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## Editorial

On 20 June I was fortunate to be in the Public Gallery of the main Chamber of the Scottish Parliament with RTPi President Ian Tant and RTPi Scotland Convenor Julia Frost to watch the final debate that led to the new Planning Bill being passed. It was an important moment for planners. The Bill has a number of new provisions including a purpose of planning, the need for statutory Chief Planning Officers, the establishment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Place Plans, the introduction of mandatory performance reporting, and a new National Planning Improvement Coordinator, to name but a few. These new provisions come at a time of reducing resources in planning services and RTPi Scotland has published research on this which shows the scale of the issue – see Robbie Calvert's article on pages 4 and 5 on this. In the last month the Programme for Government has highlighted the important role of planning and the National Planning Framework in supporting ambitions towards zero carbon by 2045.

This all means growing demand on planners and the planning system, when there is a diminishing resource. We therefore must ask the question if planners will need to work differently - and that is why we have themed this edition of the Scottish Planner on *The Planner of the Future*. It explores the future context that planners will be working within, looking at future policy priorities, issues and challenges for local government, what employers will be looking for, and, the potential of technology as a game-changer. We hope that it stimulates a debate and discussion about what we need to do and what we need to do this. We would, as usual, welcome any comments or thoughts that you have on the twitter account [@RTPiScotland](https://twitter.com/RTPiScotland) or by emailing us on [scotland@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:scotland@rtpi.org.uk)  
– Craig McLaren, Co-Editor

# Convenor's Comments:

## Planning will always need a human touch: why 'soft' skills are as important as technical ones



**Julia Frost**  
MRTPI  
Convenor  
RTPI Scotland  
[@convenorrtpis](https://twitter.com/convenorrtpis)

**Julia Frost, Convenor of RTPI Scotland provides her thoughts on the needs of the planner of the future**

When I think of the 'Planner of the Future' I think about the skills that planners will likely need. Digital skills spring to mind given our technological age and, whilst such skills will undoubtedly be important, I do not believe they are the essence of what makes a great planner. Neither do young people, the planners of the future.

In my day job at PAS I often engage with young people around issues of planning and place. We use a "Draw a Planner" workshop exercise. After understanding what a planner is, young people point out a number of skills and qualities they believe planners should have to be able to do their job well. Their ideas include:

- being good with people (talkative, approachable, friendly)
- good listening skills, patience
- good communication skills (avoiding jargon and explaining things in a clear and concise manner)
- technology skills / using digital tools (to record their work and make it more efficient)
- project management skills
- leadership, team building
- geography knowledge, including local knowledge
- knowledge of architecture styles, housing types and construction
- being considerate, reasonable and selfless
- problem solving skills
- having an environmental conscience

Yes technology skills are included, but they are dwarfed by a range of other important, often 'softer' skills. Surely this is why 'Town Planning' is recognised as a profession less likely to be carried out by robots in the future. It requires real live thinking beings to balance different points of view to manage the sustainable use of land in the long term public interest.

I recently gave a talk in my son's primary school about planning as a career, and was touched by a thank you letter I received from the one of the pupils:

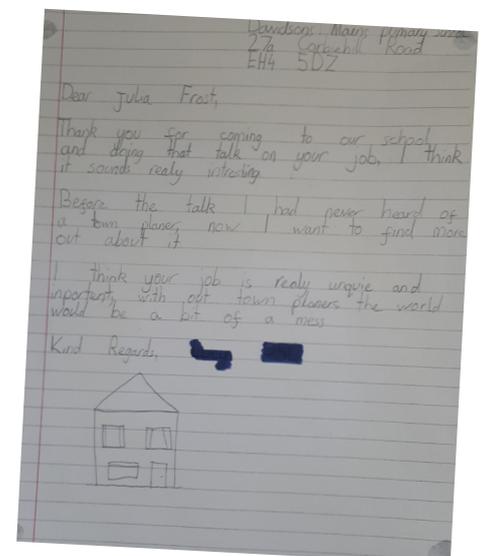
*"Thank you for coming to our school and doing that talk on your job. I think it sounds really interesting. Before the talk I had never heard of a town planner and now I want to find out more about it. I think your job is really unique and important; without town planners the world would be a bit of a mess".*

I encourage more of you to become RTPI Ambassadors. This involves going into secondary schools and encouraging young people to consider planning as a career. Town Planning uniquely crosses the world of science and art. To quote the RTPI film that we play to young students: "Town Planners are quite simply changing the world we live in".

So what have I been up to since the last edition of the Scottish Planner?

- As Convenor I attended the annual **Heads of Planning (HOPS) Conference** in Edinburgh. Collaboration was the theme and I was reminded that the language of planners is so important, as enablers and not controllers, and of the importance of collaborative leadership. Effective collaboration requires authenticity, listening skills, trust, critical friendships and time to build relationships and reflect to create consensus around shared visions. We also need these softer skills to make planning work with people and communities – understanding, connectedness, empathy and trust.
- I attended RTPI's **General Assembly** in Manchester where the need to create a more diverse planning profession was emphasised.
- I witnessed the final debate and passing of the new Planning Bill (now Act) in Parliament.

- Dargavel Village, Dumyat Path, Cuningar Loop and Dundee Waterfront were highlights for Ian Tant's Scottish presidential visit and what a privilege it was to accompany Ian and be shown around these RTPI award winning projects.
- I chaired this year's Geddes lecture, where Andrew Carter from the Centre for Cities talked about 'The Future of Cities and the Role of Planning'.
- I set up and chaired the inaugural meeting of RTPI Scotland's International Group – raising awareness about global planning issues in Scotland and Scotland's planning role internationally. In attendance were the great and the good of Scotland's planning scene – academia, private sector, sole practitioners, Scottish Government, third sector, and young people. Watch this space.... ■



## Article:

# Implementing the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act

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**Robbie Calvert**, former Policy and Practice Officer at RTPI Scotland, looks forward to the implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

With the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 receiving Royal Assent on 25 July 2019, we have an opportunity to look forward over the next ten years and shape what a future planning system in Scotland will look like. Because of course planning reform is a continuous process: Even with a new Act now in place, the Government still has the formidable task of producing secondary legislation and guidance, to be followed by the actual implementation and delivery of the new system by all working in and around planning.

RTPI Scotland and its members have been intimately involved with the entire process from the beginning. They have conceived, shaped and influenced many key provisions in the Act which could enable a transformative shift in our future planning system. So what are these key provisions and what challenges and opportunities lie in their implementation?

### Chief Planning Officers

Provisions for statutory Chief Planning Officers have been included in the Act, and will be followed by guidance to be issued by Scottish Government. With Chief Planning Officers as important corporate players local authorities can more easily take planning and place matters into account when making strategic decisions about investment and service delivery. This could help to future proof decision making and ensure long term approaches to maximise preventative spend are taken. Planning, for example, can perform the critical function of aligning transport initiatives, housing strategies and economic development objectives.

### Regional Spatial Strategies

RTPI Scotland continues to believe that strategic planning is essential to achieving

the best possible development outcomes across regions and other non-administrative areas. Therefore throughout planning reform RTPI Scotland has supported the retention of strategic planning and worked closely with stakeholders to develop new arrangements. The resulting inclusion of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) was unanimously supported by MSPs at stage 3 of the Bill. Moving forward we now have a real opportunity to strengthen this voluntary and consensus-based approach to regional planning. To do so RSSs need to be seen as strong corporate tools, making spatial connections between different public policy ambitions: economic development, environmental protection and enhancement, public health, for example. In practice this will require stronger links with other policy tools such as City Region Deals, and the National Transport Strategy.



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**Robbie Calvert**  
Graduate Planner,  
Cairngorms National  
Park Authority

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**“RTPI Scotland and its members have been intimately involved with the entire process from the beginning. They have conceived, shaped and influenced many key provisions in the Act which could enable a transformative shift in our future planning system.”**

### Local Place Plans

The introduction of provisions for Local Place Plans (LPPs) could provide a radical step change in how we support communities in developing ideas and direction for their own neighbourhoods. A major consideration in the effective implementation of LPPs will

be funding. RTPi Scotland's research shows estimated requirements of £3.28M – £9.85M over a ten year period to produce LPPs. It remains to be seen what support in terms of skill and resource will be provided to communities and planning authorities to prepare LPPs.

### Planning Improvement Coordinator

The provisions for a Planning Improvement Coordinator could usher in new, more holistic, approach to supporting continuous improvement of planning services. This includes the possible addition of performance markers that go beyond simple metrics, such as speed of processing applications and number of housing units delivered, to looking at the quality of decision making by assessing outcomes. Also included in this provision is a broader, more positive approach to planning service quality, through evaluating performance of all users of the system. The effectiveness of the improvement coordinator will in part rest on to what extent the role supports all planners to develop the skills, behaviours and knowledge needed to deliver great places across Scotland.

### Resourcing

Future challenges of attaining new climate change targets, growing the economy and creating a fairer Scotland depend on Scotland having a planning system that is resourced effectively. This is particularly concerning given that over the last 10 years we have seen a major disinvestment in planning authorities in Scotland<sup>1</sup>. Therefore no conversation about the future of the planning system can neglect consideration of resourcing. To understand the implications of implementing the Planning Act, it is important that we try and quantify the potential resource requirements of delivering the new system. RTPi Scotland undertook research to understand exactly this. This work outlined new duties that will fall on planning authorities from the Act and provided an analysis of the potential costs of implementing them. The costing estimates from the research are indicative and were made with the current information available. When secondary legislation and guidance is produced more detailed financial projections can be made. In the meantime the research found that:

- 49 new and unfunded additional duties have been placed on planning authorities by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- The cost of implementing these could be between £12.1M and £59.1M over a ten year period.
- If this is the case it is estimated that staff numbers will need to increase from between 1.9% and 9.4% to merely maintain a 'business as usual' planning service.

- If central funding for communities wishing to produce Local Place Plans is not secured an additional cost of £3.28M and £9.84M could be incurred by planning authorities over a ten year period
- 40 additional duties have been placed on the Scottish Government, which could lead to a saving of between £0.28M and £0.33M over a ten year period.

In this context the report sets out a number of recommendations to support the successful implementation of the Planning Act 2019:

1. The Scottish Government should look to cover the costs of new duties in the forthcoming spending review and budget allocations.
2. The Scottish Government should consider the resource implications of the new duties when programing their implementation so as to manage resource demand for planning authorities.
3. The Scottish Government should consider the costs of implementing each of the new duties and agree a resource plan when introducing them through secondary legislation or guidance.
4. The Scottish Government should feed the results of this research into its forthcoming consultation on future approaches to resourcing the planning system.
5. The Scottish Government should be clear about where funding will come from to support communities who wish to prepare Local Place Plans.
6. Local authorities should recognise the need to finance planning services effectively to help them achieve their ambitions. RTPi Scotland is keen to work with Chief Executives and SOLACE to achieve this.
7. Local authorities should ensure that any revenue generated from processing planning applications is reinvested in the planning service.
8. Scottish Government guidance on statutory Chief Planning Officers should recognise the need for these to be important corporate players who are engaged early in decision making.

### Programme of implementation

At the time of writing, we are awaiting publication by Scottish Government of a formal programme for implementing the Act. This timeframe will be crucial to all stakeholders involved, but especially planning authorities wishing to review their Local Development Plans.

### National Planning Framework 4

One of the first aspects of the reformed system to be implemented will be the introduction of the new NPF, which will form part of the statutory development plan across Scotland. RTPi Scotland has offered to support the Scottish Government's co-production of NPF4 by facilitating input from professional planners. We are currently designing exactly how this will work, but in the meantime would like to issue a 'call for evidence' to planners in Scotland. If you have information, evidence or data in any form that you think is relevant and should inform the early stages of NPF4 preparation, please send it to [scotland@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:scotland@rtpi.org.uk), with 'NPF4 evidence' typed in the subject line. ■

<sup>1</sup> RTPi Scotland (2019) Resourcing the Planning System: Key Trends and Findings 2019. April. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2WxNNVr>



## Q&A

# Public Enquiries



**Audrey Carlin**  
MRTPI  
Chief Executive  
Officer  
Wasps Studios

## Audrey Carlin, Chief Executive Officer at Wasps Studios, answers our questions

### 1 Who has been the biggest inspiration or influence on your career and why?

As a Chartered Town Planner most of my career has been focussed on regeneration initially with two of Scotland's Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs), in Clyde Gateway, and previously, Clydebank. My biggest career inspiration has come from Ian Manson, Chief Executive at Clyde Gateway URC. Ian has an ability to vision long term and has successfully delivered large scale, high quality, inclusive regeneration over the past 10 years in the face of significant economic and social challenge. What has been achieved is in stark contrast to the physically neglected and economically deprived landscape that existed in 2008. Ian's long-term vision approach has influenced me as CEO of WASPS, the UK's largest provider of studios for creative people. My focus is on repurposing redundant historic buildings, giving them a new lease of life for creative use while delivering significant economic, environmental and cultural impact to surrounding communities across Scotland.

### 2 What do you feel is the biggest issue facing planners and planning at the moment?

Planners understand best the physical challenges our towns and cities face so should take more of a lead in bringing the right partners together to identify solutions. There are many opportunities for partnership working with other sectors to pool experience, resources, attract grant funding and so maximise the outcomes of what can be achieved, rather than wait for market forces to come up with all the solutions. In my role with Wasps I work collaboratively with planners in many Scottish towns and cities to identify solutions for redundant properties. We have transformed buildings into space for creative businesses to incubate, while enabling local people to stay in those towns and develop a sustainable career.

### 3 Why is planning important?

Planning is more important today than it has ever been. With so many competing interests between Scottish and UK Governments, short term political interests and agendas providing plenty of daily distraction, the role planning plays in retaining, respecting and repurposing our built heritage, protecting our environment and in creating a sense of place in our towns and cities is increasingly vital. Planners provide a voice of reason, with a mind to the future, in the midst of commercial interests and local community agendas that often do not consider the wider strategic picture for our planet.

### 4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning's role in creating great places for people?

There are many great examples of partnership projects across Scotland delivering multiple benefits from environmental to social to commercial. I am working in Inverness and Perth where the foresight of City Planners, when faced with derelict property, saw them actively engage with a range of partners to identify development solutions. Highland Council's planners led the creation of a successful partnership to deliver a masterplan for the former Midmills College site, delivering private and affordable homes and a creative hub surrounded by publicly accessible gardens. The housing is now occupied, Phase 1 of Wasps' Inverness Creative Academy is home to 45 artists and Phase 2 goes on site shortly. Perth Creative Exchange opens this autumn with studios for around 60 creatives, a café and business incubation centre, sponsored by the Edrington Group.

### 5 What are the current issues facing planning schools in research and training the planners of the future?

Charities often have needs which address the challenges of others within the built environment, however it takes vision to match these up. Redundant buildings, while a headache for property owners are often a wonderful opportunity for a charity to repurpose. In Glasgow, Wasps is delivering a Meanwhile Initiative in partnership with the City Council to bring life back to vacant shop units while supporting our demand for creative business incubation space. This partnership approach is injecting vibrancy back into a tired street while providing start up support for businesses to grow the City economy. ■

# Immaterial Considerations

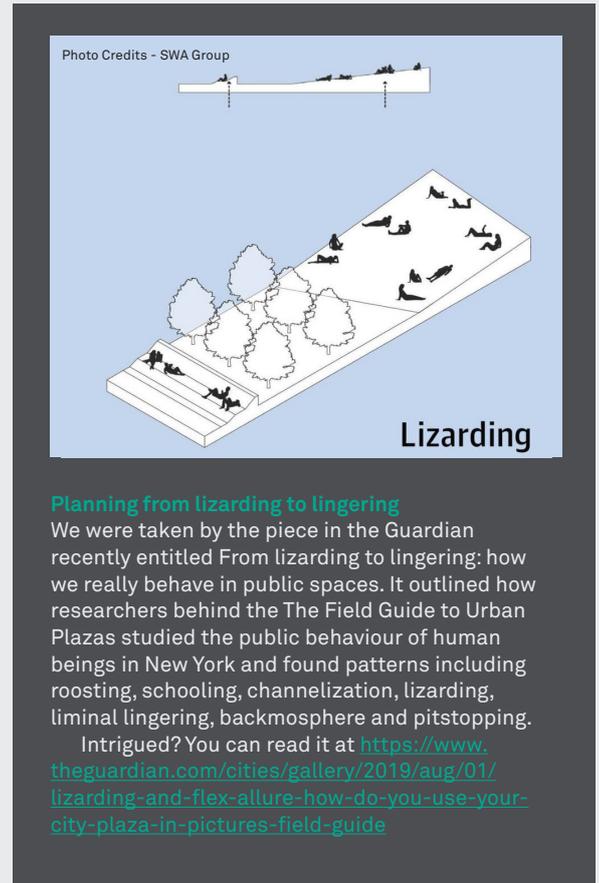
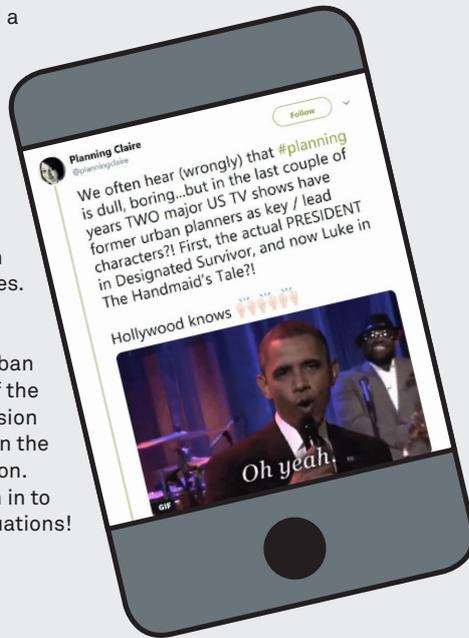
An irreverent look at the world of planning...

## Top of the (Planning) Bill...

We were tickled by RTPI Member Claire McArthur's recent post on Twitter, highlighting the number of television programmes and films that are now featuring planners as characters. One is Luke Bankole in *The Handmaid's Tale* - the series based on the best-selling novel by Margaret Atwood. Set in Gilead, a totalitarian society in what used to be part of the United States, and ruled by a fundamentalist regime that treats women as property of the state, and is faced with environmental disasters and a plummeting birth rate.

In the US series *Designated Survivor* Tom Kirkman (played by Keifer Sutherland) is an American government official, former University Professor and former urban planner who is currently serving as the 46th President of the United States. Kirkman suddenly ascends from the position of U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to President of the United States after an explosion kills everyone ahead of him in the presidential line of succession.

So planners being thrown in to deal with fairly dramatic situations! And they say this is fiction...



## Planning from lizarding to lingering

We were taken by the piece in the Guardian recently entitled *From lizarding to lingering*; how we really behave in public spaces. It outlined how researchers behind the *The Field Guide to Urban Plazas* studied the public behaviour of human beings in New York and found patterns including roosting, schooling, channelization, lizarding, liminal lingering, backmosphere and pitstopping.

Intrigued? You can read it at <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2019/aug/01/lizarding-and-flex-allure-how-do-you-use-your-city-plaza-in-pictures-field-guide>



## Can't Le(t)go

Dan Parks, RTPI member and Forward Planning Manager at Cairngorms National Park, has shared his amazing 3D Lego map of Scotland! The map is based on Ordnance Survey open data, in this case their Terrain 50 DEM. He said that "To be honest, this DEM is total overkill for a model of this resolution, however I wanted to use it so that I can

create more detailed maps in the future and don't have to go about processing loads of new data." You can see more fantastic photos on Flickr at <https://flic.kr/p/2h9RD3F>



Photo Credits - Dan Harris @Disapora Dan

## In Focus:

# The Planners of the Future - and the future of planning



**Dr. Michael Harris**  
Independent writer  
and researcher

**Michael Harris**, Independent writer and researcher and Former Deputy Head of Policy and Research at the RTPI, considers the key attributes needed by the planners of the future

Thinking about the planner of the future might conjure images of a young professional using virtual reality to fly through the city of tomorrow or crowdsourcing real time reactions to a new community plan. But the more important question about our future planner is not the technology they will use but how they will understand their own purpose.

The bigger context for planning will shape this. So among the questions I've tried to answer in my book *A Future for Planning* are why, in many countries, planning is often under-recognized and under-funded at the same time that the challenges we face are arguably greater than they have ever been, and how we might reassert the role of planning for the future.

When I worked at the RTPI I was fortunate to manage a series of reports to mark the Institute's centenary. These considered how planning is critical to responding to the big challenges of the twenty-first century, from rapid urbanisation to technological disruption. But these reports also prompted another question that runs through the book: whatever happened to the belief - a genuinely popular public belief - that planning could build a better future?

This isn't just a matter of historical interest. It might seem absurd to assume that today's challenges, such as the climate crisis, widening inequality (including spatial inequality), and poor physical and mental health, will somehow solve themselves. And yet this is effectively what we've been asked to accept by those who have attacked not just town and country planning but the broader idea that it's possible for us to try to shape our future together.

As a planning community we also need to ask some questions of ourselves. Opponents of planning have long regarded it as having

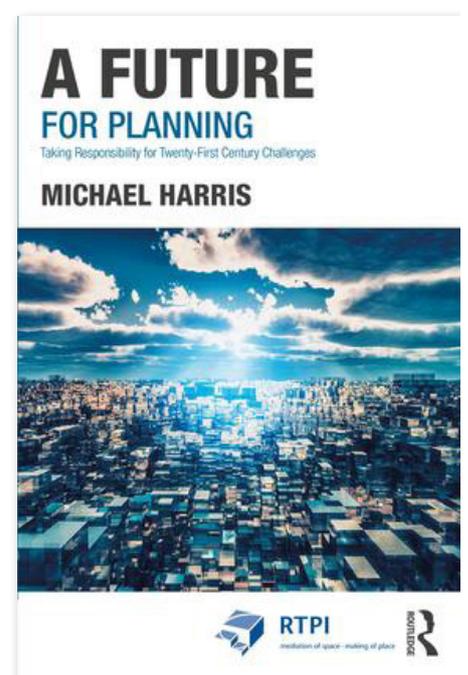
a fundamentally political role, more so than parts of our own profession have sometimes been comfortable accepting. But historically, as we know, planning as a discipline was established with a strong sense of mission not only to improve the living conditions of ordinary people but to build a better world.

It's this sense of mission that we, and our future planners, need to reassert. To resign ourselves to the pessimism of planning's fiercest critics - that it is impossible to shape the future, that visions of a better world inevitably end in bleak failure, and that the best we can do is to manage development without 'interfering' too much in the 'natural' operation of markets - would represent an unforgivable disservice to future generations. And it certainly won't help to attract the most passionate, committed, and resourceful young people into the profession.

Our future planner will need a strong set of skills that reassert the long-term in their work. Drawing on Australian planning academic Robert Freestone, among others, these include the ability to articulate the consequences of choices at different scales and timelines, expertise in a range of analytical techniques and mediums (spatial, visual, numerical etc), understanding the management of change, and being able to act as a public communicator for planning and its ability to shape the future. This will also require that planning institutes incorporate these skills more explicitly into future accreditation and professional development frameworks.

But if there is one attribute that is required of our future planners, in contrast to planning's opponents, it is that they assume a fundamental sense of responsibility towards the future, for the long-term consequences of the decisions themselves and others

take today and everyday. It's this belief that will help them through the vicissitudes of changing policy, lack of resources, and the inevitable criticisms - and it's the belief we need to ensure a future for planning itself. *A Future for Planning: Taking Responsibility for Twenty-First Century Challenges*, is published by Routledge in the RTPI Library Series: <https://www.routledge.com/A-Future-for-Planning-Taking-Responsibility-for-Twenty-First-Century-Challenges/Harris/p/book/9781138708808> ■





Braehead Community Garden  
Photo credit - the Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society

## In Practice:

# A Plan to Grow More Food

**Steven Tolson** outlines the findings of Plan To Grow, a planning guide for allotments he has written for Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society



Steve Tolson  
Steven Tolson  
Consulting

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be a Good Food Nation.

Food matters, not just to maintain life; it shapes the way we live and how we connect with the land. The Scottish Government wants to make good food a national objective, recognising the link between good food and good health.

Getting access to good food should include building on our excellent tradition of growing one's own food. Much of that tradition is rooted in improving health and welfare but the nutritional benefit of growing fresh food is only one of a range of benefits that can help to strengthen and sustain our communities. However, identifying suitable land remains a challenge.

Having the right land in the right place is a matter for planners. Planners help to allocate, support and manage resource allocations. More than ever, planners are custodians of public interest needing to understand community requirements and help put these into action by delivering great places to live. All of this is consistent with Community Empowerment principles where communities take greater control of public interest decision making and actions for their own place and services.

Food growing is a public benefit but it is surprisingly omitted by planners as a land use within the Use Class Order. Evidence suggests that planners regard food growing as a 'leisure' activity, in other words 'free time'. However, those engaged in food growing,

particularly those in education, health and social prescription initiatives, know that food growing goes well beyond people spending free time. Food is an integral aspect of any society being able to function well and it wouldn't be too difficult for the Scottish Government to adopt the Welsh Assembly's land use approach by regarding food growing as an 'agricultural' use.

The Community empowerment legislation provides statutory obligations for local food growing but this needs suitable land to be identified and acquired. Planners using their statutory powers can significantly help this process by proactively promoting food growing and identifying land as part of good place production.

At the moment, other than referencing allotments as part of wider open space allocation, planning authorities tend to wait for demand to be demonstrated. The legislation is geared towards individuals coming forward but most, particularly in cities, simply sign on to a waiting list and wait for years. The emergence of 'Local Place Plans' will motivate communities to collectively come forward with specific demands for food growing spaces and planners will be under pressure to positively respond.

However, planning for the future should be about proactively assessing and promoting food growing rather than reacting to others. One way of providing more land is being applied in Aberdeenshire and East

Lothian where planning policy requires food growing spaces to be incorporated into new 'major' developments. Such policy action significantly benefits the supply of food growing sites and provides an instant community component for a new place. While many 'major' developments are on the edge or outside settlements, the same principle should arise on major urban regeneration sites. Hopefully other local planning authorities will follow Aberdeenshire and East Lothian's lead on what is a relatively straightforward method of increasing food growing opportunities.

Such issues are promoted in a recent report 'Plan to Grow' published by the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society <http://www.sags.org.uk/Publications.php>. This report and executive summary argue the importance of allotments in place making and planning for people. The guide highlights good practice case studies and policies illustrating how successful delivery is attained and how benefits have been accrued.

Those engaged in food growing are now looking to local planning authorities to be persuaded that growing food is an essential component for good health, education and sustainable place practice. For Scotland to be a 'Good Food Nation', food growing can no longer be referred to as a minority leisure activity, but an important public and national interest activity. ■

## Article:

# PlanTech – Future ways of working



**Sebastien Herman**  
Junior Urbanist  
(City Planning &  
Urban Design)  
Connected Places  
Catapult

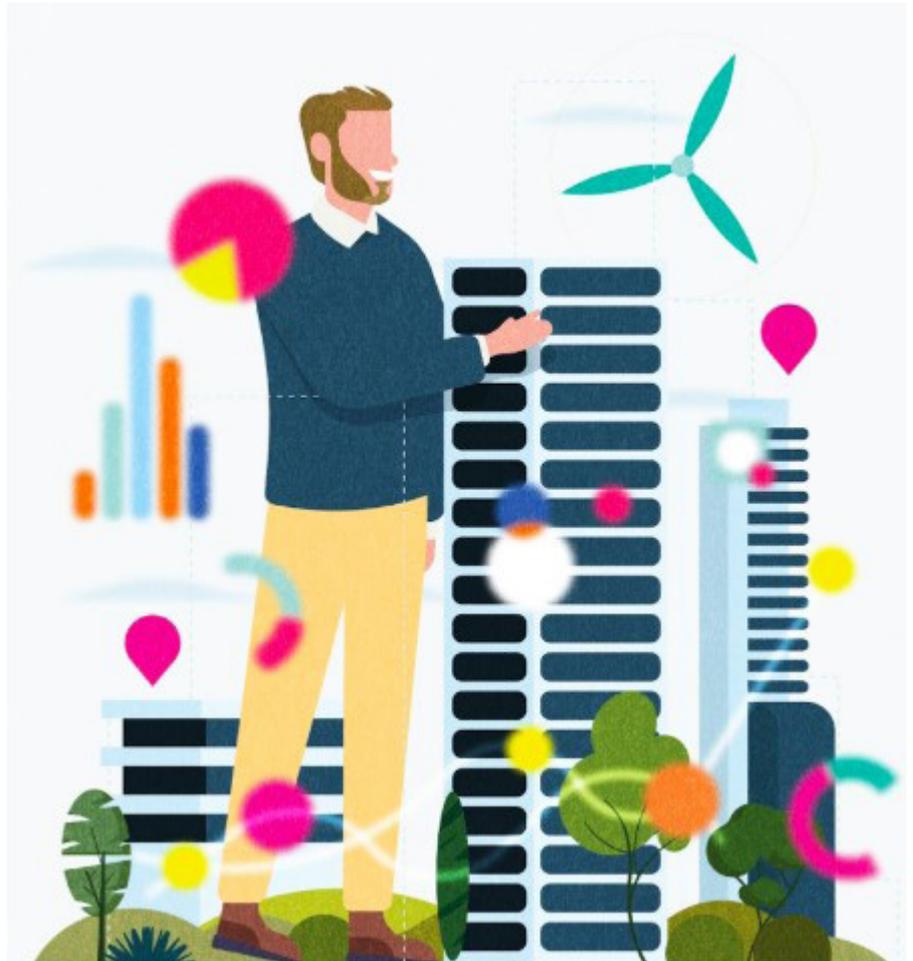
**Sebastien Herman, Junior Urbanist (City Planning & Urban Design) at the Connected Places Catapult discusses how technology could shape the way we work**

What will the ‘Planner of the Future’ look like? The answer varies depending on who you ask. For some, the role and responsibilities of a planner won’t change much in the decade to come. Others meanwhile imagine a completely redefined profession.

So while the answer may not be immediately obvious, that shouldn’t prevent us from thinking about the difficulties and challenges planners face today alongside the opportunities, tools and innovations that could transform their role in the future.

To do so, we first need to agree what we actually mean by “planning”? Yvonne Rydin in her book *“The Purpose of Planning”* (2011), defines it as the “... coordination and integration [of] all the different aspects of urban development [and] thinking of all the different needs of, and opportunities for, an area in order to guide where new investment should go”.

Which makes it something of a paradox then that today’s planners are blamed for slowing down investment and development due to “bureaucratic” inefficiencies and lack of “deliverability”. David Cameron even went so far as to state that he was “determined to cut through the bureaucracy that holds us back. That starts with getting the planners off our backs, getting behind the businesses that have the ambition to expand”. All of which suggests a real and troubling disconnect between people’s expectations of planners (at least according to Rydin’s definition of planning), and what they actually think of them.



As well as being blamed for inefficiencies, planners are also regularly expected to find local solutions to national challenges. From delivering more homes, boosting the economy and creating new jobs, to bringing about ecological sustainability and solving spatial inequality. Central government expectations are high but its budgetary allocations are increasingly being slashed and, since 2010, the reduction in Local Planning Authorities (LPA) budgets has **led to over a quarter of planning staff** in Scotland being let go.

So, with pressures increasing and resources dwindling, how might planners re-invent what they do and how they do it?

Perhaps the best first step is to review the tasks currently undertaken in plan-making, development management and citizen engagement, and to consider how different digital approaches might both streamline and optimise them.

Take for example the plan-making process itself: even with a well-resourced planning department, minimal contentious planning issues and a good land bank, it can take up to five years to develop a comprehensive local plan – during which the world around it continues to evolve and change, rendering it ostensibly obsolete by the time it is ready for adoption. Could technology accelerate this process?

Furthermore, Local plan policies can too often be written in jargon too open to interpretation by developers and planning lawyers leading to poor or uneven decision making, which in turn often leads to lengthy legal battles.

This means today's planners and their departments often become bottlenecks that lose the trust of stakeholders, become overly dependent on external consultants and deliver poorer outcomes.

If plans were underpinned by live digital, standardised documentation, with nearer real-time updates, could planning become more agile? Might it even be possible to create a plan that is responsive, in real-time – *a living plan*, as it were – that could evolve alongside the working reality it's there to help deliver? We believe so.

In terms of development management, if each **local authority receives 800 applications every year, over 200 working days will be spent on applications that are not approved**. This is a drain on resources which prevents highly qualified experienced planners – who might spend around **seven hours processing each minor planning application** – from critical work such as keeping their plans up to date, ensuring decisions are robust and completing more creative tasks. In terms of open and reliable data, there are over **450,000 planning applications made each year in the UK – each with data-rich drawings, tables and analysis – but which are submitted in non-**

**searchable or computer-readable formats**. Additionally, accessibility to local plans and supplementary planning documents is often very limited by their analogue format (i.e. PDF). Both resources are information heavy but their formatting prevents planners and stakeholders from carrying out quick queries and/or simple analyses.

Finally, the increasingly strained relationship between local authorities, developers and members of the public is another major hurdle. A 2019 **Grosvenor study found out that only 7% of the UK public trust local authorities with large residential development**. There is a crucial need to not

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**“...with pressures increasing and resources dwindling, how might planners re-invent what they do and how they do it?”**

only engage members of the public in the end-to-end process, but to do so in ways that are easy to understand – unlike, for example, the ubiquitous Planning Notice, with its complicated professional jargon and legalese.

Although complex and well embedded, it is not impossible to resolve these issues. In the past decade, the built-environment industry has witnessed the rise of PlanTech, which is the use of information technology (IT) to address the needs of actors within the planning industry. These new innovations are making the tasks of LPAs and future planners much more intuitive, transparent, efficient and interactive.

Fundamentally, the priority is to encourage local authorities and their planners to collect robust data throughout the planning process using PlanTech tools. This, combined with cross-borough sharing of data, could unlock the potential digital tools to develop a better understanding of land supply, infrastructure requirements, planning gain and increase the overall certainty and transparency around planning.

One such tool is **Growth-Planner**, a user-experience prototype developed by Connected Places Catapult (in its former guise as Future Cities Catapult). Growth-Planner is a spatial data platform that uses infrastructure data to visualise current network capacity in a city, and uses planning pipeline data to forecast how this will reduce over time. The better use and opening up of data collected by planners as part of the plan-making and application processes will provide the raw material for others to innovate upon, in planning and across the other sectors.

To have more open, accessible and machine readable information would empower future planners to carry out complex assessments themselves rather than depending on costly consultants. With more machine readable data formats, planner time could be freed from heavy administrative tasks, giving them more time to spend on creative and proactive planning activities. Indeed, **automated screening of household planning applications, for example, could save planners of the future at least 800 hours of processing time a year**. The London Borough of Hackney is working to deliver a digital service for the **submission of minor planning applications**. This service would move away from the submission of an application with information locked in PDF files into an application submitted with its credentials as raw data. The app would guide the applicants through the submission process, helping them include the right information, accurate and complete documentation and the correct fee thereby reducing significantly the number of invalid applications.

In terms of creative engagement, digital tools could allow tomorrow's planning officers to complete in-depth user-research, engage creatively, and communicate and visualize their planning process at every stage with members of the public. Citizens would then be kept up-to-date with planning proposals and decisions, and have a direct line of communication with planning officers. So, not only could users participate and express their support or disapproval with the click of a button, they would also be able to properly interrogate a proposal or a draft policy, without all the professional jargon. Participat's **interactive platform** is an example of this already in use.

It's worth emphasising however that whilst the planner of the future won't need a new set of IT skills such as programming languages and coding, or extensive data-analysis competence, they will have a greater appreciation for and understanding of data, confidently using it to engage and interact with their local community. Planning in the future will be less about predicting and providing, and more about envisaging and validating, and the planner of the future will not be radically different from the planner of today, simply that they will have the tools they need to plan for an accelerating world. ■

# Article: Will we be planners at all?



**Lisa Proudfoot**  
MRTPI  
Planner  
Montagu Evans LLP

## Lisa Proudfoot, Chair of the Scottish Young Planners' Network, gives her take on 'the planner of the future'

When looking ahead to Planning in the future I find myself thinking about three key things; the definition of planning, the digital transformation of our planning system and the direction of planning in education.

Firstly, and most fundamentally, will we still be calling the profession "*planning*" in the future? Increasingly, our work is being termed as "*placemaking*", which reflects the wider impact and involvement that the profession has taken on, and perhaps signals a change in perception of the role of a Planner. Planning today does seem more focused on place and less on policy, which helps to encourage creativity and innovation.

Secondly, the inevitable effects of the digital transformation of our planning system, against the backdrop of the ongoing digital revolution.

I see the planning profession moving more and more online with live and dynamic local development plans and delivery programmes. This can already be seen in planning practice, however for me there is a wider cultural change at play, and the need to ensure stakeholders are engaged with the digital journey. In other words, digital transformation is not simply a case of investing in IT, it is a fundamental change in approach, thought process and attitudes across the profession.

Innovation and change is happening at an increasing pace; static policy documents rarely survive in a world focused on networks, knowledge and creativity. Having a planning system flexible enough to capitalise on opportunity will be increasingly important; hence where '*real-time*' online plans can come into play.

There are very encouraging signs though, that this is happening. Even in my relatively short career so far, there are many interactive and visual tools being rolled out within planning, that simply did not exist, or were not widely used, when I entered the profession. In the next 5 years, planners will again have a different suite of interactive, visual, and data-driven tools at their fingertips.

Finally, the success of planning relies heavily on the talent coming into the profession, i.e. the next generation.

The '*planner*' is a relatively modern profession. However, the perception of planning and planners is often that we are regulatory and reactive, fulfilling the need for a necessary process.

We rarely get praise or the recognition for the positive benefits that we bring.

This being said, I'd like to see more of a planning focus in education – it is important to highlight that planning is relevant within a range of subjects, be it political, social, and environmental and that it weaves these subject areas together in a way that puts placemaking front and centre.

**"The '*planner*' is a relatively modern profession. However, the perception of planning and planners is often that we are regulatory and reactive, fulfilling the need for a necessary process."**

This would have a two-fold effect of educating future generations on the importance and technical skills of planners, as well as attracting a wider pool of talent that would perhaps not have considered planning as a career option previously.

As I write this, I am reflecting on the past two weeks, where I have been touring Scotland as part of the judging panel for the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. We heard from people from a variety of backgrounds, who all exuded pure passion for their projects. This opportunity has reaffirmed my excitement and enthusiasm in what we do as a profession. It is a feeling we should all look to impart on those we work with, colleagues and clients alike, as we seek to close the information gap.

Personally speaking, as a young planner with a long career ahead of me (!), I feel enormously excited to be part of a journey that will see us shape the future of our profession in new ways. I hope I am not alone! ■



Photo Credit - Pexels.com David Rico

# Article:

## The Planner of the Future – an employer’s perspective



Stefano Smith FRTPI  
Founding Director  
Stefano Smith  
Planning

### Stefano Smith FRTPI gives his views on what the planner of the future will look like

The new lifeblood of the planning profession will now (hopefully) have settled into their planning-related degree courses at university, equipping themselves to be *‘the planner of the future’!*

The main difference from when I started my planning degree in 1983 at Heriot-Watt University is that there is now a more transparent, simplified route to entering the planning profession; these routes are called Assessments of Professional Competence (APC). There are three routes to Chartered membership – a fully accredited RTPI degree (L-APC), a non-accredited degree (A-APC) and as an experienced practitioner (EP-APC) - which are all competency based and follow a consistent structure, while allowing candidates with different educational backgrounds and experience to be eligible. In England, there is also the recent introduction of a Degree Apprenticeship which enables an apprentice to gain an RTPI accredited qualification and Chartered Town Planner (MRTPI) status whilst gaining practical experience in the work place (<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/degreeapprenticeship>).

What are the skills required by the planner of the future? From my 30 years’ experience working predominantly in the private sector, there are core skills required of all planners, whether you operate in the public, private or third sector. These are reflected in the RTPI competencies, such as, analysing and interpreting data and situations, diagnosing problems and identifying relevant causal factors, predicting and forecasting, goal setting and identifying possible courses of action, evaluating and comparing possible

courses of action and implementing actions and monitoring them.

However, perhaps the key core skill is the ability to communicate effectively at all levels. It’s about delivering a clear, simple message about what the vision is and what your strategy is. In planning, it’s also about avoiding professional jargon, with a focus on *‘Creating Better Places’*. The message has to be relevant to whoever the audience is and not over-complicated and it should be in words that allows the audience to disagree if that is what they want. How would a child understand what *‘growth’* means? Is housing going to be good for you or bad? Is commercial development going to provide job opportunities or competition? We seem to make planning a complicated subject often having to address mixed messages, but the essence of planning is simple. Ebenezer Howard didn’t make it complicated - not having to travel too far to work, living in a pleasant place with good facilities. It’s the process of planning that has become complicated not the objectives. Clearly, our modern world presents new and emerging challenges, as well as opportunities for current and future planners. For example, climate change/crisis, infrastructure delivery, place-making and land value uplift capture. Digital innovation, urban data and user-centred design will be a key *‘influencer’* on the future of planning, changing and improving the UK and international planning systems as we currently know them. Future Cities Catapult has launched the Future of Planning <https://futurecities.catapult.org.uk/project/future-of-planning/> and Scottish

Government continues to make significant progress towards the launch of the Digital Planning Strategy, which is expected later this year. The launch of the Strategy will be a key part of the wider programme of planning reform, alongside the *Planning (Scotland) Act 2019* secondary legislative programme and the *NPF4*. It is critically important that our planners are appropriately *‘skilled-up’* to resource and deliver the planning system of the future.

Planning can take a long time to deliver results, but communities and the public/private/third sectors need to believe that planners are the leaders of transformational and beneficial change. As eloquently expressed by a planning practitioner, *‘...planners are doctors of our cities and towns; we can identify issues and potentials, draw up long-term cross-sector strategies, and create inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities for all.’*

The typical roles and even employers of planners in the future may be radically different from what they are at the moment. The boundaries of built environment occupations may be fluid, as is evident by the variation seen across Europe. But one thing is for certain, it will always be an exciting profession for the planner of the future! ■

The views expressed are my own. Please don’t hesitate to contact me on (e) [stefano@stefanosmithplanning.com](mailto:stefano@stefanosmithplanning.com) (t) 07464 744337 (w) [www.stefanosmithplanning.com](http://www.stefanosmithplanning.com)

## Article:

# The Future of Local Government

Professor Richard Kerley sets out his thoughts on changing local government



Local government in Scotland remains similar to the local government that was created in 1994/5. Still 32 councils; and responsible for much of the range of functions that they always have been; still spending large amounts of money; still criticised by many for spending money unwisely.

What we have not seen during the 20 years of the Scottish Parliament has been any attempt by governments (regardless of party) to re-shape the boundaries of local government. There are some who argue they could and should be changed but each of our 5 different governments have been loath to tackle that.

Behind that façade there have been major changes in roles and responsibilities; in funding; and in the capacity to make major differences locally. Functions such as criminal justice; social care; some aspects of roads provision have all seen major organisational changes and either removal of those functions from local governments or their provision through partnership with other agencies.

Levels of financial support for local government from central government have inexorably reduced over recent years; the Accounts Commission for Scotland assesses the real terms reduction in government support to councils to have been nearly 7% in the past 5 years. That lengthy trend of reduction in financial support has hit some

local authority services far harder than others. The scale of reduction actually means that there are no local government functions that have been 'protected' although the larger scale public facing services such as education and social care have done relatively better than other services.

In the period since 2012, Education has marginally increased its percentage share of council overall spend. Planning (*and Economic Development*), (categorised together) has

seen its share of such spend fall from 2.8% to 2%. When taken alone planning's share has fallen to 0.34%. Elsewhere in the journal the implications of this are discussed more fully.

Perhaps surprisingly, despite

this reduction in resources allocated to planning, the biennial benchmarking survey produced by the Improvement Service for Local Government shows a consistent improvement across Scotland (with some local variations) in the handling of larger commercial and industrial applications. The average time taken for such applications was 14 weeks in 2012/13 and in the most recent figures, 2017/18 has fallen to 9.3 weeks. Council planners have, in this case, done better with less.

It is hard to see what the future is for local government and its responsibilities for planning, both strategically and in terms of development control. There are clearly

aspects of the 2019 Planning Act that will prove challenging and the volume of planning changes required of local authorities will stretch the current system, probably beyond breaking point. All such new legislation, particularly when it has been the subject of a somewhat messy legislative process, invites those subject to its provisions to test these in court – as will happen with this legislation.

The current challenges facing councils, their planners, and their other related staff are at the critical intersection of planning, building regulation and licencing. High streets that can no longer support the range of shops our parents took for granted; the localised booms in short stay accommodation. We also see volume builder construction that often barely acknowledges sustainable heating sources. A housing shortage that is not addressed by edge of city/town housing developments remote from public transport.

Councils and planners are the right vehicles for addressing these complex and interrelated challenges; both need government support to do that. ■

**“Councils and planners are the right vehicles for addressing these complex and interrelated challenges; both need government support to do that.”**



**Richard Kerley**  
Professor of Management at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Article:

# Better the Balance, Better for Planning.

RTPI Vice President Sue Manns discusses why and how the profession should aim to become more diverse

Planning is for and about people, the spaces and places that they use. The legacy of decisions that planners take will last for many generations and impact upon many lives. With this in mind it is essential that these decisions are properly informed. Planners, whether considering policy development or determining applications are required to balance a wide range of factors, many of which will be supported by technical studies. However at present those tasked with decision making are not as representative of society as they might be. For different voices to be heard, they must not only be welcomed into the room but once there they must be invited to play a full part. The planner of the future will not fit a single description, rather they will be part of a team where differing

**“The legacy of decisions that planners take will last for many generations and impact upon many lives.”**

views are heard and valued.

Back in 1994, Clara Greed commented that *“it has been demonstrated by research and human experience that women suffer disadvantage within a built environment that is developed primarily for other men”*. Whilst we have made considerable steps towards ‘numerical’ diversity within the profession, with women making up 39% of members (in 1988 it was 85% male), BAME accounting for 4% and those registered disabled accounting for 1%, this is not reflective of society. More importantly however these numbers are

unevenly spread, with less than 20% of those at the top of the profession i.e. the key decision makers, being women. Data is not available for other groups. Women make up half the population and BAME 19% and yet they are a minority in decision making. This imbalance needs to be addressed – the better the balance, the better the decisions.

But why does this matter? It matters not because those at the top are not doing a good job now – they are – it is because they could do an even better job if the diversity of society was better reflected. There is a ‘data’ gap – this data gap derives from the different experiences that can be brought to the table by different groups and used to inform policy development and decision making.

Ensuring that our planners of the future are more reflective of society and more receptive to differences will go a long way to ensuring that our places and spaces work for everyone. Many of those taking decisions in what they believe to be the best interests of the wider public may unintentionally miss something of importance, simply because the voices within the room are not sufficiently diverse.

A well balanced profession, both numerically and ‘vertically’ will ensure that decisions take into account the different ways that the built and natural environments are used by and affect different groups. For example, discussions around accessibility can often be dominated by the car, yet in 2018 only 43% of households had access to a car. Data about the complexity of journeys by gender (women are more often accompanied

by children or elderly relatives or carrying shopping and tend to make more complex journeys in a more local area) is frequently missing in technical reports and then not asked for by those, predominantly car owners, using the reports to inform decisions. An unsafe built environment affects everyone, but the impacts are often felt to a greater degree by women and young males. A healthy built environment is an inclusive and attractive one, with people visibly using the spaces and places that it contains across all hours of day and night. It works for all ages and genders.

Planners of the future, just as those of today, will be trusted to balance a wide range of factors and reach decisions that work for all those in society. A better balanced profession add real value for the benefit of society. We need to actively welcome, encourage and support planners from diverse backgrounds to capture the positive opportunities that diversity and inclusivity can bring. Better the balance: better the decisions. ■



**Sue Manns**  
FRTPI FRGS FRSA,  
RTPI Vice President

Article:

# Developing the Planning Workforce

Craig McLaren, Director of Scotland and Ireland in RTPI looks at an emerging workforce strategy to help ensure we have the planners we need in the future.



**Craig McLaren**  
FRTPi  
Director of Scotland and Ireland RTPI

The world we plan is constantly changing. We need to make sure that the profession is prepared and able to adapt to these changing needs. That is why RTPI Scotland is developing a workforce strategy for planning in Scotland that aims to explore how we take forward 3 things.

## A Pipeline of Planners

We need to better promote planning as a career through making the most of the RTPI Ambassadors project which support members to give career talks to schools. We are also exploring how promoting planning as a career through Skills Development Scotland careers advisors and how planning can be highlighted as part of the Government's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) campaign in schools. Could we also promote a bursary scheme for graduates who commit to working in planning in public sector after graduation, along the lines of the NHS Dental Bursary Scheme?

We also need to open up and increase the routes to planning study and employment. The Institute has been instrumental in getting agreement for new graduate apprenticeship scheme in England and so we are looking to see if we can develop a scheme in Scotland, where the system works differently.

It can sometimes be forgotten that there

is a need for planners to process planning applications and create development plans if we want to be able to build new homes, regenerate our town centres or protect our most valuable landscapes and buildings. Given this RTPI is also aiming to assess how many planners are needed to meet the those ambitions.

## Transition to Work

Can we support potential planners of the future through introducing more formal work experience programmes for schoolchildren? Should we support graduate internships for students and establish more student placement, work experience and job shadowing programmes.

We are already supporting the transition from a general university degree to planning degree through the RTPI Future Planner Bursaries which through generous support from Scottish Government supports and encourages post graduate students to enter planning courses.

## A Resilient Workforce

The final strand of our work is to support the existing workforce to be able to adapt and be supported to have the skills, knowledge and behaviours to meet future needs of the profession. Progress has been made on this

through the establishment of the [www.partnersinplanning.scot](http://www.partnersinplanning.scot) web portal that shares best practice, but we need to build upon this with an eye to having a 'Centre for Excellence' to support culture and behaviour change across the profession and to support joined up CPD programmes.

RTPI Scotland is also working to highlight the resourcing challenges faced, especially in local government, and we continue to monitor and report trends through our research and briefings. We will continue to do this.

It is also important that there is clarity on how performance will be measured as this will drive behaviours in individual planners and the priorities of organisations. The introduction of the new Planning Improvement Coordinator will have an important role to play in this in developing any future planning performance framework. RTPI, Scottish Government, and others are taking forward research on developing an outcomes based performance framework for planning which could help this.

And there is undoubtedly a role for the digital planning strategy which is currently under development in supporting planners to undertake their job more effectively and efficiently.

We would welcome members' thoughts on these, or any other ideas that could help. ■

# Article:

## A planner of the future?



Prof. Kevin Murray  
FRTPI

Kevin Murray, Past President of the RTPI, explores what the changing policy context will demand from future planners.

What skills, capabilities and behaviours might a 'planner of the future' require, and are these really any different to the skills we have needed in the recent past?

Some things have changed considerably over the years, like technology, changing markets and the re-emergence of health and well-being. The biggest of course is the urgency of addressing climate change and place resilience. Ironically the damage from a less-informed planning, engineering and political era has contributed so much to the problems that we now face around the world.

Some traditional dimensions of planning have subsisted and may well continue into the future, such as the pivotal role of development plans in framing area-based responses to future needs, or the perpetual debates about how to calculate housing need and demand!

Perhaps our past plans have not been sufficiently flexible in anticipating economic, social or technical change? Alternatively, some may have been unrealistically ambitious. As we look ahead to further shifts in technology, whether of driverless cars, robot assistance in the home, or new modes of leisure and retail, what capabilities does the future planner need to have?

As a somewhat 'less than new' planner myself, I thought it wise to consult my younger KMA colleagues Iain and Rim before responding. So the list of attributes below is mine, but I acknowledge their positive influence in shaping its content.

1. Rather obviously, a future planner really needs to be **well informed** about the latest planning practice – legislation yes, but also about the thinking behind good practice too, particularly in relation to climate change and resilience.
2. A good planner definitely needs to be

'**future market aware**' – including about alternative and emergent uses and activities, for instance around town centre change, housing and social care, innovation and start-ups.

3. To address uncertainty (and there is a lot of it around) planners need to be **flexible and adaptable** to be able to revisit and re-address any situation that changes. An overly rigid mind set will not help the planner, nor achieve positive place solutions.
4. Future planners need to balance **intellectual curiosity and creativity** in approaching their analyses, to be able to generate visions, ideas and appropriate solutions. This includes how we create arguments and presentations, whether for committees, communities or even a contested appeal situation.
5. Planners need to strike the right balance of **open-ness, confidence and empathetic humility** when engaging with other parties, especially when working with the public – but this also applies when dealing with developers and their professional agents too. Planners really need to show that we care about the people and places we are working for.
6. Modern planners therefore also need to be very good **communicators, facilitators and presenters** – able to present ideas and communicate clearly and effectively via presentations, video, social media and any new technologies.
7. Future planners require to **develop good judgement** – of place solutions, of strategies and processes, but also of characters, for instance in gauging the credibility among developer, designer and community representatives.
8. We also need to develop a protective thick

skin, with shared **commitment and a patient, collective resolve**. Not everyone immediately understands public interest place-making, but future planners need to be positive advocates, build cross community capacity and explain the implications of weak strategies and poor development decisions.

9. Given the evident continuing mistrust of government and of planning, any future planner must **engender trust in themselves**, their profession and the wider strategic processes of shaping our collective futures.
10. Finally, a **committed and happy future planner** is best placed to do this effectively. This planner will need to be both an aspirational utopian and a pragmatic realist – a **utopian realist!**

So, if our future planner is to be a utopian realist, with good analytic knowledge and insight, but also empathy and creative communication skills, is that so far from who we need to be right now? ■



# Update:

## Scottish Government News

### Planning Reform: Next Steps

Now that the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is in place, attention has turned to what comes next. And there's lots to come next.

Fully implementing the new Act and wider planning reforms is going to take a substantial programme of work over the next couple of years. That needs a suite of regulations and guidance on wide changes to our planning system, such as: the re-shaping of provisions for local development plans; new rights for community bodies to produce local place plans; positive and proactive planning through masterplan consent areas; a range of changes to development management; and reviewing planning fees and the approach to managing performance.

That is just a flavour of the wide range of matters in a structured work programme to implement changes to our planning system. The individual provisions of the Act will come into force at appropriate times, allowing people to prepare for them and when the necessary supporting legislation and guidance is in place.

Early work is also underway on the fourth National Planning Framework, and on shaping the new Regional Spatial Strategies. You can find information on the team members at <https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/>.

We will shortly set out a programme for taking forward reviews and potential changes to a number of permitted development rights. And all will be underpinned by developing new digital opportunities to support a modern, inclusive planning system.

None of this is going to be done by the Scottish Government in isolation. Effective collaboration and co-production will continue to be at the heart of our approach to planning reform; and we are grateful to those who have already offered their assistance. We will all have a part to play in shaping your planning system, so please join in.

### Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2019

The judges undertook the interviews and site visits for SAQP2019 during mid-September. The judges will consider their recommendations to Ministers with the results announced at the SAQP2019 ceremony in Edinburgh in November. In addition, the outcome of the People's Choice Award will also be announced. Further details of the Award winners will be available on the Scottish Government website and in the next edition of Scottish Planner.

### Programme for Government

The Programme for Government sets out the actions the Government will take in the coming year and beyond. Protecting Scotland's Future is available to view online. NPF4 and the wider programme of Planning reform is a key feature of the Climate Change Chapter, setting out planning's role in the road to net zero carbon. Planning and Architecture is also committed to providing specialist support in a number of wider priorities including Housing, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Strengthening Places. You can find out more here - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/>

### Digital Planning

As part of wider planning reform, the Digital Planning transformation programme was established to explore how the Scottish planning system could be digitally transformed through the best use of technology and data.

User research has been carried out with over 1000 people across the planning sector and beyond to understand their experiences and needs through a combination of workshops, interviews and design sprints. This has identified broad themes for change around communication, understanding and accessing information, engagement, unlocking data and current technology.

We have been continuing our work towards the launch of a Digital Strategy for Planning which will be informed and shaped by these findings. The team are currently working in collaboration with local government partners to define priorities and a path to launch of the strategy.

# Update:

## Planning for the Future - National Planning Framework 4

As with today's practitioners, the 'planners of the future' will have the skills and competencies to explore issues and plan ahead in uncertain times. It is in the nature of planning to challenge what currently exists, and to think creatively about what could be.

Looking ahead to 2050, the next National Planning Framework provides a chance to create a shared platform for development planning across Scotland. The NPF4 will establish a clear national policy framework with a strong and ambitious spatial plan for Scotland that dovetails with emerging regional spatial strategies.

An open and collaborative approach will be taken to producing the next National Planning Framework and we are keen to hear your

views and ideas. Information on opportunities to get involved will be made available as the work progresses.

With a focus on folk, work, place and delivery, co-production of the NPF4 enables our profession to promote awareness of how planning's role in creating great places can help to meet the future needs of people in Scotland.

Fresh consideration of our planning policies and spatial plans allows for an innovative, challenging and delivery focused policy framework that responds positively to the many issues that arose from the independent review of the system and which were debated during the course of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

A draft NPF4 can be expected in 2020, but the extent to which it pushes boundaries and effectively tackles longstanding issues is dependent on the expertise, experience and imagination of planners across Scotland.

The future is uncertain – 30 years ago, could the planning profession have known with confidence what 2020 would be like? However, we already confront significant challenges of addressing the climate emergency, tackling poverty and inequality, promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities, and ensuring long-term sustainable inclusive economic growth.

**The requirement for planners of the future to act starts now!**

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## Update:

### HOPS

#### HOPS New Chair

David Leslie, Chief Planning Officer for the City of Edinburgh, is the new HOPS Chair, taking over from Iain McDiarmid, Shetlands Council, at the HOPS AGM held on 6 June. Forbes Barron, Glasgow is Senior Vice Chair and Pam Ewen, Fife is Junior Vice Chair.

#### HOPS Conference

The annual HOPS conference was held in Edinburgh in June this year and was well attended by planners and other stakeholders. The theme was 'Collaboration' and we explored the importance of trust between stakeholders, of shared understanding of issues and of a willingness to listen when preparing for effective collaboration. All stakeholders in the planning system need to collaborate to find ways of making the best use of the new legislation to deliver quality outcomes in place making.

#### Planning Act

At long last we now have a new Planning Act! HOPS has contributed positively at all stages and now looks forward to collaborating with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders when the SG announces the proposed work programme, consultations, Regulations etc. in September. The Scottish Government is committed to an ambitious programme of change and it is likely to take another 2 years for the system to take shape.

#### High Level Group on Planning Performance

The HOPS Chair and HOPS Manager attend the HLG meetings and at the time of writing the next one is due to take place on 10 September. This will be a key meeting to look at implementing the Planning Act, performance management issues and the move to planning outcomes. Other topics will include, planning fees, and the approach to the new role of the Planning Improvement Co-ordinator.

#### HOPS Blogs

The latest blog in the HOPS series is 'Collaborate to Move Forward' and can be viewed online at <https://hopscotland.org.uk>.

#### HOPS Business Plan

The Business Plan was updated and revised in June and sets out,

- Purpose and objectives
- Governance and organisation
- Action Plan, roles and remits
- HOPS Constitution
- It can be viewed in full at **HOPS**

#### Research survey

HOPS has been asked by the Scottish Futures Trust to undertake a Scotland wide survey of the planning and education procedures used to look at secondary school capacities, school roll projections, impact assessments and mitigation funding approaches. A pilot survey of 4 councils, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Fife and Renfrewshire is currently underway to test the survey questionnaire and to seek feedback before the final survey is agreed.

# Update:

## RTPI Scotland Update



### PUBLIC AFFAIRS

#### RTPI President

RTPI President, Ian Tant, visited Scotland in June. This included visits to a number of RTPI Awards winners including Dargavel village in Renfrewshire, Cuningar Loop Park in South Lanarkshire and the Stirling Landscape Mitigation Project. There was also a visit to Dundee Waterfront, including the new V&A museum. The passing of the Planning Bill coincided with the visit, and the President was in the public gallery of the Parliament Chamber when the Bill was passed. He then met with Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning and the Chief Planner immediately after proceedings.

### ENGAGEMENT

RTPI Scotland has met with, attended or presented at the following:

- PAS
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Institute of Civil Engineers State of the Nation infrastructure roundtable
- CaCHE roundtable discussion on the planning bill
- Homes for Scotland
- Landscape Institute Scotland
- Heads of Planning Scotland
- Graham Simpson MSP
- SURF
- Scottish Government Planning
- UK 2070 Stakeholder workshop
- Scottish Government roundtable on discretionary spend
- Launch of HRH Duke of Rothesay's Homes for Britain – A Call to Action
- COSLA
- Built Environment Professions Forum
- Clyde Gateway
- Ministerial High Level Group on Planning Performance
- Scottish Government Digital Planning team
- Infrastructure Commission for Scotland roundtable

RTPI Scotland has also presented to the following:

- RTPI Northern Ireland Annual Conference
- Royal Environmental Health Institute Scotland “Wider Public Health Agenda” conference
- Mackay Hannah conference “Scotland’s New Planning Act: The Act, Its Consequences and Next Steps Explained”
- Delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in China

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### Social Media

The [@RTPIScotland](#) Twitter account now has 3910 followers and the [@ConvenorRTPIs](#) account has 1350 followers.

#### Media

RTPI Scotland has issued the following news release:

- **5 September - RTPI Scotland welcomes government’s renewed focus on planning**  
RTPI Scotland welcomes commitment by the Scottish government to fully involve planners in its drive to deliver a zero carbon target by 2045.
- **27 August - Cost of Planning Act duties could reach £59M, RTPI Scotland finds**  
Planning departments across Scotland may need up to £59M over the next 10 years to undertake duties contained in the new Planning Act.
- **30 July - RTPI Scotland: Long-term vision for islands needs clarity**  
RTPI Scotland has called for more clarity from Scottish Government on how the proposed National Island Plan (NIP) will align with the 4th National Planning Framework and the new Regional Spatial Strategies.
- **15 July - RTPI Scotland: Improving public health through planning is a no brainer**  
RTPI Scotland has welcomed the establishment of a national public health body for Scotland, but urges more explicit connections with the planning system so that place-making can play a more preventative role in creating healthier communities.

### MEMBER NEWS

We regret to note the death of Mr James Miller MRTPI from Edinburgh.

# Update: The Planner of the Future will be a PAS volunteer

Volunteering with PAS is a fantastic way to make a positive contribution using your skills as a planner. But it's not just about giving your time and expertise to help others, it's equally about boosting your career in planning through developing new skills, connecting with other professionals who volunteer with PAS and actively advancing your Continuing Professional Development.

## Volunteering across Scotland

Our volunteers have been getting involved in a wide range of PAS projects over the last few months. From Applecross in the west, Stromness in the north, to Elie in the east, our volunteers have made a huge contribution to local communities, helping them to prepare community-led plans for their area.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced Local Place Plans, which we see as an exciting opportunity for communities to

be more directly involved in planning for the future of their area – but to be successful, planners will have an important role to play in facilitating this process. We will be launching a Local Place Plan Service later this year to offer detailed advice and support to communities on Local Place Plans – and our volunteers will play a central role in this new service.

Volunteers have also been busy helping roll out some of our youth engagement programmes including Past Protectors. Historic Scotland has commissioned PAS to carry out a pilot project on heritage crime, called Past Protectors. The project aims to be a proactive way to promote awareness of heritage and heritage crime, and help young people have a say in heritage and crime issues affecting their community, and follows the launch of a national initiative to tackle heritage crime.

So far over 50 young people have taken part in the pilot stage, carrying out archaeological and architectural surveys in their local areas, highlighting heritage which is important to them. To volunteer in forthcoming Past Protector events or if you know any schools or youth groups that may be interested to take part, contact Alison McCandlish ([alison@pas.org.uk](mailto:alison@pas.org.uk)).

## Advice volunteering

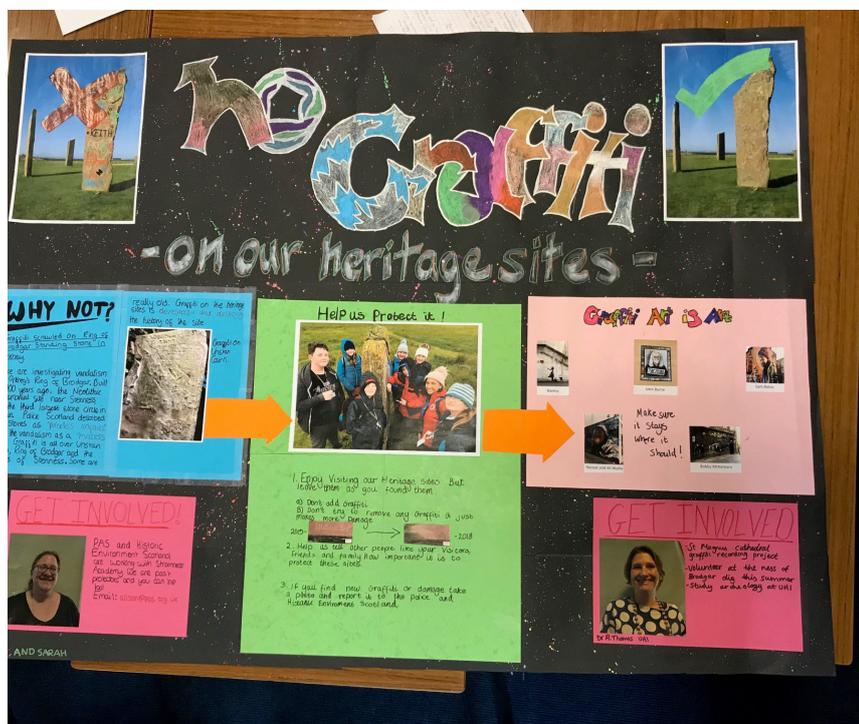
Your expertise as a planner can have an enormously positive impact on people's lives. Our Advice Service volunteers continuously help individuals and community groups across Scotland, helping them to understand planning processes and resolve any problems. What might just take a short phone call for you can make all the difference to a member of the public who has no knowledge of the planning system.

We have a large number of volunteers who take part in our wider activities and place-based projects. However, we are specifically looking to recruit MRTPI planners to volunteer for our Advice Service. Over the course of a year, our Advice Service volunteers typically take on a minimum of six cases.

As an Advice Volunteer you can count your volunteering hours toward your Continuing Professional Development when you take on new cases and you develop in line with your own professional goals. We'll also invite you to our Advice Service Forum to share experiences, network and learn something new. To find out more, contact Erin Fulton ([erin@pas.org.uk](mailto:erin@pas.org.uk)).

## On the volunteering horizon

In the remainder of 2019, we will be holding an Advice Service Forum to bring together all of our Advice Volunteers to share experiences and to help identify new ways to improve our service. We'll also begin to offer online learning courses for our volunteers, in addition to our usual volunteer training events – so watch this space! Finally, we'll also be holding another Volunteer Gathering, as a chance for many of our volunteers to get together in a social space and learn from each other. [www.pas.org.uk](http://www.pas.org.uk)



# Update:

## Policy Update



RTPI Scotland aims to lead thinking in how planning can create great places for people. We do this by:

- responding to policy consultations from Scottish Government, agencies and other organisations; and
- discussing planning issues with policy makers including Ministers, MSPs and Civil Servants.

We are keen to receive comments from members on any policy issues. Please contact Kate Houghton, RTPI Scotland's Planning Policy and Practice Officer, on [kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk).

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLANNING ACT

In August RTPI Scotland published research into the potential cost for local and national Government of implementing the Planning Act. This research was undertaken to start a productive discussion on how to more effectively resource the planning service.

The key findings were:

- 49 new and unfunded additional duties have been placed on planning authorities by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- The cost of implementing these could be between £12.1M and £59.1M over a ten year period.
- If this is the case it is estimated that staff numbers will need to increase from between 1.9% and 9.4% to merely maintain a 'business as usual' planning service.
- If central funding for communities wishing to produce Local Place Plans is not secured an additional cost of £3.28M and £9.84M could be incurred by planning authorities over a ten year period
- 40 additional duties have been placed on Scottish Government, which could lead to a saving of between £0.28M and £0.33M has been made over a ten year period.

The full research paper can be read online at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi-scotland>.

### PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2019/20

The Scottish Government published Protecting Scotland's Future: *The Government's Programme for Scotland 2019/20* on 3 September. The implementation of the reform enabled by the Planning Act and the development of NPF4 feature strongly, particularly in relation to addressing the climate emergency (including low and zero-carbon infrastructure), housing, and rural economic performance.

### NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

- Placemaking agenda
- Health and well-being including Public Health Scotland
- Town centre regeneration strategies, including commitment to maximising the added value created by cultural activities
- NPF4
- Regional Spatial Strategies
- Inclusive growth
- Output of roads collaboration project

These points will inform our response to the consultation on the draft Strategy, which runs until 23 October. Any members who would like to contribute to the response, please contact Kate Houghton as per details above.

### SUBMITTED CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Since the last edition of Scottish Planning responses have been submitted to the following consultations and requests for written evidence:

- written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee on the Annual Energy Statement
- written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee on the long-term financial sustainability of local government
- response to Scottish Government consultation on the National Islands Plan and Island Communities Impact Assessments
- response to Scottish Government consultation on short-term lets
- written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee on Regional Marine Plans
- response to Scottish Government consultation on a new National Public Health body: 'Public Health Scotland'

See the RTPI Scotland Policy Publications webpage to read our submissions - <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-scotland/policy-and-research/policy-publications/>

## RTPI SCOTLAND CONTACTS



**Julia Frost, MRTPI  
Convenor**

Julia chairs the Scottish Executive Committee and the Scottish Forum for Planning. She also represents Scotland at the RTPI General Assembly

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Irene chairs the RTPI Scotland Communications, Education and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee

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**Craig McLaren, FRTPI  
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Craig leads on public affairs, stakeholder relationships, development of CPD and skills, and communications. He is Co-Editor of Scottish Planner and Secretariat to the Communications Education and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee.

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**Kate Houghton  
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Responsible for policy development, responding to policy consultations, production of Scottish Planner, Scottish Young Planners' Network and communications. Co-Editor of Scottish Planner and the Secretariat to Policy Sub Committee.

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**Jennie Stansfield  
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Jennie coordinates RTPI Scotland communications, including bulletins with information about chapter and national events. She is responsible for keeping the RTPI Scotland's website up to date, and assists with the delivery of CPD events.

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[Twitter.com/RTPIscotland](https://www.twitter.com/RTPIscotland)

# Empower others...



# ... with a phone call

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For a chat to find out more, please get in touch with Erin Fulton:  
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