm, transport and utilities, and streamlined planning processes. Interviewees also highlighted the multiple benefits of encouraging town centre housing, including economic growth, social wellbeing, climate action and environmental sustainability.

However, significant barriers remain. Smaller development companies (SMEs) struggle to secure financing, particularly in the early stages of projects. The complexities of constrained urban environments and retrofitting increase costs and discourage contractors. Creative funding models, such as joint ventures and shared-risk contracts, were identified as potential solutions to some of these challenges. Additionally, the removal or reduction of development levies and tax burdens could incentivise the repurposing of vacant spaces.

Overall, it is clear that the town centre living agenda will remain a priority in Scotland, particularly in the context of the national housing emergency. Looking ahead ten years, with a sustained effort to implement the five success themes, and the use of new planning mechanisms like masterplan consent areas, it is hoped more people will call town centres "home". SP

The Environmental Impacts of Onshore Wind Development: The Shortcomings and Future Role of Habitat Management Plans

Niamh Coyne, Graduate Planner at Highland Council, discusses the research she conducted during her MSc City Planning at the University of Glasgow, examining the impact of renewable energy on the natural environment and biodiversity, and why bolstering Habitat Management Plans might be part of the solution.



t the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2019, Greta Thunberg declared – 'Our house in on fire'.

These words continue to resonate today as we face the global climate crisis. At the same time, there is increasing recognition that the climate crisis is inextricably linked with the global biodiversity crisis, and both require joint action.

In Scotland, onshore windfarms play a vital role in tackling the climate crisis, displacing the need for fossil fuels and reaching the Scottish Government's ambitious target for net-zero by 2045. But scientific evidence indicates onshore windfarms can cause negative environmental impacts, for example, on habitats such as peatlands and bird species through habitat loss, displacement and collision mortality.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is vital in the consenting process for onshore windfarms to ensure significant environmental effects are either avoided or minimised in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) have become key to delivering mitigation and compensation for the environmental impacts onshore windfarms can cause. As Scotland seeks to address the twin climate and nature crises, HMPs offer important opportunities to deliver meaningful action on the ground for biodiversity.

Through my master's research I found that despite the widespread development of onshore windfarms in Scotland in recent decades, there is a fundamental lack of monitoring and reporting for onshore windfarms to identify, and respond to, the environmental impacts they cause. My findings were based on interviews

with key stakeholders involved in the consenting process, including windfarm development companies, environmental consultants, planners in local planning authorities (LPAs), and NatureScot.

I found that while some developers carry out monitoring and reporting to a high standard, others fall short of this. This leads to piecemeal monitoring that is rarely done independently, and an absence of reporting. As a consequence, under-resourced statutory organisations struggle to properly enforce breaches of planning conditions.

"We desperately need renewable energy, but this must not be to the detriment of biodiversity

Policy Reform

NPF4 includes greater recognition of the dual climate and nature crises, but policy continues to emphasise support for renewables. My research found HMPs could be undermined if environmental impacts are not adequately considered prior to consent. Although planning conditions are an effective tool for determining authorities to exercise control, conditions can have a limited impact if their wording is not carefully drafted by planners. Equally, developers need to be willing to deliver commitments to a high standard, with varying approaches to delivery found in practice.

Stakeholder Participation

My research found the dynamics of power within current practice is often not equally distributed among key actors. Due to limited resources, statutory organisations have limited capacity to ensure developers uphold high environmental standards and have accountability. Due to the closed loop created by contractual relationships, my research revealed private developers often have power to control what is reported from onsite activities to the LPAs.

The influence of private landownership

The divides between private and public entities were also found to negatively impact the effectiveness of HMPs to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by onshore windfarms. Discussions undertaken as part of the research revealed that, in practice, windfarm developers are beholden to the private interests of landowners, which can undermine the delivery of environmental impact mitigation measures.

Conclusions

We desperately need renewable energy, but this must not be to the detriment of biodiversity. My research revealed flaws in present practices, which questions the ability of the Scottish Government to truly deliver commitments for climate and nature. If we are to have any chance of meeting net-zero and addressing unprecedented biodiversity loss, NPF4 is a critical opportunity to tackle the dual crises and must be pursued by all stakeholders involved in the consenting process for onshore windfarms.

For HMPs to function well in practice, independent monitoring and reporting is essential to embed transparency during the post-consent phase, as well as to improve landowner engagement, make the case for adequate resourcing for statutory organisations, and initiate cultural shift which recognises the vital role and responsibility of onshore wind in tackling both the climate and nature crises. SP

22 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland



TIM STOTT MRTPI, Principal Planner at Highland Council

CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200

Highlands' Past, Present and Future

Tim Stott MRTPI. Principal Planner at Highland Council. reflects on the Scottish Planner's first edition, the challenges it foresaw for the Highland region in 1988. and how these stack up with today's reality.

lanning at its heart is about shaping a better future. However, agreeing. predicting and securing that optimum future has been keeping planners busy since 1988 when the first edition of the Scottish Planner was published. This edition included an article titled "Focus on Highland Region". Almost 37 years on, it is illuminating to reflect on what Highland planners in 1988 thought were the key issues facing the area and how they would be tackled. This past may offer useful lessons for Highland's future as today's planners prepare its first new-style local development plan and handle an unprecedented surge in renewable energy related planning applications.

Farsighted predictions

Perhaps the most prescient comment in the 1988 article was that "changes in technology and communications" would make Highland "more accessible in many ways". With gigabit speed digital connectivity scheduled to spread across the populous parts of Highland within the next 3 years, accessibility to employment. shopping, healthcare and other facilities is being improved without the need to travel, helping counter the area's relative peripherality to the rest of Scotland and the UK. Technology has also transformed how the development industry and public engage with planners. It is now far quicker and easier to comment on a planning application or a planning policy document, although many would argue that the increased number and complexity of documents associated with an application or local development plan have eroded that benefit.

Plus ca change

More predictably, Highland is still the largest local planning authority in Scotland and home to a large part of Scotland's cultural and natural heritage. Highland still has a good track record of development plan production and development management case performance. despite the planning system increasing in complexity and Council RTPI Member numbers remaining similar to those in 1988.

Similarly, a debate persists about how to decentralise decision making. We now have a Scottish Government and a National Planning Framework that applies a more centralised approach to major planning decisions.



Planner edition of 2062 Highland planners of 2025.'

Some Highlanders disagree with this change and even within Highland some strive to decentralise more planning decisions to the 8 former district council areas that covered the Highland Regional Council area prior to 1996. Local interest in and influence on planning decisions is still strong but now less expressed via village hall meetings. Instead, these are channelled through online campaigns, councillor inboxes and local place plans (with 8 registered to date in Highland, and many more in preparation).

We are still dealing with large scale

industrial development applications but instead of the coastal super-quarry referenced in the 1988 article, it is now major port related development associated with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project. Our primary resource industries including aquaculture, agriculture and forestry have evolved, but the issues they raise are similar: notably the tension between the often-conflicting future desired outcomes of economic development and heritage conservation. The 1988 article referenced the then completed "total reconstruction of the A9 from Perth to Invergordon". We and many others now await the total dualling of that route and other parts of the national transport network within Highland.

Unpredictable events

1988 planners didn't predict the importance of climate change and biodiversity and the transition from nuclear and fossil fuels to a renewable led energy industry. Large scale variations in net migration also continue to hamper the foresight of Highland planners. With little difference between local birth and death rates, planning for growth depends upon predicting future net migration trends. Events such as expansion of the EU, Brexit and then a global pandemic have challenged the accuracy of such predictions.

Lessons for the future

So, what lessons can we learn from the last 37 years? Shaping a better future requires planners to exercise evidence-led foresight but also flexibility to unforeseen circumstances. Should we plan for the retreat from our flood affected coastal settlements? Should we allow Al to have a greater role in plan and case report writing? Will nuclear fusion technology have made our wind turbines industrial relics? Will travel increase again as guicker, more sustainable mode technologies become available? I wonder what the Scottish Planner edition of 2062 will have to say about the Highland planners of 2025. SP

*Disclaimer - the views expressed in this article are from the individual perspective of the author and should not be taken as the collective view of the Highland Council

MHOT TOPICS



IRENE REALITYMAN ERTPL Place & Wellbeing Partnership Lead at the Improvement Service & Public Health Scotland

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme:

Enhancing Health and Equity in Scotland's Communities

Irene Beautyman FRTPI, Place & Wellbeing Partnership Lead at the Improvement Service & Public Health Scotland, discusses the Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme's place-based approach to improving wellbeing, reducing inequity and creating thriving community spaces.

he Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme supported a transformative approach to enhancing health and equity in Scotland's communities. By focusing on the integral relationship between place and wellbeing. and through collaborative efforts with local project towns, the Programme supported decision makers to create environments where all individuals can thrive, thereby improving the overall health of Scotland's population and the planet.

The Programme was a collaborative initiative between the Improvement Service and Public Health Scotland, Funded by The Health Foundation and the Scottish Government, the Programme changed collective approaches to the places where people live, work, and play, enabling partnership-based, wide-ranging action at a local level. With funding coming to an end in 2024, the time is right to reflect on its legacy for others to use.

Programme Objectives and Approach

The Programme supported the three key elements of every place-based approach:

- 1. Understanding local experiences: how to gather and communicate quantitative and qualitative data on inequalities to know what people in an area are experiencing.
- 2. Knowing the features of place we need to get right: promoting the established research and evidence on the characteristics every place needs to enable those using it to thrive. These characteristics, known as the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, provide a consistent and comprehensive Scotland-wide set of outcomes for all places.
- 3. Informing decision-making: considering the impact of decisions on both local people and their places through tools like Place and

Wellbeing Assessments, which guide placebased decision-making around specific plans, policies, or proposals.

Implementation in Project Towns

Over three years, the programme worked with seven project towns to stimulate and support action at local, network, and national levels:

- Alloa
- Avr
- Dunoon Clvdebank
- Fraserburgh
- Rutherglen

The Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme's approach is anchored in the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. These Outcomes highlight the importance of everyone considering their impact on how those experiencing inequity access good quality Movement, Spaces, Resources, Civic life and Stewardship.

Impact and Learning

The Programme captured learning on how to follow and embed the place-based approach through local action, sharing this knowledge through visual resources, "how to" guides, impact stories, and blogs.

But our high-level learnings are just as important; no one profession or sector can deliver a place-based approach to improving wellbeing. In my opinion, however, the Planning Profession is well placed to lead. And to lead not purely through Local Development Plans but by stepping up to support other practitioners to consider the contribution of place when delivering their own ambitions through decisions and policy. Supporting Housing Plans, Local Outcome Improvement Plans, Health and Social Care Strategies (this list goes on) to understand

Below: Place and wellbeing outcomes



"no one profession or place-based approach to placed to lead."

the impact of place. Using the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes as a consistent framework in decision-making supports the creation of healthier, more equitable, and sustainable communities across Scotland.

For a deeper understanding of the programme's approach, its implementation in project towns and access to the tools and resources to support you to take a place based approach, you can visit our website where you will also find our dedicated Masterclass Webinar series. SP



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



ANNE MCCALL MRTPL Director at RSPB Scotland and RTPI Young Planner of the Year

Future Planners. Skills & Education

This section of the 200th issue celebrates our Scottish Young Planners, their past achievements and future aspirations. We also reflect on Scotland's planning education, with articles from four Universities in Scotland that offer planning degrees.

- 27 From National Parks to National Awards and Beyond: Reflections from a Former RTPI Young Planner of the Year
- Shaping Tomorrow's Scotland with the Scottish Young Planners' Network
- Meet our Future Planners: 2024 Bursary Recipients
- Dusting off the Cobwebs: The Origins and Ambitions of the Scottish Young Planners' Network
- Neurodiversity in Planning: Perspectives from a Young Planner
- RTPI Scotland's Intern Project Officers: Where Are They Now?
- Landmarks and Milestones: Reflections of a Soon to Be Not-So-'Young Planner'
- **Education for Everyone**
- **Change and Opportunity in Planning Education:** A Heriot-Watt Perspective
- Planning Education at the University of Glasgow: A New Era in a Long Tradition
- Leading the Way: A Plethora of Planning Opportunities at the University of Dundee
- **UWS Launches Scotland's First Workplace BSc** (Hons) Town Planning Programme



Anne McCall MRTPI, Director at RSPB Scotland and RTPI Young Planner of the Year in 2002, describes her journey into planning and offers her reflections on the profession since winning this prestigious award.

t's always flattering, and a bit daunting, to be asked to reflect on your own career. It makes you feel both appreciated and, frankly, like you're getting a bit old. All the more so when you're asked to reflect on winning the Young Planner of the Year Award in 2002.

As Director of RSPB Scotland I'm enormously fortunate to be able to do a job I love, surrounded by passionate colleagues and enthusiastic volunteers, but when I left school to head off to university I had absolutely no idea this is where I'd end up. It was the opportunity to complete an internship based primarily in the State of Maine Planning Department in the US that helped set me on a planning career path. Being able to work in Acadia National Park and being horrified by some of the strip development surrounding it helped focus my attention on how to use the planning system to deliver better environmental outcomes.

Following a post-graduate MSc from Heriot Watt and a couple of years with North Lanarkshire Council I felt I'd found my feet in the world of planning and wanted to really use my skills to drive positive environmental change. I'm forever grateful that RSPB Scotland chose that moment to recruit a fulltime planning officer and that they offered that role to me. It opened up the opportunity to work with RTPI Scotland and in time become the Scottish Convenor, it also enabled me to chair the Scottish Environment LINK planning group and sit on the RTPI UK Assembly. My early 30s were busy but full of amazing opportunities to meet inspirational people from across the UK and work with Birdlife Partners from across Europe



enormously flattering, but my passion around the system can and should play

I had no idea my colleague (and former National Director of RTPI Scotland) Craig McLaren had nominated me for the Young Planner of the Year Award, which at the time I think was decided by voting members. so it came as an enormous and wonderful surprise to find out I'd won. I recently found a photograph of the fantastic awards event in London with me standing holding the quite large, framed certificate. I recall that it had started snowing heavily during the ceremony so when I had to leave and get the train back to Edinburgh the staff kindly

found me something to put it in so it didn't get damaged, unfortunately it was a large, black bin bag - perhaps not the treatment it

Winning the Award was enormously flattering, but it also served to galvanise my passion around the critical role our planning system can and should play in helping to protect and enhance our environment. I've moved up through the organisation but remain close to our work on proposed developments and spatial planning - with a current focus on the offshore wind sector and biodiversity enhancement.

There have been some low points, such as taking part in the Public Inquiry into the Trump golf course proposal - not planning's finest hour. The SSSI has been ruined, the mitigation didn't work, and the promised investment/ economic benefits failed to materialise. Learning lessons from our mistakes is often more important than our successes and I dearly hope this is considered by those determining the second Coul Links golf course inquiry.

Winning the Young Planner of the Year Award undoubtedly gave me an enormous boost. It may be one of the reasons I've been so delighted to see the growth and success of RSPB's Nature of Scotland Awards - where we recognise and celebrate people and projects doing amazing things for nature. I'd encourage everyone to consider whether they'd like to submit a nomination - you have no idea what it might help achieve! SP

CELEBRATING ISSUE №200 CELEBRATING ISSUE №200 **SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025**



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



IAN SCOTT MRTPI, Senior Planning Consultant at Ryden and Member of the Scottish Young Planners' Network Steering Group

Shaping Tomorrow's Scotland with the Scottish Young Planners' Network

Ian Scott MRTPI, Senior Planning Consultant at Ryden and Member of the Scottish Young Planners' Network Steering Group, discusses his experience on the Steering Group and the immense value the network can bring to early career planners in Scotland.

s the Scottish Planner reaches its landmark 200th edition, I am honoured to write an article on behalf of the Scottish Young Planners' Network (SYPN), I have been a member of the SYPN Steering Group since 2022, working alongside far brighter minds to represent and engage with the roughly 300 people across Scotland who are in the first 10 years of their planning careers.

It was 2017, in my first year of working as a planner, when I went to my first Scottish Young Planners' Conference. I made my way to Stirling early in the morning alongside then-colleagues from Aberdeenshire Council. All but one of them (my senior officer) were from other teams and as unfamiliar as the people I would meet later that day. I was just 22 years old and had been in the job for about 6 months, still relatively fresh out of university and very much finding my feet. That nervous critter had no idea that in just a few years' time he'd be helping to organise these conferences and other SYPN events, nor did he think that some of those people and others down the line would form a network of friends around the country.

I describe this reflection in the third person because it feels strange thinking back to the awkward mix of shyness, uncertainty

and impostor syndrome that I had, like so many young people starting out in their first professional job. At the start of your planning career, you often approach your work and its purpose differently than more established colleagues, and this also depends on where you work. To that end, the SYPN has played an important part in my early career. It has been a valuable resource in meeting peers across different subsectors and parts of the country, allowing for discussion and debate from a variety of perspectives. Besides helping me learn and upskill, hearing from established professionals at conferences and other events throughout my early career has given me a bearing on different opportunities within planning and a broader understanding of what our profession is. On a personal note, the networking opportunities have helped to build my professional confidence, learn from my peers' experiences and make new friends. I've been fortunate to meet some former members of SYPN from across its history and



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



I know this story will seem familiar to many. One of those people, who I need to thank, is the senior officer I went to Stirling with in 2017. He was a member of the SYPN Steering Group back then and strongly encouraged me to get involved - so I did!

Looking ahead, there's no denving that this is a challenging time for the profession in Scotland. Difficult market and policy conditions have put a strain on those of us who work in the private sector, while my public sector peers are facing a dire budgetary situation. The same now seems to apply to the academic institutions that are the key to maintaining our professional pipeline. In that context, I think it would be very easy for someone starting out in their planning career to feel pessimistic or at least anxious about the future, adding to the type of nervousness I've just described from my own career. To address this, we all have a part to play in advocating for the profession and its future. The SYPN clearly has a leading stewardship role as a dynamic and important resource for emerging planning professionals in Scotland.

Our members have been working for several years to raise the profile of the SYPN within the framework of the RTPI and wider profession and have established a platform that I implore you to use if you are a young planner (or future planner) in Scotland and haven't done so already. If you're a more "well-seasoned" planner reading this who has colleagues that are just starting out, or if you teach planning students, then your good deed for the day is to tell them about the SYPN! Far from being a shameless self-plug, if you're a planner in Scotland in the first 10 years of your career, the SYPN is your network. The greater and more diverse the level of involvement, the more we will be able to do to support young planners in shaping tomorrow's Scotland.

For more information, go to our section of the RTPI website. You can join our mailing list or provide suggestions to the Steering Group by emailing sypn@rtpi.org.uk SP







FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION

Meet our Future Planners:

2024 Bursary Recipients

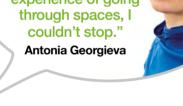
In 2024, RTPI Scotland secured funding from the Scottish Government to grant bursaries to ten planning students in Scotland. Antonia Georgieva, Beth Pennycook, and Tomás Coelho. Bursary Recipients at the University of Glasgow, and **Euan McIntosh,** Bursary Recipient at the University of Dundee. discuss their experience of studying planning, and how the bursary is helping them prepare for their future careers.

What prompted you to study planning?

ANTONIA GEORGIEVA: After graduating with an Environmental Sciences degree in 2017, one of the first roles I had was as a policy officer working on Strategic Environmental Assessments within the Scottish Government's Planning and Architecture Division. This was when I started seeing policy not only as a strategic framework but as a powerful tool with a tangible spatial dimension. It introduced me to the concept of 'place' and what could make a 'place' feel a certain way. My main interest was previously the natural environment and how it was being influenced by climate change; now I was considering impacts on people and their connection to their surroundings. Once I started noticing how planning and urban design influenced my experience of going through spaces, I couldn't stop. A few years passed, and I finally decided to study planning as a way to deepen my understanding of the subject and potentially pursue a career change.

BETH PENNYCOOK: My interest in planning began at a young age after an intervention from built environment professionals at my high school. I initially chose to study geography at an undergraduate level to keep my career options broad, but planning continued to pique my interest. Whenever

"Once I started noticing how planning and urban design influenced my experience of going through spaces, I couldn't stop."



possible, I incorporated city-related topics into my coursework, drawn to the complexities of socio-spatial relations. Pursuing this passion as a career felt like both a natural and the right choice, affirmed by receiving this bursary.

TOMÁS COELHO: I have been passionate about city planning and urban design in one form or another since I was in school - however at the time. I didn't know it was called planning and that I could have a career in it! Moving to Glasgow for my engineering undergraduate degree introduced me to the challenges that cities have faced historically and still face now. My curiosity to learn turned into a desire to make a positive difference through designing and creating better places for everyone, which led me to the planning sector and to study planning.

EUAN MCINTOSH: While reflecting on the lack of housing, the challenges faced by tenants and landlords in the private rental sector. and the inconsistencies in infrastructure and transport across the UK, my partner suggested that pursuing a career in planning could be a way to contribute to meaningful change. This conversation, in April 2024, prompted me to explore planning as a field where I could make a positive impact.

What have you gained (or achieved) so far since commencing your studies?

ANTONIA GEORGIEVA: The thing I have appreciated most is having structured learning and a well-curated reading list to take me on my planning journey, as well as workshop-based classes where I can explore real-life planning scenarios. Coming into the programme, I was particularly interested in transport but am now definitely falling down multiple rabbit holes - from housing to greenspace design!

BETH PENNYCOOK: Since beginning my studies. I have felt immersed in the fast-paced and diverse planning environment. I have significantly advanced my professional skills through training and assessment in report writing, residual valuation, group presentations, and Vu.City software. Additionally, I have gained extensive industry and market knowledge, reinforced through interactions with professionals - both as guest speakers in our course and through networking opportunities we have been invited to.

TOMÁS COELHO: Studying planning has greatly expanded my knowledge of the different roles that make up the planning sector. I have learned further about the importance of community collaboration in planning and the many ways this can be achieved. The programme has increased my knowledge of

planning legislation in Scotland and given me chances to critically analyse it against legislation in other countries. It has also introduced me to the requirements from different stakeholders that planners must balance. Further, I have met

and made friends with some great people in my courses where we have shared our different perspectives to create a productive learning environment.

> "I am deeply grateful for this support and am excited about the prospect of contributing to the public sector."

Euan McIntosh

EUAN

MCINTOSH: Since commencing my studies, I have been fortunate to attend the RTPI Conference in October 2024, which provided invaluable insights into the field. Additionally, I participated in a drop-in session with Susie Stirling, Head of Placemaking and Design at the Scottish Government, alongside fellow bursary recipients. This session allowed us to share our backgrounds, aspirations, and experiences while learning about the Scottish Government's commitment to fostering collaborative and informed participation in planning.



How has the bursary helped you?

ANTONIA GEORGIEVA: The bursary has enabled me to reduce my working hours which has allowed me to have the headspace to take on the programme, and as a consequence reduced stress and helped my mental health. Without the bursary, I might have further delayed pursuing planning.

BETH PENNYCOOK: The bursary made pursuing my MSc financially viable, allowing me to enrol in my preferred course, which supports specialisation in the housing sector, without the burden of commuting costs. Beyond financial support, it reinforced my confidence

in my abilities by affirming that the RTPI believe in my potential to succeed. This encouragement has strengthened my sense of belonging and support in the field.

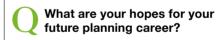
FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION

TOMÁS COELHO: The bursary has given me financial security during my postgraduate degree which has allowed me to focus on my studies. With the bursary, I have also been able to attend RTPI events such as the Scotland Annual Conference in Clydebank which was a fantastic opportunity to meet some of the wonderful people working

in the planning sector, learning about their experiences and taking with me their valuable advice. Visiting the Scottish Government offices and their planning department has been another highlight that I am grateful for the bursary providing.

EUAN MCINTOSH: The Future Planners Bursary has been instrumental in alleviating financial concerns related to tuition and has enabled me to access essential software to support my studies and future career. I am deeply grateful for this support and am excited about the prospect of contributing

to the public sector after completing my studies.



ANTONIA GEORGIEVA: Transport still remains my main interest - the degree I'm currently doing offers a Transport Pathway which I'll be able to take next year (as I'm studying part time) and which I'm very excited about. I would love to work in the transport space one day and help make sure we all live in places where we feel able to reach our destination or simply be walking, wheeling or cycling - in a way which feels safe, accessible and enjoyable.

BETH PENNYCOOK: I look forward to working in practice and undertaking the APC process to gain chartership. I recognise that transitioning from an academic student to a planning role will come with challenges, so I am proactively strengthening my skills through voluntary work and sought-out experience. My aim is to become an impactful and approachable young planner in Scotland. It would be a privilege to contribute to

"I hope to continue learning about how planning can improve people's lives while caring for our environment."

Tomás Coelho

meaningful projects and drive positive change on the national scale.

TOMÁS COELHO: I hope to continue learning about how planning can improve people's lives while caring for our environment, and I hope that my career gives me the opportunity to demonstrate this development and put this learning into practice. I have a wide range of interests within planning, from urban design and policy making to improving social mobility and opportunity equality, so I hope that in my future planning career I will be making a positive difference in one or more of those areas. If I succeed in that, I believe I will have a very fulfilling career in planning.

EUAN MCINTOSH: At an RTPI mixer in December 2024. I was inspired by seasoned professionals whose enduring passion for planning reaffirmed my enthusiasm for the sector. It was a powerful reminder of the opportunities planning offers, and I only wish I had discovered this path sooner. As I embark on my second semester, I look forward to the exposure to theoretical planning concepts and exploring routes toward sustainable urban design in preparation for my dissertation this summer. SP

"Pursuing this passion as a career felt like both a natural and the right choice, affirmed by receiving this bursarv."

Beth Pennycook



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



FIONA CLANDILLON MRTPI. Head of Development at Midlothian Council and former Chair of the Scottish Young Planners' Network

FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION

lanning has been a constant theme

throughout my life, from growing

to studying architectural technology, and

spatial planning. My perspective on spaces

transform lives. As we mark both the 200th

Acceptance Month, it is the perfect time to

explore how embracing neurodiversity can

My interest in planning began during my

undergraduate studies, where I explored spatial

analysis through an architectural lens. This

experience deepened my understanding of

how spaces are created and highlighted how

neurodiversity is often overlooked in the design

process. I believe that inclusive design has the

potential to transform how people engage with

their environments, and I have seen first-hand

neurodiversity within universities. This prompted

me to discover the Neurodiversity in Planning

integrating neurodiversity into various aspects

network, which offers valuable guidance on

of planning. Despite this, I still recognised a

significant gap in the support available for

the significant difference it can make.

Throughout my studies, I became

increasingly aware of the lack of focus on

issue of the Scottish Planner and Autism

later completing a master's degree in

and places has been shaped by my

understanding of how planning can

neurodiversity, influencing my

strengthen our profession.

up on the west coast of Scotland,

Neurodiversity in Planning:

unlock potential and increase inclusivity in the profession.

Darius Jack, recent planning graduate and Planning Improvement

Project Officer at the Improvement Service, discusses neurodiversity in

education, employment and planning, highlighting the opportunities to

Perspectives from a Young Planner



"My perspective on

spaces and places

has been shaped by

DARIUS JACK, planning graduate and Planning Improvement Project Officer at the Improvement Service

Dusting Off the Cobwebs: The Origins and Ambitions of the Scottish Young Planners' Network

Fiona Clandillon MRTPI, Head of Development at Midlothian Council and former Chair of the Scottish Young Planners' Network (SYPN), reflects on the SYPN's origins, past Scottish Young Planners' conferences and the valuable role early-career planners can play in advancing the profession.

he Scottish Young Planners' Network began as the Scottish Young Planners Group in 2003, when young planners were taking their first steps into a very different profession.

Looking back, it was pretty dusty, Literally, The first office I worked in as a graduate consultant was lined with shelves holding copies of the Local Plans that covered Scotland. Many were decades old and were as neglected as some of the places they referred to. Peeling apart the various statutory instruments from each other was a rite of passage.

The Royal Town Planning Institute also felt a little dusty. The young planners I met at university and in my early career had huge enthusiasm and ambition for how planning could shape the world for the better. We wanted to make sure that our passion for our profession and its potential was seen and heard. We also wanted to have more excuses to head to the pub ("to create a platform for communication") and somehow combine that with CPD.

And so, the Scottish Young Planners' Group was born, becoming the Scottish Young Planners' Network by 2006.

Its immediate strength was the combination of personalities and backgrounds that came together, across all sectors and interests. Our first Chair was Jim Kirkwood. who was confident, commercial and determined to get the group on a strong footing within the RTPI, while maintaining its own distinctive personality.

My memory of this period is sitting in the rather grand-feeling boardroom of RTPI Scotland in Melville Street debating what we wanted to do and why and getting a valuable education in institutional governance.



met at university and in enthusiasm and ambition shape the world for the

An early priority was to establish a means to bring young planners together from across Scotland to build a sense of togetherness while creating a space where we could learn and reflect on practice and policy that was geared to our early-career interests. This would become the Scottish Young Planners' Conference. We had to persuade the RTPI that this would complement their own annual conference and strengthen the organisation

Having successfully made our case, we then benefitted hugely from the support of the institution, as naturally we didn't actually know how to put together a conference. It was a steep learning curve.

memories of our conference in the National Museum of Scotland are one of sweaty panic as we lost delegates in a warren of rooms, real joy as the selection of speakers paid off with some inspirational presentations, and sheer adrenaline as I had the privilege of addressing delegates myself, which I used to full soapbox effect.

The re-making of the planning system was well underway at that stage and our conference led to a meeting with then Chief Planner Jim McKinnon and Johann Lamont, Deputy Director of Communities. Both recognised that a successful programme of reform had to take young planners with it as we would ultimately be driving the culture change that was central to moving the profession forward.

That lesson is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago. The energy and passion that early career planners bring to their work remains critical to positive change. The RTPI continues to recognise this. In return. the opportunity to step outside day-to-day preoccupations and engage in the big picture discussions that are happening

This works in everyone's favour as planning will never gather dust when young planners are in the room. SP

I was Chair of the group in 2006 and my

working with the RTPI offers young planners across the profession.

> neurodiverse students and graduates. After I graduated, I faced considerable difficulty securing employment. Sir Robert Buckland's Review of Autism Employment reports that neurodiverse individuals are twice as likely to be unemployed 15 months after graduation, with only 33 percent securing full-time roles. A recent report by Autistica highlights that

there is still much work to be done to make the recruitment process more inclusive.

In my experience, requests for reasonable adjustments are often viewed as an unfair advantage. Such misconceptions not only undermine the purpose of reasonable adjustments but also highlight a broader lack of understanding within the planning sector. However, I believe these challenges present an opportunity for the sector to lead by example, developing truly inclusive recruitment practices and unlocking the full potential of

influencing my neurodiverse talent. how planning can

Above: The RNIB London Office building was the first building in the UK to fully adopt the new BSI neurodiversity standard -BSI PAS 6493: Design for the Mind -Neurodiversity and the Built Environment - while also meeting good practice for accessibility and inclusion.

Research has shown that neurodivergent individuals bring valuable skills and innovative thinking. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, neurodiverse teams are 35 percent more productive, while Deloitte reports that inclusive organisations are 83

> percent more likely to meet innovation targets. The planning sector has a unique opportunity not only to become more neuroinclusive but also to actively welcome neurodivergent individuals into the profession.

RTPI Scotland's

findings highlight a clear need for up to 730 additional planners over the next 10 to 15 vears to meet the increasing demand. At the same time, many neurodiverse graduates continue to face significant challenges in securing employment, despite their potential to contribute to the profession. This represents a missed opportunity, as neurodiverse individuals can offer valuable perspectives in addressing the challenges facing planning. Planning has the potential to not only meet its workforce demands but also become more inclusive by embracing neurodiversity. I believe the profession can lead by example, highlighting the positive impact of becoming more neuroinclusive, which will not only benefit the profession but the communities it serves. SP

although many organisations offer support,



RTPI Scotland's Intern Project Officers: Where Are They Now?

The RTPI Scotland team has been privileged to welcome many student and graduate planners over the years in the role of Intern Project Officer. In this article, four of our past Interns reflect on their experience and how the role helped shaped their planning careers.



ANNE KRIPPLER MRTPI, Planning and Projects Officer at Planning Aid Scotland

I had the privilege of being an RTPI Project Intern in 2018/2019 during my final year studying BSc Urban Planning and Property Development. At the

time, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 was still the Planning Bill at Stage 2. My role involved attending weekly Local Government and Communities Committee meetings at Parliament, where MSPs voted on amendments to the Bill. I was responsible for drafting briefs on the implications of these amendments—a task that rapidly deepened my understanding of planning legislation. What started as a daunting maze of legal jargon quickly became familiar terrain.

The internship also opened doors to invaluable networking opportunities, allowing me to connect with planners across Scotland. These connections proved invaluable for my dissertation on the introduction of Local Place Plans. The role also helped me stand out professionally and secure a scholarship for the 4Cities MSc in Urban Studies, which took me to Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid.

Since then, I've worked at East Lothian Council in Planning and in Housing Strategy, where I developed a keen interest in the often complex relationship between housing and planning legislation. My

"The internship also opened doors to invaluable networking opportunities, allowing me to connect with planners across Scotland."

time at Glasgow
City Council
further broadened
my experience,
as I facilitated
diverse public
and stakeholder
engagement
sessions. Local
place planning

has been a recurring theme throughout my career. I am now excited to embark on a new role as Planning and Projects Officer at Planning Aid Scotland. This position brings me full circle, enabling me to work even more closely with the communities and legislation that first sparked my interest all those years ago.



DANIEL FAWCETT, Senior Adviser, New Towns Delivery & Implementation at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

I joined RTPI Scotland as an Intern Project Officer in late 2015, to support the organisation's work around the then-forthcoming 2016 Scottish Parliament Elections.

I had graduated from university a few months earlier and, if I am being totally honest, had struggled a little in the interim. I had discovered through my studies that I had a real head for policy work. I was keen to work in the public sector, but there were very few graduate-level opportunities available at that time.

Looking back, the role with RTPI Scotland turned out to be exactly what I wanted and needed, and really was an ideal first step in my career. I got to make use of my policy skills, writing and researching a series of papers on core planning topics that the RTPI then published on their website (a real honour!). But it also stretched me and forced me into situations

where I was less comfortable; speaking to members, talking through my work to the Executive Committee, even guest-editing an edition of the Scottish Planner when nobody

"the role with RTPI Scotland turned out to be exactly what I wanted and needed, and really was an ideal first step in my career."

else was available and deadlines were fast approaching. Most of this wouldn't have been possible without the friendly and supportive atmosphere in the office and the wider organisation, which definitely helped me feel confident about the demands of the role!

I was sad when my time ran out, but I moved on and joined the UK Civil Service. The work I did in the Intern Project Officer role was vital to getting my foot in that door. But moreover, the skills and experience I got, particularly around how to be flexible and open to new opportunities at work, continue to support me in my career to this day.

FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



NICK SPRINGTHORPE, Assistant Development Officer at Bath & North East Somerset Council

I was an intern from 2022-23 during my MSc City Planning at The University of Glasgow. Being an intern project officer was a fabulous opportunity to

see the inner workings of the planning system, assisting in thought leadership and evidence-based reporting, networking with planning professionals across Scotland (and the UK & world!), and working within a lovely team. It was an absolute privilege – and I'm especially grateful for the mentorship I received from Craig McLaren and Robbie Calvert. This provided me with the confidence and understanding of planning practice that stood me in great stead whilst I completed my Masters, and in entering my first job. A lot of change was happening in planning around then with the introduction of NPF4, which was an exciting time to be involved!

I took a leap of faith out of Scotland after university, starting out as a Graduate Planner with Arup in Bristol - working on a range of projects from nationally significant infrastructure, renewables, planning policy and some DM work - and in both the English and Welsh contexts. This gave me a great spread of experience that was all bolstered by the insight across the planning profession I got whilst at RTPI Scotland. However, I came to realise that my calling is more in regeneration and urban design, and have been really fortunate to land in my current role as an Assistant Regeneration Officer with Bath & North East Somerset Council, working across a wide range of creative placemaking, urban design and regeneration master-planning work. The spectre of change within planning that I found myself in with NPF4 continues to loom large with the new Labour government but I am grateful for being instilled with the continuity and enthusiasm for guiding the delivery of high-quality, well-being enhancing, designfocussed places that my RTPI experience helped form.

"Being an intern project officer was a fabulous opportunity to see the inner workings of the planning system."



SHABNAM AFSHAR, Graduate Planner, University of Dundee

Looking back on my six-month internship as a Project Officer at RTPI Scotland last year, I realise just how much it shaped me, both professionally

and personally. As a postgraduate spatial planning student at the University of Dundee, this opportunity was more than just a great experience, it provided me with real insight into the planning profession in Scotland. What made it even more special was that it was my first planning job after immigrating to the UK, making it a deeply personal milestone in my journey.

From day one, I was surrounded by a passionate team, all committed to promoting sustainable, inclusive, and resilient places. Their dedication was inspiring, and I quickly understood how vital collaboration is in tackling modern planning challenges.

During my time at RTPI Scotland, I worked on consultation responses covering topics such as energy, climate change, infrastructure, and flood resilience, which broadened my understanding of different aspects of planning and strengthened my policy analysis

and research skills. One particularly rewarding project was contributing to the Infrastructure Levy for Scotland discussion paper, where I led collaborations with experts to gather insights and integrate their

"I have found my internship with RTPI Scotland a unique opportunity which solidified my passion for planning, equipped me with new skills and gave me confidence in my abilities."

feedback into RTPI Scotland's response. This experience not only enhanced my stakeholder engagement and communication skills but also deepened my appreciation for the collective expertise within the planning profession.

Beyond policy work, my internship helped me grow in many other ways. Attending conferences introduced me to incredible professionals and expanded my network. Further, the internship provided me with a significant opportunity to publish an RTPI blog and an article in the Scottish Planner about empowering displaced planners and the preservation of built heritage sites.

I have found my internship with RTPI Scotland a unique opportunity which solidified my passion for planning, equipped me with new skills and gave me confidence in my abilities. As I move forward, I will carry these invaluable experiences and lessons with me as I work toward becoming Chartered, with a strong commitment to sustainable and inclusive planning. I am grateful for this experience, not just for what I learned, but for how it made me feel part of something bigger—something that truly matters. SP

34 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 Scottish Plan

FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



JAMES HEWITT MRTPI. Senior Planner at Aberdeenshire Council and RTPI Scottish Young Planner of the Year in 2024

CELEBRATING ISSUE №200

Landmarks and Milestones:

Reflections of a Soon to Be Not-So-'Young Planner'

James Hewitt MRTPI. Senior Planner at Aberdeenshire Council and RTPI Scottish Young Planner of the Year in 2024, reflects back on his career journey and the positive impact volunteering with the RTPI has in creating and shaping opportunities and new experiences.

he Scottish Planner is approaching a real landmark in its publication history, with this iteration marking the 200th edition. Being asked to write something for this edition has prompted me to reflect on career landmarks for planners, through the lens of my own experience.

Coincidentally, the publication of the 200th edition will occur around the time I will cease to be a 'Young Planner', having passed the 10-year mark in my career journey - I'm not sure what that makes me?

Setting aside my professional identity crisis, the biggest landmarks in my career have been getting my first role as a planner, finding my place in planning and volunteering with the RTPI.

I began my career as a professional Planner at Aberdeenshire Council at the end of April 2015, and by the beginning of May 2015 it was snowing outside. I wondered what on earth had I gotten myself into, but at least the post was only 6 months... 10 years later... I am still with the Council. How little did I know that this job would be the making of me and would give me a crash course in all sorts of areas of development management.

After a couple of years as a development management planner, I took a bit of a leap and applied for a job as a Planner with the Strategic Development Delivery Team (Major Apps and Energy). At the time, I applied because I wanted a new challenge – although in hindsight I knew nothing of energy developments. But little did I know that this would be the best career move I have made. I discovered (to my surprise) that I had a genuine interest in energy and Infrastructure projects, and that I rather enjoyed presenting at committee. For other Young Planners.

don't worry if you don't know exactly what kind of planner you want to be, just be brave enough to try new things.

It was when working in this role that I befriended the Senior Planner in the Council's Policy Team. Ailsa Anderson, Ailsa was actively involved as a Steering Group member of the Scottish Young Planners' Network (SYPN). After a couple of years of gentle persuasion. Ailsa convinced me to apply to join the group - which I did in 2019. This opened a whole new world of opportunity.

the SYPN. I have had the planners from all over the

We often think of planning as being a small circle, and once you get into more northernly regions of the country, that circle contracts even further. A tight-knit professional community can have its benefits, but it can also limit opportunities - especially for young planners. Through involvement with the SYPN, I have had the opportunity to connect with planners from all over the country and see the work they do.

Through the SYPN I have been given opportunities that I simply wouldn't have had



Volunteering helped my professional development, instilling the importance of engaging with the RTPI in order to get the most from my membership. It has helped me to gain CPD, which has helped me to become MRTPI. Most importantly it has that volunteering played a large part in my Year 2024.

with the RTPI - whether that is through the to be inspired by and connect with others, follow you. SP



helped with my confidence. Personally, I feel being named Scottish Young Planner of the

For other Young Planners, I would wholeheartedly encourage you to get involved SYPN or your local Chapter. Take the chance and pass on that experience to those who will



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



DR CAROLINE BROWN MRTPI. RTPI Director of Scotland and Ireland

Education for Everyone

Dr Caroline Brown MRTPI. Director of RTPI Scotland and Ireland. provides an update on the RTPI's Education for Everyone programme which aims to broaden access to pathways into chartered membership.

t the end of February 2025, the Institute's Board of Trustees approved a revised Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education (PSIPE). This marked the end of Stage 2 of the Education for Everyone programme, established by the Board as a detailed review of the existing entry model into planning as a profession, with the intention to broaden access pathways.

The PSIPE sets out the Institute's requirements for planning education at undergraduate and postgraduate level and was last reviewed in full in 2012. The main audience for the PSIPE is accredited universities - and the revisions made have been shaped by extensive consultation with planning academics, students and members, as well as benchmarking research guided by Institute Committees and staff. All in all, the changes to the PSIPE are both subtle and profound.

www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland

Some of the subtle changes are in format and language - clarifying the text and reducing repetition within the document. The main substantive changes are to the learning outcomes, which have been updated and extended to reflect changes in society and in the profession. That means - for example - that AI, digital and soft skills are now included in the learning outcomes. The most profound changes are to the language

"As we roll out also preparing for the next for Evervone programme.

around accreditation - with degree courses simply described as accredited and the terms full/partial accreditation no longer used. All accredited courses allow graduates to become Chartered Members - although the route to membership differs between the Licentiate and Associate pathways. Equalising these two pathways is an important step in diversifying routes into the profession.

It's worth also saving that many elements of the Institute's approach to planning education remain unchanged, and have through the Education for Everyone review - been endorsed as fit for purpose. The most important aspect of this is retaining a postgraduate qualification as the benchmark for membership.

The revised PSIPE has now been circulated to all of the accredited planning schools and is being used in all of this year's Partnership Board meetings, the annual conversation between the Institute and our university partners. The Institute has also written to all of the universities and providers who have expressed an interest in accreditation, and we will open the doors for new accreditations in the late summer, tving into the new academic year.

As we roll out implementation of the new policy statement, we are also preparing for the next stage of the Education for Everyone programme, which will look at the APC. That work will start in earnest in the Autumn and will consider both the APC process itself as well as all of the different routes into membership. Do keep an eve out for information about the work - I'm sure we will be turning to our members for your insights and experiences. In the meantime, you can keep up to date with Education for Everyone through the RTPI website. SP





DR JOHN McCARTHY MRTPI, Global Head of Discipline at Heriot-Watt's Institute for Place, Environment and Society

Change and Opportunity in Planning Education: A Heriot-Watt Perspective

Dr John McCarthy MRTPI, Global Head of Discipline at Heriot-Watt's Institute for Place, Environment and Society, discusses the University's approach to planning education and what may lie ahead as the school responds to global economic, ecological and technological changes.

ver the past few decades, there has been significant change in education for planning in Scotland, as well as globally. Such change builds upon a longer-term shift in focus in planning education away from narrower aspects of land use planning to more integrative concepts of spatial planning, including more nuanced notions of inclusive planning.

Heriot-Watt's experience and offer has for many years emphasised the global nature of planning, with increasing internationalisation of curricula, increased interest from international students, and the rising influence of crossnational policy – including, for instance, the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Teaching and learning at Heriot-Watt has also built upon the University's broader focus on employability and practical application of knowledge and skills by prioritising interdisciplinary elements of practice, with more recent inclusion of a broader array of related professions/disciplines.

In addition, many predict future shifts in wider policy and governance which might make integration between professional groups even more important. Planning education at Heriot-Watt and elsewhere must of course reflect such shifts, to ensure we effectively meet the needs of employers, students, and society.

In a wider context, there are also of course major changes proposed for fundamental processes of planning in England, which could reverberate through many other contexts. Such changes on the one hand may foreground the role of planning in the economy and society, but on the other hand may question many long-held assumptions about the way in which planning can best shape our environment.



These are clearly issues that planning education needs to address in refreshing and updating course content.

There are many other challenges facing planning education more widely, including the wider economic context of many universities, and this may underline the need for more flexible and responsive modes of delivery, including more emphasis on partnership with employers and elements such as work-based learning.

Of course, the RTPI's Education for

Everyone project is seeking to address many of the above issues, in the context of lifelong learning as well as initial planning education, and it is hoped that the result will be a robust and flexible approach to developing a suitable context for planning education for the next decade.

Further challenges in practice will no doubt include the ever-increasing impacts of climate change and the increasing speed of change in relation to technology, particularly perhaps Al and its implications. We must ensure that planning education is resilient enough to address these, so that future planners continue to play a role in shaping resilient, sustainable, and equitable communities. SP

FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



DR ANDREW HOOLACHAN MRTPI FRSA, Lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning and MSc City Planning Programme Director at the University of Glasgow

Planning Education at the University of Glasgow: A New Era in a Long Tradition

Dr Andrew Hoolachan MRTPI FRSA, Lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning and MSc City Planning Programme Director at the University of Glasgow, discusses the origins of planning education in Glasgow, and what lies ahead for future students as the programme prepares for an exciting relaunch.

lanning education at the University of Glasgow enters a new era this September, with a refreshed programme that responds to major societal challenges. From the climate emergency to renewable energy and digital planning, we are relaunching our accredited Master's degrees to provide an exciting, innovative and practical suite of courses for the 2020s and beyond. These are grounded in critical thinking and practical application, developed with the RTPI, our industry networks and students.

Alongside our core offerings in planning systems, processes, theory, design, economics, and governance, we will introduce new specialist pathways which respond to the planning skills shortage and reflect current priorities facing the sector. At Glasgow, we teach planning in a way that seeks to bridge theory and practice with a range of approaches in course design and assessments; from on-the-ground engagement with real world sites, to reflective essays, and using digital platforms.

This refresh is part of a much longer story of planning education at the University which began in 1964 and has always looked to its immediate socio-economic and environmental urban contexts of the City of Glasgow to inform teaching and research. In the 1982 documentary 'The Blight', the late Prof. David Donnison zips down to Bridgeton in Glasgow's East End on his bike, to interview the public at Bridgeton Cross bandstand. Here, significant interventions to stem the 'crisis of the inner city' of post-industrial urban Britain were taking place under the ground-breaking Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal Scheme (GEAR). Along with colleagues at



"we are relaunching our accredited Master's degrees to provide an exciting, innovative and practical suite of courses for the 2020s and beyond."

the University of Strathclyde, Donnison and others evaluated the impact of GEAR in the landmark edited book 'Regenerating the Inner City' published in 1987. Soon after, planning education at the University would enter a hiatus, and was absent throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

As Glasgow's post-industrial experiment in housing and culture led regeneration gained significant international interest by policy-makers and academics in the 1990s, research staff at Glasgow became known for their evaluations on British urban regeneration policy. By 2006, the intellectual foundations led to the renewal and revival of planning education at Glasgow, led by Prof. David

Adams who designed two new accredited programmes. His 2010 paper 'Planners as Market Actors' with Steve Tiesdell outlined why planning students need to understand planning's critical role as 'shaping markets'. Ade Kearns' work, centred on the longitudinal research project GoWell, sought to understand the relationship between planning policies, regeneration and health inequalities. Libby Porter passionately engaged with communities in the urban transformation of Dalmarnock in the lead up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

If 1987 was a time to 'Regenerate the Inner City', the 2019 edited volume 'Transforming Glasgow: Beyond the post-industrial city' by Keith Kintrea and Rebecca Madgin captures how our work at Glasgow has expanded into new empirical and theoretical spaces. Today, our staff and their teaching and research interests reflect a much broader range of planning issues. They also reflect the diversity of the students and society we work with. with many new female professors, LGBT staff, who come from all corners of the world. For example, Nicola Livingstone examines the future of housing markets, Harriet Thompson considers energy equity, and Rebecca Madgin seeks to understand place attachment.

In 2022, Glasgow declared itself the UK's first 'feminist city' which we reflected in our all-female panel at the UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference in Glasgow in 2023, showing how planning at Glasgow engages in the forefront of contemporary urban debates. So, if you are interested in the innovative ways planning can shape the future of Scotland's places and communities, you will find the energy, passion and fresh ideas on our programmes. Come join us! SP

38 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland Scottish Planner | Issue 200 swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland



FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



KIRSTY MACARI FRTPI. Associate Dean (Student Experience) at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. University of Dundee

FUTURE PLANNERS, SKILLS & EDUCATION



SOHAIL AHMAD MRTPI. Senior Lecturer in Town Planning & Programme Leader at the University of the West of

Leading the Way: A Plethora of Planning Opportunities at the University of Dundee

Kirsty Macari FRTPI, Associate Dean (Student Experience) at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, discusses the university's unique programme offering and what academics and RTPI members can do to attract future planners to the profession earlier, and what academics and RTPI members alike can do to support this mission.

uring academic year 2024/25 the University of Dundee proudly celebrates its 60th anniversary of planning education. Over the years the initial programme may have changed name from town and regional planning or moved academic school, but we are still here and we are proud. The core of what we deliver continues to stand strong on the foundations of Geddesian thinking.

Our research and scholarship praxis recognises the value of both the city and the region and the interdependencies of each. We see this instilled within our academics, our students, our alumni and our host of partners in practice with whom we continue to collaborate. We highly value the interdisciplinary nature of the profession and the opportunities that it creates for reflexiveness and growth.

The interdisciplinary nature of learning has seen the University of Dundee grow our planning programmes to include not just our undergraduate MA(Hons) Urban Planning and postgraduate MSc Spatial Planning with Sustainable Urban Design but also the MArch (Hons) with Urban Planning. We are proud to be one of the first to deliver this dual accredited degree in the UK.

We have been leading the way in working with practice to allow a more flexible approach to learning, beyond the boundaries of more traditional Degree Apprenticeships. We continue to develop our practice-based

the way in working with practice to allow a more flexible approach to learning beyond the boundaries of

> approach to our degrees and will champion a responsive planning education, not just for the profession itself but for those whose places we are the custodians. Scotland is uniquely placed to nurture creative approaches to planning education due to its size and the sense of community amongst generations of planners.

It is not without challenge. The University of Dundee is currently the only Royal

Town Planning Institute accredited planning in Scotland. Being unique can often be celebrated. This is not one of those times. Too often we hear students join us from other subjects such as geography saving that "I didn't know planning was a career option but it's really cool." There are many more practising planners in Scotland than there are academics who can reach out to schools, clubs and societies to promote planning as an exciting career option.

Prior to the RTPI introducing volunteering in schools to support the future pipeline as part of CPD. I had already worked out the impact of this approach for Scotland. Based on an average 35-hour week, if each planner in Scotland gave a day of their CPD time a year to supporting growth, that would be the equivalent of 9 people each working full time to secure our future planners. Supportive curriculums such as Design Engineer Construct Curriculum delivered by Class of Your Own are leading on built environment learning opportunities in secondary schools. They too need support from practice. Could your one day help them to help us all?

"Progress doesn't come without discomfort. The more uncomfortable you are willing to get, the more progress you will make." Allistair McCaw (2025).

It's time to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. SP

school delivering an undergraduate curriculum

Looking ahead I want to see the value and purpose of planning continue to grow. As planners we are adaptable and natural collaborators. The pace of change is faster than it has ever been. With that comes challenges as well as opportunities. Today we worry about AI, tomorrow it will be something else. We need to balance what we have learnt from the journey so far whilst ensuring we don't inadvertently inhibit the needs of the future. We need to be innovative and bold in equal measure if we are to truly stand up as leaders of change.

Leader at the University of the West of Scotland, celebrates the launch of Scotland's first workplace town planning course and gives an insight into what students can expect from UWS's exciting new programme. he University of the West of

Sohail Ahmad MRTPI, Senior Lecturer in Town Planning & Programme

Scotland (UWS) is delighted to introduce its innovative BSc (Hons) Town Planning workplace learning programme - a first for Scotland. Designed to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise, this fully funded programme directly responds to the growing demand for planners across Scotland's public, private and third sectors.

Unlike traditional degree routes, the programme enables students to study whilst at work. By broadening access through this flexible, work-based learning approach, UWS aims to tackle the critical shortage of planners in Scotland through early career development and expanding opportunities for professionals to upskill within their existing roles, creating structured pathways for succession planning in the short, medium and longer term.

Further, by taking a partnership approach to syllabus design and development with planning authorities, consultancies and kev industry stakeholders. UWS ensures that organisations are well-prepared to contribute to Scotland's evolving planning landscape.

The programme structure and accreditation

The BSc (Hons) Town Planning programme has been carefully developed using the QAA Town and Country Planning Subject Benchmark Statement, Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Learning Outcomes, and extensive industry consultations. While not yet accredited, UWS will apply for RTPI accreditation following the successful completion of the first cohort in September 2026, as per RTPI guidelines.

The programme offers multiple entry and exit points to provide maximum flexibility for learners: entry levels are Year 1. Year 2. and

a new accessible route for shaping Scotland's future."

UWS Launches Scotland's First Workplace

BSc (Hons) Town Planning Programme



Year 3, and exit awards range from Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) to BSc (Hons) in Town Planning. The current cohort includes students with Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degrees in related disciplines, along with significant industry experience.

A curriculum design for the future

Structured over four years, the programme ensures a progressive and scaffolded learning experience. It covers six key themes that reflect the complexities of contemporary planning practice: work-based learning, spatial analysis and digital planning tools, sustainability and the environment, planning and policy, placemaking and the economy, and stakeholder and

A distinctive feature of the programme is the embedded Work-Based Learning (WBL)

modules at every level. The thematic focus will evolve over the years: Year 1: Introduction to Planning, Year 2: Sustainability in Built Environment, Year 3: Project Management for Planners, and Year 4: Applied Research Project. In these modules, students engage in real-world problem-based learning to develop practical solutions, often drawn from challenges within their own organisations.

Engaging with the planning community

As part of UWS' commitment to professional development, the programme collaborates with public and private sectors (e.g. Councils. Network Rail and Scottish Power) and other key stakeholders to provide guest lectures, site visits, and networking events - bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice.

Shaping the future of planning in

With increasing challenges in housing. transport, sustainability and climate change, the demand for skilled planners has never been higher. UWS' BSc (Hons) Town Planning programme offers a new accessible route for individuals passionate about shaping Scotland's future.

Our next intakes are in September 2025, and we are currently accepting applications at multiple entry points. If you are interested in ioining or would like to learn more about the course, please contact Industry Engagement Manager Usman Ahmad at usman.ahmad@ uws.ac.uk and visit the UWS website for further details, SP



TREVOR MOFFAT. Planning Skills Project Manager at the Improvement Service, and Heads of Planning Scotland Secretary

Celebrating Collaboration

This section of the 200th issue looks beyond the RTPI to the important work of some of our placemaking partners as they celebrate important achievements and milestones, and set out their future ambitions with collaboration at the core.

- HOPS, HOPS, HOORAY! Celebrating 25 years of Heads of Planning Scotland
- The Cockburn Association: 150 Years of Civic Engagement
- 2025: The Year of Delivery
- The Key Agencies Group: Collaboration and
- The National Planning Improvement Team: A New Collaborative Approach to Improvement
- The Collaborative Future of Digital Planning in Scotland



Celebrating 25 Years of Heads of Planning Scotland

Trevor Moffat, Planning Skills Project Manager at the Improvement Service, and Heads of Planning Scotland Secretary, celebrates the journey of collaboration, innovation and excellence that HOPS has undertaken over the last 25 years.



s Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) marks its 25th anniversary, it is an opportune moment to reflect on its iourney and the contributions it has made to the planning system in Scotland.

HOPS emerged from discussions among the Scottish Society of Directors in Planning (SSDP) which recognised the need for a modernised and proactive organisation that could address upcoming challenges to the planning system particularly looking at the environmental and economic agendas of the time.

The decision to establish HOPS was unanimously agreed upon at a meeting in June 2000. While the name and acronym took time to finalise-early contenders included the more retail-oriented "SHOPS"-HOPS won out and became the identity of a collaborative and forward-looking organisation dedicated to improving Scotland's planning system.

From the beginning HOPS wanted to work closely with key stakeholders across the planning landscape. Strong partnerships were established with the Scottish Government, the RTPI, Key Agencies, other professional bodies, and the private sector. This foundation of collaboration has remained a defining characteristic of HOPS. The organisation continues to be a trusted source of support and advice. HOPS has also championed inclusivity and diversity within

planning; early chairs Sheila Terry and Shirley Linton led efforts to promote women in senior planning roles, ensuring a better reflection of the changing workforce.

Over the years, HOPS has played a crucial role in shaping the planning system in Scotland, responding to legislative shifts and advocating for continuous improvement. The organisation has contributed significantly to the evolution of the National Planning Framework (NPF), which has undergone four iterations, each presenting new opportunities and challenges to integrate planning with Scotland's wider priorities.

HOPS has also been instrumental in developing Planning Performance Frameworks (PPFs), led by the efforts of Jim Birrell and David Leslie, which have now evolved into the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF). These frameworks have allowed for a more structured approach to measuring and enhancing the effectiveness of planning services across Scotland and not just focusing on planning performance.

Technology has also transformed planning, and HOPS played a key role in advancing ePlanning, streamlining the application process, and making the planning system more accessible to stakeholders and the public. Additionally, HOPS has strongly supported the emergence of the Chief Planning Officer role, ensuring strong

and senior leadership within local authorities to guide and advocate the benefits of good planning policies alongside influencing their corporate strategies

HOPS also recognised the need to secure the next generation of planning professionals. and has continually championed the need for a well-resourced planning system. Working closely with the Scottish Government and RTPI, the Future Planners Project is intended to encourage more people to take up planning as a positive career move. We are already seeing real progress being made, with 18 graduate planning posts advertised recently by the Scottish Government and the trebling of the planning bursaries.

While HOPS has achieved significant improvements in the past 25 years, the organisation continues to champion the opportunities that Planning can bring in terms of economic growth and sustainable development as well as addressing the challenges and streamlining the planning process.

At its core, HOPS is a collective effort, led by local authority planning staff who go above and beyond to drive improvements in Scotland's planning system. HOPS has grown from a small group into an organisation that now involves senior planners from across all local authorities in Scotland from the Chair. Senior Vice Chair. Junior Vice Chair, members of the Executive Committee, Chairs of the sub-groups and those who participate in the various groups together with the support from the Improvement Service.

HOPS has been shaped by the dedication of many passionate planners over the last 25 years. Special thanks go to John Bury, Pamela Clifford, the first and current chairs who presented at our Parliamentary Reception on the 19th of February. as well as all the chairs and contributors from 2000 to 2025 who have helped steer the organisation to where it is today.

Happy 25th Anniversary Heads of Planning Scotland - here's to many more years of excellence and impact. SP

This article was written using contributions from the HOPS Executive Committee.

42 Scottish Planner | Issue 2

www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland





TERRY LEVINTHAL. Director of the Cockburn

The Cockburn Association

150 Years of Civic Engagement

Terry Levinthal, Director of the Cockburn Association, reflects on 150 years of the Association's remarkable, and often controversial, impact on Edinburgh's built environment.

n 15 June 1875, concerned citizens of Edinburgh convened a meeting to form the "Cockburn Club". The Cockburn Association was purposed to commemorate the excursions of the late Lord Cockburn and his efforts to promote and improve the amenity of the city.

Lord Cockburn's earlier 1849 pamphlet "A Letter to the Lord Provost in the best ways of spoiling the Beauty of Edinburgh" still resonated. It was a response to changes across the city that were unplanned or uncontrolled. It was also a response to the lack of civic engagement in matters of the city, and the complacency of residents to such changes. It ended, "And it is hard on those in your Lordship's place: who, with your Council, are thus left to combat mischief, unaided by the community; or have the sadder fate of being left to do it yourselves, uncontrolled."

"How will Edinburgh look in 1949? Or 2049?" he asked.

A century and a half later, the Cockburn Association continues to promote the amenity of the city of Edinburgh and to protect its architectural, landscape and historic character, working with public authorities, private developers and local communities towards these objectives. The range of issues and proposals considered over this period is extraordinary.

Without it, Edinburgh today might have had a motorway on stilts through the Meadows, flying over the road along the old Middle Meadow Walk. Emerging from the drab multi-storey car park in what was once East Princes Street Gardens, your eves would be dazzled by the giant flashing advertisements overlooking The Mound. Mercifully out of sight is the underground Princes Street Gallery shopping mall built into the north side of West Princes Street Gardens below Princes Street in the late 1990s; now half-empty, as there are so many retail parks scattered around the edge of the city which straddles out across and beyond what was once green belt. The city's former green spaces have been given over to a private partnership with the public excluded on most days to support the year-round events sector.

To suggest that the Association enjoys universal approval from Edinburgh's public and planners would be folly. In an environment dominated by an increasingly polarised social media, opinion formers and high degrees of self-interest, it frequently is criticised for the positions it takes. However, the Cockburn Association's ability to bring an informed, critical opinion to the table, and to encourage discourse between civic society and civic authorities is its most lasting legacy.

"Campaigning for Edinburgh: The Cockburn Association 1875-2049" by Professor Richard Rodger and Professor Cliff Hague is published by Birlinn and will be available for purchase from June 2025. SP



Above: Calton Hill and Old Calton Gaol c.1870 © Cockburn Association

A concern for the visual damage to the city of uncontrolled signage and prospect of development around and on Calton Hill led to formation of the Cockburn Association. This featured as ongoing action of the Association including the objection to Bovril erecting a large, illuminated sign on the elevation of the Old Town overlooking Princes Street in 1897



Above: Sketch from 1966 leaflet The Inner Ring Road and You © Cockburn Association

Edinburgh was not immune from urban pressures such as traffic provision. The Association was a key objector to the proposed ring road which would run at an elevated level across the Meadows and, here, been built over the Water of Leith beside the Stockbridge Colonies. The Association was able to coalesce public opinion against the proposals.





KATE HOUGHTON MRTPI. Senior Planner at the Scottish

2025: The Year of Delivery

Kate Houghton MRTPI. Senior Planner at the Scottish Government, discusses the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Directorate's priorities for 2025, reflecting on their collaborative work so far and the challenges that lie ahead.

he First Minister characterised this year's Scottish Budget as "delivery in the present, hope for the future." This sentiment extends to work being progressed across the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Directorate. Scotland needs development that helps us to address the climate and housing emergencies and grow the economy, and we are aiming to support proactive delivery of this.

Responding to the housing emergency

Planning has not created the housing emergency, but it can help find solutions to the challenges faced.

Working collaboratively with a Short Life Working Group which includes local government and development industry representatives, we have identified 113 high priority stalled housing sites across Scotland. We have categorised these according to the principal issues and are working to identify strategic solutions which will contribute to site level resolution across Scotland, Every planning authority has got behind this work. so that our information is up to date and accurately reflects the challenges involved.

Delivery-focused local development planning

New style LDPs are expected to be placebased, people-centred and delivery-focused. In this context it is difficult to overstate the importance of Delivery Programmes as part of the local development planning package.

Ministers required that planning authorities updated their action programmes to delivery programmes by 31 March 2025. This ensures that during the transition to the new development planning system every planning authority has sequenced, and provided a timescale for, the delivery of

housing sites allocated in LDPs regardless of the age of the plan.

On 26 March the Scottish Government hosted a seminar with planning authorities to explore preparation of Delivery Programmes and LDPs in tandem, in pursuit of a deliveryfocused way of working.



'Planning has not created it can help find solutions to

Masterplan Consent Areas early adopters

We are providing tailored support to early adopters of Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs). including identifying and overcoming barriers

Early conversations have taken place with local authorities and ports representatives. Aberdeenshire (Peterhead Investment Zone and Housing), Perth & Kinross (Binn Ecopark) and Stirling Councils have confirmed their interest in using MCAs to accelerate delivery of existing proposals.

National developments

The national developments included in NPF4 support implementation of our long-term spatial plan, and provide certainty upfront for investors, businesses, and communities.

Progress on national developments, which will rely on partnership working, is being actively monitored.

We are working with Scottish Futures Trust to establish an up-to-date position of the national developments. From this we will be able to reliably identify actions that could be taken to support delivery going forward.

Resourcing delivery of our priorities

This work is being taken forward at pace, but is not about delivery at any cost. Achieving the desired outcomes requires investment in the system, to create space for planners to focus their skills and professional judgement on proactive support for the right development in the right place.

We have increased planning fees and will do so annually in line with inflation with further measures coming into force in the summer. We are working with the Improvement Service to expand their work on a Hydrogen Hub to offer a wider range of services through a National Planning Hub, providing tailored support on development priorities including energy and housing. We have worked with a range of partners to drive forward a national planning skills commitment plan. Our Future Planners Programme. which will recruit up to 18 planners to work part time in the Scottish Government while also studying for a master's degree. This Programme closed to applicants last month and we are delighted by the interest shown. In addition, we are tripling the bursaries available to planning students. We are also working with stakeholders to streamline processes to make best use of available capacity.

All of these workstreams demand collaborative working with a range of stakeholders. We thank those involved for their time and commitment and look forward to continuing to work in partnership across sectors and interests over the coming year. SP





PETER NOAD MRTPI, Chair of the Key Agencies Group

CELEBRATING COLLABORATION



SUSAN RINTOUL, Improvement Lead with the National Planning Improvement (NPI) Team at the Improvement Service

The Key Agencies Group: Collaboration and Quality

Peter Noad MRTPI, Chair of the Key Agencies Group, discusses the objectives, recent work and future priorities of the Group.

lanners can be found in lots of organisations and businesses in Scotland. A small but significant contingent of planners work within Scotland's key agencies, represented by the Key Agencies Group. The group was established in 2008 and comprises a number of public bodies that support an efficient and accountable planning system which delivers great places for Scotland.

What is the Key Agencies Group?

The Key Agencies Group includes organisations which are formally recognised as Key Agencies that are required to be consulted by local authorities and others on Local Development Plans and major developments. Such Agencies include NatureScot. Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Historic Environment Scotland and economic development agencies. The Group also includes organisations that have an interest in planning issues but are not statutory consultees - such as Transport Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland, Planning Aid Scotland, Sport Scotland, Scottish Land Commission and the Royal Town Planning Institute (Scotland).

Members have different roles and responsibilities, but all share the belief that by working together and with local authorities and central government, they can contribute to making Scotland a better place. Collaboration is seen by the Group as the fundamental route to better decisions and better outcomes.

"Collaboration is seen by the Group as the fundamental route to better decisions and better outcomes."

Our Objectives

The focus of the Group's activity is to support the delivery of the three themes identified in National Planning Framework 4 (sustainable, liveable and productive places) in a way that aligns strongly with the National Performance Framework vision and outcomes. We aim to achieve this through place-based collaboration in line with the Place Principle.

Through this approach we strive to add value as a group of Agencies in the following ways:

A combined wealth of expertise, knowledge and evidence to **support** innnovation in our places of the future

Improving outcomes for places and people through early collaboration

Delivering value for money through the alignment of resources and funding

- Working collectively with partners in the spirit of the Place Principle to deliver the best outcomes for people and places;
- Creating opportunities for innovation in addressing significant challenges such as climate change, biodiversity decline, social injustice and a green recovery;
- Collaborating from the early stages of development planning and development management to create efficiencies and improve performance in the longer term:
- Sharing good practice across Agencies to promote clear and practical planning advice:
- Supporting accessibility to evidence through digital transformation;
- 6. Developing skills with key stakeholders to help improve performance; and

Working with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to support delivery of national planning priorities.

How we operate

The Key Agencies Group meets quarterly to review progress against our objectives and to engage with other stakeholders in planning to discuss initiatives and projects where we have an interest. The Group is supported by subgroups and occasional 'task and finish' groups. These are convened to meet work priorities and can change over time. The subgroups are collectively decided by the members based on feedback we receive.

Recent Work

Local Development Plan Evidence Reports have been one area where the Key Agencies Group has worked closely with Scottish Local Planning Authorities. We are seeking to develop processes which not only deliver better outcomes and meet statutory requirements but which also improve the effectiveness of how we work together at an early stage.

Another area of activity has been working with the UK and Scottish governments on two Green Freeports, by agreeing a protocol for joint working and then actively engaging with the Freeports as they develop their plans. The principal aim is to ensure the consenting processes can be as efficient as possible without undermining the important role of Key Agencies as consenting bodies.

What Next?

Looking ahead, the priorities for the Key Agencies Group include supporting the production of Local Development Plans by providing guidance on how Key Agencies can be effective consultees, as well as contributing to the delivery of significant projects by co-ordinating work between Key Agencies, local authorities and developers. We are also addressing resource issues faced by Key Agencies in their consenting and advisory roles, in turn ensuring they continue to provide the high-quality and collaborative services expected of them by users.

If you would like to know more about the Key Agencies Group or have a suggestion on how we can work together, please contact me at peter.noad@scotent.co.uk SP

n the National Planning Improvement (NPI) team, we have embedded collaboration at the core of our approaches:

National Planning Improvement Framework

Tasked with creating a new performance framework for planning authorities, we knew that collaboration would be key to its success. We worked with stakeholders to develop the 12 attributes of a high performing planning authority, which make up the basis of the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF). The NPIF empowers planning authorities to undertake a self-assessment of their performance, to identify areas for improvement and then develop an improvement action plan.

We knew that planning authorities wouldn't be able to take on all the actions in isolation, which led us to incorporate the Peer Collaborative Review into the process. This involves NPI, a peer planning authority and, for the first time, the users and stakeholders of the planning system. We come together to discuss the improvement action plan and act as critical friends. It also encourages discussion around where the planning authority needs support from other stakeholders to take forward the identified improvement actions.

Our <u>annual report</u> identifies actions for national partners to take forward, alongside what we are planning to take forward in the NPI team in the next year.

We are working with planning authorities to pilot the NPIF approach in 2024/25, encouraging them to feedback on its ease of use, relevance, useability, and effectiveness in providing evidence on planning authority "The NPIF empowers
planning authorities to
undertake a self-assessment
of their performance,
to identify areas for
improvement and then
develop an improvement

The National Planning Improvement Team:

A New Collaborative Approach to Improvement

Susan Rintoul, Improvement Lead with the National Planning Improvement

collaboration-based approach to boosting access to expertise, and how

(NPI) Team at the Improvement Service, discusses the NPI team's

this will help to address challenges across the planning sector.



Above: National Planning Improvement Framework Attribute Themes

performance. The pilot aims to test the new framework, which will allow us to adapt the process for future years.

National Planning Hub

While undertaking the pilot work, we were delighted to be given the opportunity to take on the National Planning Hub (NPH), with an initial focus on planning for hydrogen.

Our first task was to build our small, agile team. As such, the NPH is hosted in the Improvement Service, working in collaboration with staff loaned from Scottish Government and Planning Aid Scotland.

Our conversations with the hydrogen industry, planning authorities, government agencies and regulators helped to inform the work of the NPH, which is based around three programmes:

Our Access to Expertise programme has worked closely with planning authorities to identify their capacity and resource requirements and what they need to meet their priorities. We then deploy the identified specialist skills and expertise.

The Learning and Knowledge Exchange programme has aimed to develop support tools, provide training, organise learning events and provide financial support for planning authorities.

The **Explainer** programme has looked to provide impartial information on planning for hydrogen to community members. It also involves scoping, research and analysis to help provide a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by planning authorities. An example of this is our <u>Insights paper</u> into Planning for Hydrogen which we have shared with planning authorities on the pipeline of hydrogen proposals.

National Planning Improvement Champion

We have a crucial role in sharing intelligence on the challenges planning authorities are facing and possible solutions. In future we hope to use our findings from the NPIF, which identifies the challenges, to inform the work the NPH takes forward. We hope the NPH can be proactive and help to address the issues coming down the line for planning authorities.

Going forward, we will continue to put collaboration at the core of our work, to effectively pull together different skills and resources to enable us to find new ways to tackle our biggest challenges in planning. SP

46 Scottish Planner | Issue 200 Scottish Planner | Issue 200

SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025 CELEBRATING ISSUE Nº200 SCOTTISH PLANNER SPRING 2025





NISSA SHAHID MRTPI, UK Digital Planning Lead at Arup

The Collaborative Future of Digital Planning in Scotland

Nissa Shahid MRTPI, UK Digital Planning Lead at Arup, examines Scotland's role in advancing digital planning, and how effective collaboration can equip planners with the digital skills they need to both address contemporary challenges, and put quality place-making at the heart of their work.

wo years ago, Scotland's planning system was on the cusp of digital transformation, yet a series of challenges has led to the slowing down of what was an exciting trajectory toward a planning system that could stimulate economic growth and investment across the country. In late November, Arup hosted a breakfast event with key collaborators from public, private, academic and third sectors to agree on a collective vision for the Scottish Planning system's digital future, and to discuss what we could do to get the momentum back.

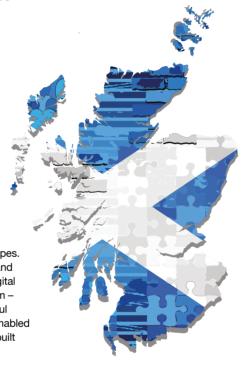
Anyone involved in the inception stages of the Digital Planning Programme for Scotland will know that collaboration is key. The most successful digital initiatives are not the ones with the most sophisticated technologies or the most perfect data, but those with full buy-in across multiple stakeholders. A robust, efficient, transparent, and digitally enabled planning system does not just happen; it needs deliberate action and intervention, support and energy from a workforce that consciously works towards a collective goal or outcome.

The fear of getting things wrong can scare us from even trying but letting that stop us is a mistake. If we do not actively try to keep up with innovative technologies, we risk being designed out of the planning system. The digitisation of planning is not simply about the automation of processes; it is about creating the ability to share data transparently, efficiently, and effectively so that those who need to make decisions about the future of our communities can do so with complete and up-to-date information at hand. A shared data infrastructure is only possible through collaboration.

Planners, and the planning system, are often touted as the reason development is slowed down. This is unfair, and while we can accept that the planning system is not as effective as we would like it to be, that viewpoint is not reflective of far more complex political and economic landscapes. Planners, equipped with the right tools and skills, can enable better places and a digital system will never be able to replace them but it could equip them to make impactful decisions quicker. A data-led, digitally-enabled planning system will not address every built environment problem - but it could help planners to find the answers to planning problems using a homogenous language.

"Scotland has the opportunity, talent, and scale to lead in datadriven, collaborative planning, but this will only happen if technology, people, and policy evolve together."

Planners need to advocate for their role in the centre of the system. Understanding the value of the data we create, curate, and interpret is central to establishing what the future of places looks like. By investing time and resources to understand the value of our data and upskill in using data efficiently and effectively, we get to design what the system



of the future looks like so we can do our jobs as we were always meant to – by putting shaping places at the heart of it and cutting out the worst of administrative tasks.

Scotland has the opportunity, talent, and scale to lead in data-driven, collaborative planning, but this will only happen if technology, people, and policy evolve together. The future of planning is not about replacing professionals with algorithms, but about empowering planners with better tools, fostering stronger partnerships, and embedding digital thinking into every stage of decision-making. By placing planners at the heart of data creation, embracing cross-sector collaboration, and ensuring a balanced, inclusive approach, Scotland can build a planning system fit for the challenges of the 21st century.

We look forward to keeping you in the loop about where our collaborative group takes us and hope to give you more details and insights in the coming year. **SP**



RTPI

>> Programme for Government

•••••

On 6 May, the First Minister announced the 2025-2026 Programme for Government.

The Programme includes a number of measures related to the planning system, including recognition that planning must be at the heart of the Government's economic growth strategy.

Read our initial reaction to the announcement <u>here.</u>

Future Planner Bursary Applications Now Open

Applications are open for the Future Planners Bursary scheme to support the future pipeline of planners in Scotland.

£5000 bursaries are available to 30 students on an RTPI-accredited Planning Masters in Scotland for 2025/26 to assist with course fees and living expenses.

Read more here.

Helen Fadipe's Presidential Visit to Scotland Highlights

RTPI Scotland was delighted to welcome RTPI President Helen Fadipe to Edinburgh on 30 April as she hosted a joint event with RIAS on planning for net zero, chaired by RIAS Past President Chris Stewart. The event discussed ways of linking up ambitious targets in construction with community-based sequestration through tree planting and green infrastructure.

The main purpose of the event was to hear from Anderson Bell Christie on their research findings and proposals for making this balanced approach work in practice, and to stimulate a conversation about next steps. As someone noted, there is always a good conversation when planners and architects are in the same room!

Interested members can find out more on the Anderson Bell Christie website.

Below: RTPI President, Helen Fadipe, hosting the joint RTPI/RIAS event during her Presidential Visit to Scotland





Above: The Scottish Young Planners' Network Steering Group with the Minister for Public Finance, Ivan McKee MSP, and RTPI President, Helen Fadipe, at this year's Scottish Young Planners' Conference

Scottish Young Planners' Conference 2025

On 1 May, we welcomed 170 delegates to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh to attend this year's Scottish Young Planners' Conference.

We also welcomed RTPI President Helen Fadipe and Minister for Public Finance Ivan McKee MSP, who both delivered inspirational presentations.

The Purpose of Planning was the theme of the day, covering a range of topics including Flood Risk Assessments and empowering communities to shape the built environment. Our 'day in the life of' Panel Session allowed delegates to understand the varied and rewarding trajectories a planning career can take lead

The afternoon walking tours and workshops allowed our delegates to get out and about in Edinburgh, and to brush up on their design tools, sketching and FOI skills.

John Alexander wrapped up the conference with an inspiring keynote address discussing his journey into planning and reflecting back on his involvement in Dundee's waterfront development as a key example of collaboration at work.

Thank you to all our speakers and tour guides who helped to make it a fantastic day. Thank you also to our wonderful sponsors who made the conference possible: Geddes Consulting, Shepherd and Wedderburn, Ryden, Iceni Projects, Planning Aid Scotland and Homes for Scotland.

>> Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland have submitted responses to the following consultations and requests for written and verbal evidence:

- The Scottish Government's consultation on community benefits from net zero energy developments.
- The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee's call for views on the Fourth National Planning Framework.
- The Scottish Government's call for views on how permitted development rights can be used to address the housing emergency.
- The Scottish Government's proposal to amend policy on the protection afforded to certain Ramsar features.
- The Scottish Government's consultation on the National Marine Plan 2 Planning Position Statement.
- The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) consultation on Electricity Infrastructure Consenting in Scotland.

All RTPI's written responses are published on our website.

Consultations currently under consideration are:

- Housing (Scotland) Bill, deadline 18 July
- Just Transition Plan for Transport, deadline
 19 May
- Climate change duties draft statutory guidance for public bodies, deadline 23 May

UPDATE

- Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill deadline 23 May
- Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill, deadline 9 May

Congratulations to our Women of Influence for 2025

We were delighted to see so many women based in Scotland on the Planner's Women of Influence list this year. Included in the list are Irene Beautyman, Holly Gray, Etive Currie, Anna Light and our very own Dr Caroline Brown.

You can read more about the important work and impact of all the <u>Women of Influence on the Planner's website</u>.

WelcomingJoseph Ashmoreto the RTPIScotland Team

In February, we welcomed Joseph Ashmore to the team

as our new Intern Project Officer. Joseph will be with us until November assisting on policy, research, events, and the Scottish Planner. He has already been a great help to us and there's plenty more work to do!

» RTPI Nations Public Affairs Post

Applications have recently closed for the role of Public Affairs Officer in the nations.

The suitable candidate will lead the Institute's engagement with the devolved governments in the nations.

We are looking forward to welcoming and working closely with the new Public Affairs Officer once they are appointed.

>> Social Media

Keep updated with the latest news by following us on <u>LinkedIn.</u>

Scottish Government



>> Skills Commitment Plan

Our Skills Commitment Plan launched on 17 March. The Plan's purpose is to bring greater coherence and organised partnership working on planning skills across Scotland. The creation of the plan has involved a wide range of stakeholders committing their support to it. Delivery of these commitments will roll forward on a monthly basis with a training theme for each month, however the plan is designed to remain responsive to 'hot topics'. We welcome more input from stakeholders and if you wish to play an active role in delivering training please do get in touch with us.

Section 3F annual report

The Section 3F annual report was published on 27 March. The report identifies that, NPF4 is providing a holistic planning approach to reducing emissions from new development and noted the introduction of the New Build Heat Standard in 2024, via The Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 and 2024. The report concludes that on balance, the latest policy and regulatory position goes beyond what Section 3F can achieve and that the requirement to include policies within development plans under Section 3F is no longer necessary. As such, Scottish Ministers will progress work to prepare an Order to repeal Section 3F, as provided for by Section 73(2) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

» Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group Annual Report 2025

The Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group (PIPAG) published its first Annual Report on 13 February. PIPAG is an advisory group of infrastructure specialists and was established to find solutions to infrastructure challenges, support the delivery of National Planning Framework 4, and to promote joined-up, timeous, place-based delivery of development and infrastructure in Scotland.

After a busy year, this Annual Report informs Ministers and stakeholders of the Group's outputs from 2024 and progress against its strategic objectives. The report includes suggested areas for a future work programme.

>> Housing Audit guidance

Published on 20 January, the <u>Housing Land Audit guidance</u> sets out the approach to the preparation and publication of Housing Land Audits (HLAs) for all planning authorities in Scotland.

The purpose of the guidance is to support a consistent approach to the method and presentation of HLAs. This is important to be able to provide a comparable baseline of information across Scotland's authorities and to aggregate the information to provide a national picture of the housing pipeline and its progress through the planning system. The guidance recognises that authorities face different circumstances locally and therefore also provides for flexibility.

Masterplan ConsentArea guidance

We also published <u>guidance</u> in January to help planning authorities prepare Masterplan Consent Area (MCA) schemes. The guidance explains and expands, where appropriate, the intention of the provisions in the legislation and Scottish Ministers' expectations for implementation of MCAs. It includes suggestions for potential considerations and offers a consistent approach for authorities when preparing MCA schemes.

Community Engagement Guidance

In late December we published <u>guidance</u> to assist with engagement activities in the preparation of local development plans as part of measures introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to put community voices at the heart of the planning system in Scotland.

This guidance aims to support planning authorities and all users of the planning system, including communities, members of the public and others undertaking engagement activities.

Unauthorised Environmental Impact AssessmentDevelopment

We consulted on a proposal to disapply enforcement time limits for unauthorised EIA Development last year. On 24 February we published a <u>summary of responses</u>.

Keep up to date with our work by subscribing to our ealert, reading our <u>blog</u>, following us <u>Linkedin</u> or on <u>X.com</u> @scotgovplanning

Planning Aid Scotland



A message from Johanna Boyd, Chief Executive

(UPDATE

200 editions of The Scottish Planner! What an achievement — congratulations to all involved over the years. We couldn't let this milestone pass without marking it alongside RTPI Scotland.

As we work towards our shared goals of tackling the climate emergency. housing crisis and poverty in Scotland, it is important to keep well-informed and focused on the country we want for our communities. The Scottish Planner helps foster a sense of co-operation, trust and transparency across the planning and placemaking sector in Scotland, and we want to say thank you to the editorial team at RTPI Scotland for continuing to provide us with an essential resource — one that inspires and informs us all.

>> Retired planners wanted

We continue to work hard to encourage retired planners to share their wealth of experience and expertise by volunteering with Planning Aid Scotland. We are always on the lookout for chartered planners, but now we have opened up volunteering opportunities within our Advice Service and training programme specifically for retired planners. It's a great way to continue using your professional experience and give something back.

As one of our volunteers put it, volunteering for Planning Aid Scotland can act "as a parachute from total full-time work into retirement". So, if you're retired — or maybe thinking about retiring — but still want to stay connected to the profession, please reach out. We'll happily talk you through all the ins and outs of this remote and flexible volunteering opportunity.

Planning can be complex and overwhelming for someone who isn't familiar with it. People seeking planning advice often feel at a loss. Let's say there's a really wonderful project that could go ahead and improve the lives of people in a local community — only to be stalled because of an incorrect application or missing form. That's where your expertise can make all the difference.

One recent Advice Service user said, "This service was extremely valuable to us. We did not know who to turn to for advice and came across Planning Aid Scotland on searching Google. The advice was quick, very clear and very much appreciated. We now know exactly where we stand, and it has really helped us make a decision what to do." Even a small contribution of your time can make a big impact.

There are no silly questions when it comes to planning! If you'd like to help individuals and communities across Scotland, this is your chance to make a positive difference in people's everyday lives. Your planning expertise and knowledge are invaluable. You could help someone get involved in local placemaking and contribute to creating vibrant, liveable spaces.

50 Scottish Planner | Issue 196 swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland swww.rtpi.org.uk/scotland

(UPDATE

There's only so much we can say in this short article about the positive difference you could make as a volunteer, so we'll let another client's words do the talking: "I feel this service is of genuine value to those seeking to engage with the planning system. It is one that I would most definitely recommend, and I am so grateful that the service was offered."

If you want to get involved, please get in touch by emailing our Volunteer Coordinator Jo Elston at jo@pas.org.uk or give us a call on 0131 220 9730. We'd love to hear from you!

>> Exciting projects in 2025

Our Training Offer

A key focus for us in 2025 is delivering our bespoke training offer. Through our training, we help people and organisations to better navigate the complexities of planning and understand the latest legislative changes. We always aim to encourage a more inclusive and accessible planning system for everyone.

We are collaborating with the Scottish Government and other key stakeholders to develop a series of route maps towards the implementation of mandatory Elected Member training. We are inspired by this opportunity and look forward to developing the training content and format to help strengthen understanding and decision-making across

Our training is always tailored to meet the specific needs of Elected Members, Community Councils, community groups and other stakeholders who engage with planning. For example, we provide specialist training on key areas like the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and support Councils undertaking peer reviews under the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) with our expert facilitation skills.

But we're not stopping there. We're expanding our training offer to make sure that even more people and organisations across Scotland have the confidence and knowledge they need to engage effectively in planning and understand the power of good community engagement, through our recognised best practice benchmark SP=EED training.

National Planning Improvement Hub

This year we continue our strategic partnership with the National Planning Improvement Hub. with our Planning & Policy Manager, David Wood, currently delivering a project to support the Hub's initiatives. His involvement helps strengthen understanding of planning policies and practices at a national level.

Community-led Plans

As we move into 2025, we are already making strides in empowering communities and helping them shape their places. With lots of work around Local Place Plans already underway, we are making real progress in getting communities more involved in the planning process and we are excited to build on this momentum. We have recently submitted three Local Place Plans on behalf of communities we've been supporting, as well as continuing our work with Community Councils across Shetland to support them in preparing their own Local Place Plans.

Community Engagement

This year we are also focusing on community engagement programmes, including Local Action Plans and Active Travel Plans. Our Sustaining Choices initiative, funded by the Smarter Choices Smarter Places Fund at Paths For All, has already made strides in developing Local Walking Action Plans in communities like Kelty, Fa'side, Ruthrieston and Eskdalemuir. These plans will help residents shape their areas into more accessible, walkable and sustainable places.

We've developed an innovative public art strategy for Shawfair and are supporting conservation engagement for the Stonehaven 'Past, Present, Future' project. Our inclusive approach ensures all voices are heard, particularly those from seldom-heard groups.

By working closely with communities, Community Councils and Councils, we are also also making the process between them smoother, faster and more effective. This way, even more people can actively participate in local placemaking. It's shaping up to be a busy and exciting year and we can't wait to continue this journey with you.

Expanding our team

Finally, our Board of Directors has seen significant and positive change. We have now acquired brilliant additions to our Board and have 100% of the skills we were looking for to make our Board filled with dynamic and talented Directors!

- · Jill Paterson, is our new Chair of the Board. Jill is a longstanding volunteer and the Service Lead for Planning and Sustainable Growth at Angus Council. She brings a wealth of experience, expertise and leadership skills to the Chair. We have also welcomed five new board
- members: · Pamela Clifford, Chief Planning Officer at East Ayrshire Council and Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS), Pamela also served as a convener at RTPI Scotland
- · Aaron Doidge, Senior Consultant at Stantec, a Chartered Urban Planner with a focus on urban development, and regeneration. Aaron has previously served on the executive committee of RTPI Scotland.
- Annie Tordoff, former Scotland Director at Parkinson's UK. has also served as secretary of Morvern Community Council. She worked with Planning Aid Scotland on the award-winning 'Live Life Morvern' sustainable community action plan.
- · Ruth Wolstenholme, a sustainability and climate change expert, was Managing Director of Sniffer (now Verture).
- Robbie Young, the Construction Group Financial Controller at Robertson Group. Robbie is also a member of the ICAS Charities Panel, overseeing financial practices within the charitable sector.

Additionally, we have a very welcome new team member, Anne Krippler who takes up the post of Planning and Projects Officer.

CONTACTS



MRTPI Convenor

Laura Robertson

Laura chairs the Scottish Executive Committee

Immediate past Convenor Pamela convened RTPI Scotland in

MRTPI

2024

Pamela Clifford

scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Contact scotland@rtpi.org.uk



Convenor Maura chairs the RTPI Scotland Policy Subcommittee

Contact

scotland@rtpi.org.uk



Duncan Smart MRTPI

Junior Vice Convenor Duncan chairs the RTPI Scotland Communications, Events and Lifelona Learning Subcommittee

Contact scotland@rtpi.org.uk



South East Scotland:

southeast.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Scotland Chapters

Central Scotland:

Grampian:

grampian.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Highlands and Islands:

highlandsislands.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

West of Scotland:

west.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Scottish Young Planners' Network: sypn@rtpi.org.uk

Other RTPI Contacts

RTPI Membership:

membership@rtpi.org.uk 020 7929 9462

RTPI Education:

education@rtpi.org.uk 0207 929 9451

RTPI Media Enquiries: Simon Creer

Simon.Creer@rtpi.org.uk

Dr Caroline Brown MRTPI

Director

Contact

Contact caroline.brown@rtpi.org.uk

Kirsten Waller

Communications and Events Administrator

Contact kirsten.waller@rtpi.org.uk

Joseph Ashmore Intern Project Officer

Contact joseph.ashmore@rtpi.org.uk

Jenny Munro AssocRTPI

Policy, Practice and Research Officer

Contact jenny.munro@rtpi.org.uk

Annette O'Donnell

Office Manager

Contact annette.odonnell@rtpi.org.uk

Editorial Team

Editorial: Jenny Munro

Joseph Ashmore

Potential articles and photography are welcome. The Editors reserve the right to amend articles as necessary.

Enquiries to: The Editors Scottish Planner RTPI Scotland 18 Atholl Cresent Edinburgh EH3 8HQ.

scotland@rtpi.org.uk

The opinions stated are the contributors' own unless otherwise stated. The RTPI is not responsible for statements made or views expressed in this journal.

For further information, please visit

www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland

Town and Country Planning in the Scottish Borders, 1946-1996

From Planning Backwater to the Centre of the Maelstrom

Douglas G Hope

Studies continuity and change in the practice of town and country planning in the Scottish Borders, 1946-1996

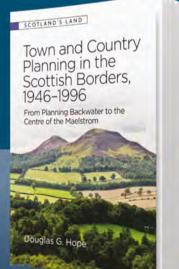
- Provides a comprehensive appraisal of the changing role of town and country planning within a unique area of Scotland over a fifty-year period
- Explores the relationships between planning and economic development in stimulating development in a rural region of Scotland

About the author: Douglas Hope has been a town and country planner for over 50 years. He has worked for both central and local government in Scotland, principally at Borders Regional Council between 1975 and 1996, where he was Depute Director of Planning and Development, and the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals.

NOW IN PAPERBACK SAVE 30%



Visit edinburghuniversitypress.com
Use code **PAPER30** at checkout



EDINBURGH University Press

Connecting people and ideas edinburghuniversitypress.com