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Board of Trustees

Chief Executive's Report

Report from the Chief Executive

FOR INFORMATION

The Board of Trustees is invited to note the contents of this report.

1. Introduction

This paper sets out a selection of high-level deliverables during the period mid-June – end of August 2021. This snapshot of corporate strategy highlights of activity undertaken by RTPI colleagues and volunteers during this period and does not represent all activity undertaken during this period.

2. Delivering for Members: June - August 2021

This section highlights updates on the four corporate strategy pillars, delivering the climate action plan and corporate strategy foundations.

2.1. Pillar 1 - Promoting the value of membership

- The mid-career NURTURE pilot mentoring programme is now firmly underway and being steering by the programme board, in advance of a full evaluation.
- In support of GROWPLAN, the English Regions are working with the Membership team to deliver complementary Assessor-led APC webinars to expand our reach to licentiates. Sessions have already taken place in London and East of England and three more sessions are planned before the end of the year.
- Out member CPD programme continues to be improved, with trainer recruitment underway as design and development phase of next year's training programme begins to expand our core provision. An update to our external endorsement policy for ELLC will test additional income generation opportunities with partners in 2022.
- Our successful outreach engagement programme will be boosted by a new Education Engagement Officer who joined in July. Internal discussions with Directors for Scotland/Ireland and Wales/NI and the Head of English regions are progressing to discuss protocols for student engagement and closer working with regions and nations, with a mapping exercise of activity

undertaken across RTPI.

- An updated Events Strategy has been prepared for consideration by BOT at this meeting to distill the clear value proposition on a comprehensive and compelling annual events programme going forward, in support of the Corporate Strategy commitments.
- Core webinars delivered by the national events team continue to be very well attended, including recent events on Planning Digital Technology, Diversity and Inclusion and Healthy Cities. Anecdotal feedback has been very positive with members reporting back that during the last year they have engaged far more than previously with the Institute via the rich programme of webinars available to them. Actual performance indicators are equally as positive with many events been regularly attended by between 200 -300 members.
- The annual Minerals Planning Conference was successfully delivered in June, and the sold-out event, chaired by President Wei Yang, goes from strength to strength.
- The Welsh Planner Live conference was successfully held with the theme of 'Plan the Wales We Need' and focusing up many of the issues in the Senedd Cymru election asks, with the Minister for Climate Change providing a keynote speech.
- The inaugural Planner Live North welcomed more than 130 delegates to RTPI's first 'pan northern' online conference. The conference was curated by the three northern regions, working in partnership with members, and the events and marketing team to deliver. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive in terms of content and programme.
- This year's regional Awards for Planning Excellence were successfully launched and new for 2021 is that the London region will join the programme, and entries will be received by online submission using the Evessio digital platform, which has provided significant efficiency savings for example on officer time and travel time by judges.

2.2. Pillar 2 – supporting planning services

- The 'Pipeline of planners' student research programme, which represents Stage 1 of CSIP project Education for Everyone, is now complete and will be reported on in the Autumn. As agreed with ELLC, an independent advisor will then be commissioned for Stage 2 of the project to review accreditation policies and processes next year to meet the scope outlined in the Corporate Strategy. An advisory group will also be appointed, including standing committee and young planner representatives.
- Our Future Planners initiative continues to be developed, with an updated ambassadors 'self-service' member only area online to support volunteers: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/member-benefits/ambassadors-information/>. In addition, data analysis, to develop list of priority schools for 2022, is underway in-house with support from the policy team, to deliver Stage 1 of CSIP project BALANCE (Build A Legacy And New Community Equality) project by December.

2.3. Pillar 3 – Raising the profile of planning: Comms & engagement

- The RTPI continues to provide responses and public research and policy statements in relation to research strategy priorities across the nations and regions.
- The 'Plan the World we Need 2', a refresh of the successful 2020 campaign, is being developed for launch in the autumn to coincide with our COP26 activity.

- Detailed scoping work is underway for the RTPI's Green Growth Boards proposals, with high profile events planned in early September.
- We hosted a very successful launch of the RTPI's Politicians in Planning Network on 14 June, with representation across the nations, and well over 500 councilors already signed up to the network.
- Our Northern Ireland Director continues to support national audit office work on a review of the planning system in Northern Ireland, and the Wales Director is exploring a project with the WLGA on peer review in relation to planning committee operations and related matters.
- Our Scotland Director provided oral evidence to House of Lords COVID-19 Committee - Towns and Cities Inquiry; and responses were submitted to Scottish Parliament Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on priority issues for the new session, along with meeting held with the new Planning Minister and other MSP's.
- The Chief Executive and the National Directors have met with a variety of politicians over the last period, appearing in local and national media to discuss planning matters, including on BBC Wales, Times Radio, and other national media.
- The Presidential Team activity has recommenced in person, as a hybrid programme, with a visit to the East Midlands, Presentation of the Young Planner of the Year Trophy in London, and attendance and speaking panel at the Chartered Institute of Housing annual conference in Manchester for example.
- A continual stream of thought-provoking member Blogs have continued to provide interesting content for members and are now attracting our most popular content on our website, with a future programme of blogs now in development by the Director of Communications. The most popular blog has been our regular England White Paper blog series written by Head of Policy: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/blog/2021/august/richard-blyth-levelling-up-what-s-it-all-about/>
- A new practice advice 'Creating places to grow' published in July on the role of town planning in creating child friendly places: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2021/july/children-and-town-planning-creating-places-to-grow/> with related communications activity aligned to the start of the school summer holiday season.
- RTPI Awards for Research Excellence shortlist announced in August, with extensive social media promotion of the finalists in the lead up to winners being announced at ceremony on 8th September during the annual Planning Research Conference, this year hosted by Newcastle University: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/events-training-and-awards/awards/rtpi-awards-for-research-excellence-2021/2021-award-finalists/>

2.4. Pillar 4 – Promoting equality, diversity & inclusivity:

- Our successful apprenticeships programme continues to be developed, with a new internal quality assurance policy, process and guidance agreed over the summer with our Membership Assessment Advisory Panel. This means the Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship scheme is ready to accept those graduating from the degree apprenticeship in October for the professional discussion and then the APC. We are looking ahead to being able to award our first chartered town planner apprentice in 2022.

- We are delighted the Assistant Apprenticeship (Level 4 England) funding has been signed off by the Minister and the team is discussing delivery with training providers for 2022 delivery.
- Internal EDI guidance on language and terminology piloted for staff for 2021.
- New reporting process is being tested to ensure BOT reports are reviewed for EDI implications and a new EDI Champion volunteer role description for Nations and Regions has been agreed.
- We have announced the RTPI's support of the inaugural BPIC (Black Professionals In Construction) Awards, with our President joining the judging panel: <https://www.bpicnetwork.com/judges>
- We have rolled out a new e-learning module for RTPI colleagues featuring learning on various aspects of EDI to support delivery of CHANGE.
- This year's regional Awards for Planning Excellence awards criteria have been refreshed to encourage entrants to provide more information about how they have specifically tackled EDI issues, to support delivery of CHANGE.
- The 2021 elections data collection has been refreshed to enable improvements to how EDI data is collected through the elections process, to enable us with a more comprehensive benchmarking of participation in governance.

2.5. Climate Action

- Work continues on the RTPI's COP26 programme of activity, which is subject to a separate BOT paper to this meeting.
- Preparation for the 2021 World Town Planning Day schools' competition is underway with scoping with an education consultancy to discuss possibilities for this year's project, to align with RTPI's COP26 and #PlanTheWorldWeNeed 2 report.
- Design codes for net zero and nature recovery - LDA Design appointed in August, commissioned in partnership with the RSPB. Outputs due in late Autumn 2021
- Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill response to the call for evidence by the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs submitted in July, and the team have responded to the Climate Change Bill which recently come before the Northern Ireland Assembly setting out a framework to mitigate the effects of Climate Change.
- Response submitted to Scottish Government consultation on Local Place Plans and Response submitted to Scottish Parliament Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on priority issues for the new session.

2.6. Corporate Strategy Foundations updates

There are 10 foundations to the corporate strategy. This section notes occasional progress updates. On this occasion, there are three updates.

2.6.1. Foundation 4: Research

- There has been extensive consultation responses over the summer period including:

- Local authority remote meetings <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations/2021/june/rtpi-response-to-mhclg-call-for-evidence-on-local-authority-remote-meetings/>
- Technical consultation on consequential changes to permitted development rights <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations/2021/june/rtpi-response-to-mhclg-technical-consultation-on-consequential-changes-to-permitted-development-rights/>
- Draft Policy Statement on Environmental Principles <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/consultations/2021/june/rtpi-response-to-defra-consultation-on-the-draft-policy-statement-on-environmental-principles/>
- Engagement across the Nations and Regions and committees/stakeholders has progressed well, and the Research Strategy 2022-24 is subject to a separate paper to this meeting for consideration by BOT. The implementation will be taken through by the business planning cycle and along with the new research fund will be overseen by PPRC.
- Current research highlights include the Rural Planning in the 2020s project, a cross-national research project with consultant interviews early September, and the 'location of development III' research, on track for completion in December.

2.6.2. Foundation 7: Volunteer strategy

- Following approval of funding to rollout the RTPI volunteering strategy, a new Volunteer Coordinator has joined the RTPI to support the implementation of the project's early deliverables and provide a framework to embed key recommendations across the Institute. This is important progress toward delivery of the strategy across the nations and regions.

2.6.3. Foundation 8: Governance

- There has been continued engagement on the proposed governance changes, which is subject to a separate paper at this BOT meeting.
- The 2021 elections were successfully launched, and voting is underway.

3. Use of Delegated Powers

- In September I join the Greener Transport Council, whose purpose is to oversee the creation of a 'Manifesto for Decarbonising Transport' by Greener Transport Solutions. I join a board of 14 leading academic experts and practitioners including leading practitioners and professors from many transport schools across the UK and Ireland.

Victoria Hills MRTPI, FICE 3 September 2021