



# Rural Planning in the 2020s

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## Invitation to Tender

July 2021

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RTPI

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the UK's leading planning body for spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning and is the largest planning institute in Europe with over 25,000 members. The RTPI has fully functional Nations organisations in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The RTPI is:

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

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

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

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Rural communities in the UK and Ireland are facing many challenges in the 2020s. This project will seek to address how rural planning will need to change to deal with these challenges, as well as how rural communities can meet policy and practice objectives for achieving sustainable development.

These challenges include (but are not necessarily limited to):

### Brexit

Brexit has big implications for rural communities in the UK, but also some implications in Ireland. Conversations about Brexit have often neglected rural areas and its potential impact on rural communities, including:

- The implications of a reduced labour pool for rural businesses in relation to restrictions on hiring EEA workers.
- The potential implications of the loss of EU funding on rural communities and businesses.

- Implications of Brexit on biodiversity loss if current EU protections are watered down in some way and/or if the UK moves away from a cross-border approach to species protection.
- Impacts of trade deals the UK makes outside the EU.

### Climate change & CO2 emissions

The challenges rural communities are facing with respect to tackling and adapting to climate change are wide and varied. They include (but are not limited to) the impacts of extreme weather conditions, pest increases, sea level rise and reduced soil fertility.

In addition, rural communities are facing the challenge of becoming net zero having regard to:

- Farming practices (which account for around 10% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions). In this regard, are current legislative, regulatory and funding measures enough, or is more required in the UK and in Ireland to encourage sustainable farming practices (such as, for example, agroecology)?
- Increasing viable active and sustainable transport options in rural areas that meet the needs of residents and visitors.
- Sufficient EV charging points and grid capacity to make this a viable option in rural areas for local residents, business and visitors.
- Pressure on rural areas to be the location for renewable energy generation schemes and the impact of transmission.

### The Impact of Covid-19

The pandemic has had wide ranging short- and long-term impacts on rural communities, many of which are still to be fully identified and understood. These include:

- The short- and long-term health (both physical and mental) implications on rural communities and access to support services and the cost and capacity of providing care services for an increasingly older rural population.
- The economic impact of the closure of local businesses, which are more heavily reliant on seasonal, migrant, and the part-time workforce compared to urban areas.
- The impact on rural high streets and the social implications on rural communities
- The implications of increased flexible and home working patterns on rural areas which:
  - Potentially creates increased opportunities for residents to remain in rural locations rather than relocating to urban areas for work.
  - Creates greater scope for city dwellers to relocate to rural areas, putting increased pressure on already overheated rural housing markets in attractive parts of the countryside. It can also impact on

community cohesiveness and identity, for example in Wales the impact on predominately Welsh speaking communities.

- Places increased pressure on access to fast and reliable broadband.

## 2 TENDER INFORMATION

### 2.1 BUDGET

This project will be funded up to a maximum of **£60,000 (to include all disbursements and including VAT)**, with the intention that this be paid in three equal instalments according to agreed project milestones (i.e. on signing of the contract, delivery of the draft report and delivery of the final report to an acceptable quality standard).

Certain RTPI Nations and Regions have made specific contributions within this budget and we would expect the successful bidder to demonstrate particular attention to:

**Wales**

**Northern Ireland** and

**English Regions** – regions to be advised soon after appointment to reflect this.

### 2.2 ELIGIBILITY

Tenders are invited from RTPI accredited planning schools, other university-based research teams/departments, planning consultancies and other appropriate organisations, particularly those which can demonstrate expertise in rural planning, climate change, sustainability, digital planning, tourism and nature recovery. Collaboration between organisations is welcome.

### 2.3 PROJECT BRIEF

The purpose of this project is to identify and examine the challenges facing rural communities throughout the UK and in Ireland in the 2020s. The final report will provide guidance and recommendations regarding the legislative, policy and process changes that will be required in each UK nation and in Ireland to ensure rural communities and local authorities are equipped to meet these challenges, including the realisation of policy and practice objectives for sustainable development. The project will also explore what measures are required to ensure rural communities in the UK are not left behind as the Westminster Government embarks on its mission to level-up the country.

The final report will support existing RTPI research, including on [measuring planning outcomes](#), [net zero transport](#) and [climate change](#). It will also have regard to the varying experiences and requirements of all five nations – England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

### 2.4 INDICATIVE METHODOLOGY

The supplier should propose a methodology, which includes the following steps:

1. Identification of the key challenges facing rural communities in the 2020s in each UK nation and in Ireland.
2. An assessment of the success (or otherwise) of government policies, schemes and processes to address these challenges.
3. Identification of rural case study locations that best illustrate the challenges that rural communities are facing, and which demonstrate best practice.
4. Produce guidance and recommendations in relation to the changes that are required in each UK nation and in Ireland with respect to planning policy and practice to ensure that rural communities are equipped with the right mechanisms and support to face the challenges identified in the report.

NB: The outputs and methodology specified here are indicative. We will consider bids, which are non-compliant on their merit, provided they imaginatively interpret the brief and deliver the RTPI's objectives for the commission. Workshops and interviews with external stakeholders may be necessary to facilitate the above processes.

## 2.5 PROJECT TIMESCALES

We anticipate that the project will last eight months, starting at the start of September 2021 and being delivered by the end of April 2022. Below is an indicative timescale for the project:

- **01/07/21** Publish Invitation To Tender
- **12/07/21** Deadline to ask questions
- **09/08/21, 9am** Close of tender
- **16/08/21 – 20/08/21** Inform shortlisted firms
- **W/C 30/08/21** Interviews
- **6/09/21 or 7/09/21** Project initiation meeting and commencement of work
- **07/02/22** Draft report submitted for review to the RTPI and project steering group
- **14/02/22** Project steering group meeting
  - Changes and modifications
- **25/04/22** Final report submitted and reviewed by the RTPI and project steering group
- **May 2022** Publication and publicity

The precise timescale for the project will be determined in collaboration with the selected research team during the inception meeting.

## 2.6 GOVERNANCE

The day-to-day project manager at the RTPI will be Jenny Divine, RTPI Policy and Networks Adviser.

The RTPI will establish a client Steering Group which will provide representation from across the Institute staff. There will also be a reference group which will act as a sounding board to the project comprising RTPI Members with rural interests.

## 2.7 OUTPUTS

- Produce a report which identifies the current challenges facing rural communities in each UK nation and in Ireland in the 2020s.
- Include guidance and recommendations regarding the planning policy and practice changes required in each UK nation and in Ireland to ensure rural communities are equipped with the tools and support to face these challenges.
- Identify case study locations that demonstrate the project's findings and illustrate best practice.
- Attendance, as required by the RTPI, to promote the research in the year following publication.

## 2.8 APPLICATION PROCESS

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

- Proposed methodology
- Proposed outputs, demonstrating conformity (or otherwise) with the project purpose and brief described in Section 2.3 of this document
- Project team and general experience
- Statement of experience relevant to the project, and selected projects that demonstrate relevant experience
- Proposed approach to project management, identifying risks and mitigation strategies, and specifying how the project will be delivered on time and to a high standard
- Total cost of the project
- A budget breakdown between the stages, daily rates and personnel inputs.

## 2.9 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated against five criteria:

1. Quality, rigour and depth of the proposed methodology and analysis
2. Experience/track record/knowledge of research and/or project delivery relevant to the project
3. Experience of effective and impactful partnership working (i.e. with project commissioners and/or public stakeholders)
4. Experience of managing politically-sensitive projects

## 5. Value for money and added value

### 2.10 ASSESSMENT PANEL

An assessment panel comprising members of the project steering group will evaluate tenders and decide which application to support.

### 2.11 DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS

Tender applications should be submitted electronically to: [research@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:research@rtpi.org.uk)

The deadline for applications is **09.00, Monday 9 August 2021**.

We intend to interview a shortlist of bidders during **w/c 30 August 2021** and to appoint the successful research team.

### 2.12 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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

Any outcome from the project shall remain strictly **CONFIDENTIAL** until such time as the RTPI determines that it be released for publication.

### 2.13 ENQUIRIES

We welcome enquiries about this project, but please note that all responses to enquiries will be issued as (anonymised) Q&A's to all bidders.

For enquiries, please contact [research@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:research@rtpi.org.uk)