



# **DIGITAL PLANNING BUSINESS CASE FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

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**Invitation to Tender**

March 2020

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Summary

This is an invitation to tender to produce the evidence base for a business case for digitising the Scottish town and country planning system.

## 1.2. About the RTPI

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the UK's leading planning body for spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning and is the largest planning institute in Europe, with over 25,000 members and over 2,000 members in Scotland.

To this end, the RTPI promotes research into planning practice, theory, policy development and education. The RTPI's strategic research agenda in the UK aims to:

- Promote the funding and dissemination of research activity informing and evaluating planning policy and practice;
- Promote awareness and engagement of planning practitioners in planning research at local, national and international scales;
- Encourage interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral research and dialogue;
- Support research in planning education and lifelong learning.

This research is being funded and procured / cliented / managed by RTPI on behalf of the Scottish Government using 100% funding from the Scottish Government.

## 1.3. Project partners

**Scottish Government:** The Scottish Government is the funder of this research and will play a steering role in the project. The Scottish government is responsible for the oversight of the operation of the town and country planning system in Scotland by Scottish local authorities. It is also responsible for National Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework.

The project will also be assisted by an advisory group which will be made up of representatives of the Government plus those responsible for delivering the planning function .

## 1.4. Background to the research project

The research will examine the value of moving to a single digital planning system in Scotland

### **Policy context**

The Scottish Government also aims to produce a Digital Planning Strategy in 2020, "focusing on where technology can add high value improvements to create a digital

planning service that is flexible, responsive and ready to embrace future change.”<sup>1</sup> Scotland also has a broader set of National Performance Framework Outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

The Business Case for the digital transformation of planning supports the wider Scottish Government Digital Strategy<sup>3</sup> and will provide a strong evidence base to commence with the transformation programme. It sets out the costs and benefits arising from investment in new services and technology. These benefits fall broadly into two categories:

1. The micro picture - efficiencies that accrue within the planning system from investment in new technology (cost and time savings)
2. The macro picture - economic and societal benefits arising from transformation (the Scotland-wide impact)

### **Micro Picture**

To date the Government has looked at the micro picture and has found that:

1. Implementation of a digital planning system can free up a significant amount of a planner’s overall time in Scotland.
2. From the 2016/17 data, major developments currently take an average of 37 weeks to complete planning.

Further details are available in Annex A.

The Government wishes to carry out further analysis to measure the reduction in time and cost that could be possible with the implementation of the digital planning system. This will be a key part of the commission. Tenderers should indicate how they would take this work further and deeper. A key area will be to extend the assessment to include how *applicants* for planning permission would have their costs lowered.

### **Macro Picture**

However, the Government estimates that some of the biggest benefits will come from the **impact of digital planning on the wider Scottish Economy and society**. Building a clear picture of this value will be a key component within the return on investment analysis of the business case.

Therefore, tenders should describe what methodology would be used to model these broader benefits. This will measure and illustrate the impact of economic, socio-economic and other benefits that accrue through joined-up working and better informed decision making. Demonstrating this capability will strengthen the case to invest in the digital planning programme, and help to secure wider partner funding interests.

The Government has given some thought to the parameters to be measured during an appraisal of the wider benefits (see Table 1 overleaf). This provides a guide to tenderers in considering what methodology they would pursue.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2019), [Planning: post bill work programme](#)

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government (2019), [National Performance Framework Outcomes](#)

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (2017) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/realising-scotlands-full-potential-digital-world-digital-strategy-scotland/>

**Table 1: Parameters to be measured**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Major developments</b>	Assess the economic impact of a future digital planning system in attracting international investment in major construction projects by making data-driven investment decisions shorter and easier through a shared platform which offers improved consistency across planning authorities, a searchable site database and access to real-time open data
<b>Vacant and derelict land</b>	Assess the economic impact of a future digital planning system in aiding the re-use and development of vacant and derelict land through a searchable site database and open data.
<b>Creation of Jobs through a sustainable economy</b>	Assess the impact of a future digital planning system which supports a strong competitive economy and the creation of jobs, directly and indirectly, through attracting increased investment into major projects
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Assess the impact of a future planning system which enables the design of space and communities with access to green places resulting in better health and wellbeing via engaged public consultation and communities
<b>Communities/ affordable housing</b>	Assess the impact of a future planning system, through open source data exchange, which supports efficient site identification and subsequent building to achieve attainment targets set within the affordable housing initiative(s)
<b>Support for existing services</b>	Assess the impact of a future digital planning system, on the level of revenue collected to support planning services, through an effective planning fee direct payment capability
<b>Environment/ Climate targets</b>	Assess the impact of a future digital planning system which, through identified criteria (local transport/ geographic access /efficient energy usage), directs building and planning design to support climate greenhouse targets
<b>Major investment / FDI</b>	Assess the impact of a future digital planning system, which attracts large investment to Scotland by enabling efficient management of major development applications through open source data exchange, active collaboration platforms across all agencies and real-time tracking of applications status

## **Economic Sectors**

Within the “sustainable economy” tranche the Government has identified some specific sectors which are worthy of specific attention. However this should not be regarded as an exhaustive list of sectors.

## **Tourism**

The tourism industry is a cornerstone of the Scottish Economy, and vital to the economic performance of towns, cities and regions across the length and breadth of Scotland. Visit Scotland believe the industry is worth over £11b to the Scottish economy.

The digital planning tool can be used to identify:

- Tourist hot-spots and inform decision for supportive infrastructure (from roads to rest stops).
- How to spread the benefits (transport, hospitality). These choices will help accelerate the growth of tourism.

The core driver for 71% of Europeans visiting is for the scenery and landscape; decisions can be made that help preserve the landscape and heritage - Scotland's greatest asset.

## **Energy**

The Energy sector is the largest single sector in Scotland and in 2015 generated more than £45b in turnover. The move to renewable and low carbon solutions is central to Scotland's ambitions of producing sustainable, inclusive growth. Scottish Government have stated that '..... by 2030 we aim to generate 50% of Scotland's overall energy consumption from renewable sources, and by 2050 we aim to have decarbonised our energy system almost completely'. This will involve many planning decisions for both on-shore and off-shore installations and specialised infrastructure; the spatial tool will give greater clarity from a wider perspective and allow quicker decisions to be taken, which will attract national and international investment.

Energy efficiency has been designated a national priority with heating and cooling contributing to approximately half of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. The Heat Network Partnership aims to boost the uptake of low carbon heat technologies in Scotland and focuses the efforts of a number of agencies working in this area.

One of the main ways of increasing the use of low carbon heat is through district heating networks which deliver heat from single or multiple energy sources to a number of buildings.

The spatial tool is a powerful way to visualise and assess heat/cooling requirements, heat sources and how these can be connected in a cost efficient way via:

- Both reducing the cost of heating/cooling and the carbon footprint of energy generation.
- In combination with other spatial datasets, as a tool to illustrate the socio-economic benefits to be gained by changing existing paradigms of heat supply

The spatial tool facilitates such opportunities and will also contribute to the reduction of fuel.

## Links to parallel ongoing research

The RTPI has commissioned research into better [Measuring the Outcomes of Planning](#) with a strong focus on Scotland. We expect the successful tenderer to pay close attention to emerging content from this project (with a working paper available at the outset of this digital project and then interim report on 20 April).

There is also an existing body of research on which to develop a better approach to measuring outcomes. In particular the 2018 Scottish Government paper, 'Monitoring the Outcomes of Planning' provides a clear overview of some existing and previous attempts to measure outcomes, of different types of planning outcomes, of who needs to be involved, confounding factors, and more. Proposals should take into account the findings relating to issues around implementing a performance management framework.<sup>4</sup>

Tools for assessing new development e.g. [The Place Standard](#), which was designed in partnership by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland, and Architecture and Design Scotland.

The research should also consider the increasing importance of digital planning in local authorities. The RTPI recently joined with the Connected Places Catapult to produce a shared vision for the digital future of planning across the UK. One of the main ambitions is to "Develop tools and methods for better analysis, monitoring and reporting of the economic, social and environmental outcomes of planning policies and decisions".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/monitoring-outcomes-planing-research-study/pages/7/>

<sup>5</sup> RTPI and Connected Places Catapult (2019), [The time for a digital planning system is now](#).

## 2. Tender information

### 2.1. Budget

This project will be funded up to a maximum and fixed sum of £60,000 (to include all disbursements but excluding VAT) with the intention that this be paid in three instalments according to agreed project milestones (i.e. on signing of the contract, on the delivery of an interim report and on the final report being assessed to be of acceptable quality).

### 2.2. Eligibility

Tenders are invited from research/ economic/ planning consultancies, RTPI accredited planning schools and other appropriate organisations.

Collaborations between organisations are welcome.

### 2.3. Purpose of the research

The aim of the research is to evaluate the benefit of introducing digital planning on the format that the Scottish government envisages as compared with a base line case.

### 2.4. Key audience for the research

The audience for this evidence base is the Scottish Government, which will be considering whether to make an investment in digital planning on behalf of the planning service in Scotland's local authorities and in Central Government.

### 2.5. Methodology

#### **Micro Picture**

The tenderer should indicate how they will build on the existing evaluation of the operational benefits which the Scottish Government has undertaken.

#### **Macro Picture**

The proposed method should indicate how the wider economic and social benefits over the range of impacts defined in Table 1 will be evaluated in the different formats of digital planning. Tenderers may suggest other impacts if they wish. The economic impact should cover tourism and energy and again other sectors the tenderer considers appropriate.

It should be clear how time frames impact on this assessment, including the use techniques such as Net Present Value as appropriate to strategic business cases.

#### **Do nothing**

The method should cover the business as usual case and the impacts of not moving to a more unified digital planning system.



## 2.6. Project Timescales

### Tendering

2 March 2020	Invitation to tender released
23 March 2020	Application window shuts (9am)
25 March 2019	Shortlisted applicants contacted
w/c 30 March 2020	Shortlisted applicants interviewed
w/c March 2020	Winner notified

### Research

6 April 2020	Work begins/ inception meeting
18 May 2020	First draft report
1 June 2020	Second draft report (after feedback)
22 June 2020	Final report due after integration of comments

## 2.7. Governance

The day to day project manager at RTPI will be Richard Blyth, overseen by the Director of RTPI Scotland and Ireland. The RTPI will coordinate with the other main project partners.

It is envisaged that the Advisory Group for this project will meet twice and comprise representatives from the following:

- Digital Planning, Scottish Government
- RTPI
- Heads of Planning Scotland
- Key Agencies Group
- COSLA (local authorities' confederation)
- Improvement Service (local authorities' innovation entity)
- Connected Cities Catapult
- Homes for Scotland
- Scottish Property Federation
- Scottish Planning Consultants Forum
- Scotland's Towns Partnership
- Selected local authorities

This group will comment on draft project outputs and will meet at two stages the project to hear updates and provide a steer on next steps.

## 2.8. Outputs

**A clearly written final report** (in MS Word) of no more than 12,000 words. This report should be written in plain English and adhere to RTPI's publication template. This final report should include a clear 2-4 page executive summary, written in plain English and suitable for the wider dissemination of these conclusions (including to politicians and individuals or groups in communities with an interest in the subject).

Drafts of the report and executive summary should be provided to the RTPI first as described elsewhere. The supplier should plan in time for editing in response to comments, as indicated by the key dates in the project timetable.

## 2.9. Application process

Organisations/project teams should submit a tender document that includes:

- Analysis of the context of the research;
- Proposed methodology including detailed timetable;
- Proposed outputs, demonstrating conformity with the project purpose and brief;
- Project team and general experience;
- Statement of experience relevant to the project, and selected projects that demonstrate relevant experience;
- Proposed approach to project management, identifying risks and mitigation strategies, and specifying how the project will be delivered on time and do a high standard;
- Total cost of the project and budget breakdown between the stages, daily rates and personnel inputs.

## 2.10. Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated against six criteria:

1. Quality, rigour and depth of the proposed methodology and analysis;
2. Experience/ track record/ knowledge relevant to the project – in particular the preparation of evidence to support strategic business cases,
3. Knowledge of the Scottish context;
4. Experience of effective and impactful partnership working (i.e. with research commissioners and clients);
5. Capacity to do the commission in the timescale;
6. Value for money.

### 2.11. Assessment panel

An assessment panel appointed by the RTPPI will evaluate tenders and decide which application to support.

### 2.12. Deadline for applications

Tenders should be submitted electronically to: [research@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:research@rtpi.org.uk)

Tenders should be received by no later than **9am** on **23 March 2020**.

Bidders will be notified if they have been shortlisted by 25 March 2020.

We intend to interview a shortlist of bidders on w/c 30 March 2020 and to appoint the successful research team so it can start work by 6 April.

### 2.13. Intellectual property

The Scottish Government will retain ownership of the work, but will grant the researchers the right to publish and re-use the material submitted to them, and will be fully credited for their work. Researchers and institutions should not apply if they will not be able to agree to these provisions. The researchers should acknowledge the support from the Scottish Government and other funders in any subsequent publications and activity based on the supported projects.

### 2.14. Further information and enquiries

This Invitation to Tender can be found on the RTPPI website at:

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/researchtenders>

We welcome enquiries about this project, but please note that all responses to enquiries may be issued as (anonymised) Q&As online on the tender page (see above). For this reason it may also be worth checking this page before you submit your tender.

For enquiries, please contact:

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