



RTPI

Royal Town Planning Institute

Invest and prosper

Developing a business case for investing in
planning in the UK

Invitation to Tender

May 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1. About the RTPI

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

The RTPI is:

- A membership organisation and a Chartered Institute responsible for maintaining professional standards and accrediting world class planning courses nationally and internationally;
- A charity whose charitable purpose is to advance the science and art of planning (including town and country and spatial planning) for the benefit of the public;
- A learned society.

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

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

1.2. Background to the research project

This research is being funded by the RTPI as an early part of the RTPI's Corporate Strategy 2020-2030¹. Pillar two of the strategy is Supporting Planning Services, positioning the RTPI as "the leading advocate campaigning for well-resourced, effective planning functions that support the outcomes local communities want to see." A key strategy for pillar two is to promote the business case for investing in planning, developing an evidence based narrative demonstrating how investment in planning resources can return dividends and deliver wider strategic priorities for local authorities, business and the environment.

Research from the RTPI and others has provided evidence on the value of planning, and the huge economic, social and environmental contribution it makes in the UK and elsewhere. However, the system faces a number of major new challenges as well as huge resourcing and capacity challenges even in delivering current services. The Government has made it clear that addressing resourcing and performance is a priority, however, looking forward, if we experience an economic downturn due to the impact of Covid-19 it is likely that we will hear familiar calls for deregulation

¹ RTPI (2020), [RTPI Corporate Strategy 2020-2030](#).

aimed at unleashing the market. Given the likely damages of such an approach², and the missed opportunities it would imply for a sustainable economic recovery³, it is crucial to evidence the value of investing in planning to support recovery and resilience. There also remains little data on what investment is required and the likely costs and benefits.

We expect this research to draw on previous work including in particular the RTPI's [Value of Planning](#) research series. It should also draw on RTPI's ongoing research exploring [Measuring Planning Outcomes](#) – in particular to ensure it focuses on a wide range of the outcomes of planning.

We also expect it to be located in the appropriate policy context, for example it might link up with the UK Government's plans for planning reform; the National Infrastructure Strategy; the Scottish Government's national outcomes and emerging National Planning Framework; and the need for a sustainable economic recovery from the impacts of Covid-19. It will also be able to draw on RTPI's developing work on a response to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 (which has now been delayed until the autumn).

Finally, we are interested in the international context of this question – in particular in how investment in planning works in other countries.

2. Tender information

2.1. Budget

This project will be funded up to a maximum and fixed sum of £30,000 (inclusive of VAT), with the intention that this be paid in three instalments according to agreed project milestones (i.e. on signing of the contract, on the delivery of an interim report, and on the final draft being assessed to be of acceptable quality).

This budget is non-negotiable.

2.2. Eligibility

Tenders are invited from RTPI accredited planning schools, other university-based research teams/departments, research/economic consultancies, think tanks, and other appropriate organisations including independent consultants. Collaborations between organisations are welcome.

2.3. Purpose of the research

This is an invitation for tenders aimed at developing the business case for investment in planning in the UK. We expect it to draw heavily on previous work including in particular the RTPI's [Value of Planning](#) research series. The overarching aim is to provide data on the social, environmental and

² See the RTPI's recent report on [Priorities for Planning Reform in England](#) for a discussion of this.

³ RTPI will be publishing [research on the role of planning in a sustainable economic recovery](#) in the coming month.

economic benefits of investing in planning. This includes the upfront costs and the dividends from that investment.

The main audience for this research is those making investment decisions about planning. HM Treasury is an important stakeholder – the RTPI will include the findings of this research in representations to the Comprehensive Spending Review and Autumn Budget (both expected in autumn 2020). However, the research should also aim to inform decision making on investment in public sector planning by devolved governments within the UK, and at a local and combined authority level. We also hope the findings will have wider relevance to the funding of planning internationally, and in particular to the Republic of Ireland.

2.4. Aim of the research

The overarching aim is to help build a business case for investment in planning, based on data on the social, environmental and economic benefits of investing in planning.

We are open to proposals for how best to deliver this objective within the budget and time specified. Below we have suggested two possible approaches towards achieving this aim. Bids should choose one of these, or suggest another approach, and justify why their choice is the best way to deliver the overarching project aim.

2.5. Methodology and possible approaches to the research

Rather than prescribing a strict approach to this research we are inviting potential suppliers to demonstrate their professional expertise by making a case for which approach would best help deliver the overarching aim of this research. Below are more detailed methodological considerations we want bidders to take into account, and two potential approaches we have identified in scoping.

Where possible, costs and benefits should be reported in financial terms, however, where this is not possible, benefits should still be noted.

Approaches should be mindful of (but not limited to) responding to the ways of working of HM Treasury⁴. As stated above, we will produce representations to the UK [Autumn Budget](#), UK Government's [Comprehensive Spending Review](#) and devolved government's budget setting processes drawing on this research so please demonstrate how your methodology will align with these. For example, methodologies should be able to deliver as much as possible of the following evidence suggested for Budget representations:

- likely effectiveness and value for money
- revenue implications for the Exchequer
- wider macroeconomic implications (for economic stability and growth)
- sectoral impacts

⁴ For example, we welcome consideration of the [Treasury's Green Book on appraisal and evaluation in central government](#). However, we have also long pushed for revisions to how policies and investments are appraised and would not want benefits of investment to be ignored just because they do not fit in with the existing Green Book methodology.

- distributional impacts
- administrative and compliance costs and issues
- legislative and operational requirements
- environmental impact

RTPI will provide guidance on the approach and assumptions underlying it and help provide contacts through our networks. We can also provide the successful supplier with additional information on our previous research on the Value of Planning and on ongoing research on Measuring Planning Outcomes and the Business Case for Digital Planning in Scotland. If you believe this research will need any additional inputs from the RTPI please indicate what these are so we can make an informed decision about the resource implications.

Below are two possible approaches we have identified during scoping. Suppliers should justify their choice of either of these two, or another approach in relation to how it would help deliver the main project aim and considerations described above.

Approach one: the total value of investment in public sector planning services

One option would be to assess the total current investment in public sector planning services in the UK (including spending in each devolved nation). This would mean estimating the current amount spent on planning and the value delivered from that investment. The main final result could be a single figure estimating the value of investment in public sector planning, as well as a description of the diversity of outcomes. The research could consider:

- The total amount invested in public sector planning
- The benefits derived from planning, including but not limited to:
 - Economic value: e.g. contributions to the national economy and to local economic resilience
 - Social value e.g. contributions to health and wellbeing, public spaces, public participation
 - Environmental value e.g. contributions to natural capital, climate change mitigation

Approach two: the value of specific new investments in public sector planning services

Another approach would be to estimate the cost and benefits of specific potential investments in planning to provide specific examples of what investment in planning is needed and the benefits of such investment. This might include, but not be limited to, some of the following investment opportunities (a final list could be agreed with the RTPI at inception):

- Resourcing planning to tackle climate change and support the delivery of net zero carbon targets
- Incentivising local planning authorities to deliver up to date local plans
- Investing in planning and place based approaches to sustainable economic recovery from Covid-19, including the rejuvenation of town centres and high streets

- Investment in cross-authority and strategic planning
- Investment in capacity building for proactive planning
- Investment in the digital transformation of planning
- Resourcing planning to tackle health inequalities
- Investment to support the delivery of sustainable, high quality homes

2.6. Project Timescales

Tendering

11 th May 2020	Invitation to tender released
8 th June 2020	Application window shuts (11:59pm)
By 12 th June 2020	Shortlisted applicants contacted
17 th June 2020 (tbc)	Shortlisted applicants interviewed (probably via GoTo Meeting)
By 19 th June 2020	Winners notified

Research

22 nd June 2020	Work begins/inception meeting
31 st July 2020	Update/ interim report due (for internal purposes only)
28 th August 2020	Draft final report due
11 th September	Final report including agreed edits and revisions

2.7. Governance

The RTPI's Chief Executive Victoria Hills will be the Senior Responsible Officer for this work. Day to day management from the RTPI side will be dealt with by Tom Kenny. An internal project steering group will be chaired by Tom to provide project oversight.

2.8. Outputs

An interim report to provide a progress update for internal use (to be discussed at inception meeting).

A clearly written final report (in MS word) which the RTPI will publish in a suitable form. This final report should include:

- A literature and policy review;
- Cost-benefit analysis of the investment(s) being considered
- Recommendations relating to the purposes of the research

- A clear 2-3 page executive summary, written in plain English and suitable for the wider dissemination of these conclusions (including to politicians and individuals or groups in communities with an interest in the subject)
- A high level communications plan setting out proposed engagement during and/or after the report completion.

We welcome proposals for additional and novel outputs, which make the research more impactful or accessible. We also welcome proposals for increasing the impact of this research's findings at various stages of its development.

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

The RTPI will also consider other potential places to promote the findings and conclusions from the research (for example, the RTPI's magazine *The Planner*).

2.9. Application process

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

- Proposed methodology, taking into account the considerations described above
- Proposed outputs, demonstrating conformity (or otherwise) with the project purpose and brief
- Project team and general experience
- Statement of experience relevant to the project, and selected projects that demonstrate relevant experience
- Proposed approach to project management, identifying risks and mitigation strategies, and specifying how the project will be delivered on time and do a high standard
- Total cost of the project
- A budget breakdown between the stages, daily rates and personnel inputs.

2.10. Evaluation criteria

Applications will be evaluated against four criteria:

1. Quality, rigour and depth of the proposed methodology and analysis;
2. Experience/track record/knowledge of research and issues relevant to the project;
3. Experience of effective and impactful partnership working (i.e. with research commissioners and clients);
4. Value for money.

2.11. Assessment panel

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

2.12. Deadline for applications

Tender applications should be submitted electronically to: research@rtpi.org.uk

Applications should be received by no later than 11:59pm on Monday 8th June.

Bidders will be notified if they are shortlisted for interview by Friday 12th June.

It is intended to interview a shortlist of bidders on Wednesday 17th June (tbc), likely by video call. We will appoint the successful research team so it can start work as soon as possible after the interviews, aiming for an inception meeting on Monday 22th June.

2.13. Intellectual property

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

2.14. Further information and enquiries

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

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

We welcome enquiries about this project, but please note that all responses to enquiries will be posted as (anonymised) Q&As on the research tenders page and shared by email with potential suppliers who have indicated interest in tendering for this work.

For enquiries, please contact:

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