



RTPI South West
Royal Town Planning Institute

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BRANCHOUT

No 182

AUTUMN 2020

NEWS

Message from the Chair

Welcome from the Chair...

This is my final Branchout article for year so whilst it is only October I feel it is time for some reflection, and let us be honest who is not in a hurry to see 2020 off?

As Chair of RTPI South West I was ready for a challenge and in preparation for the year I chaired some CPD events in 2019 and had the honour of presenting the Excellence in Planning Awards. Behind the scenes with the help of the Regional Management Board (RMB) and Charlotte, the Regional Coordinator we had a whole year of CPD events lined up! The first two events were successfully held in Exeter and Taunton and then we hit lockdown! The whole world as we knew it just stopped!

Life stopped, schools stopped and working, if you were able, suddenly got much harder. Through this chaos, people started appreciating the environment more than they had perhaps done before. It is surprising how when you tell people to 'stay in' they start to really value 'going out'! A walk in the countryside, a pub meal and not forgetting the hairdressers!

By constraining 'how' we can operate there was a wave of 'adaption and innovation'. An almost tidal surge of emergency policy and guidance emerged to assist the world to keep moving. Today virtual meetings are now common place from the formal and informal to committees, hearings and inquiries, each of them helping everyone to keep connected and keep the pace of work moving. I traditionally have a love/hate relationship with technology and becoming dependant on it was really challenging. However this year my confidence has grown, I have chaired our online RTPI South West Committee meetings, hosted a virtual roundtable discussion on the White Paper, chaired webinars and welcomed the RTPI President to a virtual visit to our region. I am also on YouTube so you may have recently watched my personal regional message (Oh what a treat!). This week I will be taking part in recordings in preparation for the RTPI South West Virtual Awards Ceremony. Please do join us at 1.00pm on the 18 November to celebrate planning excellence in our region and be inspired by these exceptional projects.

I know mental wellbeing and dealing with the stresses that this world can throw at you is challenging at the best of times and being restricted socially and maintaining these ever-smaller social circles can really weigh on this. Never before has it been so obvious to so many how important it is to really 'plan', protect and maintain open spaces and opportunities for active engagement. This is where we can make a difference and much of this will be a focus for Angharad Williams who will be South West Chair for 2021. So keep a look out for an interesting programme of CPD and other opportunities in 2021.

For now...let us just take a moment to breathe. Take a moment to reflect on everything you have been through and acknowledge how much you have grown because of it. You have got this!

So from me, thank you for your time and remember the first rule of 2021 is that you do not mention 2020! In the meantime, be brave, be bold and be beautiful!

Dawn de Vries
Principal Planning Officer,
Sedgemoor District Council



Editor's blog

“Well, here it is – the last edition of Branchout 2020...”

I can't believe that this is my final edition as editor. It has gone so fast. I am pleased to be handing over the editorial position to Ian Perry, 2021 Junior Vice Chair, who will continue bringing you news and articles from across the South West in 2021.

My final edition of Branchout is a bumper edition which includes articles on the New Eco Stadium for Stroud, Neighbourhood Planning, lessons for LPA officers, New Zealand plan making, PD Rights, Dementia, Gypsy and Travellers and On the right track – The Gateway!

The RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence short listed projects are set out in this edition long with an invitation to this year's online ceremony. Which projects do you want to see win? My WYG colleague Rachel Robinson has been on the judging panel however has remained tight lipped on who has won, so like you, I will be watching live on 18 November to find out the winners. Good luck to all the shortlisted projects.

The celebratory vibe continues with the announcement of the Plymouth University graduates who have been awarded prizes for being outstanding students and for producing excellent dissertations. Congratulations to you all and all the best in your future careers.

Also it is great to see five additional chartered members being celebrated for passing their RTPI APC submissions, well done all on an excellent achievement.

This edition also includes the regular Young Planners round up and review of recent events. It is great to see the Young planner groups going from strength to strength and embracing webinars and the 'new ways of working'.

Details of the Regional Management Board and Activities round up feature in this edition, including a successful Presidents visit. Currently we are busy focusing on the business plan and planning the CPD events for 2021, so watch this space.

As I said, this is my last edition of Branchout, as I move on to become Senior Vice Chair for 2021. It has been a great experience and I have really enjoyed being editor and Junior Vice Chair. I would like to say a huge thank you to Dawn, you have been a great Chair, under very difficult circumstances. Thank you, Charlotte Daborn, for your endless hard work on keeping the RAC and RMB in check and for facilitating the delivery of so many CPD events, Good luck Angharad on your year as Chair and thank you to WYG for supporting me and my role over the last year.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Branchout and all the best in the future.”

Do you have news to share or an article to contribute?
Contact
southwest@rtpi.org.uk



Julie O'Rourke
RTPI South West Junior Vice Chair

RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence - The shortlist



RTPI SOUTH WEST
AWARDS FOR
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE 2020

About the Awards

The South West Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate projects and people who have helped create exceptional places and improved the lives of those who live and work there; highlighting how planning and planners work to create a safe, healthy and sustainable future.

Winning these prestigious awards is a clear demonstration of quality, and an excellent way to raise the profile of a project, team or individual.

Entries into the 2020 Regional Awards closed in July 2020 and the following entries were shortlisted.

The Regional Awards will open for new entries in Spring 2021 Note: The descriptions for the following shortlisted projects has been taken directly from the entry forms

Cam Neighbourhood Plan & Design Code

Entered by: Place Studio

Other organisations involved with the project:

Cam Parish Council, Potterton Associates (landscape)

Planning prioritises nationally designated places. Most places we love to call home are not designated. Protecting community place values is equally important to identity and wellbeing. But often they aren't captured, with pattern book growth watering down distinction and stiffening resentment to new homes and jobs. Cam Design Code (with its Neighbourhood Plan) was produced by Cam's community, helped by consultants, Place Studio. It is an innovative enabling tool, working with Stroud Local Plan. It defines Cam's valued connected relationship with landscape and nature, illustrating exactly how development can embed these qualities, helping extend Cam's special DNA to new residents.

www.rtpi.org.uk/southwestawards

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Shortlisted Entries



Conservation through COVID - adapting to new ways of working Entered by: Bath Preservation Trust

In response to COVID and the closure of BPT's offices the organisations planning team along with its professional Architecture Planning & Place Committee has adapted to new ways of working remotely to maintain high standard services and range of functions in line with BPT's charitable objectives to ensure the continued conservation of Bath's historic environment. BPT has supported local planning processes including; consultation on planning policy and planning applications, planning committee, SPD's, stakeholder engagement, pre-application and listed building advice, heritage and local heritage expertise. And has been proactive in engaging the public in local planning issues through multiple social media platforms through unprecedented times.

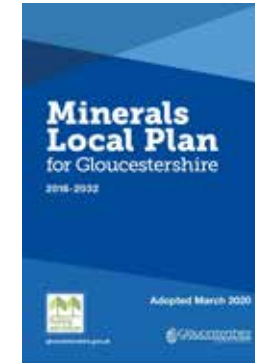


Jersey Integrated Landscape & Seascape Character Assessment Entered by: Government of Jersey

Other key organisations involved with the project:
Fiona Fyfe Associates Ltd

Jersey faces tremendous challenges in the face of global forces of climate change, biodiversity loss and development pressure. The Jersey Integrated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (ILSCA) was commissioned, as part of the evidence base for the new Island Plan, to address these challenges through the promotion of sustainable development.

The ILSCA - which covers all terrestrial, intertidal and marine areas within the Bailiwick of Jersey – analyses, celebrates and informs a rich understanding of how the island's landscape and seascape character contributes to its unique sense of place which is critical for the planning and management of development and change.



Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018 - 2032)

Entered by: Gloucestershire County Council

Other key organisations involved with the project:
Land Use Consultants, Planning Officers Society (POS Enterprises), Building with Nature.

Many challenges lie ahead in ensuring steady and adequate supplies of Gloucestershire's minerals, not least the fact they are a diminishing, finite resource that can only be worked where they are found. It is vitally important therefore that the right plan is in place – that plan is the Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire. It affords certainty for industry in an ever competitive, turbulent economic environment; will secure amenity protections for host local communities, ensure prized local assets are safeguarded and enhanced; and drive forward the response to the climate change emergency and help to decarbonise the local minerals industry.



Palm Cross Green, Modbury, Devon **Entered by: Place Studio**

Other key organisations involved with the project: Bloor Homes. Their consultants: Barton Wilmore, Nicholas Pearson, Steve Munday, WSP.

The community engagement on this 80+ housing development in a sensitive location, with a strong and articulate local community, ensured a high level of community support that in turn (with the backing of a very thorough report of consultation) led in the end to no serious objections. The approach adopted by the Place Studio team used best practice principles in a wide-ranging programme of activities targeted from 'day one' at all sections of the community. Local feedback post completion has been extremely positive.



Pilgrim Court, Plymouth **Entered by: Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SP&I), Plymouth City Council**

Other key organisations involved with the project: ADG (Architects), Adult Social Care – Plymouth City Council, Bournemouth Churches Housing Association, Coyde Construction, McLaren Construction Group

Pilgrim Court is an excellent example of innovative partnership working between Planning, Housing and Adult Social Care professionals to meet the needs of residents with learning disabilities. It creates 12 self-contained homes by using Council land assets and gap funding subsidy, providing on-site round the clock support to enable independent living. It will relieve pressure on the Council's overstretched Adult Social Care budget, by combining services under one roof, creating a replicable delivery model. Additionally we have regenerated a neglected site within a conservation area close to the city centre, by ensuring the development of a high quality building.



The Story of Gardening & The Viper, at the Newt in Somerset **Entered by: AZ Urban Studio and South Somerset District Council**

Other key organisations involved with the project: Stonewood Design (Architects, The Story of Gardening), Mark Thomas Architects (Architects, The Viper)

The Newt in Somerset is a major heritage-led diversification of a traditional country estate, transforming the Grade II* listed Hadspen House and extensive heritage landscape into a major regional visitor attraction.

The Story of Gardening is a museum dedicated to exploring the history of gardening around the world and its impact on people and culture, forming part of the visitor experience at The Newt. A small café serves plant-based dishes taking inspiration from the global journey through gardens within.

The Viper is a tree canopy walkway that brings visitors on a dramatic journey snaking through ancient woodland to the museum.

Join us to find out
this years RTPI South
West Awards for
Planning Excellence
2020 Winners...

RTPI SOUTH WEST
AWARDS FOR
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE 2020

Invitation to this year's online ceremony
1:00pm on 18 November

www.rtpi.org.uk/regionalawards

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Inspired? Enter now for the RTPI National Awards 2021

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Excellence winner will go straight into the shortlist
for our RTPI National Awards for 2021**

These high-profile awards reward the very best of the best in our profession, helping to transform economies, environments and communities.

It's not too late to enter, the awards are still open for new entries. Deadline 14 December 2020

CATEGORIES

People

Young Planner of the Year
Planning Heroes in a Pandemic

Teams

Small Planning Consultancy of the Year
Planning Consultancy of the Year
Planning Authority Team of the Year
In-house Planning Team of the Year

Projects

Excellence in Plan Making Practice
Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture
Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment
Excellence in Planning for Health and Wellbeing
Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes -
large schemes (50 or more homes)
Excellence in Planning to Deliver Homes -
small schemes (up to 50 homes)
Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy
Excellence in Tech within Planning Practice
International Award for Planning Excellence

HOW TO ENTER:

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Find out more www.rtpi.org.uk/excellence

New Eco Stadium for Stroud

Introduction

The Eco stadium is a project which demonstrates excellence in planning delivery through collaborative co-operation between a variety of disciplines and the community producing a sustainable form of development.

Background to the project

The Eco Stadium relates to the development of a new 5,000 seater stadium to support the growth and promotion of Forest Green Rovers Football Club's (FGR) into English League Division 2 as well as to provide for enhanced community sport within the Stroud District. To provide a landmark building, FGR's owner commissioned a stadium ensuring that it was an outstanding design and had exemplary sustainable credentials. The new stadium will replace FGR original home at New Lawn, Nailsworth and provide their new stadium and training pitches all at the same site, enhancing the sustainability of the Club.

The development comprised the following;

- 5,000 capacity football stadium and other ancillary uses (Use Class D2)
- Two full-sized grass training pitches and a goal practice area for the First Team use
- Parking for c.1,700 vehicles, with signalised site access and dualling of A419
- A signal-controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A419 which will link to National Cycle Route 45 (NCN45)
- A scheme for improvements to NCN45 from the nearby settlement of Stonehouse
- Bus connection between the approved scheme and Stonehouse to serve the stadium on match days.
- Cycle path improvements and enhancements from the new stadium directly into Stroud.

Founded in 1889, FGR was the longest serving member of the National League. Attendance at FGR games has grown 73% over the last four seasons due to greater investment into the Club. The Club's growth has also coincided with its promotion into English League Division 2. New Lawn is constrained in size by the topography of the area and, as a consequence, the Club's training facilities are located in Chippenham (some 50km away) creating unsustainable journeys for players throughout the season. Furthermore, on match days there are severe infrastructure problems including lack of parking and providing sufficient water to the stadium. On match days, there is frequent conflict with the local residents due to noise, congestion and highway issues.

The consolidation of the Club into the approved gateway location will consolidate all facilities onto one accessible site as well as ensure that there is sufficient room for the Club's growth and expansion for the future.

The Eco Stadium is situated on one of the main artery routes into Stroud (A419) and is accessible by all forms of public transport and provision has also been made to ensure that it is also easily accessible by personal modes of transport.

Referenced S.19.1418/OUT, members of the Stroud Planning Committee were minded to grant outline approval to the Eco Stadium, subject to conditions, in December 2019. Outline planning permission was granted in September 2020.



Visuals of Eco Stadium

© Zaha Hadid Architects

New Eco Stadium for Stroud cont...

Involvement by Ridge

The planning team at Ridge became involved in the project in 2017 following the refusal of the original scheme. Ridge led the preparation and submission of the revised scheme which was submitted in 2018.

Providing strong and effective leadership and vision, the planning team at Ridge worked collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists and the client to provide a robust case, overcoming the objections to the refused scheme. The team worked in collaboration with other team members which included

- The client - Ecotricity Group Ltd
- Stroud District Council
- Architects
 - Landscape
 - Archaeology
 - Transportation
 - Ecology
 - Flood Risk
 - Local politicians
 - Local community
 - Sports clubs

In working with such a large multidisciplinary team, Ridge recognised the need to establish clear points of contact within the project team and encouraged the client to do the same to enable efficient communication and coordinated decision making. Meetings took place regularly, with each team member or specialist being encouraged to look beyond the normal 'off the shelf' solutions and to ensure their technical solutions incorporated wider benefits which met the requirements and pushed the boundaries of sustainable development. As a consequence of these regular meetings, continued amendments were made to the design resulting in the overall evolution of the final scheme.

Issues raised and the solutions

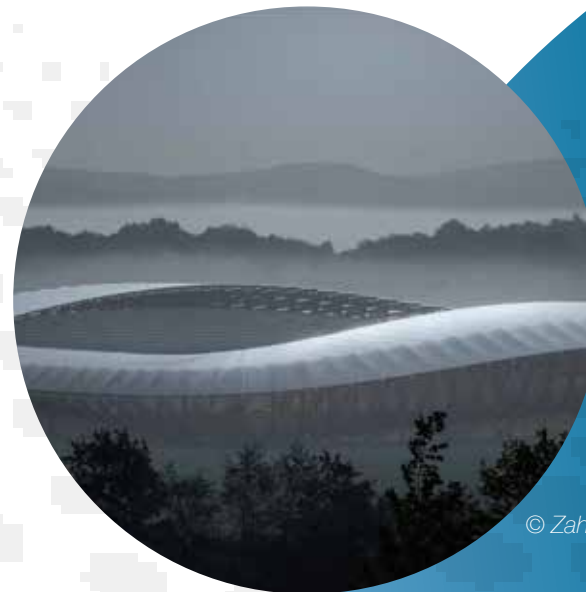
A number of objections were raised to the previously refused scheme, the issues of which had to be overcome. The team engaged positively with the Council, local stakeholders and local community groups to ensure effective communication. During the preparation of the application, Ridge increased the extent of collaboration between the disciplines and the client whilst at the same time broadening the depth of public engagement. The unique set of skills employed by the Ridge team enabled a greater degree of transparency between all parties which resulted in increased feedback from the community resulting in improvements to the scheme. As a consequence, local support for the scheme was increased for the project which will potentially deliver a hugely positive economic, social and environmental impact for Stroud and Gloucestershire. Furthermore, the planning team at Ridge used its professional and technical skills to ensure that the scheme was robustly assessed against, and complied with, all relevant planning policies.

Outcomes

The Eco stadium at Stroud offers an excellent balance of economic, social and environmental solutions that meet the objectives of sustainable development. These solutions are best demonstrated through the local community, economy and environment as detailed below.

The Local Community

The Eco Stadium will support the health, social and cultural wellbeing of the local community. FGR is the football club of the District. Securing permission for the development of a new flagship stadium in the District was therefore paramount not only for the Club but also for its fan base and for the enhancement of sport within the District.



© Zaha Hadids Architects

New Eco Stadium for Stroud cont...

The approved scheme will result in a net increase in sports pitches within the District and will make football more accessible for players and fans alike. The stadium will meet FGR's aspirations for long-term, sustainable growth to provide a hub combining the new stadium with a range of training facilities for the first team. The location of the Eco Stadium ensures that it is within close proximity to local services and facilities. FGR is a focal point for community activities and provides a focus for sport and entertainment which is engrained within the locality thus adding further value for the local community. Significantly, the relocation of the FGR will free up the land in Nailsworth which can be redeveloped for residential purposes providing new homes and raising amenity levels for the existing residents.

Economy

The approved scheme supports the growth of FGR, which is a club currently constrained in terms of location, access, parking restrictions and capacity. The approved scheme will enable FGR to operate in a financially viable way enabling local supporters to attend home matches. Coupled with this, FGR is a significant employer, many people are dependent on the Club for their livelihoods. The new stadium will provide further jobs to the local area through the creation of new sporting facilities as well as through the provision of additional ancillary conferencing and catering facilities on site. These facilities will be available to local businesses to use and will help support the network of established businesses within the area. Such facilities are currently lacking within the District and the Stadium will therefore directly support local businesses and the local economy as well as job creation.

Environment

The approved scheme will have a positive and sustainable impact on the local environment in the following ways;

- The stadium will be constructed out of wood which has a high carbon capture and reduced reliance on less sustainable materials such as concrete.
- The power and heating of the stadium will primarily be generated from green energy sources to ensure that it has a low carbon output when it is being used.
- The Club's owners will ensure that people have the ability to travel sustainably to the Stadium. This commitment will be provided through enhanced cycleways and walkways that provide linkages directly to the nearby towns of Stonehouse and Stroud. Otherwise, there will be new bus routes to the site which will ensure that fans will have the ability to get to the District's main train stations before and after matches.
- The new site had little environmental capital by being low grade farmland in poor condition. The development will therefore provide a wildlife enhancement ensuring net bio-diversity gain.

As such, the stadium has been designed to the highest architectural and sustainability standards, including the use of innovative technologies and eco sensitive materials.



© Zaha Hadids Architects

Anne Pawsey MRTPI
Senior Planner
For Ridge and Partners LLP

South West Young Planners Round Up

Gloucestershire Young Planners

Review of recent events:

September saw the Gloucestershire Young Planners (Chair - Chris Moore) and the East Midlands Young Planners (Member - Melissa Balk) co-host a talk on the emerging Environmental Bill and Biodiversity Net Gains in light of significant legislation changes in the built environment are starting to pass through Government.

The talk was hosted by Simon Taber (Ecology Solutions) and Oliver Ramm (Rammsanderson) and provided a useful insight into the potential benefits and challenges which this legislation could action as part of future planning applications and placemaking. For example; positively the legislation could encourage creative and well considered architecture which places environment as a core design rationale, whilst the lack of consistent “scoring” for all habitats means that there could be a shift in our natural environment with developers encouraged to use “higher scoring” habitats as a way to securing planning permission (for example; more mixed scrubland over woodland).

The talk is now available for viewing on Youtube on the RTPi account.

In October, Gloucestershire Young Planners held another talk on the environment, with a focus on Land Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA's), with the talk being presented by John-Paul Friend from LVIA Ltd. The young planners group are also currently liaising with Cheltenham Borough Council on their ambitious Cyber Park, as a large masterplan urban extension for Cheltenham and GCHQ.

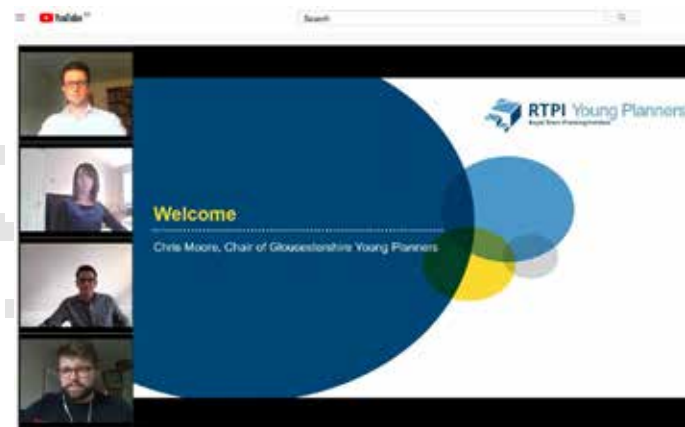
Watch the webinar

<https://youtu.be/BDcmrPDnQkU>



Watch the webinar

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjkgFZFyUs&feature=youtu.be



Future events:

Event ideas and suggestions:

If anyone has any suggestions or requests for future Young Planners events, or would like to be a speaker for a future event, please get in touch with us via southwest@rtpi.org.uk or contact any Steering Group members.

South West Young Planners Round Up

West of England Young Planners

Review of recent events:

West of England Young Planners Sustainable Development Goals Event - 26 August 2020

Michael Downes (Arup/Member of West of England Young Planners Steering Group) and Robyn Skerratt (RTPI Young Planner of the Year 2020) hosted and organised a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Town Planning webinar on the 26 August 2020. Speakers included Catherine Hutchins from Adur and Worthing Council, and Alan MacLeod and Sarah O'Driscoll from Bristol City Council.

The webinar focused on the UN SDGs, with discussion focusing on how the Goals are relevant to professionals in the built and natural environment and specifically to town planning.

Catherine Hutchins explained the work currently being done by Adur and Worthing Council to imbed the SDGs in the emerging Worthing Local Plan. Allan MacLeod and Sarah O'Driscoll outlined what Bristol is doing to monitor the SDGs at a local level. They set out how the SDGs are being considered as part of the review of the Bristol Local Plan and in the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) authorities' work.

The webinar helped to raise awareness of the SDGs and explained the role the Goals can play to help town planning create a more sustainable future. The event was well attended and very well received by town planners (and other built environment professionals) from a range of consultancy firms and local authorities.

Steering Group update:

Jennifer Joule is sadly leaving the West of England Steering Group as she takes up a new position with Teignbridge District Council in their Development Management team. Jennifer has been a valued member of the Steering Group and has organised many events during her time with us, including a great workshop on public consultation last year and everyone's favourite, the annual summer boat social! We would like to thank Jennifer for all her efforts as a member of the Group and wish her the best of luck with her move to Devon. Jennifer hopes to continue her involvement with Young Planners in the Devon and Cornwall group.

Since the last edition of Branchout, our chair Emily Johnson has taken up a new position with the Network Rail planning team - congratulations Emily!

Watch the webinar

www.youtube.com/watch?v=edHOAGF44Ts&feature=youtu.be



Future events:

Event ideas and suggestions:

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South West Young Planners Round Up

Design Review Panel - Ellen Fortt, Persimmon Homes

In January 2020 I was part of a team that presented at a Design Review Panel for a major development scheme of 1100 dwellings on Fishpool Hill, Bristol. As a first experience for myself and the technical team at Persimmon Homes Severn Valley, it was an opportunity to showcase the project and learn from this type of review process. I had many questions going into this review and want to share this experience for others in the same position.

What is a Design Review Panel?

Design Review Panels consist of an independent group of multi-disciplinary professionals who work in the field of the built environment and are brought together as part of a review process. The review process is referred to in paragraph 129 of the NPPF and in the case of this project, their feedback was incorporated into our pre-application advice. The panel will be made of expert volunteer members with architectural, urban design, landscape or other specialist experience.

What Forms Part of the Design Review Panel Process?

On the day typically a site visit will be held first, to give the panel an understanding of the context of the site. For Fishpool Hill as a major site it was important to get a sense of the wider context of infrastructure, as well as adjacent areas of development Filton Airfield and Cribbs Causeway. Subsequently, a presentation will be first held by the applicant and then the Local Authority, to promote and explain the project as well as give a planning policy context. Each presentation will take approximately 10 minutes and then the remaining time booked will be a question and answer session.

What Needs to be Prepared for in Advance?

A presentation will need to be prepared and the panel members will be sent this a week prior to the day; your explanation and narrative of the project will give them a greater understanding. For Fishpool Hill this was key, as large elements of the site had already been agreed as part of the outline application which was subject to S106 engrossment. The outline parameter plans were submitted for context, but the basis of the review was the detailed Masterplan and Design Code, part of the outline conditions prior to reserved matters submissions. I would advise for anyone considering this process to engage as early as possible in the project's evolution.



Ellen Fortt
Persimmon Homes

What are the Presentation Methods?

During preparation for the meeting, myself and the design team found A1 presentation boards quite helpful as it enabled the scheme to be displayed on a large scale but we could also move them around the room and draw over if needed. Other methods are encouraged such as printed plans, models or PowerPoint presentations but I would advise you bring your own laptop and projector to the meeting to avoid technical delays.

What are the Outcomes of the Design Review Panel?

The Panel's feedback is a material consideration for Local Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate but the fundamental outcome for us was the formal written feedback received a week later. This enabled us to revise the Masterplan and go into greater detail to pave the way for a smoother reserved matters application, although we are yet to see whether this will prove helpful. I would recommend this process to others as the impartial feedback will benefit your project in terms of design and engagement with the Local Authority.



South West Young Planners Round Up

Devon & Cornwall Young Planners

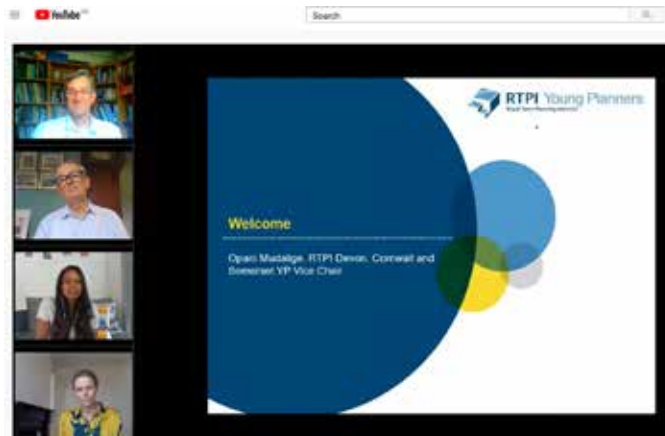
News

August brought the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset steering groups first webinar, To Conserve or Not to Conserve, where we were joined with Richard Morrice, Senior Reform Advisor at Historic England, and Duncan Coe, Heritage Consultant at Cotswolds Archaeology, to discuss the historic environment and development. The session began with Duncan addressing the key definitions in relation to heritage. This was followed by Richard who explored the topic of significance and the task of writing Statements of Heritage Significance, providing some of the tools to effectively analyse significance in heritage assets. The evening was then wrapped up by Duncan, who examined the practical considerations for Young Planners, followed by a short Q&A session.

Big thanks again to Richard and Duncan for a really informative and interesting webinar!

If you missed the webinar and wish to have a watch, the webinar is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYrZOujxLUM>



Continuing on the heritage theme, Nick Bishop from Avalon Planning & Heritage has provided the group with an interesting article on the removal of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol.

The toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol has drawn public attention to contested heritage in the UK and raises questions around how we manage it going forward.

Seeing reports of the Edward Colston statue dragged into Bristol Harbour in June this year felt like history in the making. It was certainly one of the most significant moments in the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the UK and the reactions were as interesting as the event itself.

The Home Secretary Priti Patel referred to the act as 'thuggery', while Marvin Rees, the Mayor of Bristol and the UK's first directly elected black mayor, described the statue as 'an affront to humanity', appealing to the authorities to listen to the grievances of the perpetrators. Historian David Olsuga commented 'for people who don't know Bristol, the real shock...was that 21st century Bristol still had a statue of a slave trader on public display'.

Contested heritage is common across the world and an important source of risk to World Heritage Sites, but the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn public attention to our own contested heritage in the UK and how we manage it going forward.

In the case of the Colston statue, Bristol City Council must reconcile his position as one of the City's main philanthropists with his leading role in the transportation of an estimated 84,000 enslaved Africans. Campaigns had urged the removal, or at least, reinterpretation, of the statue since the 1990s.

Following the event in June Historic England (HE) was careful to distance itself, stating:

"We are here to offer guidance and support but believe the decision is best made at a local level - we do not believe it must be reinstated."

However, HE's dedicated Contested Heritage webpages more generally promote retention and reinterpretation:

"We believe the best way to approach statues and sites which have become contested is not to remove them but to provide thoughtful, long-lasting and powerful reinterpretation, which keeps the structure's physical context but can add new layers of meaning, allowing us all to develop a deeper understanding of our often difficult past."

The accompanying checklist also recognises that: The continued conservation of a heritage asset is a public benefit, even if its historic interest is contested in some way. The alteration or relocation of a contested heritage asset may provide public benefits.

These statements reflect the UK's nation-wide conservation philosophy which recognises that a heritage asset might have several layers of significance which should be preserved and revealed rather than lost to future generations.

Find out more
www.rtpi.org.uk/swyp

South West Young Planners Round Up

In the case of memorials though, the question of preservation in-situ can be particularly problematic because the historic value of the subject can be as important, or more important, than the artistic value of the design itself.

Retention in situ unavoidably preserves a sense of honour which may no longer be appropriate. Yet a 'powerful reinterpretation' scheme which effectively incorporated a layer of dishonour would appear to be at odds with the core purpose of public monuments, which is generally to project positive ideals.

In Colston's case there is clearly no intention to leave him in place. We understand that the statue has been recovered by Bristol City Council and that it will be placed in a museum with protestors' graffiti and ropes intact. Will other local authorities follow suit if Listed Building Consent applications for removal come forward elsewhere?

And where does that leave the plinth in legal terms? The statue remains on the statutory list but with the statue gone, is the plinth now de-listable? It has some artistic value in its own right – (it was designed by sculptor John Cassidy who was responsible for in number of listed statues nationally), but its heritage value is primarily historic. Undoubtedly the empty plinth itself has taken on a new layer of significance as part of nationwide reflection on the nation's colonial past, but is this single event of sufficient special interest to justify retention on the list? Listed Building Consent would likely be required for the permanent installation of new statue and the Council has been actively removing unauthorised replacements, such as the statue of protester Jen Reid, by Marc Quin, installed in July.

Perhaps the authorities will settle on a new permanent sculpture or update the listing description to protect the base and allow for temporary installations, as at the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.



Nick Bishop

Heritage Director (nick@avalonplanning.co.uk)
Avalon Planning & Heritage

Forthcoming events:

With the RTPI now hosting a full schedule of online CPD events, the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset group will now be focusing their efforts on physical events so that they can hit the ground running once restrictions are lifted.

The group continues to operate with 4 members but is open to welcoming new people to join.

If you are interested, please contact Keegan (keegan@avalonplanning.co.uk) or Opani (opanimudalige@lrmpplanning.com) for further information.

South West Young Planners Round Up

Dorset Young Planners

The Dorset Young Planners gave a CPD event on green infrastructure on 8th October. Nick Smith gave us an insight into the challenges and enablers associated with the design, planning and delivery of GI, with a focus on major residential development. Drawing from his ongoing PhD research, Nick reflected on the messages arising from theory and practice and the issues that are impacting upon practical implementation on the ground. Nick is a familiar face to the SW RTPI since he used to work for Terence O'Rourke in Bournemouth and now leads the UWE Planning School at UWE in Bristol.

We are looking to hold a Christmas social online and we will provide details of this soon! If any of our members has any ideas on online activities and CPDs for the next year we would love to hear from you.

The Dorset YPs Also are taking an active role in the planning of the RTPI YP online conference, and Carla Fulgoni (chair) is sitting on the Steering group to help to try and organise this.

Following on from the thought-provoking session with RTPI President Sue Manns, the Dorset Group had some ideas on what working in the pandemic had meant for them as planners:



Amelia Rose
Policy Planner,
Dorset Council

I work for an LPA in the policy department and have worked from home throughout the pandemic. Pre-lockdown, I worked from home a few times a week so was used to it in some ways but found how it's totally different doing it full time, especially when everyone else from your family is now working at home too. I started working in Planning Policy in February just before lockdown (having previously worked in development management), so I've been learning a new job from home which has come with some challenges! Having to ring a colleague to ask advice definitely isn't the same as being able to turn to someone in the office, but I've got used to it and found myself learning lots and becoming more confident despite the difficulties. We will be working from home until at least the end of March, which seems a very long time away, but I know it will fly by. I'm also enjoying the lack of commute to the office which is over an hour each way, and being more productive in the extra time I gain from it!



Jessica Glover
Planning Consultant
Pure Town Planning

'As a planning consultant, being back in the office full-time is surreal as it is almost back to business as usual, until you may be required to wear a face mask at a meeting or socially distance from clients and colleagues. I do think that there is a greater degree of flexibility and trust in the workplace if you need to work at home on odd days or if you are feeling a little under the weather, which is a positive to take from 2020.'



Carla Fulgoni
Chair of Dorset Young Planners
and Policy & Appeals Manager
at The Planning Bureau Ltd

'I work for a planning consultancy and I was furloughed from April until June. I've been working from home since then. I enjoy the flexibility that comes with it and I'm very lucky that my employer also allows us to go into the office if necessary. As someone who rarely worked from home before the crisis and spent a lot of time hurtling to meetings across the country I have appreciated how much more I can get done when I have a meeting online rather than spending hours in a car. I do miss being able to quickly check things and run ideas past colleagues as well as the social aspect of working in an office. From October my team are going to try to work from the office one day a week. I think this added flexibility will make a huge difference to my little work life balance, not to mention my carbon footprint!'



Frances Summers
Planning Consultant
Pure Town Planning

Working from home with two young teenagers has had its ups and down. The hormonal pair have worked hard perfecting their bickering skills and I'm now confident they will win gold in the Bickering Olympics. But in between meetings (and bickering matches) I've managed to quiz my daughter on her science GCSE's and I'm so proud of how hard she has worked, and playing tennis with my son has meant we could spend quality time together. I think we have rapidly moved towards and I see nothing but positives.

University of Plymouth Graduates & Prizes

MSc Planning graduates from the University of Plymouth, 2019-20

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the Graduation Ceremony in July, 2020 had to be postponed until early 2021. The graduating cohort were: Yvonne Dale (Exmoor National Park Authority); Imogen Day (Cornwall Council); Darren Horn (Natural England); Sam Lewis (Plymouth City Council); Emily Perryman (Exeter City Council); Jasmine Philpott (Barratt Developments PLC, Norwich); Ryan Steppel (Torridge District Council); Briony Waterman (Taunton Deane Borough); and Nicola Williams (Lead Parish Councillor for St Endellion Neighbourhood Plan).



Imogen Day (Cornwall Council) was awarded the Cornwall Council Award for best part-time dissertation.



Michael Booker was awarded the RTPI SW Prize for best full-time student and the Cornwall Council Award for best full-time dissertation.



Emily Perryman (Exeter City Council) was awarded the RTPI Botolph Lane prize for overall best student and the RTPI SW Prize for best part-time student.



The graduating cohort from the MSc Planning programme at the University of Plymouth on 6 December, 2019 at the Plymouth Guildhall: (left to right): Madeleine Hale (Plymouth City Council), Jozie Bannister (WYG Group), Michael Booker, Kieran Neumann (Wokingham Borough Council), Dr Olivia Wilson (Lecturer in Spatial Planning) and Dr Stephen Essex (Programme Leader).

Chartered Membership in the South West

Congratulations to those recently elected to Chartered Membership in the South West

We are delighted in the latest round of APC Submissions the following members have received their Chartership. It is an accreditation to be proud of and demonstrates to your employer, colleagues, clients and the community that you uphold professional standards.

Tom Emery

Persimmon Homes - Severn Valley

Alexander O'Doherty

Planning Inspectorate

Georgina Perry

Place Studio Ltd

John Shakespear

WYG - Bristol

Scott Britnell

Planning Inspectorate

For me the Chartered Membership is a recognition of what I have learnt and achieved so far as a planner. It is deemed as a key requirement in the industry for career progression, and was the next milestone for me since finishing my masters degree two years ago. I recommend to those fresh out of university to enrol as a Licentiate and kick on with the APC process and achieve chartered status early on in their careers.

Tom Emery

Doing my APC has been a really useful reflective process. The PDP is a helpful tool for focusing career aspirations and thinking about your strengths and potential opportunities. Becoming a Chartered Town Planner has boosted my confidence in my ability and I'm looking forward to building on my experience to contribute towards building better places for people.'

Georgina Perry

Why did you come into Planning?
The history of places fascinates me, and planning offers an opportunity to positively contribute to place-making.

Alexander O'Doherty

My top tip for anyone going through the process would be to make use of all of the resources the RTPi provides and don't overthink things. The process really isn't as daunting as you think!"

John Shakespear

The perceived power of Neighbourhood Development Plans

Student Dissertation Summary

"I submitted my dissertation to the University of Plymouth in March 2020 to complete my MSc Planning course. In July, I was awarded the best part time dissertation award and I am hoping to work with my tutor to get my work published in the near future"

Nine years on from the passage of the Localism Act (2011), the community empowerment created by the legislation to positively influence planning decisions has not been fully delivered by Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). There is little research available to test how effective this realignment of the planning system is, specifically within rural areas. Commentators have raised some important questions about the inclusivity and practicalities of neighbourhood planning: Are NDPs a step towards collaborative policy making, or are they an attritional tool to polarise communities and hand power to those stepping into the self-selecting space? This study aimed to assess user experiences of NDPs in Cornwall, to understand how the intricacies of formulating an NDP are operating, in order to provide policy and research recommendations for the future.

The research findings suggest a dichotomy between planners and communities and their understandings of NDPs. Whilst Steering Group participants saw NDPs as an opportunity to 'fill the gaps' in strategic policies, it was thought that the perceived policy vacuum created for neighbourhoods without an NDP would lead to developers 'taking control' of the planning system. Other stakeholders (from the private and public sector) saw NDPs as an added complication for planners. The study indicated that although NDPs do empower communities to communicate local aspirations and promote social cohesion, NDPs are founded on the flawed assumption that communities are fully

representative of local need and act democratically. In reality, some voices and experiences of rurality have been drowned out by more powerful groups (Yarwood, 2002), which has intensified existing marginalisation

within communities. A key trend highlighted from the interview data was the need for more meaningful, inclusive engagement with the whole community throughout the NDP formulation, rather than tokenistic consultations to meet the requirements of the statutory process.

Another conclusion that was drawn from the study was the importance of actors and governance within rural communities. Rural governance was identified as a barrier inhibiting NDP formulation, because the Qualifying Body often does not have the resource, ambition or consensus to input to the NDP formulation process. Conversely, the unitary governance structure of Cornwall Council, and its dedicated NDP and Localism Teams, were identified by many respondents as a key facilitator for the delivery of NDPs.

The study concluded with some policy and research recommendations for the future, including a review of the NPPF to ensure that it is fully 'rural-proofed' to accommodate for the differing principles of urban and rural planning priorities. Amendments to the NDP regulations could include a stronger framework for the examination. For example, mandatory training for examiners and a set analytical framework for the examination is needed to secure the standard of NDPs and improve consistency by using a structured approach to examination.

The planning reform brings some ambiguity around the future for planning in England. However, participatory planning is firmly embedded within cross-party manifestos and it can be reasonably concluded, therefore, that participatory planning will be evident for years to come. Frequent reviews of NDP operation is therefore critical to the success of Localism.

participatory
planning will
be evident
for years

For more details on this dissertation, please contact

Imogen Day
Planning Policy Officer at
Cornwall Council
Imogen.Day@cornwall.gov.uk

Lessons for LPA officers and for planning consultants helping promote land in an NP area

On the face of it, the recent Planning White Paper poses an existential threat to neighbourhood planning. In being excluded from 'zoning', site allocations and development management policy making, plans will be nothing more than the town and village design statements that have been too easy to ignore. If so, will there be anything that planners early in their careers might miss?

Eight years of experience in supporting nearly 150 neighbourhood plan projects of every shape and size across 47 LPA areas has given my consultancy many insights to help young planners to determine if they care or not. So, here's a summary, looked at from the perspective of both LPA officers and of planning consultants.

For most LPAs, young planners are the designated contact for neighbourhood planning teams. Those teams come in all shapes and sizes – town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums – and will have a variety of needs and demands, and occasionally some historic baggage with the LPA that will long predate the officer. She or he needs to be a combination of advisor, interpreter, diplomat, trusted friend and signposter and have an acute emotional intelligence to perform this role successfully.

But working with local communities can be hugely rewarding professionally and performing this role well will always be welcomed by a team of non-professionals. It doesn't mean having to 'go native' as teams want and need their professional help to be honest and to be willing to tell them things they may not want to hear. But nor does it mean that officers shouldn't reflect on challenges made by teams. Feeding back to LPA colleagues in policy or DM how an existing or proposed Local Plan policy may

not work as intended in that community and could do with local refinement ought to lead to better development plans and decisions.

And what of young planners in the private sector, probably working for consultancies working for clients promoting land for development? There are valuable insights here too.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the mood music from developers and their consultants has not been widely enthusiastic about neighbourhood planning. Too many still regard plans as 'NIMBYS Charters', forgetting how almost impossible it is for any such plan to pass examination, or to be an effective constraint on development if they do. Or that meeting the 'simple' basic conditions instead of the tests of soundness means they're not 'proper' plans.

What the best developers and consultancies have realised, probably as a result of losing a battle with a neighbourhood plan, is that there are effective ways of promoting land through a plan. They require a modified set of softer people skills to engage with plan teams and the wider communities. Doing the homework to understand the local issues driving a plan and what may become the key factors in site allocation decisions can be the difference between success and failure.

Young planners in consultancy therefore have much to gain from using experiences in working with plan teams and may help their businesses and clients be more successful in securing allocations.

No matter who you work for, as a young planner, you may even be thinking of getting involved with a neighbourhood plan in your own area. You really should. For those in development management, it will be an eye-opener on how planning policy is formulated, hopefully with careful

attention paid to implementation. For those in policy, it could be a sense check on how Local Plan policies covering a whole area may need refining at the very local level. For those in consultancy, seeing the world from the plan-maker's perspective, and contributing your 'delivery' experience may be invaluable.

So, there's a lot to miss out on if the proposals in the White Paper are implemented next year. The opportunities to engage with local communities and for genuine spatial planning will be far fewer. The 'science' of planning will dominate its 'art' even more as a result. The standing of planners as public servants, in the face of so many global and national sustainability challenges, will decline further. Who would want to spend their working lives in this career then?

In my view, the future of planning is the future of neighbourhood planning. Communities are the most important stakeholders in successful place-making. The plan-led system could and should be the means by which their existing and future needs are met sustainably. Planners early in their careers, no matter who they work for, should therefore see an attack on neighbourhood planning as an attack on the foundations of the system and of the profession. So, yes you should care.

Neil Homer

MRTPI MBA B.Sc.(Hons) TP Dip TP UD
Director of Planning O'Neill Homer

Regional Management Board & Activities Committee Up-date

There have been two joint meetings of the Regional Management Board (RMB) and Regional Activities Committee (RAC) over the summer. Both (3 July and 18 September) were held by video conference. The principal matters considered were:

Impact of Covid-19 on RTPI SW's planned activities

An important part of each meeting is Dawn de Vries (as Chair) report on recent and planned activities being taken forward by the RTPI South West. As would be expected, Dawn's reports have been dominated by how we've been responding to the pandemic's ongoing impact. We've now moved from closing down events because of Covid-19 restrictions to setting up and running what has become a busy online schedule - including CPD webinars and running the region's Awards for Planning Excellence (more on these below).

Dawn has also been able to report that we've run successfully two online 'President's visits' for Sue Manns. The first, in early June, focused on Southmead Community Trust and was very well-received by Sue. The second in late July, organised by the South West Young Planners, focused on four aspects of planning in a post Covid-19 world: the future of home / digital working and what this means for planning; the future of purpose-built student accommodation in the post-Covid era; public houses and planning; and, changing perspectives on open space. Sue was clearly impressed and commented in her blog "If my 'virtual visit' to the RTPI South West Young Planners is anything to go by, then there is no doubt that the future of planning is in safe hands".

Work is now underway for the third and final of the President's visits. This will have an 'Island Planning' theme involving our offshore colleagues and will look at the challenges and opportunities specific to Island environments and how the different planning systems are responding.

Dawn also gave September's joint meeting a brief overview of the roundtable we hosted to feed in views from the region to inform the RTPI's response to the Planning White Paper. The discussion included representatives from public and private sector and included colleagues with experience of zonal planning systems. By all accounts, it was a lively discussion and it's fair to say the government's proposals got a mixed reception.

RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence

We've been very pleased with the response to this year's awards. There were 16 initial expressions of interest which led to 13 full entries with a wide range of topics and geographical spread. The judges have met and agreed on a shortlist of seven. A programme of 'virtual visits' has been set up, running until 25 September with the final judges' meeting at which awards will be decided, scheduled for late September. The intention is to announce results at an on-line award ceremony currently scheduled for Wednesday 18 November at 1pm on YouTube. So hold the date in your diary!

Corporate Activity

A substantial chunk of the joint meetings is normally taken up with what can loosely be called corporate activity. For a number of reasons, the last two meetings have been particularly busy on this front.

July's meeting had a comprehensive report and update from Richard Williamson on the most recent meeting of the RTPI's General Assembly and Board Effectiveness Review. An added bonus was the thorough response provided by Victoria Hills to the questions Richard had asked about the review. The joint meeting considered that, as a member organisation, members should be able to understand and influence the decisions that affected them. The dialogue with Victoria was an example of good practice in action and was something to be encouraged. We did have a number of concerns about the review and Dawn wrote to Sue Bridge, who chairs the RTPI Board of Trustees, about these. Peter Ellis provided feedback on the meeting of the Nations and Regions Panel held in June which, amongst other matters, considered the RTPI Corporate Strategy Implementation Plan (CSIP). We were also able to hear direct from one of the RTPI's trustees, Tom Venables, who with an informative presentation took the meeting through the CSIP headlines and posed the following questions for us:

- 1) Are you happy with progress on the Corporate Strategy so far in 2020?
- 2) Do you feel we've identified the right priorities for 2021?
- 3) Is your committee / panel sufficiently referenced in the "RTPI Committee Work Plan column? If not please let us know.
- 4) Have we sufficiently identified all the opportunities for nations and regions to deliver the corporate strategy?

Regional Management Board & Activities Committee Up-date

At September's meeting our focus was our business plan and budget for 2021. The draft business plan reflects the steer from RTPI HQ that we need to minimise risk in 2021 (Covid-19 and financial) while still seeking to deliver a range of activities and service to members in the region that reflects our priorities and supports the RTPI's Corporate Strategy. Given how quickly the Covid-19 rules around meetings and gatherings can change our focus in the first quarter of 2021 will be virtual or small-scale events in open environments. Hopefully we can scale up events and hold them indoors as we move further into 2021.

The draft business plan considered at September's meeting included the following priorities:

- To develop both formal and informal networks of RTPI Members and employers as a means of communicating and engaging (both virtually and physically) on planning issues and issues arising from Covid-19 across the South West.
- To provide a good range of affordable and inclusive CPD, social and networking opportunities for South West members.
- To promote the value of planning and RTPI membership.
- To maintain and enhance liaison with the region's planning education providers.
- To enhance relationships and promote the value of planning with other professions, politicians and key stakeholders in the South West.
- To support and engage communities with planning, including through the activities of Planning Aid England in the South West.
- To support and encourage the further development of the Young Planners groups in the South West.
- To include a theme of health and wellbeing looking at how planning can influence this in our communities.

- To maintain the conversation about planning's important role in tackling climate change.
- To actively support the RTPI in becoming carbon neutral by being more mindful in how we can minimise and mitigate our carbon footprint in the region.

Subject to the RTPI's Board's sign off, we've an exciting number of activities and events which we're developing to support this package of priorities. There'll be more on this in a future edition of Branchout.

The joint meeting has also been updated on the arrangements for this year's elections for the RMB and RAC for 2021. As you know we've had contested elections this year for the posts of Junior Vice Chair and our Regional Representative on the RTPI General Assembly. The results are included in this edition of Branchout, together with a full listing of next year's committees.

Reports from working groups

The joint meetings have also considered helpful updates from working groups including reports from the South West Young Planners, Planning Aid and Education / Future Planners.



Getting to know you - Jadine Havill

New Member of the RTPI SW Regional Activities Committee



A bit about yourself

I am Bristol born and bred, minus a short stint in Birmingham during my studies. The South West is just too glorious to resist. I am now nearly half-way through my 'Young Planner' status, which is quite scary!

Why a career in planning?

Largely due to a series of (fortunate) events! I came across planning during my hunt for undergraduate university courses, when I saw the Joint Honours course of Geography and Planning at Birmingham. Looking at the module offer, it felt like the planning profession was an opportunity to combine my main areas of interest in human geography, sociology and environmental psychology. I was always fascinated by space and place and how and why we behaved in certain ways in the built form.

Whilst studying, I undertook work experience with Turley in Bristol and have never looked back since. I love the diversity there is every day, the critical thinking and problem solving involved and the real challenge of working with such a range of people and professionals to see new places come to fruition. There is so much passion that underpins planning and the people that work across the sector.

What does your current job involve?

My current job is as a Senior Planner at Turley, a leading multidisciplinary planning consultancy. My role as a Senior Planner in the Bristol / Cardiff region involves working with a range of stakeholders, clients, consultants and services to see development through the planning process. I lead on a range of scales of projects and have

developed a keen interest in later living, education and energy and infrastructure development. Delivering this type of development is vital in responding to a number of challenges we and future generations face including an ageing population, net zero and green energy, high quality teaching facilities and skill sets to support our future economy and society. Each day is different which is what I love about my role.

For me, my role is all about relationships and communication. Achieving successful and high quality development is all about the relationships we build between different parts of our sector, including developers, land owners, local authorities and local residents amongst others.

At Turley we seek to collaborate across a range of services to deliver truly sustainable development. This includes planning, design, economics, development viability, sustainability, heritage, strategic communications, landscape and more.

Why did you get involved in the RAC?

I have been involved for a number of years now and this has been underpinned by my passion for planning and wishing to promote this to future generations. The RAC provides an opportunity to meet other planners across academia, the public sector and private sector and I think this is so valuable for not losing sight of the unique role we all play in making places and understanding different perspectives. As planners, we must always be open to learning from one another.

The committee does a brilliant job of promoting our profession and tackling difficult discussions around key topics. I hope through my involvement to support other Young Planners early in their career, as well as be part of the voice reaching out to children and other young people about a career in planning. As a young female, I see diversity in our industry in future decades as extremely important to creating truly inclusive places and the RAC provides a great base for working towards this.

What do you do when not planning?

In my spare time I enjoy hatha and vinyasa yoga and long, challenging walks and hikes in the countryside. I am also attempting to teach myself piano, though I think I'll be an amateur for a while longer yet! You will also often find me exploring new cities and capturing lots of urban photography snaps.



Jadine Havill
Senior Planner, Turley

Zonal planning – a reflection on the system in New Zealand

One of the most significant changes proposed in ‘Planning for the Future’ is the introduction of a form of zonal planning. A number of countries use different types of zonal planning to promote development and control land use, and New Zealand is one such country. A recent RTPI research piece provides insight on this.

David Oakhill, head of planning at Cheltenham Borough Council, worked in Auckland for ten years and shares his thoughts.

“New Zealand has a positive planning system – there’s an overriding assumption that development is permitted. Local authorities zone land for a wide range of uses, with rules attached to most zones prescribing the circumstances where permission is required, in order to control inappropriate development.

“In my experience, the general assumption is that development is positive for personal and public wealth generation and enhanced quality of life, and in part reflects the modern culture of the population.

“There is no ‘housing test’, green belt or AONB designation, no EIA or SA framework. Land, water and air are resources to be managed and utilised – to house the population and enable the economy to thrive, to be protected for clear environmental reasons (eg protected species, air or water quality), for the national benefit (national parks), to produce energy, or for agriculture. Without very sound resource management reasons, land is not ‘protected’ from development and in principle, more land is available for development.

“Plan making is resource hungry but reasonably efficient – the first Auckland Unitary Plan, covering a city of 1.5m, was developed within five years.

“The Government and local authorities (LA’s) have different responsibilities to those in the UK – the government are responsible for affordable housing and education provision. LA’s are responsible for functions carried out here by the Environment Agency, Natural England and utility providers. The use of land is easier to plan for when a single entity has greater control of the various components of land use. Social infrastructure provision isn’t the concern of the planning system. Elected representatives are involved in plan making.

“Zones are sophisticated to cater for range of uses - there are multiple residential, commercial, mixed use zones and so on. Without this, market forces would dictate that all land would be utilised for the highest return, having damaging impacts on other land use demands (eg residential vs commercial).

“Rules in local plans MUST be prescriptive and not open to any interpretation (otherwise the purpose – such as speed and clarity - is lost and it is open to legal challenge). The same is true for design guides and codes – visions, policies and aspirations alone don’t work. People have a choice whether to comply with a plan and avoid the planning application process or not.

“The public are involved in plan making, but rarely in application decisions (less than 3% in Auckland). This is a problem – the general public don’t understand zones and rules. They understand the impact of a two storey extension next door; however they can’t get involved in site by site decisions.

“All application decisions are delegated – there is no planning committee. This inevitably shortens the time taken to make application decisions (to 20 working days) and would be possible in the UK if the public were excluded from application decision making.

“To cover costs, LA’s charge hourly rates to process applications. This means departments are better resourced, aiding speedy decisions. The discretion of planners is significantly restricted by rules and regulations set out in local plans, limiting any planning judgement. “There are of course criticisms. There is little if any evidence in Auckland that zoning land for growth accelerates delivery or reduces house prices. Annually, Auckland has one of the most expensive housing markets in the world, despite many targeted initiatives between the government and local authorities to improve the situation. “Local Plans tend to become unwieldy, because what started as a permissive system now has layers of control added to avoid past mistakes. The public are largely disengaged, particularly from site based decisions. The development outcomes created on the ground are, to a large extent, distinctly average.

“New Zealand is world renowned for its landscape, not its modern built form.”

For further information visit see RTPI’s research piece. www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/september/planning-through-zoning/?dm_i=1L61,71FHQ,SZWHVE,SEDMK,1



David Oakhill

Head of planning at Cheltenham Borough Council

Permitted Development Rights Update

Introduction

As part of the Government's attempts to boost the economy following the Coronavirus pandemic, it has pledged to "radically reform" the planning system with Boris Johnson announcing back in June 2020 that there would be a new package of measures introduced to build thousands of new homes.

This was then followed by the publication in August 2020 of the long awaited "Planning for the Future" White Paper. As part of these plans, a number of changes to permitted development ("PD") rights have been introduced, which apply in England only. These changes have been implemented in a piecemeal approach through different legislation. This article sets out the detail of these below.

Amendments to the Use Class Order 1987 ("UCO 1987")

On 1 September 2020, The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/757) came into force which makes a number of amendments to the UCO 1987.

These enable many more changes of use to take place without the need to apply for planning permission and specifically support more flexible uses of premises. The changes can be summarised as follows:

Transitional/material period: -

It is important to note that there will be a 'material transitional period' from 1 September 2020 to 31 July 2021. The key points to note are:

- any references to the uses or use classes specified in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 ("the GPDO") or in prior approval applications or article 4 directions are to be read as references to the uses classes which were specified in the UCO 1987 on 31 August 2020 (previous use classes);
- references to uses or use classes in article 4 directions which have already been made will continue to be read as the previous use classes;
- planning permissions, permissions in principle and reserved matters approvals submitted prior to 1 September 2020 should be determined by reference to the previous use classes.

This will allow a period of grace for development currently permitted under the GPDO to happen with reference to the current use class definitions.

Amendments to the GPDO to allow for the demolition of buildings and the construction of new dwellinghouses in their place.

The Government introduced an amendment to the GPDO on 20 July 2020, by introducing the new Class ZA (Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place) which came into effect 31 August 2020 and allows the demolition of commercial/residential buildings and replacement with residential buildings.

Class/Use	Permitted changes of use	Effective from
E (Commercial, business and service)	Changes between uses in the same Class Includes: shops over 280m ² (Class A1), offices (A2/B1b), restaurants or cafés (A3), research or light industrial facilities (B1b/B1c), health centres or nurseries (D1), gyms or indoor sport centres (D2)	1 Sept 2020
F.1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and F.2 (local community uses)	Class F.1 includes: schools, art galleries, museums, libraries, etc. Class F.2 includes: small shops (not more than 280m ² selling mostly essential goods), community halls, swimming pools, etc. Changes between the new Use Classes F1 and F2 will not require planning permission	1 Sept 2020
New sui generis uses (i.e. in a class of their own)	No change of use to other sui generis uses or other uses without express permission. Allows local planning authorities to continue to be able to exert influence over pubs, wine bars, hot takeaways, cinemas, concert venues and nightclubs (Classes A4 and A5).	1 Sept 2020

Permitted Development Rights Update cont...

Limitations and exclusions

There are a long list of conditions, which need to be satisfied to benefit from the new PD right, of note are that the old building must:

- have a footprint of no more than 1,000m² and be no higher than 18m;
- have been built before 1990;
- not be within a conservation area, national park, area of outstanding natural beauty or a site of special scientific interest; and
- have been vacant for at least 6 months before the date of the application for prior approval.

Whilst developers will not need planning permission if all the conditions are satisfied, it is important to note that comprehensive prior approval is required (as one of the conditions) including for design, ensuring adequate natural light to habitable rooms, landscaping and the amenity of residents including overlooking, privacy and light. This list

has been expanded from the previous matters considered in the prior approval process, to address concerns raised about the potential poor standard of homes created under other PD rights such as Class O, which permits the conversion of office blocks to dwellings.

Amendments to GPDO – upwards extensions to individual homes

In late June, the Government published a new PD right allowing for upwards extensions to existing blocks of flats under the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development and Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. The Government later extended this by allowing upwards extensions to individual's homes to allow for the creation of new homes or additional living space. This also came into effect on 31 August 2020 and covers the following:

Limitations and exclusions

These new PD rights are subject to a number of limitations and conditions, including that:

- The existing building must have been constructed after 1 July 1948 and before 5 March 2018;
- The additional dwellinghouses must be flats; and
- The additional storey(s) must be constructed on the principal part of the building.

As with existing PD rights, the developer must apply for the local planning authority's prior approval of certain aspects of the proposed development. These include the impact of the amenity of any adjoining premises (including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light), the external appearance (including the design and architectural features of the principal and side elevation), and air traffic and defence asset impacts. A report detailing the management of the construction must also be provided to the Council.

Class/Use	Permitted changes of use
New Class AA, Part 20 (New dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use)	Construction of new flats on top of terraced dwellinghouses
New Class AB, Part 20 (New dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in commercial or mixed use)	Construction of new flats on top of terraced buildings (including semi-detached buildings) in commercial or mixed (including residential) use.
Class AC, Part 20 (New dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in use as dwellinghouses)	Construction of new flats on top of terraced dwellinghouses (including semi-detached houses).
Class AD, Part 20 (New dwellinghouses on detached buildings in use as dwellinghouses)	Construction of new flats on top of terraced dwellinghouses (including semi-detached houses).

Permitted Development Rights Update cont...

Guidance

On 18 September 2020, the Government amended its planning practice guidance to take into account the amendments to the GPDO and UCO 1987. This focuses on when planning permission is needed for town centres and retail and the details of updated application fees.

Legal challenge

The above changes have already been met with legal challenge by Rights:Community:Action, an environmental campaign group.

The group issued a crowdfunded judicial review claim to the High Court on 26 August 2020, requesting that the new measures are quashed and seeking urgent interim relief suspending the changes pending the outcome of the claim.

The claim challenges the lawfulness of three statutory instruments relating to the changes. The claimant argues that the Government did not carry out the correct procedures in introducing the new measures as it failed to (1) undertake an environmental assessment pursuant to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, (2) have regard to the public sector equality duty pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 and (3) comply with its consultation duties in a number of ways.

Sir Justice Holgate issued a response to the legal challenge on 2 September 2020 via Court direction. This ordered that the interim relief application be withdrawn and scheduled a rolled up hearing for 1.5 days between 8 October 2020 to 15 October 2020. The rolled up hearing will first consider if permission is to be granted for the claim to be heard and if it is, will proceed to the substantive hearing immediately.

In the meantime, the new rights remain in force, but we would advise caution against placing any reliance on them pending the outcome of the challenge. Watch this space.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss proposals to change the use of existing assets, please do not hesitate to contact

Hannah Mannion on
Hannah.mannion@burges-salmon.com

or Sarah Sutherland on
Sarah.Sutheralnd@burges-salmon.com



Planning for dementia: the role of town planning in creating better places

It is nearly four years since the RTPI published advice for our members on 'Dementia and Town Planning'. During that time, there has been improved acceptance and understanding of the disease in the UK, but the number of people living with the condition has continued to grow.

The majority of people living with dementia live; and want to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible. We have now updated the advice, to take account of changes in planning guidance and good practice. Our advice continues to demonstrate the evidence that good quality housing and well-planned, enabling local environments can have a substantial impact on the quality of life for someone living with dementia.

Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns have been particularly difficult for people living with dementia and their families and carers. Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that 27% of deaths involving Covid-19 in England and Wales between March and May also had dementia. People living with dementia also have unique challenges in terms of infection control and the damaging impact of social isolation. People living with dementia and their carers have expressed fears over losing basic cognitive and communication skills due to social isolation during this time.

Three examples of planning work in the South West demonstrate how town planning can plan for dementia in a positive and proactive way, and offer hope for the future.

Integrated dementia friendly town planning - Plymouth City Council

The Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Department at Plymouth City Council works together with the Dementia Friendly City Coordinator. The award winning Plymouth Plan contains the ambition to become a dementia friendly city. The aim of Plymouth's dementia friendly city is for, "people to feel they have a choice and control over the decisions about their life, to feel a valued part of the community and live well with dementia". Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan follows on from the Plymouth Plan and was adopted in 2019. It contains policies that support a dementia friendly city. The view of Plymouth's Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Department's is, "the key for successful projects is to ensure that the dementia community is properly consulted and involved to inform the measures that will be implemented."



Neighbourhood plan priorities - Cullompton Town Council, Devon

The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2033 passed the examination stage in late 2019 and a local referendum will follow. The aims and objectives for community wellbeing in the plan include, 'continue to improve community resilience'. The plan includes a policy to become a dementia friendly town and, 'Development proposals will be expected to show how they incorporate the principles of dementia friendly and fully accessible environments by reference to the Cullompton Dementia Strategy and other relevant Town Council strategies.' The approach taken in Cullompton has strong support in the local community, with 98% of respondents to the consultation survey in 2016 in support of the proposed plan.



Sarah Lewis
RTPI Policy

Planning for dementia: the role of town planning in creating better places

Positive pre-application discussions - Teignbridge District Council

Teignbridge District Council approved a planning application for the Church Path Valley scheme in Exeter to build 240 homes in 2019. During pre-application discussions, the Senior Planning Officer made a number of urban design requests. This included a focus on designing for people living with dementia. The response from the developer, Cavanna has been very positive. The outcome has been a site designed with a positive approach to inclusive design and improved legibility. A dementia garden has also been included. The planning officer provided general dementia friendly design principles that the developers have taken forward to create a sensory garden. The garden is located next to the proposed play area, which will encourage interaction between users of the garden, and the play area.

As this is the first application as part of a large-scale development, it sets a precedent.

As an inclusive planning approach was raised at the very early stages of the pre-application discussion Vistry Partnerships have been supportive in accommodating the inclusive design approach to the site. Whilst this scheme is at an early stage in the development process and it will take some time to assess how it is implemented, so far this scheme demonstrates how the enthusiasm of an individual planner can add value and improve the inclusiveness of a scheme.



When people ask me what made me want to become a planner - this is the answer. I am so pleased the RTPI has now published this guidance on Town Planning and Dementia. This is a huge passion of mine, and I became a planner to make places more accessible for those with disabilities and those with dementia to ensure they have a better quality of life and can enjoy the things everyone else does. This is the start of it, and having worked with the RTPI the last few years to achieve this is exciting. Next year as Chair of the RTPI South West I hope to achieve more things like this through my work and with others. Together, we can make a difference and create better places. Many thanks to the RTPI for letting me get involved to produce this."

Angharad Williams
RTPI South West Senior Vice Chair



To download the full advice, which has been endorsed by both Alzheimer's Society and Public Health England visit www.rtpi.org.uk/dementia

Planning and negotiating for Gypsy and Traveller sites

As the year starts to draw to a close it's a time to reflect on the past months. For all of us 2020 has been truly exceptional and we have all had to make changes, here and there, to the way in which we go about our lives and the new challenges the Covid-19 pandemic has brought before us.

With this in mind, and taking a pause from helping to inform the Council's suggested response to the Government's consultations on planning reforms, I've spent time thinking about the difficulties facing households in the Gypsy Roma Traveller community in finding a place that can be called 'home'. This focus has sharpened at a time when the Forward Planning team is taking on the wider role of housing enabling and I am hearing stories of travellers sites being afflicted by Covid-19 and household changes forcing moves but with no-where to go.

De Montfort University has very recently completed research for Mid Devon District Council that has sought to investigate the challenges facing Local Authorities to secure travellers sites in new urban extensions. This has been led by Professor Jo Richardson, with expertise in the field, and was funded through the Local Government Association's Housing Advisers Programme. The research has orientated specifically around the assertions made by some quarters of the development industry levied at the Council (and others), that where the provision of sites are required this can affect the viability of housing schemes. Put simply, the assertion made is that lenders will not lend and people will not get mortgages to buy a house. An equally simple question that follows is why is this the case? Pitches are just another form of housing that provide homes to meet a housing need of a specific part of our diverse community.

The matter was the subject of much debate through the examination hearings for the recently adopted Mid Devon Local Plan Review. At that time I put it to participants around the table that, in meeting its public sector equality duty and seeking to achieve sustainable development, the Council was not in the business of tailoring local plan policy to the approach that may be taken by lending institutions. Main modifications were felt necessary by the Inspector to deal with the difficulties that he thought might arise with the delivery of housing. These have culminated with a policy approach where pitches on allocated sites at three main towns should be provided on-site unless it is demonstrated that off-site provision will achieve an 'acceptable outcome' for Gypsies and Travellers taking into account pitch numbers, site facilities, accessibility to services, and the provision of an effective mechanism for the early delivery of serviced pitches which are available for occupation. The Mid Devon Local Plan Review (Policy DM7) provides more detail about this.

Turning back to De Montfort University's research...a 9 month investigation involved a survey of Local Authorities across the country and a look at how residential property prices may be affected by the proximity of other land uses. Efforts were made to engage with mortgage lenders in the UK. It was found that the work was very much the first of its kind, with little to draw from, published or in scholarly theses. The 20 page report "Negotiating the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller sites through local planning" provides an insight into the conundrum, that I recommend to fellow planners and housing enablers.



Planning and negotiating for Gypsy and Traveller sites

Notwithstanding the material provided by participants to our Local Plan Inspector, De Montfort University has found no substantive evidence to support the assertions made by some developers that the inclusion of pitches can impact on the viability of development. The report does, however, make a very relevant point, which at first glance the significance might easily be missed – ‘certainty increases viability’. While it has not been possible to obtain lenders’ policies (if indeed these are written) which set out the process for risk-profiling, it seems sensible to conclude that well-scoped plans can help to decrease the risk and uncertainty that may be felt by some developers and lenders. By well-scoped plans – this can be taken to mean detailed criteria in site allocation policies, clear notation on Policies Maps, supplementary planning documents, the preparation of masterplans, design guides and also through placing a requirement for planning applications to be made in a hybrid form with details for travellers’ sites and pitches. What is recognised is that flexibility in the planning process and negotiation is key. The report makes clear this should not be seen as a way out for developers, but with negotiation it may be possible to find an appropriate and mutually agreeable option to get much needed sites built, rather than remain stuck in intractable viability arguments. Main modifications made to the Mid Devon Local Plan Review provide the basis for this going forward, where site allocation policies for urban extensions include requirements for the delivery of new pitches as part of a holistic response to housing need in the community and facilitating well-planned sustainable communities.

De Montfort University’s work provides a useful think-piece for planners and the wider development industry to work better together in bringing forward homes for part of the community which is in much need of improved housing outcomes.

For further information please contact

Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader
tpeat@middevon.gov.uk

The LGA funded research report is available on Mid Devon District Council’s website:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/gypsies-and-travellers/lga-funded-research-on-gypsy-and-traveller-sites-completed-for-the-council/>

Mid Devon Local Plan Review 2013-2033

www.middevon.gov.uk/media/350631/local-plan-review-final-adopted-version_accessible.pdf

On the right track

The Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB) is not a name that rolls off the tongue, yet since its formation this little-known group has laid the foundations to a railway revolution.

Stretching from the South Coast to the Midlands and back down to the Bristol Channel, the Gateway area is home to over 3 million people spread across nine Local Authorities. With the stated purpose of acting as a single voice to central government on transport investment, the Gateway seeks to improve connectivity, support housing and deliver the economic growth the area is planning. The Gateway is in many respects an awkward geography, primarily North – South focussed the majority of the road and rail infrastructure is aligned East – West, Figure 1. With the rail industry nothing is ever easy and so to complicate matters the area is home to two separate Network Rail regions, four Train Operating Companies (TOCs), and multi Freight Operating Companies (FOCs) in addition to local community rail groups and national passenger lobbies.



Figure 1: Western Gateway Geography and Rail Network

The Gateway commissioned WSP to produce an area-wide rail strategy to guide the delivery of its vision “to be a region that is sustainably connected and provides high quality, value for money travel opportunities for all its businesses, residents and visitors”. It is worth noting that the delivery of most rail infrastructure schemes typically requires persuading Network Rail to help develop a business case in order to seek funding from Treasury through a process known as the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP). RNEP is rolling programme of investment, focused on outcomes rather than the 5 yearly funding cycles that preceded it. Consequently, there was a very strong need to have Network Rail buy-in from the outset, which would not be possible with a rail strategy focussed on specific local projects. In developing

the rail strategy, the Gateway took the approach that a close partnership with Network Rail - but also involving the wider rail industry stakeholders - would prevent a loss of adhesion. Now that the rails were sanded and Network Rail on-board, a thorough review of the Gateway’s rail priorities could be undertaken. Through iterations of refinement, this has led to 23 ambitious outcomes that reflect Gateway’s aspirations for the rail network (referred to as Conditional Outputs) grouped under five themes developed with industry engagement: Choice, Social Mobility, Decarbonisation, Productivity and Growth. The delivery of the Western Gateway rail strategy to 2040 has been structured in to six route-maps with five supporting task forces responsible for specific areas of the strategy, Figure 2.

COs are allocated to one of the 5 Taskforces identified in the governance structure.

Strategic Planning	Digital Solutions	Stations & Access to Rail	Freight	Future Ready & Resilience
C1 Frequency	M4 Fares Influence	M1 Station Access	C6 Freight Capacity	C3 Performance
C2 Interchange	M5 Ticketing Solutions	M2 Modal Integration	D2 Carbon Footprint	C4 Extended Timetable
C4 Extended Timetable	P2 On-Board Productivity	M3 Regional Catchment	D3 Freight Growth	D1 Carbon Emissions
C5 Direct Services	M1 Station Access	M6 Accessibility	D4 Freight Capture	P2 On-Board Productivity
P1 Journey Speed	M2 Modal Integration	P3 International Gateways	P4 Freight Capability	G3 Network Resilience
P3 International Gateways		G1 Transit Oriented Growth		
M3 Regional Catchment		G2 Mobility Hubs		
D2 Carbon Footprint				

Note: italics indicate a secondary taskforce

Figure 2: Delivery of 23 conditional outputs by five task forces

On the right track

So, what do these 23 conditional outputs mean in practice?

Many of the outcomes and impacts are interrelated, decarbonisation of the rail network in particular, as well as measures that support greater choice. Increasing passenger and freight usage by making it easier to travel by rail will support more services and yet more interchange opportunities, which in turn will reduce congestion on the roads. Good land use planning comes into play with the Gateway's aspirations to stimulate better links between new developments and existing rail stations thereby growing the demand for services. Wider equity goals of providing equal access opportunities for all and tackling the need to make rail accessible by all will support greater health and social wellbeing improvements and assist in creating a seamless journey for start to finish.

The Covid crisis has changed the way the rail industry operates however the Gateway's vision for the future (above) remains unchanged. Whilst changes to the way passenger rail services are specified and delivered was already anticipated - along the lines of route devolution bringing a more joined-up track-and-train partnership coupled with simplification of the fares and ticketing regime - few would have anticipated the speed by which the structure and form has altered. Writing this now, franchises are off to the breakers yard having been replaced by Emergency Recovery Management Agreements, wider reforms are expected, and passenger numbers remain stubbornly low albeit with signs of rising slowly. Despite the uncertainty and disruption caused by the Covid crisis set within the wider context of the climate emergency, the rail strategy's strength is its focus on clear outcomes. This focus will ensure the strategy remains relevant for years to come regardless of who ends up running the railways.



Alexis Edwards
Transport Development Team Leader BCP Council
Rail Strategy Lead Western Gateway
Member of RTPi South West Regional
Management Board