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RTPI Corporate Strategy update - June 2021

Update from the Chief Executive

TO NOTE

The General Assembly are asked to note the progress made on implementing the Corporate Strategy, and comment on future priorities

1. Summary

Following the launch of the Corporate Strategy in January 2020, and subsequent agreement of dedicated funds for 2020 and 2021, this paper sets out a high level update on the timely delivery of the funded projects to date, and engagement on future priorities for 2022.

2. Progress to date

The 2020-2030 Corporate Strategy (corporate strategy) is arranged around four pillars, with 10 foundations underpinned by climate action. Within the strategy there are a total of 58 individual projects identified for delivery by 2030, of which

- 18 projects are priority for delivery in 2020 and 2021:
- Six were brought forward for funding and delivery in 2020-22 – section 2.1 (approved by BOT April 2020)
- Six are funded for delivery in 2021-23 – section 2.2 (approved by BOT December 2020)
- Six are being delivered from 2020 onwards with refocussed service plan funding – section 2.3 (via BAU budget)

2.1. 2020 projects

2.1.1. P2-1 INVEST and PROSPER

This project prepared a new business case INVEST and PROSPER targeted at the autumn 2020 Comprehensive Spending review, with a UK treasury proof outline Business Case investing in planning. The project has completed and continues to inform communications activity.

2.1.2. P1-8 NURTURE

This project aims to develop and launch a new pilot mentoring programme, NURTURE, aimed specifically at mid-career members who would benefit from support and a boost to help them to step up to middle or senior management. It was formally launched in February 2021.

This project is in development and the oversight will be undertaken at an operational level by the Senior Executive Team, with Committee oversight will via Membership and Ethics.

2.1.3. CA9 Climate Action Plan

This project saw the launch of the RTPI's first corporate climate action plan in September 2020.

2.1.4. P3-9 PLANNING IS GREAT

This project will support the #PTWWN campaign, the idea of a campaign showcasing UK planning as a significant professional services global export also featured in the President's manifesto commitments from the 2019 election campaign. This work will be developed in 2021.

2.1.5. P1-16 GROWPLAN

This project saw the launch of GROWPLAN, a new growth strategy for the RTPI, and work in 2021 will include conversion campaigns, marketing of routes to membership, ensuring employers understand the benefits of membership, and campaigns to ensure that graduates value and maintain their free student membership as they move into employment.

2.1.6. P4-1 CHANGE

This project has seen the development and launch of the RTPI's first ever Equalities, Diversity and Inclusivity action plan – CHANGE. Following a short delay (pandemic induced) to the recruitment of an EDI Manager to take forward this important work, project delivery will intensify during 2021.

2.2. 2021 projects

These projects were agreed at the December 2020 BOT meeting and a summary is included here.

2.2.1. F7 Rollout Volunteering Strategy

Dedicated resource by way of seed funding to lead the early delivery of some of the projects and also a small budget for elements of the projects. The project will run for two years, after which the project would be evaluated to ascertain whether it can be blended into existing roles or requires a permanent resource going forward.

2.2.2. P1-10 Expand Chief Planning Officers of Tomorrow

Dedicated resource to ramp up coordination of CPOT activity, the project will run for two years after which time it will be evaluated to ascertain whether it can be blended into existing roles or requires a permanent resource going forward.

2.2.3. P3-1 Promote public understanding of planning through launch of YOURPLAN

This will see the development of a targeted public communications campaign, which promotes planning at the heart of a sustainable green economic recovery.

2.2.4. P4-2 Work Experience Pilot

This project will target to less privileged backgrounds to introduce a pathway to a career in planning.

2.2.5. P4-5 Education For Everyone review

This project will appoint independent expertise to ensure our pathway into and through education supports CHANGE.

2.2.6. P4-8 Balance

This project, Build a Legacy and New Community Equality, will seek to establish new priority target locations and establishments for our careers outreach work.

2.3. BAU projects underway

In addition to the projects that have secured dedicated funding in 2020 and 2021, there are a series of other BAU projects that have been incorporated into the work of the RTPI.

2.3.1. P2-3 Create a strong HEADS OF PLANNING EVERYWHERE (HOPE) network and host an annual HOPE event

This corporate strategy notes the RTPI will be the leading advocate for campaigning for well-resourced, effective planning functions that support the outcomes local communities was to see. The RTPI is utilising its powerful convening role to bring together chief planning officers from across the nations into a single network of authorities with a new annual event to share best practice and discuss current issues and opportunities. The inaugural meeting on the new HOPE network was held on Monday 30 June as part of the annual The Planner Live Online event.

HOPE is a new annual gathering of chief planning officers from across England, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales organised by the RTPI with the aim of sharing best practice, making the case for resourcing planning and the important role of putting planning at the heart of local government delivery for the quality places that people want to live in. The first event was help in the margins of The Planner Live in 2020 and a recording on the RTPI's YouTube channel has seen several hundred views since. This has provided a valuable opportunity for planners to share insights into the life of chief planning officers during the global pandemic.

2.3.2. P2-4 Launch a new POLITICIANS IN PLANNING NETWORK (PIPN) and host an annual PIPN event

The aim of launching a new PIPN (replacing the previously disbanded politicians in planning association) is to foster shared practice and interface between politicians and practitioners. It is hoped that through the network the RTPI can deliver a comprehensive engagement and education programme for politicians to help improved shared understanding and the role of good planning.

Whilst there is much appetite for a network, with elected members from across the political spectrum having been directly in contact with the chief executive to offer their time, in the light of the global pandemic it was felt that 2020 might not be the best year to launch, given the extraordinary challenges facing local, regional and national government politicians. The event will now take place in June 2021.

2.3.3. P1-11 Host an Annual Welcome Event for new members

Within the value of membership pillar, a key consideration of the corporate strategy is how to better support member engagement through focussing on the value of membership and professionalism, so that planners are not only proud of what they do, but are proud to be a chartered member of the RTPI.

The strategy commits the RTPI to hosting an annual welcome event for chartered members elected to membership during the year in a ceremony that recognises and celebrates their achievement of becoming chartered.

Through the consultation for the corporate strategy there was some anecdotal evidence for members' appetite for an annual 'certificate ceremony' so that newly elected members have the opportunity to celebrate their achievement. In the light of the global pandemic it was felt that 2020 might not be the best year to launch, particularly given the various Governments social distancing restrictions. Further, the demands of the pandemic have put a strain on RTPI capacity to deliver more within the business as usual envelope, so this project has been postponed until Q1 or Q2 of 2022. If successful it is anticipated this should be included in the national events programme.

2.3.4. P1-2 Develop an RTPI events strategy and roll out RTPI must-go-to events and training

Within the value of membership pillar, a further consideration of the corporate strategy is how to best support life-long education and skills development through opportunities for our members. The strategy commits the RTPI to delivering RTPI-branded events, such as conferences and training programmes that are recognised as the 'must go to' planning events that are technically robust, intellectually stretching and consistently of high quality. The strategy also commits the RTP to deliver content to support different learning styles and geographies by utilising digital platforms, volunteer networks and third-party suppliers.

The success factor will for all RTPI –branded events to be valued by members, with the annual flagship event seen as the premier must-go-to global planning event for all planners.

All of this is being taken forward by a new RTPI events strategy that will see coordination and collaboration across the nations and regions with the end goal being one-programme and efficiencies via minimised duplication, and ultimately a knock-out programme for our members and non-members. The global pandemic has provided the opportunity to fast-track this ambition as virtual events know no geographical boundaries and a new branded RTPI on-line events offer is being rolled out successfully across the nations and regions. The PlannerLive as rebranded and repackaged from a two day in-person conference to a week-long PlannerLiveOnline, our most successful conference in a decade. The formula was rolled out to PlannerLiveOnline Wales and PlannerLiveOnline Scotland.

2.3.5. P1-3 Promote Planning Theory and Practice journal

Within the value of membership pillar and how to best support life-long education and skills development through opportunities for our members, the strategy states that all planners need to have access to high quality education, skills, knowledge and resources to equip them for today and tomorrow's planning requirements.

The strategy commits the RTPI to promoting our leading Planning Theory and Practice Journal as an important vehicle to serve the need to improve members' critical thinking, supporting the RTPI's role as a learned society. Also within pillar three raising the profile of planning the corporate strategy commits to promote our pleading journal as an important vehicle for promoting the RTPI's unique position as a learned society to provide a platform for articles and research.

The success factor will see RTPI members with relevant knowledge and confidence to work across sectors and address planning challenges whether they be local, regional, national or global. The strategy also notes that a comprehensive suite of learning is delivered through different projects, such as the journal, and is accessible to all members.

In 2020 the journal reached its 21st anniversary and the RTPI marked this important anniversary via a special celebration at the RTPI's annual research awards in September. The founder of the Journal,

Professor Patsy Healy, spoke alongside the current Editor, and then RTPI President at the event in early September.

The policy and research service plan will mainstream the promotion of the journal into 2021 business as usual deliverables and priorities. Its dissemination will be considered as part of a wide ranging plan for the dissemination of planning research in general being developed as part of the new research strategy 2022-24.

2.3.6. P4-3 Work with national governments and education providers to develop apprenticeships

Within pillar four, equality, diversity and inclusivity, the corporate strategy notes that we will work to promote a diverse and inclusive profession. We want to demonstrate that a career in planning is open for all to join. The establishment of town planning apprenticeships has provided an opportunity to provide new routes into the planning profession from a broader range of talent. Because of the funding arrangements in place with the UK government, within England, the uptake of apprenticeships has exceeded forecasts to date.

The strategy commits the RTPI to work with national governments and education providers to develop apprenticeship schemes across the UK and Ireland, so that we can grow the opportunity afforded by apprenticeships beyond England. Success will see a growth of apprenticeships across the nations, enabling a more diverse pool of talent to have access to a career in town planning. During 2021 the national directors will continue to work with the devolved administrations to make the case for funded apprenticeships beyond England.

3. Future priorities

3.1. What is left to deliver?

There are 13 remaining projects that are likely to require additional funding and/or staffing capacity in the future and/or a refocussed service plan.

With eight years remaining for the delivery of the strategy, accepted the final year is likely to focus on the next iteration of the strategy, that leave potential for seven years of delivery, broadly equating to two extra projects on top of business as usual. This is a manageable and realistic number given the current size of the organisation and given that some of the piloted projects may become BAU in future years if they prove successful and will need to be therefore absorbed within existing staffing capacity and budges in future years.

It is those 13 projects that will be the focus of the engagement for 2022 projects. The aim is to identify two projects that could be brought forward for delivery in 2022-24. The unfunded 13 projects are as follows:

- F5 Develop and launch new RTPI brand and brand strategy
- F9 The Right Home for the RTPI
- P1-1 Deliver a seamless and attractive CPD journey
- P1-12 Launch a member welfare resource
- P1-14 Delivery personalised account management for employers

- P1-15 Launch COLABORATE for Planning
- P2-4 Promote the career of planning
- P3-6 PICTURETHIS
- P3-8 Project bespoke campaigns that celebrate the contribution of Fellows and Honorary Members
- P4-1 Broaden the diversity of fellows and honorary members
- P4-6 Look to accredit more international planning schools
- P4-7 Systematically identify and use role models from the profession to teach alongside academic planners
- P4-9 Influence governments to support independent planning aid services

3.2. Early thoughts on 2022 priorities

The executive has met to discuss priorities and from these early discussions it was noted that the brand strategy had been put forward for 2021 priority but paused by the BOT who reflected the pandemic might not be the right time to undertake this exercise.

As we look beyond the pandemic, the executive now recognise the importance of establishing and reasserting a strong brand to support GROWPLAN delivery. The brand project is a strategic intervention that would go significantly beyond refreshing the 'look and feel' of marketing materials for example, with a significant focus on reasserting the brand and therefore value of the RTPI to members and non-members.

As the RTPI continues its digital transformation it was recognised that delivering a seamless and attractive CPD journey should be a priority for supporting members and the broader value proposition.

Any consideration of priorities will need to be mindful of the resources that will be required to deliver them.

3.3. Corporate Strategy Engagement with Members

A bespoke engagement programme is underway across the institute to identify priorities for 2022. Any future 'ask' for additional restricted funding would be considered later in the year. It is anticipated the order of magnitude will be likely to be in the region of two projects for recommendation to the Finance Committee and BOT.

The Chief Executive has met with the Standing Committees, GA and BOT during the first quarter of 2021 to discuss corporate strategy progress noted in this paper and to discuss future priorities. Given the extensive engagement during 2019 on establishing the priorities, it is not proposed to revisit an intensive engagement with every national committee and regional board, but the Chief Executive has also attend the first Nations and Regions Panel meeting of 2021 as part of this engagement.

The timetable of engagement set out in the Annex to this paper. The General Assembly is asked to note and comment on future priorities, as appropriate.

4. Summary of progress to date

As noted in section 2.1 and 2.2 above the implementation of 12 new projects that secured restricted funding in 2020 are progressing well. Section 2.3 notes the six projects where existing funding and staff resources have been, or will be, pivoted to support delivery during 2021 and beyond. Therefore, a cumulative total of 18 projects either delivered or underway.

In addition to those 18 projects, there are 27 corporate strategy projects which are now being delivered as part of BAU, with no additional focus or reallocation of funding required. The majority of these will have already been underway in some shape or form, but the publication of the 2020-2030 Corporate Strategy has provided an opportunity for renewed focus and impetus.

Putting that all together, cumulatively, 45 of the 58 corporate strategy projects have either been absorbed as part of a refocussed BAU, or have been delivered in 2020 or are making good towards progress towards delivery in 2021 and beyond. This is a welcome achievement and its worthy of noting here. The remaining 13 projects are currently being consulted on with the Chairs of all the Standing Committees, the Nations and Regions Panel, the Audit Committee and the Chairs of the Young Planners Networks. Progress has been well received across these groups.

Annex

Engagement timetable for 2022 priorities

During 2021 there will be extensive engagement to ensure all relevant parties have sufficient opportunity to input into the prioritisation of future corporate strategy projects as well as provide feedback on progress to date. The items highlighted in green have been completed.

- 7 January Chair of Committees meeting: strategic discussion on overall approach
- 3 February BOT meeting: strategic discussion on engagement timetable
- 10 Feb SET awayday: strategic discussion on potential 2022 priorities
- 24 Feb Heads of Service strategic discussion on potential 2022 priorities
- Update to Finance Committee on approach and timetable for 2022 CSIP bids: 10 March
- 16 March Nations and Regions Panel
- March / April / May: meetings with standing committees
    - ELLC 9 March
    - International Committee 18 March
    - PPRC 24 March
    - M&E 30 March
- 9 April Quarterly catch-up with Committee Chairs
- 22 April SET awayday
- 9 June General Assembly
- 7 July BOT awayday strategic discussion
- September tbc SET awayday / budget meeting
- 20 October Finance Committee
- September / October tbc Quarterly catch-up with Committee Chairs
- 1 December BOT meeting
- December / January tbc quarterly catch-up with Committee Chairs