

Comments from Vice Chair Scott O'Dell

Working from home under lockdown

We are certainly living in interesting times. We have all had to adapt to ensure the planning system continues to function and do what we can to encourage the construction industry to bounce back as the light at the end of the lockdown tunnel starts to emerge. This has undoubtedly been a challenge; however, I feel that we are at the precipice of a culture change towards remote and flexible working. This already exists in some form but has never taken place on such a scale or under similar circumstances, nevertheless, applications have continued to be submitted, processed and determined throughout the lockdown period. Our positive work in this e-bulletin highlights some of the local authorities who have risen to the virtual challenge for continuity of service, which has helped everyone and also enabled the sector to be more agile. This demonstrates that it can work, although identifies that in order to maximise productivity on an individual level, we should not have a one rule fits all approach, rather tailored based on personal circumstances and business need.

Prior to 2020, I had limited interest in such arrangements and spent nearly all of my time in the office, travelling at least 70 miles a day by car. Now we have all had remote working forced upon us, it has allowed me to appreciate its benefits and recognise its difficulties. I have gained 2 hours a day, spent almost nothing on fuel, slashed my carbon emissions and generally improved productivity. On the other hand, I do miss the wind down time a commute offers, meeting people face to face and being in the office with colleagues. Upon reflection, I now have an appetite for a mix of office and home based working once things return to normal with the aim of maximising the benefits of both. It will be interesting to see in time if my experience is one that represents a wider culture change, even when restrictions are lifted and if so how this will influence matters such as the demand for office space and carbon emissions.

We are keen to understand experiences across the region and hear the views of our members, therefore please do feel free to contact us to share these. You can contact us on east.midlands@rtpi.org.uk.

RMB and RAC membership - Vacancies in 2021/22

There are opportunities for members from across the region to join the East Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB) and Regional Activities Committee (RAC) next year with nominations now open. I have found my time invaluable volunteering for the RTPI. This has provided both professional and personal growth with the opportunity to make new contacts from a variety of different backgrounds. During my time on the Young Planners' Committee, I have been involved in organising regional CPD, social activities and a national conference. I then joined the RAC supporting the organisation of events for members progressing recently to the position of Vice Chair of the RMB. This is proving a great, albeit challenging opportunity given the current circumstances. We have had to take unprecedented measures cancelling all in person events and look at new ways of delivering CPD. I encourage all who are keen to be involved to find out more. For details of the process and vacancies available, please visit <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/governance/elections2020/>.

Contact us:
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