

Email to: cteea.inquiries@parliament.scot

12 October 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

Written Evidence – Impact of Brexit negotiations on Scotland

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2100 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 25,000. We:

- support policy development to improve approaches to planning for the benefit of the public;
- maintain the professional standards of our members;
- support our members, and therefore the majority of the planning workforce, to have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver planning effectively;
- maintain high standards of planning education;
- develop and promote new thinking, ideas and approaches which can improve planning;
- support our membership to work with others who have a role in developing places in Scotland; and
- improve the understanding of planning and the planning system to policy makers, politicians, practitioners and the general public.

RTPI Scotland thanks the Committee for the opportunity to comment on the impact of the Brexit negotiations on Scotland. The Institute, as a Charity, Learned Society and Membership Body does not, and cannot, take a position on political rather than planning issues. The Institute will however support its Members to make planning work throughout the UK following Brexit, and is working with the UK Government and its members to prepare. The RTPI:

- has commissioned research into potential land use regulatory change, and the impact of this on the four planning systems of the UK;
- is lobbying the UK Government to try and ensure that the UK's position as a world leader in designing and delivering built environments is not lost following Brexit; and,
- is using communication channels to prepare members for working in the planning system and built environment more broadly following Brexit.

What preparations, if any, are being made by individuals, businesses and organisations for the range of scenarios which may result from the Article 50 negotiations? And What the impact of a no-deal outcome would be for Scottish individuals, businesses and organisations?

Research

The RTPI has commissioned research into the possible scenarios that regulatory change following Brexit could have on planning systems across the UK. Phase one of this research, published in June 2018, took three feasible outcomes from the Brexit negotiations and examined how the resultant changes to land use regulation would impact on planning. This includes a 'no deal' scenario. The [full report](#), including a short summary and conclusion, is available on the RTPI website.

The second phase of this research will propose a mechanism for assessing the efficiency of the application of the directives and regulations to the four planning systems in the UK. This will include focus on the issue of whether there is duplication between the environmental regime and the planning regime and how to avoid it if necessary whilst retaining at least the current levels of environmental outcomes post-Brexit. Phase Two will be published early in 2019.

Cross-sector working and briefing our members

The RTPI is working with the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Institute of Building to prepare our members and the sector more widely for whatever scenario results from the Brexit negotiations. The four nations of the UK are together a world leader in planning, designing and building urban environments. The RTPI, RIBA, RICS and CIOB represent a combined membership of over 175,000 skilled professionals working in the built environment, with members across the world. Together, our members make a vital contribution to the global success of the UK construction industry - a sector worth over £100 billion to the UK economy.

The Institutes are lobbying the UK Government on six priorities for the built environment:

1. *Access to skills* - The greatest strength of our sector is the skill of our workforce. The free movement of labour within the EU has been vital to the growth and flexibility of the construction sector. Access to a skilled workforce of the highest quality and a focus on developing the next generation of home-grown talent are critical to ensure we can build the homes businesses and infrastructure we need to compete globally. We therefore urge the Government to explore options and approaches to ensure that this access is not impeded to the detriment of the built environment. We must also continue to look at improving access to skills on a global scale.
2. *Common standards* - We believe that the UK has much to gain from pursuing an approach that makes it easier to do business with trading partners new and old. Access to markets in the EU and around the world has transformed the UK construction sector. The mutual recognition of qualifications and the development of common technical standards have reduced the barriers our members face working abroad. Reducing tariffs and harmonising standards have helped UK firms of all sizes expand to Europe and beyond. These common approaches have also meant that UK businesses can support best-practice in environmental and product standards, to address global issues such as climate change. It is imperative that governments in the UK protect and promote the UK's role as a leader in environmental and consumer protection standards.
3. *Research excellence* - Our members have benefitted from the collaborative research that the EU has enabled and promoted. Our future success depends on maintaining these relationships, while forging new ties with research organisations around the world. In addition the continued success of our world class university courses training our young people in the built environment is essential to underpin research and the continued supply of labour for construction and allied activities.

4. *Infrastructure investment* - The UK's global competitiveness will be hampered unless we do more to tackle the major infrastructure challenges we face. With a housing crisis, and growing concerns around energy, telecoms, road, rail and airport capacity, the Governments in the UK must seek and entice prospective investors to consider infrastructure of all kinds. Providing confidence to the construction industry through infrastructure funding and development will provide stability during a period of uncertainty and ensure that the UK is well-placed to take advantage of growth opportunities in the future.

5. *Devolution commitment* - The referendum has brought the divide between the different nations and regions of the UK into sharp focus. Our organisations believe that further devolution from Whitehall should be a key priority for the UK government as powers move from the European Commission. Devolution will enable a rebalancing of the economy so that all parts of the UK can benefit from any new opportunities arising from the UK's new relationship with the European Union. It is also an effective way of ensuring infrastructure spending is efficient, timely, coordinated and accountable.

6. *Community development* - Through the extensive skills and experience of our members we are best-placed to advise on how the built environment can unlock new opportunities and combat existing challenges, as well as provide places for people to live, work and play. Leaving the EU could present an opportunity for the UK, but it should not be associated with a drive to the bottom in the environmental and building standards which future generations will live with.

I trust that you will find these comments helpful. As the negotiations evolve the RTPI will continue to work with the UK Government and inform its members of any relevant developments. For up to date information on any of these issues, or to discuss any aspect or require clarification of any points raised in this evidence, please contact me on 0131 229 9628 or by email to kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Houghton
Policy & Practice Officer