

An architectural rendering of a vibrant park scene. In the foreground, a group of people sits on a grassy area with red flowers. A winding path leads through the park where children play, people picnic, and others stroll. In the background, modern multi-story buildings and trees are visible under a clear sky.

THE NORTH WEST PLANNING YEAR A REVIEW OF 2019



RTPI North West
Royal Town Planning Institute



Celebrating
60 years of our
Royal Charter

THE NORTH WEST PLANNING YEAR
A REVIEW OF
2019



Image left
Preston Bus Station

Cover Image
Northern Gateway, Manchester –
The Strategic Regeneration Framework
Artwork by Adriette Myburgh

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CHAIR'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as Chair and it is my pleasure to present to you this years' review of events.

My time as Chair officially started at last year's AGM, in a brewery in Salford, and my first event was beer tasting. I couldn't think of a more fitting way to kick things off.

The foundation of our regional activity calendar is our CPD programme, which continues to grow. This year we held 20 full day CPD sessions, which accounted for over 7,000 hours of CPD for our members. We were also responsible for delivering a further 10 events including Young Planner, career advice, APC club, and Let's Talk sessions. All delivered by volunteers, with support from our generous sponsors and, of course, Bev Watson our regional coordinator.

Thank you to everyone who made this all possible and for your continuing support for these CPD events. I was fortunate enough to attend several events myself and, for me, they remain the best way to promote best practice, knowledge sharing, innovation and cross sector collaboration at a regional level.

Throughout 2019, the Regional Activity Committee has given special attention to our local authority links. Conscious that to serve all our members we need input and support from all parts of the profession – public and private. This has involved meeting with

Heads of Planning and senior officers from all 40 LPAs across the region (the only exception being Isle of Man, sorry. Hopefully we can make it next year).

This has been a personal highlight of the year, getting to meet with and hear from fellow planners across the profession. I've learnt that there are ways we can improve as a Regional Activity Committee to better serve our members and we have started to implement this already. We now have a better balance of planners on the committee from across the profession; we have launched an initiative this year



Planning for Mental Health CPD, September



Our new Chair



Preston City Council Planning Team

to make it easier for volunteers from local authorities to engage with regional events (LPA Champions); we have reworked the APC Club to make it more inclusive and brought it out of Manchester and Liverpool for the first time; and we are also working to bring an RTPI apprenticeship course to the region following feedback that there is a demand for this regionally.

The region is in the fortunate position of having two excellent planning schools at The University of Manchester and Liverpool University. The Regional Activity Committee has close links to both, which has allowed us to run many joint awards, lectures and career events over the years. In 2019, I have met with both and we have made moves to better formalise these partnerships to build on the great work that already takes place. There will be more to follow on

this in 2020, recognising that students, graduates and young planners are the future of the profession in the region.

For the President's Visit to the region in June, we were asked to take the path less trodden. Ian Tant (this year's RTPI President) hails from Lancashire and we were therefore challenged to explore further afield which ultimately took us all the way to Whitehaven, via Windermere, Preston and Rochdale. It was a great opportunity to shine a light on the varied work that planners do across the whole region.

In 2019 there have been more regional award winners. Congratulations to the RTPI North West Overall Winners – South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document as well as all the individual category winners.

The region also gained three new Fellows – the RTPI's most prestigious accolade. Congratulations to Warren Marshall, John Sturzaker and Jon Suckley, who were all recognised for the major contributions they have made to the profession over the years.

Our annual dinner in October was our biggest ever. It was an honour to be joined by Chris Boardman MBE and hear stories of his celebrated career, innovation and leadership. It was a double honour, as we were also joined by Victoria Hills, Chief Executive of the RTPI. It was great night and wonderful way to celebrate the planning profession in the North West.

My final event as Chair will be the 2019 AGM, back in a brewery by popular demand. A fitting way to round things off. Then it is over to the incoming Chair Kim

Cooper. As I said at the start of the year, my aim for 2019 was to not drop the ball (or lose the Chair's medal). I have almost made it and it has been an honour.

Lastly, thank you to the Regional Management Board and the Regional Activity Committee for all their hard work and support over the year. None of the above would have been possible without them.

Andrew Johnston
RTPI North West Chair



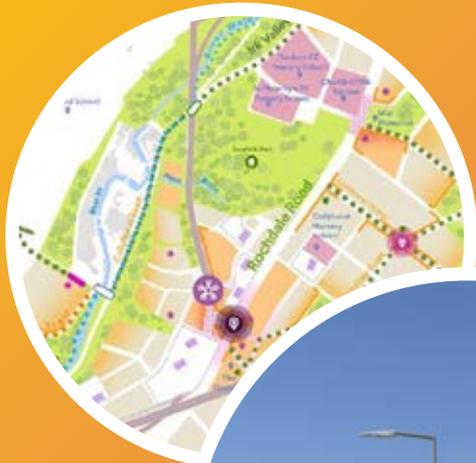
RTPI North West Overall Winners



Chris Boardman MBE



Royal Liver building, Liverpool



REGIONAL PRACTICE

In this section we look at what the RTPI North West Region, its planners and volunteers, have achieved in developing and rewarding best practice in 2019



RTPI NORTH WEST'S AWARDS FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE, 2019

This year we received a record number of entries to our Regional Awards and shortlisted 8 schemes for site visits/presentations that took place in September. Schemes were considered in the following categories:

- Regeneration
- Culture and Heritage (kindly sponsored by IHBC)
- Spatial Planning
- Small Scheme
- Large Scheme
- Young Planner of the Year

The judging panel included representatives from the public and private sector, including: Selma Carson, Chris Findley, Louisa Fielden, Dan Jackson, Peter Kuit, Paul Mason, Chris Bradshaw, Steve Thompson, Alec Hickey and Tom Royles.

The judges visited the schemes and heard presentations from the entrants. The decision on the overall winner was a difficult one, as the entries were of such quality. The judges did, however, agree that the worthy winner was Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document, an innovative plan applying policies and allocations across the AONB in a way that conserves and enhances the landscape and creates vibrant, diverse and sustainable communities.



Spatial Planning and Overall Winner

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document, submitted by South Lakeland DC and Lancaster City Council

“The plan, which specifically covers a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is the first of its kind to be adopted within the country. It was adopted in March 2019 and was prepared jointly by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council, collaborating with a range of partners.

The judges were impressed by the plan’s positive approach to affordable housing provision, supported by a comprehensive evidence base including a Household Needs Survey Form which was sent to every household within the AONB area. They were also particularly impressed with the Landscape Capacity approach to identifying

potential development sites. This approach has helped the plan to achieve the delicate balance of preserving the natural beauty of the area, whilst providing for the specific housing needs of the community.

The plan is an excellent example of joint working and positive planning, which has successfully addressed competing policy objectives at the national and local level. It is an innovative and ground-breaking plan, which showcases a wide range of skills and the high quality of planning work involved in its preparation.”



Regeneration Winner

Brinnington Regeneration Initiative, submitted by Countryside Properties

“The Brinnington Regeneration Initiative has been ongoing since 2009 with the objective of increasing housing choice, and creating a more balanced sustainable community in what is an area ranked within the 5% most deprived areas. Through long-term joint working between Stockport Council and Countryside Properties, a number of planning and political challenges were overcome in order to deliver private dwellings. The success of the housing development was demonstrated by the 98 homes being sold within 12 months, and 87 of these to first-time buyers.

The scheme required permission for the development of land within the Green Belt and Reddish Vale Country Park which was highly

contentious and was promoted over six years, from the approval of the Brinnington Masterplan Regeneration Plan in 2011 through to 2015 when a Judicial Review application was defended.

It has delivered not only a high-quality residential development, but improvements to the accessibility of the adjacent Country Park and assisted in the delivery of a leisure centre for the wider community. The judges thought that the development team’s pride of the scheme shone through at the site visit which is fully justified given the clear integration of the scheme into the community.”



Culture & Heritage Winner kindly sponsored by IHBC

Preston Bus Station, submitted by Cassidy + Ashton Group Ltd

“Preston Bus Station is an iconic landmark structure which celebrates its fiftieth birthday this year. It is a significant building of imposing character that was designed in the late 60’s as an innovative integrated design in a strident modernist style by local architects’ practice BDP.

At 170 metres long, the monolithic bus station and car park was saved from demolition and is now a grade II listed heritage asset. The vast scale, poor condition, and its disconnect with the city posed a real challenge for the design team, and its refurbishment and works to improve the public realm have now transformed the tired looking and unwelcoming facility into a place that now contributes to the functioning, vitality and regeneration of this part of Preston.

Refurbishing the bus station has seen dramatic changes to the apron to provide level access and direct linkages with the centre that were previously an unattractive and dangerous barrier.

The improvements and investment in high quality landscaping has ensured that the station is now well and truly integrated with the centre and has seen an increase in footfall and activity.

The judges were particularly impressed with the consultation engagement and commitment to investing in this transport hub along with the quality and level of repair and refurbishment. They noted the success in decluttering the spaces to reinforce the important long internal and external vistas. They also commended the team on the retention, reinstatement and reuse of materials, especially the creative reuse of Iroko timber into benches.

The result is an exemplary project that retains the clarity and purity of the original iconic 60’s design yet transforms the visitor experience into one which is safe, legible and connected. Preston Bus Station retains its status as Twentieth century modernist classic of national significance.”



Spatial Planning Commendation

Northern Gateway, Manchester, submitted by Avison Young

“The Strategic Regeneration Framework covers a substantial area to the north of Manchester City Centre and Victoria Station. It has been prepared by a team of specialist consultants, led by Avison Young and was commissioned by Manchester City Council, along with Joint Venture Partners the Far East Consortium.

The Framework identifies the potential for around 15,000 new homes within a series of neighbourhoods over a 15-20-year period, along with improved transport links, new employment opportunities, community facilities and new and improved open space.

The judges were impressed with the scale and ambition of the project and its potential to transform the area and address existing problems

of deprivation. The judges were also impressed with the bold vision for a new urban park alongside the River Irk leading into the city centre. The Framework is well written and avoids the use of planning ‘jargon’. The extensive use of diagrams and illustrations also help to create a more user-friendly document.

The Strategic Regeneration Framework is a good example of a flexible, strategic plan for a large and complex urban area, which provides a strong, transformational vision which should help to attract new public and private investment. Its preparation has had a strong planning focus and has required a wide range of planning and place making skills.”



Spatial Planning Commendation

The Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan, submitted by Knutsford Town Council

“The adopted Neighbourhood Plan covers the historic town of Knutsford, Cheshire, which had been identified as an area for significant new housing development by the local planning authority. The local project team were supported by planning consultants, Urban Imprint and the Planning Policy team at Cheshire East Council. The plan was described by the examiner as “thorough and well- illustrated”, and who commended its contributors.

The judges recognised the strong commitment of the local community and project team, and the wide range of volunteer input into the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. They were also impressed with the wide range of planning policies within the plan and the clear diagrams which help to create a more user-friendly document.

The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a specific Knutsford Design Guide, which aims to ensure new developments are locally distinctive and reflect the existing character of the area. However, at this early stage, it is unsure how effectively this new design guidance will be applied through the Development Management process.”

It is a good example of a community led plan, which has provided opportunities for engagement and which has helped to raise the awareness and understanding of planning issues across the community.”



Small Scheme Winner

Green Lake Barns, Aldford, submitted by Cadnant Planning

“The aim of this scheme was to provide a hub of services to integrate with and strengthen the already vibrant community at Aldford. There was an immediate requirement to replace the village shop and following a site search a central location was found reusing redundant forestry buildings.

The scheme provides a shop, which stocks an extensive range of convenience goods for residents and visitors together with a café and two commercial units, all of which have already been occupied.

The judges were impressed with the range of facilities provided in the hub and the value of this to residents, some of whom find it difficult to travel. The provision of the café and village square is a convenient meeting place and was especially welcomed by local people. The scheme also improved connectivity from the village hub to the nearby village green and bowling green.

The design and local materials utilised, combined with outstanding craftsmanship have ensured a development that is greatly valued by the village community and in complete harmony with the remainder of this traditional village.”



Large Scheme Winner

Windermere Jetty, submitted by Lake District National Park Authority

“Windermere Jetty is the outcome of the redevelopment of the Windermere Steamboat Museum and was once a sand and gravel works. This is a large development in the context of the Lake District National Park located as it is on the shore of Windermere.

The purpose of this facility is to house and display historic boats and establish a world class visitor attraction.

This is a key site in the Windermere Waterfront Programme of the National Park’s core strategy which together with other key sites are creating a cohesive and joined up visitor destination. Challenges included the requirement to provide buildings to display historic boats and provide workshops where boats can be restored. The

structures had to be sensitively designed, of appropriate scale and following much heart searching over external materials arrived at the innovative solution of pre-patinated copper.

The judges were impressed with the distinctive design and materials of the buildings which have resulted in the creation of a development completely in harmony with its setting on the edge of Windermere, reaching out into the lake by means of a jetty leading from the boathouse. The judges were also impressed with the traditional boat building skills that are being retained and developed at the centre through the use of existing craftsmen and women from the region including Barrow.”



Young Planner of the Year Hannah Payne

The judges found Hannah's presentation to be very engaging and an excellent example of alternative methods of communication. The judges were impressed by the wide variety of planning practice with which Hannah has already been involved. This has largely been on private-sector projects but has covered a range of scale and which enabled her to demonstrate very good ability to deal with challenging issues.

The choice of projects allowed Hannah to clearly demonstrate her enthusiasm for planning and the ability to make a difference to communities and individuals. Hannah is a very able communicator and evidently enjoys contributing to mentoring and team-building activities, both in her workplace and the wider profession.

The judges were very pleased to see Hannah's active involvement with the RTPI having been involved with the RTPI Young Planners and RAC for the past three years. In particular, they recognised Hannah's major contribution to the successful RTPI Young Planners conference in 2017.

EDUCATION AND CAREERS

The Education, Careers and Mentoring Task group has had a very productive year, beginning with the award of prizes for the regional schools competition, and culminating in our celebration of World Town Planning Day.

Back to school

The 2018 NW Schools Competition encouraged GCSE and A-Level students to consider the role of the town planner in relation to their local high streets. The challenge highlighted the changing nature of local centres by asking entrants what their local centre should look like in 2030. We received 48 entries, all of a very high standard.

Ada Kolodziejska of St. Monica's RC High School won first place. In second place was Hollie Meehan of St Thomas More RC College. Third place went to Grace Tregenza from Upton Hall School, Wirral. Khara Falcon of Cockermouth School received a commendation.





Khara Falcon, Commended

We are delighted that our 2019 question, inspired by the wave of climate change protests led by young people, has been adopted at a national level, and look forward to being involved in judging the entries.

We have promoted planning at careers fairs at the Universities of Manchester and Liverpool, and have attended work experience events at local schools to introduce students to town planning as a profession. We are always asked for more volunteers than we can supply, so please get in touch if you would like to assist – committing to just one event a year would be tremendously helpful.

LPA support

Following on from the success of the Chair's 'LPA Champions' initiative, the Task Group has delivered the first of what we hope will be many APC support events for local planning authorities. Our presentation in Cumbria was entitled 'MRTPI Demystified' and provided 30 officers with an insight into the various routes to membership, with perspectives from an assessor and two successful candidates. The NW office is keen to help with any membership queries you may have – do get in touch.



Supporting the profession

The task group's remit extends to providing the soft skills that are so important to all professionals. This year we had a dynamic session on confidence and public speaking from the Vibrancy Hub, whilst Luma Marketing visited us twice, providing valuable insights into social media, and how to excel at networking. The events were well attended and have received fantastic feedback.

Planning Aid England in the North West

Planning Aid England is part of the RTPI. It is co-ordinated by just four staff members (2.5 full time equivalent) at Botolph Lane and delivered by 180 or so volunteers across the country. Eight of those volunteers in the North West meet as a Task Group to help pinpoint where Planning Aid support is needed in our Region and provide training for volunteers.

Planning Aid demystified ...

What is the scope of Planning Aid?

The service has a general aim of enabling people of all walks of life understand how planning processes work so they can be better involved and have an effective say. However, there is a special focus on those who cannot afford to pay for planning advice and residents' groups in deprived communities.

Who can request advice?

Anyone can get limited free help on a planning matter by emailing the nationally run email Advice Service via:

planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new

Enquirers receive 15 minutes' worth of reply time from a chartered town planner volunteer. The target response time is 5 working days.

Enquirers are also pointed to the extensive on-line resource of planning information - Planning Aid Direct at:

planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us which is compiled and kept up to date by volunteers. Individuals and community groups with limited financial means who require in-depth or on-going support will be allocated a volunteer caseworker who devotes as much time as is needed to provide the advisory assistance required.

Is the service also proactive in offering advice?

This role is taken up regionally by the Task Group, particularly targeting community planning activities in the more deprived areas of the North West and more generally at supporting public participation in development plan consultations.

What sort of work is advised on?

All aspects of planning are catered for. The national advice service covers development management, enforcement and policy queries including help with making representations, preparing planning applications

and pursuing appeals. Much of the assistance initiated by the North West Task Group is support for Neighbourhood Plan groups in derived areas and volunteers acting as neutral facilitators at community engagement events for development plans and proposals.

Can LPAs and Planning Consultancies promote Planning Aid?

Very much so, they can point to Planning Aid England on their websites and in general correspondence therefore helping enquirers who need additional support and of limited means. Councils and consultancies can also encourage their staff to become Planning Aid volunteers and so gain different, wider planning experience outside of their day jobs.

North West Planning Aid activity in 2019

2019 has been another busy year for North West Planning Aid volunteers, over half of whom have been actively engaged in providing support or carrying out research tasks. As in previous years, information has been collected about the preparation progress of all development plans in the Region. Impressively about 200 groups have embarked on the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in the North West but some are struggling to maintain progress. Support is offered to all those groups in the most deprived areas and several are receiving Planning Aid assistance on an on-going basis. This is behind the scenes work by our volunteers but nevertheless rewarding for them and gratefully welcomed by the recipient groups. The records of Local Plan progress are used to offer neutral facilitator support to Local Planning Authorities at community engagement stages.

A dozen or so delegates attended a free Task Group organised a presentation by Mark Dickens, lead planner at the Liverpool Combined Authority on the preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy. This event helped bring our volunteers get up to speed on this rarely used form of development plan (the only other current equivalent is the London Plan) with a view to Planning Aid assistance being given when the Strategy is consulted on next year.

How can I become a Planning Aid volunteer?

Simply click on the following link and complete the on-line form: rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/volunteering

You need to be a RTPI Member is some capacity. Only Chartered Members can provide advice but there are ancillary roles that other Members can play.

The benefits of volunteering

These are numerous and include: the feel good factor of being able to help people who may not otherwise receive assistance; widening of personal practice experience; meeting and learning from other volunteers; receiving free training (include a free NW CPD place for active volunteering) and boosting CPD/APC accreditation.



Planning Aid Task Group

A photograph of the Albert Dock in Liverpool, showing a long, multi-story brick building with many windows and arches along the waterfront. Several boats are docked in the water in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Albert Dock 175 Interpro Lecture Series 2019

Albert Dock on Liverpool's waterfront is one of the UK's most popular visitor attractions. It comprises the UK's largest group of Grade I listed buildings and forms an integral part of Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City, a Unesco world heritage site. But for most of the second half of the twentieth century Albert Dock lay neglected and under threat of demolition.

The story of how Albert Dock was rescued and brought back to use is told in a series of professional lecture events that will run for five years up to 2021, when the 175th anniversary of its opening in 1846 will be celebrated.

Ten half-yearly lecture events will focus on different aspects of this exemplary heritage-led regeneration project that saw the redundant, bomb damaged Albert Dock transformed into a successful cultural and commercial hub.

Interpro 6 Construction

Interpro 6, held at Merseyside Maritime Museum on 28th March 2019, took construction as its theme and was led by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). The event took the format of two panel discussions, with

speakers who had worked at Albert Dock in the 1980s during the restoration phase, and short presentations from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) students speculating on how Albert Dock could look in the future. It

was chaired by Andy Macfarlane, director of Curtins, the engineering firm that undertook the appraisals of the Albert Dock warehouses in 1982 in advance of the restoration.

Peter Connell, Connell Consulting Engineers, formerly engineer for Tarmac Construction and Curtins

I had the pleasure of working for Tarmac Construction at Albert Dock from 1984 to 1986, after which I jumped ship and joined Curtins where I was resident engineer on the Tate Gallery. So I have the unique experience of working on the restoration on both sides of the fence, with the contractors and the consulting engineers.

In 1972 the dock gates were opened, and the south docks became tidal and very quickly silted up. Albert Dock was left in a dismal state. The elevations and the tie bars on the buildings were peppered with corrosion. You can see how the buildings were put together in the Merseyside Maritime Museum's stairways.

Liverpool used to have a pool, a tidal tributary that the Old Dock was constructed in the middle of. The docks were further developed, and Albert Dock was the first dock designed for security. They were built to be fireproof and secure. Jesse Hartley, whose dad was a

mason, was an incredible man who was employed by the dock board to be responsible for the development of the south docks.

What we don't realise is that the site of Albert Dock was occupied by a number of buildings before it was constructed. Some of the land was reclaimed and they had to build a new river wall and the buildings were supported on timber piles.

Albert Dock had thirteen thousand plus timber piles and you have to imagine them bashing the timber piles into the ground at basement level to support these buildings. In 1982 Curtins was involved in load testing the piles and some were found to be rotting and some stabilisation works had to be undertaken.

Twenty-three and a half million bricks, locally made, were said to have been used, and the cast iron columns were brought by canal from Wigan where they were made. Hartley sourced all these materials to build Albert Dock and although

it was a large area, unfortunately it became outdated very quickly because ships got bigger and bigger.

In the basement of the Tate Gallery you will see the cast iron columns on sandstone plinths, and the roofs have bowstring trusses, constructed out of wrought iron, like the upturned hull of a ship. The floors are brick arches supported on unique Y shaped beams, which are quite fascinating to look at.

The masonry of these buildings is incredible. The retaining walls were also on piles that had to penetrate boulder clay. With the Tate we had to put new foundations to carry the new lift shafts and stairs.

When I was involved in the Britannia Pavilion there was some failure of the foundations. We used a patented Italian system, which entailed pouring cement into the piles through the brickwork at various angles and is an example of using modern techniques to stabilise a building that was built in the 1840s.

Susan Brown, SMB, former marketing executive for Arrowcroft

I started my career at Albert Dock, and I remember it as a very dejected place, a grey and silted up environment, when I came for an interview for a job with the developer Arrowcroft. Arrowcroft was working with Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) to develop shops and residential units at the dock and looking for someone on the marketing, promotion and sales side. They chose me for one reason really - because I had lived in America and I had seen similar developments to Albert Dock there.

I feel very lucky to have had ten wonderful years on this project and what I learned what immense. Thirty years ago, regeneration, or urban renewal as we called it, was something that no one actually wanted to do. I was working for estate agent Sykes Waterhouse in Liverpool, as Arrowcroft had no office at the time, and none of my Sykes colleagues wanted to take on Albert Dock. They wanted the big commercial clients such as Next and Liberty and didn't want to be dealing with small speciality shopping units and certainly didn't want the challenge of enticing people to live at Albert Dock.

Liverpool was considered to be on its knees at this time; there was high employment with factories closing and people understandably cared more about their jobs than how the Albert Dock was going to look.

Emotionally, they were driven to ask why we were putting money into Albert Dock, when factories such as Birds Eye in Kirkby were shutting down with the loss of 1000 jobs. It was considered to be throwing money down a black hole.

But the Albert Dock project went ahead for two or three reasons. Two people – one a developer from Arrowcroft named Ian Pearce, and Alex Anderson from Merseyside Development Corporation - wanted to do something different with Albert Dock. But that would not have been possible without an earlier proposal from an architect, Ken Martin, now retired, to turn it into a polytechnic for what is now Liverpool John Moores University. It shouldn't be uncared for and unloved, Ken argued, and it would be the perfect place for a university campus. He didn't get his way, but he was able to emotionally involve the people of Liverpool in the future of Albert Dock and show that it could have another use.

This was lucky for Albert Dock as it dramatically changed the way people saw Liverpool. So, when we came on board, we did little things to keep the future possibilities alive. We had a concert in the middle of the dock; we opened tiny parts of the building and had all sorts of different activities happening in it, just to make people see the potential of it. This was mainly in E Block, now

Edward Pavilion, because it was the only part we could open at first, and people started coming to it, and getting behind our ideas when they looked at our illustrations showing how it could look.

We were trying to get small businesses into the dock, and I started talking to banks and building societies to ask them to support the small retailers that had decided to go the route of speciality shopping, which they do a lot of in America. There was a lot of negative press saying that it was only for rich people, that the apartments would be too expensive.

The apartments weren't on our agenda because there was an awful lot to do before we could get to that point, but we got the banks and the building societies into a position where they had to support us. We took them out into the dock during the Tall Ships Race and didn't take the boat back in until they agreed! We basically strong-armed them, saying: look, this has never been done before, we want to do contracted out leases so we could control the merchandising. We wanted to make sure that every single shop controlled what it sold so that it didn't impact on what other shops were selling.

We knew there would be big periods of time when there would be a lot of renovation going on, and that we couldn't afford to fail. I talked to

all the shopkeepers. If we put you through a programme, I told them, if you go to one of the three banks or three building societies that we had on board, and you get your loan and business support from them, we will support you in marketing, we'll support you in sales, we'll support you in promotion, and we'll also put you on turnover rents, so we take the risk with you.

We were the first developer in the UK to do this. It was a new concept then. It's done a lot now, but we

were the first. A lot of people were doing it in America, but they weren't doing it over here. It's a fantastic way of giving time to develop a business and taking the risk together.

Also, it might be a big surprise to some people that Margaret Thatcher was very much behind Albert Dock. At the time her chancellor Geoffrey Howe was trying to start a managed decline of Liverpool and pushed it further into decline. But she and Michael Heseltine set up the task force and they both came

here a lot (it was my job to take his daughter shopping in Liverpool), quietly behind the scenes to see that something was happening in Liverpool that they could take a little bit of control over in regards to setting a standard for other cities. It's a question of looking at what each city has in relation to its heritage and its culture and seeing how in Liverpool's case we could start taking Liverpool back to its glory days.

Conclusion

This event brought the practical - and precarious - realities of being on site during Albert Dock's restoration in the early 1980s vividly to life through both the prepared talks and the ensuing discussions. How much working methods and conditions have changed in the 30 years since it was restored and reopened were thoughtfully considered, but also the strong sense of respect and awe for the original labourers and navvies who built Albert Dock to Hartley's instructions was also clear.

The sometimes less-considered softer skills of regeneration were also applauded, the work to change perceptions about a derelict dockland site considered a no-go area for all but the most intrepid, not only winning the hearts and minds of local Merseyside residents and businesses, but also the pockets of investors.

Albert Dock's solid and skillful construction means it could last for many more centuries. But the challenges that were faced and overcome during the regeneration in the 1980s, and inevitable problems in buildings of Albert Dock's nature and age are recurring today, while costs spiral and skills are not being passed onto the next generation. The sober truth that those present were surely left with is that if we want to keep these unique structures for future generations, we must address these issues with urgency.



The Best of CPD

Planning for Mental Health

On 10 September over 40 delegates gathered in Manchester to discuss how we can plan and develop our living environment – its buildings and spaces – in a way that recognises the relationship with mental health and promotes good mental wellbeing for all.

The event was part of the RTPI NW CPD Programme and chaired by Robert Huxford of the Urban Design Group. Eight speakers from academia, the public sector, the NHS, private consultancy and the world of art presented on a wide range of topics. Dr Arun Chidambaram, Merseyside Care

NHSF Trust and Prof Rhiannon Corcoran, University of Liverpool led the way with presentations that addressed mental health and mental well-being respectively. This part of the day provided an opportunity to begin to understand and discuss the broad picture of mental health and wellbeing and the relationship with the living environment. Sarah Lewis from the RTPI then established the link between mental health and the role of the planning system, and in particular emphasised that this is a subject the RTPI are increasingly taking an active part in researching.



This was followed by Dr Robert MacDonald, an architect and Merseyside Care Design Champion, and Andy Farr, a professional artist. Robert is bipolar and gave a very personal and illuminating insight into how a person with a mental health condition experiences the world around them and introduced the concepts “happy places” and “vital planning”. Robert’s thoughts and ideas were illustrated by artist Andy Farr who created two special paintings for the event that, based on the audience response, respectively reflected the pain and isolation of living with mental illness and poor wellbeing, versus joy and a sense of community that typified the recognition that planning and design can make a positive difference to mental health and create internal and external environments that promote good mental wellbeing for all.

After lunch the focus was on practical ways that planners and designers can influence mental health and wellbeing. Graham Marshall from the University from the Liverpool/Prosocial Place provided a means of embedding design principles for good mental health through the Mind the GAPS idea (Green, Active, Pro-Social, Safe). Amber Morley from Turley gave a critical review of the tools available to planners, with a particular focus on the use of Health Impact Assessments as a means of evaluating potential impacts on mental health and well-being. Finally, Andy van Vliet, formerly a Principal Planning Officer with Sheffield City Council provided the opportunity to discuss a particularly relevant aspect of mental health in an ageing society - the practicalities of designing built environment for independence schemes for older people and those with associated conditions such as dementia.

Evidence from a range of studies over time and across the globe makes a clear connection between urban living and mental disorders, including depression, psychosis, mood and anxiety disorder.

The qualities of an environment directly determine our life strategies and our wellbeing, emphasising the importance of place design and stewardship.

In planning, design and development it is as well to be aware of unintended consequences. For example, increased density is considered to have important planning/ sustainability advantages in conserving land, enabling walking, cycling and public transport and supporting vitality. However, there is also a possible link between increased density and worse mental health outcomes. It is not clear whether the health outcomes are to do simply with density in general, or other specific factors that correlate with areas of higher density, such as lack of greenspace, worse air quality, increased noise and light pollution, concerns over safety and security, harsher environments, inner city poverty, and population transience in inner cities. It is not clear whether or not poorer health outcomes are an inevitable consequence of increased density, or if it is more a matter of design, maintenance and management.

Promoting good mental wellbeing means developing places that are green, active, pro-social and safe. Creating a good place for everyone should include activities for all across and between age groups with safe play spaces. It should include opportunities for people to develop a sense of community and neighbourliness in a safe, clean and pleasant environment that connects with nature and has a good transport system and movement network.

An ageing population creates its own specific planning and design challenges. Although people are living longer more are living with a life limiting illness such as dementia. However there is a pressure for independent living as people want to live independently at home and it is more cost efficient - in terms of the adult social care budget - to enable people to stay at home.



Designing for independent living principles require a consideration of a range of internal and external environmental factors including natural light/air, warmth, connections to the outdoors, movement and accessibility, flexible and adaptable uses and common facilities. External environments should be designed as neighbourhoods for life and be legible, familiar, and distinctive, accessible, comfortable quiet and interesting, and safe.

Importantly, designing for mental wellbeing requires the development of integrated and effective partnerships with care and service providers including social care, housing providers, health and wellbeing boards, NHS Trusts, public health authorities and charities.

Ultimately, the day highlighted the simple fact that as planners, architects, designers and developers we need to appreciate and understand mental health conditions and the wider advantages of promoting good mental wellbeing, and take this into account in planning and designing the buildings and spaces that make up our lived environment. In this context it is important to observe

that we already have the tools to embed healthy planning, for instance through the development and application of planning policies and supplementary planning documents (e.g. health, green infrastructure), the use of financial contributions through S106 agreements and CIL, the use of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and the use of environmental checks such as air quality assessments and pro-active tools such as travel plans.

Finally, don't forget: much of planning for good mental health and wellbeing is about good town planning.



Art work by Andy Farr

The Best of CPD

Urban Design

Delivering Design Quality

Gillespies facilitated a lively session on 'delivering design quality' in October to over 60 planners and designers from across the North West. Speakers included the ever inspiring and provocative Wayne Hemingway, Katie Hammond challenging us to embrace landscape-led masterplanning, Garry Legg from Carlisle providing a public sector perspective, Rob Thompson on design promotion tools and Caroline Baker of Cushman & Wakefield with a hard-hitting focus on commercial delivery. The session was bookended by a straw poll of public sector designers' quality issues from Leicester to Gateshead

and a workshop of attendees to tease out issues, opportunities and priorities.

Jim Fox – chair for the day – opened the event with an overview of design quality themes tested through the straw poll where respondents prioritised promoting residential design quality, pedestrian-friendly streets and spaces, and resourcing. High level conclusions from the survey were grounded by a plea from one design officer, "We want to be even more proactive and strategic with design quality but have to deal with over 300 major applications per year." Wayne took on the curse of housing standardisation



and mediocrity countered by successfully delivered places at The Staithes in Gateshead and Green Hills, Blackburn characterised by community places and spaces, and local distinctiveness motivated by local developers and ‘patient capital’ respectively.

Katie’s case for landscape led masterplanning drew inspiration from Jan Gehl and case studies including Leicester Waterside where river, canal and three new parks set the tone for this new edge of city community. Interestingly the first phase has been shifted towards the first park due to the housebuilder recognising the value uplift created by a green aspect. Garry picked up on the theme expanding on Katie’s second case study of St Cuthbert’s Garden Village where the priority theme of ‘start with the park’

needs to stay top of the design agenda incorporating a 10km greenway connecting new and existing communities, supported by the exploration of creative stewardship approaches. Emerging bespoke design reviews, SPDs and design guidance will underpin design priorities over what will be a lengthy planning, design and development period. Rob further developed the theme of planning and design tools including his work on the Manchester Residential Design Guide which was backed up by Caroline’s strong focus on commercial delivery.

The afternoon workshop session built on the findings of the straw poll with nine groups exploring the themes of residential quality, high street design, landscape and public realm. The greatest housing priority was the battle against standardisation and how to achieve

local distinctiveness – how to get the most out of our housebuilders. This was followed by the promotion of a pedestrian friendly public realm – getting the best out of our highway’s engineers. BfL, guides and codes were promoted and critically the resources needed to effectively embed them.

Pedestrian friendly spaces were the priority for the high street supported by a flexible use mix including culture, town centre living and pop up activity. Again guidance, masterplans and design reviews were promoted in the context of a wave of funding through Future High Streets and related initiatives. Landscape discussions picked up on Katie’s ‘landscape led’ challenge with a desire for greater and earlier integration of landscape planning and design. Long term maintenance and broader

stewardship should be a starting point - not an afterthought. In part motivated by the Leicester Waterside case study and FHSF the economic value of design quality was a recurring theme including footfall, jobs and land value uplift. The day closed with a bigger picture call to arms – to be bold and promote design leadership supported by proactive planning and interventionist land ownership.

Perhaps the last word comes from Garry Legg, Investment and Policy Manager of Carlisle City Council:

“It was great to see so much passion in the room and consensus about the importance of design quality. Perhaps more importantly

it was inspiring to see that passion and energy translate, particularly through the afternoon workshop sessions, into identifying practical ways to secure better design and hence looking to the future as opposed to dwelling on some of the shortcomings of the past. Great to hear about lots of good work already underway in the North West and I think the day amplified the importance of taking the time out to share and be exposed to best practice. I certainly came away with my enthusiasm brimming and better informed to ensure we really are striving to plan for the highest quality in the St Cuthbert’s Garden Village project”.



The RTPI NW run a wide range of events to support your learning needs.

18 events are programmed for 2020 and full details can be found at
rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-north-west/events

RTPI Training is part of wider CPD delivery by the Institute and compliments RTPI conferences, regional training events and RTPI Learn online modules.





REGIONAL RESEARCH

The RTPI and North West planners have been working hard over 2019 to develop and influence planning academic research at all levels. This section looks at their achievements and the views of regional academics on key issues.

RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

The Research and Policy Task Group's achievements for 2019 included helping to deliver the second phase of the **Local Authority Direct Provision of Housing** research project. This research, co-sponsored by RTPI North West, builds on the first phase of work undertaken in 2017. It describes the scale and range of local authority housing delivery and provides learning on delivery, outcomes and best practice. We hosted two roundtables in the region in 2019 (in Liverpool and Manchester), and the report was launched in Manchester in June.

The research included a survey of all local authorities in England and a series of in-depth case studies, two in the North West (Salford and South Lakeland).

The report presents findings in relation to particular issues around local authority housebuilding, including how planning can help to deliver more social and affordable housing; and the use local authorities are making of section 106 monies to prime and deliver housing development.

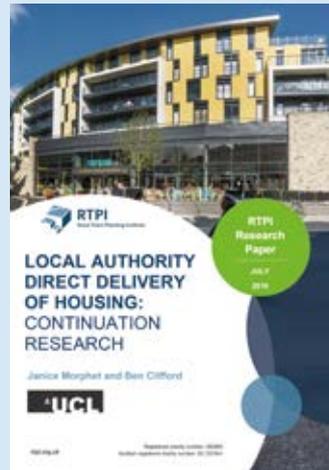
Continuing our involvement in the **Great North Plan**. This project, a collaboration between the RTPI, the Institute of Public Policy Research and others takes forward the Blueprint for a Great North Plan produced in 2016. The Great North Plan has four main purposes:

- A vision for the North
- A set of collaborative strategies
- A prospectus for investment
- A programme for action

Seven workstreams have been established to achieve these purposes. Together these workstreams will achieve the objectives of the Great North Plan to:

- Achieve a clear, strategic and long-term vision of what the North can become
- Identify how northern actors can own and drive change
- Recognise and bolster the distinctiveness of the North
- Indicate how this vision can be made into a reality

Of the seven workstreams, the three northern RTPI regions funded the development of a People and Place strategy. RTPI North West representatives sit on the project group driving the work, and wider consultation was undertaken



through six roundtables held across the North early in 2019, including two in the North West (in Blackpool and Manchester).

The strategy was launched in May. **Ambitions for the North: A spatial framework for people and places in the North of England** recommends a more ambitious approach to strategic planning and governance across the North of England: promoting co-operation beyond traditional boundaries, helping cities, towns and rural areas develop sustainably, and ensuring that prosperity generated by the Northern Powerhouse is shared as widely as possible. Throughout 2020 attention will move to implementing the recommendations of the report.

Supporting the national **RTPI Better Planning** initiative which aims to provide practical advice and intelligence to RTPI members and others in ways which demonstrate how planning can be part of the solution to major social, economic and environmental challenges. Within the North West region, the aim of Better Planning continues to focus on key policy and practice topics and areas.

The aims of the Better Planning programme include:

- To demonstrate the benefits of good planning
- To present planners and planning as having solutions to high profile issues

- To provide constructive and specific policy and practice solutions to these issues
- To encourage and support planners and others to deliver better outcomes from Planning

One such high profile issue within the North West region is the **Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)**. A further round of public consultation on the GMSF took place between January and March this year. A series of round table discussions for RTPI members and other activities took place in February with members attending from within the Greater Manchester area and beyond. The round tables were facilitated by RTPI and followed a similar exercise for the London Plan

previously undertaken by RTPI London. An agreed response between the RTPI and RTPI North West based on the round tables was subsequently sent to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. A further round of public consultation is expected in Summer 2020.

A city region plan for the Liverpool/Merseyside area is now at preparation stage and it is hoped to hold this type of format for a consultation with planners from the city region and beyond during an appropriate public consultation in 2020.

Finally, RTPI North West is invited to contribute to important national consultations on a variety of Planning and related matters.

During 2019 these included the Government “**Accelerated Planning**” **Green Paper**, due to have been published during this Autumn to which a full response was made based on Local Plan experience within the North West region. Other topics considered during the year included consultations on the

measurement of land for planning and development purposes to achieve more consistency and the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Current consultation towards the end of the year include the Future Homes Standard concerned with reducing the carbon footprint of homes to be built from 2025 and improving the energy performance of non-domestic private rented buildings through tighter minimum energy standards.



Planning for a greener and more equitable future

Dr Ian Mell

Senior Lecturer in Environmental & Landscape Planning,
University of Manchester

Over the last few years the UK planning systems have been reformed in various ways and for various reasons. Often overlooked during this process has been the gradual shift in emphasis placed on the “environment” as a policy arena. The proposed requirement (since downgraded to an option) for biodiversity net gain in all new large-scale development expected in the Environment Bill is one example of this shift. How environmental, landscape and biodiversity policy are being shaped has significant impacts on how local government responds to the management of their assets and their financial capacity to do so effectively. One significant and very visible aspect of this has been the

ways in which funding for local green spaces, waterways and parks have been impacted.

As austerity has continued to force local authorities to rethink the provision and management of local environmental resources, there has been a corresponding rise in joint academic/practitioner research assessing what can be done to maintain the UK’s “green and pleasant land”. For example, research from the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield has highlighted the value of local parks to diverse socio-economic and demographic communities. They have also been at the forefront of the

political discussions regarding the climatic and socio-economic value of street trees and the difficulties faced by communities and city councillors in managing public works contracts. Moreover, work by the University of the West of England and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust produced the Building with Nature Green Infrastructure standard, which has facilitated a dialogue between local planning authorities and developers to embed higher quality environmental design into new builds.

However, there remains a reluctance in some areas of local government to embrace these research findings and to think more innovatively

about how best we, as planners, can deliver sustainable places. This highlights a critical issue in local government service provision: what is legally required, what is morally justified and what is needed societally to develop healthy, functional and sustainable places. Research being conducted by the universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Ulster, Salford and Brighton in Belfast and Liverpool suggests that this may be changing. Through the research we are identifying institutional opportunities for funding and management that may offer solutions to some consequences of austerity. In addition, by engaging with communities our work illustrates something all planners know: that a greater level of local understanding is important in structuring an integrated approach to development.

The outcomes of this work provide insights into how community and local authority understandings of landscape value can be aligned within formal policy. As a result, we can identify synergies between the developing Belfast Agenda and recent consultation on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan for Belfast and the thinking underpinning the revised Local Plan consultation in Liverpool.

Why do communities like parks?

Communities in both Belfast and Liverpool articulated the value of parks as locations for all members of society regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnicity. Although spatial differences mean that cities in the UK do not have a uniform distribution of parks or green infrastructure, they are considered valuable in all areas. Ensuring that parks have suitable access points, a range of amenities and visible management of anti-social behaviour promotes their use and their popularity with local people. When challenged with change, communities are willing to fight to retain their parks, especially if they are the only amenity locally, as seen in Liverpool through the 2016 Strategic Green and Open Spaces Review.

What options do local authorities have to pay for parks?

One consistent message from central to local government since 2010 has been the need to do “more with less”, with consequent large cuts in grants to local authorities. Parks and green infrastructure have felt the full force

of this, and Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield are all examples where sales, endowments, community assets transfers, and private sponsorship have been reviewed as alternatives to traditional block grants. However, the value of parks and green infrastructure is often undermined by established balance sheet techniques that place a £1 notional valuation on “green public assets”. This may now be changing as more local authorities are undertaking green space audits and producing green infrastructure strategies. The Liverpool review noted above is one example of work which illustrates to elected members where value can be identified, how parks can be paid for, and what they mean to local people.

In addition, we have seen significant shifts in the approach taken by government to fund parks. In 2019 the UK government announced a £10 million Parks Accelerator Fund to be administered by the National Trust and Heritage Lottery fund to explore (and deliver) new funding models for green space. This comes on top of transitional funding received in Newcastle and Sheffield to explore the potential of park trust models

for management. Newcastle City Council has since established an endowment to support a new Parks Trust for 33 parks and 61 allotments. We can also see Business Improvement Districts in London, and elsewhere, stepping up to lead local level investment in urban greening. Better Bankside, Team London Bridge, Cross River Partnership, and the Wild West End BIDs have all worked with their members to improve the aesthetic and physical quality of their local environments through investments in street greening, new “parklets”, sustainable drainage and street trees.

Whilst this may be the equivalent of the “finger in the dam”, it does show that innovation is occurring. It also illustrates the potential for public and private stakeholders to step forward and relieve the pressure on local authorities. However, these “alternatives” should not be seen as a panacea – local authorities need to think carefully about how they address local conditions.

Who else might help pay for them?

Payments for ecosystem services, the introduction of biodiversity net gain, changes in s106 and CIL or moves towards charitable status for parks have all been proposed as options to pay for environmental resources. One mechanism being used to gain traction for these approaches is through aligning funding for natural resources with key government policy “hooks” including health, well-being, economic prosperity, and potentially climate change, air quality and flood mitigation. There is though no single refrain that works across parks and green infrastructure planning to ensure that the value of the environment is aligned effectively with these policy areas. Further work is needed to ensure that the findings of research are fed back to local authorities and start to influence policy across the UK.

What does the future hold for environmental financing?

There is a growing body of research looking at how best advocates for the environment can react to austerity. The outcomes of

this process are not all positive and highlight issues on all sides of the financing debate. However, these enforced reflections have provided a platform for communities, environmental advocates and local government officers to examine how “non-traditional” approaches to funding can make a meaningful contribution to ongoing provision. Although park trust models, community asset transfers, sponsorship and commercialisation activities are not universally popular with communities they do provide underexplored revenue streams. In addition, those local authorities utilising these options, e.g. Birmingham, London and Newcastle, are potentially both taking risks with their public assets whilst also future-proofing them against further funding cuts. To date there is no silver bullet to address the impacts of financial cuts, however, there is a growing community of academics, practitioners and local government officers working to identify, test and adopt new management techniques.

To find out more about these issues, you can contact Ian on ian.mell@manchester.ac.uk

RTPI FELLOWS IN 2019

Being recognised by your peers as a Fellow of your profession is one of the highest professional attainments. In 2019, the North West Region saw three regional members elected as Fellows.



Warren Marshall

“I am honoured to have been elected to Fellowship of the Royal Town Planning Institute a recognition by my planning peers of my positive contribution to the planning profession.

In a career spanning public and private sectors I have and continue to work alongside so many dedicated planning professionals all seeking to make a positive contribution to enhancing place and creating sustainable communities. Through my involvement with the University of Liverpool planning school it is very satisfying to be able to witness and support the emergence of our future planning profession”.



John Sturzaker

“I’m very proud to be elected as a Fellow of the RTPI. I have tried throughout my career to promote the power of positive planning, and it’s a great honour to have that recognised in this way. Being a professional planner is important to me, and something I promote to my colleagues and to students. I’m particularly pleased to be a Fellow working in an academic context, as I think strengthening the relationship between our planning schools and the wider membership is essential”.



Jon Suckley

“I am a passionate Town Planner and a proud member of the RTPI. Fellowship is one of the highest professional attainments available to a planner and I am very honoured to have received this accolade. I am extremely proud that my leadership and innovation skills have been recognised by the planning professionals who have elected me to this class. It gives me great pleasure to mentor senior members of staff, and to nurture, support and develop the next generation planners as well as provide planning advice on some of the most challenging, significant and rewarding development projects in the North of England. I am looking forward to continuing my role as a fellow of the RTPI and an ambassador for this much valued profession”.



REGIONAL LIFE

A light-hearted look at the social side of planning in the North West and how the NW RTPi is bringing people together for networking, and for fun!



RTPI NORTH WEST PUB QUIZ 2019

This year's hotly anticipated RTPI NW Pub Quiz was held in the Seven Brothers Beerhouse in historic Ancoats, Manchester. Sponsored by Urban Imprint and hosted by their team members Jo Gregory and Bob Phillips for the third year running, the event saw 10 teams battle for supremacy and the coveted pub quiz trophy. This year we were pleased to welcome teams from all corners of the RTPI family ranging from planning and development consultancies, a team of enforcement officers as well as transport and cycling design experts,

All participants enjoyed a wonderful 'burger and chips' supper before testing their brains over six rounds of questions including the much anticipated 'Win your Tea' round where teams had to guess the price of everyday supermarket purchases. This year saw the finale round where the best planning minds

pitted their wits against naming items from ten different categories all beginning with a letter 'F' – it was decreed that a 'Frog' was not something that would normally be found in a circus despite some protestations from the team involved.

But as always there always must be a winner and this years the champions were 'Comply and Die' from Manchester City Council, who beat off close competition in a three way tie break, to be crowned champions. The wildcard team of 'Waifs and Strays' took the much sought after peanuts for coming in last place – but later commented that it was an excellent networking opportunity! Our thanks to all who attended and brought so much good humour to the event, and to the Seven Bro7hers Beerhouse for hosting this event



In First Place – ‘Comply or Die’



*In, erm, less than first Place –
‘Waifs and Strays’*

5-A-SIDE TOURNAMENT 2019

This year's event took place at Powerleague Central Manchester on Thursday 23 May, attracting 20 teams. NJL Consulting won the overall tournament, beating Barratt & David Wilson Home 3-2 in the final. The other semi-finalists were Kings Chambers and Cushman & Wakefield. Another successful event and thank you so much to sponsors Kings Chambers.

Next year's event will take place at the same venue on Thursday 21 May 2020. We are seeking sponsors so please get in touch with Bev if you are interested. Full details will be online and available to book in the New Year.

SPA DAY OFFERS NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY!

Planners and guests discovered yet another innovative way to network on 18 April at Ribby Hall Village Hotel Spa.

Kindly sponsored by Savills, the event attracted 22 guests from both the public and private sectors. The day included complimentary morning coffee and croissants, the luxury aqua thermal journey through steam rooms and plunge pools, dips in the hot tubs and a sit in the sunshine, followed by a two course lunch. The ultimate networking experience!

This is proving to be a very popular networking opportunity with a difference and a truly inspirational event.

WELL LUBRICATED NETWORKING: THE RTPI 2018 AGM

At the Seven Brothers Brewery in Salford, 2018 Chair, Bob Phillips, handed over the reins to 2019 chair, Andrew Johnston. After formal business was complete, the mic was handed over to two of the brothers from Seven Brothers for a beer tasting session.



“Andrew, I have a Cunning Plan”



Jo Harding



At the Brewery, feeling the effects

RTPI DINNER

2019 was a big year for the Annual Dinner. It was the first year that we had hosted the Dinner at the Mercure Piccadilly, Manchester and we had just under 500 (494) guests, our best attendance to date! Squarely putting us at the forefront of property events in the Region. So a big thank you to everyone who supported us on the night and to our generous sponsors Croft Transport Planning & Design, Nexus Planning, Curtins, Kings Chambers, TLT Solicitors, CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP and White Peak Planning.

The Annual Dinner is a time for Planners across the Region to catch-up, network and celebrate with the presentation of the RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Excellence 2019 (this year kindly sponsored by WYG). These awards celebrate outstanding projects that demonstrate the power of planning in our region. Entries reflect the diversity of planning achievement, whether in urban or rural areas, large or small in scale, involving new development, regeneration or conservation.



It's Networking, honest...





Andrew Johnston,
Regional Chair



Young Planner of the Year,
Hannah Payne



We had a fantastic guest speaker this year, Chris Boardman MBE (the former racing cyclist and who won World and Olympic titles as well as leading the Tour de France on three occasions). Chris of course is now Greater Manchester's first Cycling and Walking Commissioner. And we heard from him about the innovative he drove through British Cycling, with the 'Secret Squirrel Club', and how he is now translating this into the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, making Greater Manchester a safer place to cycle and walk. Chris's speech was littered with some great words of advice, drawing on his own experiences and reflecting on his success (and some self-identified failures). Two things he said stuck with me - "attitude is a choice" and "it's your responsibility to find your own learning" – both of which are certainly relatable to a career in Planning.

We also heard from our honoured guest Victoria Hills (Chief Executive of the RTPi) about the strength of planning in the NW Region, her push to support the next generation of planners and her thanks to volunteers and staff in the Region for their continued hard work this year - with special thanks to outgoing Chair Andrew Johnston and our own Bev Watson.

For those of you who were able to attend we also hope you enjoyed the 'surprise' guests! The singing and dancing on tables certainly indicated that you did.

With thanks to our sponsors. Look forward to more information on next year's Annual Dinner at the RTPi Events Page: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/>



Chris Boardman MBE

PRESIDENT'S VISIT 2019

In June, we hosted the RTPI President, Ian Tant.

Ian knows the North West very well already, having grown up in Lancashire and studied in Manchester. We were therefore tasked with visiting some of the region's more hidden gems.



Ian Tant, Andrew Johnston and Bev Watson with members of Copeland Borough Council
Inset: Ian Tant with Cllr Peter Moss, Deputy Leader, Preston City Council

A big thank you to Rochdale Borough Council, Preston City Council, Copeland Borough Council and Lakes National Park for helping host this year's visit.

Ian summed up the visit best in his blog post "Passion for planning in the North West":

My visit to the North West region took me to a number of places lying on the 'path less taken' – and to one very well trodden.

Rochdale, Preston and Whitehaven – each a step further away from the metropolitan centres of the region (and from London) – share in one thing: the fervent desire of planners and councillors alike to see their places thrive and their centres renewed and regenerated.

Rochdale

Rochdale benefits from the strategic planning work of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the substantial funding that comes with the City Deal and its place in the Northern Powerhouse.

The GMCA strategy places Rochdale in the Northern Growth Corridor, a focus for economic investment as well as housing growth, intending the redirection of advanced manufacturing opportunities to the area.

Rochdale Council is proactive in delivering major regeneration of the town centre. The Council's new One Riverside offices (picture) are already complete. Work is well advanced to complete the Riverside Centre, sitting alongside the Metrolink (tram) station and the re-exposed River Roch (it was previously culverted throughout the town centre). With the Rochdale Development Agency (owned by the Council) and investment through a Heritage Action Zone, work is well advanced to deliver the vision. There is no shortage of ambition.

Preston

An hour or so further away, Preston City Council has a similar level of aspiration for its city centre, combining new projects, such as the award-winning Preston Markets, with heritage conservation including the recently restored 1960's bus station, the largest in Europe (I'm told). Work on the public realm outside the bus station continues apace.

Ian Tant, Andrew Johnston, Bob Phillips and Bev Watson with members of Preston City Council

The challenge for Preston, with a smaller budget than that available in Greater Manchester, is to prioritise its expenditure to greatest effect. By focusing on public realm works and grant aid in the retail centre, the City Council is seeking to lever in private investment. This can take time to arrive but there is huge confidence amongst the officers in their ability to deliver.

Continuing investment by the University of Central Lancashire is aiding regeneration, with work underway now to deliver a new student support building which will provide a vital landmark in the Friargate regeneration.



Ian Tant with Mike McKinley (Chairman), Dave McGowan, Ben Long and Steve Ratcliffe, (Director of Sustainable Development), Lake District National Park Authority

The challenge is to ensure that everyone, not just those employed in the nuclear industry share equally in the planned economic prosperity. Delivering the developments should engender confidence in both the private sector and in the community, where it is much needed.

The Lake District

The final stop in my visit was to the Lake District National Park Authority. 2019 marks the 70th Anniversary of the National Parks Act. It was nothing short of a delight to visit the National Park I know best (growing up in Lancashire) and to see the newly opened Windermere Jetty Museum (picture) – a brave scheme with brave architecture. As 19.4 million people a year visit the Lakes, I’m sure you’ll all see it for yourselves soon enough!

I could have called this piece “Love in a Cold Climate”. The climate is the economic one, with each place facing its unique challenges in austerity. But there is no doubting the love of the planners for their city, towns and National Park.

Ian Tant

RTPI President 2019

Whitehaven

Further away is Whitehaven. Its seclusion on the coast, west of the Lakeland hills, has limited investment in the town for centuries. On the other hand, it has left us with a historic and cultural gem largely intact from the ravages of 20th century redevelopment that have so marked other towns and cities.

Pat Graham, Chief Executive of Copeland Borough Council and an RTPI Planner herself, proudly proclaims Whitehaven to be the pioneer of town planning. The present town was created through the efforts of Sir John Lowther (1642 – 1706) who provided a master plan for the town with each plot of uniform width and each building three storey. The plots were sold for others to build on – “the first self-build community –

and design code”. With its preeminent place in trade with America (Whitehaven was for a time the third busiest port in England), its grid system was exported there - and was reimported to the UK in the design of Milton Keynes. It could be said that Whitehaven is the grandparent of Milton Keynes!

Today there is a substantial investment being made by “the nuclear family” (nearby Sellafield). A local development company, BEC, has been established (jointly by Copeland, Allerdale, and Cumbria County Councils and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) and is investing in the new North Shore development – a series of sites close to the harbour which will provide a hotel, retail, leisure and educational facilities.

NORTH WEST YOUNG PLANNERS 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

As the committee settled with a host of new faces at the beginning of 2019, we set off to deliver a range of CPD and networking events for our members.

In February we hosted our thought-provoking 'Can you swim?' CPD event, where Head of Policy at the TCPA Dr Hugh Ellis delivered a sobering presentation on urgent climate change challenges we face as a society. Adjusting to a new way of designing and inhabiting urban environments was discussed, with evidence suggesting prevention is already too late. To lighten the mood, potential technical solutions were offered by Wardell Armstrong alongside green infrastructure advocates City of Trees and the Mersey Forest Network.

In May, our members broke the ice with an evening of axe throwing at WhistlePunks. This was followed by an introduction to Manchester's Great Northern Warehouse SRF, led by Savills. The event included an update to the City Council's aspirations for the Warehouse, with a stress-busting showdown of axe throwing skills to determine who would be crowned the 'King or Queen of Axes'.

From axe throwing to facing an audience, and in the same month members were treated to a CPD event on public speaking techniques. Delivered by Manchester's The Vibrancy Hub, this interactive workshop had members develop an authentic feeling of confidence, along with tips on rehearsal techniques, content and body language. All designed to captivate the room.



The gang at WhistlePunks

We are continuing in our aim to deliver events in Cumbria, and this year we hosted a Biodiversity Net Gain CPD event, in partnership with Natural England and the Cumbria Planning Training Scheme. The event, hosted in Kendal, introduced the biodiversity net gain approach and saw guest speakers covering national guidance, local examples and private sector perspectives. The event stimulated significant interest amongst local planning authorities across the north, with an audience of over 60 delegates.

In September, a near-capacity audience arrived at Manchester Art Gallery for an event on effective community engagement and grassroots campaigning. The event was in collaboration with the gallery's 'Get Together and Get Things Done' exhibition, commemorating the Peterloo Massacre bicentenary. Speakers from across community, academic, public and private sectors engaged with issues around consultation, engagement and collaboration in planning - even a resident mouse briefly got into the spirit of participation!

As we look to improve our soft skills CPD offering, we hosted a Professional Writing Skills Workshop in October, led by Bob Philips of Urban Imprint and Lucy Lomas of Luma Marketing. This gave over 30 delegates valuable tips on writing skills from two diverse perspectives. Subjects included 'why we write and where we write', developing our own style and summing up with a meaningful conclusion.



The gang at WhistlePunks



Manchester Art Gallery

North West Young Planner of the Year Hannah Payne



In November, over 30 young planners attended a Licentiate Assessment of Professional Competence (L-APC) workshop presented by the RTPI Membership Team. The presentation and workshop provided guidance on becoming a fully accredited RTPI member, and provided an update on the written submission and competencies in the light of revised guidance which will come into effect from January 2020. Speakers also included Duncan Wenham from Savills, who provided an insight into the submission from the perspective of a newly chartered member.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Hannah Payne of WSP Indigo for winning this year's North West Young Planner of the Year award. Hannah was awarded for her involvement in a wide range of development projects, but most importantly (for us!) her active involvement with the Young Planners Committee over the past few years.

As we look forward to 2020, the committee intends to deliver more transferable skill CPD sessions, alongside more creative events in locations throughout the North West. We thank our membership for their continued support, attendance and feedback throughout 2019, and look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year. But before then, keep an eye out for our Christmas Social – our final event of the year!



Licentiate Assessment of Professional Competence (L-APC) workshop

Looking Forward

Roll on 2020. The North West region is in great shape and we have another packed year of events planned.

Having been involved with the RTPi for the last 10 years, I am thoroughly looking forward to taking on this new position as Regional Chair. Andrew Johnston has had a substantial impact over the last year; on behalf of the rest of the RMB and RAC, I would like to say a huge thank you to Andrew for his excellent leadership and project delivery. In particular, Andrew's initiative to strengthen the RTPi's links with public sector planners has had a significantly positive effect, and I'm grateful that Andrew will continue to drive this project forward in his role as outgoing Chair.

I will strive to ensure that our region continues to be supported to do the brilliant work that it already does, and that we continue to grow and support our North West members.

In 2020, I want to:

- Ensure our planners are **better equipped for a digital future**. The pace of technological change in society is rapid, and I believe it's important that the planning profession keeps up with this digital transformation. Planners should embrace technology and truly understand how it can support our profession. For this year, all of our CPD training will reference an aspect of digital innovation/digital working to showcase the great work we already do and encourage others to embrace the digital revolution.
- **Encourage the next generation of planners**. Our Young Planners Committee, Education and Careers Task Group and Planning Ambassadors have made a substantial impact in engaging and encouraging future planners and I will continue to support their efforts this year. It is important that we are attracting people from diverse backgrounds so that our planners better represent the communities for which they are planning. In addition, I will work with our North West universities to encourage and support them in adopting the new Planning Apprenticeship, increasing the routes available into the planning profession.

- **Talk about success.** We have a lot to be proud of in our region and it's important that we shout about it. Good news stories will highlight the fantastic work we are doing, help enhance the image of the profession and encourage new members. It's also important to congratulate and thank our volunteers, new chartered members, new Fellows and everyone contributing to making our profession the best it can be.

On top of this, we'll also be doing our usual activities: an informative CPD programme; an exciting social programme (quizzes, sports and spas); regional awards; the president's visit in the summer; the regional annual dinner in the autumn (the biggest in the country!); and the touring AGM.

2020 already looks to be a busy and exciting year. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible as we deliver our year's activities. If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch - I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Kim Cooper

RTPI NW Chair 2020



THE NORTH WEST PLANNING YEAR
**A REVIEW OF
2019**

