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RTPI
Royal Town Planning Institute

Board of Trustees

Chief Executive's Report, 29 November 2018 – 5 February 2019

Report from the Chief Executive, Victoria Hills

Commercially Confidential & Sensitive – not for wider distribution

FOR INFORMATION

The Board is invited to:

1) Note the contents of this report.
2) Comment on any particular noteworthy aspects and / or feedback observations directly to the Chief Executive, under separate cover

Introduction

- The end of the year was a typically busy and productive period for the RTPI. The highlights of activity noted in this report represent a snapshot of activity and are reported against the five strategic Objectives set out in the current Corporate Strategy.
- This report highlights areas of particular interest that the Chief Executive would like to appraise the Board of Trustees of, but is not a comprehensive summary of all of the excellent work and activity undertaken by RTPI colleagues and volunteers during this period.
- There are three main areas of activity that the RTPI staff deliver on a day-to-day basis; 1) Membership, 2) Learning & Practice, and 3) Policy & Research. In addition there are the core activities associated with the operations of a charitable organisation and employer.
- This format and presentation of this report will continue to evolve, and feedback on its 'look and feel', directly to the Chief Executive, continues to be welcome.

1. Shaping and Informing Policy & Practice

Policy Practice and Research

- Completed review of PTP Journal, with recommendations shared with the Editorial Team and our publisher partner.
- We have published our second digital Brexit Blog, written by Member Janice Morphet.
- **Published Reports:** Rural Housing Delivery in Wales, Working in the Public Interest, and the Brexit research phase 2, all published in January.
- The RTPI team are running six round tables for the Great north plan research project.

- **Completed and ready to be launched:** 2019-21 Research Programme and Position Paper on challenges and opportunity of planning research, due to be published in February.
- **Calls for tenders ready to be launched:** Number of Planners (January), and Town Centres (February).

England Policy

- Response to the review of National Parks and AONBs (submitted 18 December) and response on the Permitted Development consultation (submitted 14 January), with the latter resulting in widespread coverage and a joint letter with Shelter and the LGA to Government.

Research

International

- The UK Built Environment Group (UKBEAG), chaired by Janet Askew, Chair of the International Committee, met on 24 January in preparation for the future House of Lords UKBEAG Roundtable on 27 February.
- ECTP-CEU General Assembly and Workshop: Plymouth has secured its candidacy to host the 13th ECTP Biennial in September 2019. This is the first time the UK will host the event.
- Thought Leadership: following our publication of a paper on impacts of Brexit published, we have published out Phase 2 Brexit research (23 January)

RTPI Cymru

- We published research in January commissioned from Cardiff University on Rural Exceptions Site Policy in Wales. www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-cymru/policy-in-wales/wales-planning-research-agenda/rural-exception-site-policy-in-wales/
- We have been continuing to support a Cardiff University project engaging with Faith and Place Dialogues, with events in Swansea, Newport and Cardiff. This has given us the opportunity to talk about the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.
- At the end of 2018 we celebrated the Wales Planning Award winner Flint Walks housing scheme by Flintshire County Council and partners returning to house building and producing a high quality and well-designed scheme.

Ireland

- RTPI Ireland responded to the consultation on the National Marine Plan Baseline report.
- RTPI Ireland has welcomed the appointment of Niall Cussen as Ireland's first Planning Regulator, heading up the new Office of the Planning Regulator.

Northern Ireland

- RTPI NI's new Executive Committee met in January to discuss plans for the year ahead.
- RTPI NI celebrated the RTPI's Outstanding Service Award to Mary MacIntyre in recognition of her extensive work to promote professional planning in Northern Ireland.

Scotland

- RTPI Scotland has continued to engage with MSPs and the Scottish Government on the Planning Bill. This has led to the current version of the Bill containing provisions for a purpose

for planning, retention of strategic planning, for the establishment of a statutory Chief Planning Officer in local authorities, for the repeal of the planning penalty clause, and, not to adopt Third Party Rights of Appeal. We are continuing discussions with MSPs and Scottish Government as the Bill moves to Stage 3 and Royal Assent in the Spring

- RTPI Scotland has published research showing that the Planning Bill will introduce 91 new and unfunded duties. It is using this as a basis for discussion with MSPs and Parliamentary officials
- RTPI Scotland has responded to consultation from the Scottish Government on its Housing Beyond 2021 discussion paper and the Democracy Matters Local Governance Review
- RTPI Scotland has written to the Finance Secretary setting out a five point plan to secure resources for planning in the Scottish budget, which taken place on 12 December. ON 2 November the Director of RTPI Scotland was on BBC Radio Scotland discussing healthy high streets.

English Regions

- RTPI's 2019 Regional Chairs and National Convenors attended our annual incoming chairs' induction at Botolph Lane
- Our 'Chief Planners of Tomorrow' work shadowing initiative was launched in December. The initiative has been very well received by both Young Planners and participating host authorities - we had double the number of applicant places. The programme runs from Jan to March 2019.
- Investing in Volunteers Phase II - Work is complete on the draft report which will inform the development of a draft strategy later in the year. It is currently being reviewed by SET.
- RTPI Regions have launched their 2019 CPD and multi-buy programmes
- A number of roundtables have been held across the Regions to support RTPI's work on Local Authority Provision of Housing. RTPI Northern Regions (NE, NW and Yorkshire) have also been supporting the delivery of the Great North Plan's People and Place Strategy with a series of events planned in January.

2. Developing Knowledge, Education and Raising Standards

National Training Events *(post-Kaplan training events, not University training or CPD events led by Regions)*

- Launch of expanded 2019 national training programme with a portfolio of 56 events across 14 UK locations (5 new: Plymouth, Powys, Bristol, Newcastle, and Exeter). The programme consists of 15 day briefings and 41 expert masterclasses. Topics are aligned to the RTPI's new Core CPD Framework of professional skills and planning knowledge.
- Recruitment of replacement training officers completed to ensure programme development and delivery remains on track for February.
- Full review of 2018 pilot year of programme is underway including an analysis of all event feedback, programme design, speakers and lessons learned. The 2018 programme saw 1112 delegates attend 48 planned events and a healthy financial return to the RTPI. 35% of speakers were female, and 28% of briefing chairs.

Careers, Education & Professional Development

- Agreement on revised Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship proposal secured from employer Trailblazer group and submitted on time to Government agency, the Institute for Apprenticeships, on 9 January. The two stage assessment plan includes a professional discussion, following by the full RTPI APC process to ensure apprentices directly meet RTPI membership requirements. Decision from Government expected in February. Development of follow-on implementation plans underway.
- New Core CPD Framework of professional skills and planning knowledge launched at the end of 2018 across member bulletins and website. Quality assurance mechanism being piloted through the RTPI training programmes.
- Accreditation Visit to University of Hertfordshire was held 16-17 January. Assessment and analysis of the required levels of effectiveness as a planning school ongoing.
- Annual Code of Conduct monitoring round of members successfully administered and the assessment of records scheduled throughout January.
- University accreditation fee increase secured via committee in 2018. Promotion and relationship management to generate income of circa £100k for the RTPI in 2019. New online data return now process in place.

3. Championing the planning profession whilst supporting and growing membership

Communications

- Appointment of full time permanent Comms Officer has boosted capacity to the team
- RTPI has secured extensive media coverage in a mix of local, regional, and national. Media in relation to its activities and campaigns
- Blogs continue to feature wide variety of influencers and are growing in popularity
- Media Training has been organised for CE, with dates to follow for President

Parliamentary Affairs

- Senior Public Affairs Officer appointed from February, which will provide the RTPI with additional capacity to grow our public affairs activities and influence/
- Party conference activity already being scoped - agreement with HBF and BPF for one joint event - further party conference events are in planning stage.

Corporate Events

- Work underway to draft national events strategy for growth for presentation to SET
- Worth noting that English regions are still putting on and promoting major events that clash with National events, e.g. The minerals conference
- Will start recruitment for partnerships and sponsorship officer in February to provide a key account manager for developing strategic relationships with our key partner

Marketing

- Marketing activity continues to grow and develop, with new collateral and campaign developed for Corporate Strategy Review consultation launched in December 2018

- Work on marketing strategy on track, for presentation to SET to outline the potential of the chartered marketing resource we have to address corporate goals e.g. membership growth is a key target for 2019.

Membership

- I'm delighted to update the Board that our Membership figures remained over 25,000 for the beginning of 2019, with a 55% increase in the number of students converting to Licentiate membership in 2018 (compared to 2017) and a 20% increase in first time applications through the new non-accredited routes to Chartered membership.
- SET will focus their next 'awayday' in February on developing the framework for the RTPI's first Growth Strategy.
- The membership guidance review is on track - the competencies are being redrafted with support from the Guidance Review Group.
- APC assessor registration for 2019 is now complete - 77 assessors registered for 2019.

Preparations for the delivery of the annual APC assessor training events are on track - training days are 1st February in London and 6th February in Birmingham.

4. Empowering Communities

Planning Aid England

- A positive meeting was held with Planning Aid London to discuss joint working on planning aid in London.

<u>E-mail advice service and PAE website:</u>

- Services continue to function well despite December being the quietest month of the year. The e-mail advice panel handled 117 e-mails in the 30 days to 17 January, with a current customer satisfaction rating by service users of 83%. The number of hits on these website pages in the same period was 6403.

<u>Consulting</u>

- Sizewell C: The PAE team have been joined by three previous PAE staff to deliver over 20 workshops during January, February and March to promote effective responses from local parish and town councils. Delivering this commission is taking up a significant proportion of PAE staff resources.
- Search exercises: Following a similar exercise re Stonehenge NSIP project PAE is delivering in February the results of a second search exercise to provide a shortlist of suitable candidates to chair the community engagement forum for the A27 Arundel Bypass. Another very similar search exercise will also take place for improvements on the A358 from Taunton to Ilminster, with the start date has yet to be finalised.

<u>Casework</u>

- Currently volunteers are assisting with 10 pieces of casework around the regions.

<u>Events:</u>

- Planning is underway for the main PAE event this year to be held in Birmingham on the 30 April involving a training event for the members of the two volunteer panels (responsible for the e-mail advice service and the website material) together with the chairs of the regional task groups to review progress and consider potential service improvements.
- Other regionally-led events are planned in the South West on 17 January, North East on 23 January and East Midlands on 11 April.

5. Delivering strong financial and business management in a member focussed organisation

Human Resources

- I'm delighted to update that the RTPI undertook our first Employee Engagement Survey in December 2018, and, after much internal promotion, we achieved a 78% response rate.
- A confidential high-level summary of the results will be provided at the February 2019 Board meeting. A fuller action plan for consideration will be reported at a later meeting.

Finance & Subscriptions

- West Sussex LGPS – final discussions continue in relation to the RTPI's formal exit from the scheme. Target date for cessation calculation and potential payment to RTPI of any cessation surplus in early 2019 remains on track.

Information Technology

- Progress with the CRM/Website project has been good and the CRM/Website Project Board met on 15 January to make a decision on whether to proceed to go live with phase one of the CRM. The project team reported good progress on all of the criteria set for a go live decision, in relation to testing, website integration, data migration and finance reporting. The Project Board therefore decided that CRM will go live and that the target date for this is 19 February 2019.
- Internal work on business resilience, including digital resilience and contingency planning is underway and progressing well.

Summary

- In addition there has been extensive business as usual activities on colleague training in preparation for implementation of the new CRM and continued resilience on General Data Protection Regulations.
- There has been extensive on-boarding of new General Assembly and Board of Trustee Members. There has been a successful and robust confirmation of all the Committee and Panel compositions for 2019.
- There has been extensive communications on all the activities of the RTPI, and significant preparation for the 2019 Presidential Inauguration and the 2019 Parliamentary Reception, which has been our most popular to date.

- In addition to the above service updates, the Chief Executive has personally championed a Memorandum of Understanding with Future Cities Catapult, to work collaborately on digital planning, and also supported the development of a volunteering strategy and a refresh of our approach to safeguarding.
- A continued 'joint institutes' programme of activity is paying dividends in the RTPI's ability to broaden its reach and increase impact. A personal highlight, since the last report to the Board, was speaking on the 'Wake up to Money' Radio 5 Live show on 12 December; with 750k listeners this provided an excellent platform to discuss skills, apprenticeships and the future pipeline of planners.
- The Corporate Strategy consultation has got off to a successful start, with an extensive engagement programme underway. Initial responses have been promising, and there is an ongoing need to remind members, stakeholders and all interested parties to engage with the digital consultation survey.
- Board members are invited to note the contents of this report. The Chief Executive welcomes observations from the Board of Trustees.

Victoria Hills MRTPI, FICE 21 January 2019