



IN PERSPECTIVE

AUTUMN 2021

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The Chair's Word

Since I put pen to paper to write my first Chair's Word at the beginning of the year, it is undeniable that a lot has happened at the national level. Lockdown restrictions have eased, and we have slowly started to reclaim the spaces that we used to occupy.



Simon Taylor,
MRTPI

RTPI South East,
Chair

High streets, offices and our public spaces are gradually coming back to life, while still exercising a degree of caution on public health.

As I write this in a London train station, it has also allowed me some quiet time to reflect on the world that we are returning to, which us as planning professionals will have a crucial part to play.

In this ever-changing world, we as planners, have a active role to play in both influencing policy and continuing innovation with good planning practice.

What will our urban areas look like in the face of public health concerns? How will we conserve our natural assets in a world that is increasingly turning towards net zero? How will climate change play its role as we consider place-making? This question is particularly pertinent with the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) conference in Glasgow later this year. We should continue to talk about these issues in not only our professional lives but in normal day-to-day conversations as well.

In this ever-changing world, we as planners, have a active role to play in both influencing policy and continuing innovation with good planning practice.

This is why I think it is right to mention the South East Regional Planning Awards this year. I am honoured to be part of the judging panel this year, where we recieved a number of exciting submissions this year across the categories. The shortlist will be published shortly and I want to wish all our entrants the best of luck!

In other news, it was both a privilege and a pleasure to welcome Dr Wei Yang, our RTPI President, virtually to the South East region alongside our colleagues from the [East of England](#) and the [North West](#) where we discussed new towns and the importance of our natural environment. You can watch the visits on the RTPI's Youtube channel. We were delighted to welcome Wei to Kent this October, to showcase some of the excellent planning work that's happening here in the South East, you can [read all about it here](#).

Your RAC are continuing to deliver a wide ranging CPD programme, including events being run by our Young Planners groups. Presently, we will continue to deliver these virtually but there will be opportunities to attend face-to-face events, subject to national guidelines and advice from the RTPI Executive. To stay up to date, visit our [Events page](#).

I do hope that you have managed to find time over the summer to have a well deserved rest. I wish all our members to keep safe, and to keep in touch with us by visiting the RTPI [website](#), on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

RTPI response to DLUHC Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework consultation



About the RTPI

The RTPI champions the power of planning in creating sustainable, prosperous places and vibrant communities. As a learned society, we use our expertise and research to bring evidence and thought leadership to shape planning policies and thinking. As a professional body, we have over 25,000 members across all sectors, and are responsible for setting formal standards for planning practice and education.

This is the RTPI's response to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities consultation on the [Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework](#).

This consultation seeks views on a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework and to guide the future growth of the area to 2050. The RTPI welcomes the work of DLUHC in preparing a Spatial Framework and consulting on a vision for the future long-term growth of the Arc.

General comments

Economy: The document recognises the Oxford-Cambridge Arc as a national economic priority area. It highlights its potential as one of the most prosperous, innovative and sustainable economic areas in the world with the ability to make a major contribution to national economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

It should however recognise that the economic success of the Arc is the result of deliberate and unconscious government policy over decades. 46% of research council funding for example is spent in Oxford, Cambridge and London [1], and yet these three cities have some of the biggest barriers to sufficient housebuilding. So, for decades government's research policy has not been in step with its housing policy

The document outlines the objectives of the Spatial Framework at a strategic scale. This will involve coordinating and focusing investment in the area, shaping future local planning decisions on how land is used, how the environment is protected and enhanced, where and what type of new development happens and what infrastructure is provided

Sequencing and consistency: How the Spatial Framework interacts with the 30 different local authorities producing separate plans and strategies at different times throughout the Arc is critical. The Framework should also support aligning the management of utilities, infrastructure, flood risk and air quality measures.

Champion: We recommend that a growth body be established as soon as possible with responsibility for delivery, championing the Arc and providing certainty over the scale and broad locations of growth. This is needed to ensure that delivery can be thought about alongside the development of the Spatial Framework through the growth body which will play a key role in integrating this and managing the important sequencing process.

Agility: The delivery framework should remain a 'live' document that can be quickly updated to reflect changing circumstances as necessary such as in response to climate change, technological advances or public health. The Spatial Framework itself should guide the vision over a long period of time.

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Health, wellbeing and climate change: The linking of human health and wellbeing to the urgency of addressing climate change is paramount. The Arc is ideally placed to act as an arena to develop ambitious policies to address these challenges.

Resources and skills: We recommend that local authorities including local planning authorities and all the necessary built and natural environment stakeholders such as Natural England and the Environment Agency are fully engaged throughout the process and appropriately resourced. A multi-disciplined approach is essential if growth is to be planned around places and not functions.

[1] Tom Forth, Open Data Institute Leeds Richard A.L. Jones, University of Manchester, Nesta (2020) [The Missing £4 Billion Making R&D work for the whole UK.](#)

[Read the RTPI's full response here...>](#)

The Climate Crisis: A guide for local authorities on planning for climate change



Jointly produced with the [Town and Country Planning Association \(TCPA\)](#) this guide shows how the planning system can help communities face the climate crisis. With the climate science clearly warning of the catastrophic impacts of climate change this new guide seeks to place the Government's ambitions for net zero as well as building community resilience to severe weather at the heart of the planning system.

The guide makes clear the vital importance of the planning system in designing places which cut carbon through the promotion of energy efficiency, sustainable transport and renewable energy.

This guide, published in the run up to COP26, is intended as an introduction to some of the key issues. It is a starting point on the vital journey to put in place practical solutions which will halt the rise in temperatures and begin to reverse the climate crisis.

[Click here to download the guide](#)

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Appreciating and harnessing the benefits of green and blue infrastructure



Aline Hyde
Elmbridge Borough Council

(The views expressed by authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the RTPI or my employer)

Close your eyes and think of infrastructure. Personally, I see brightly-lit motorways and a little van with the Thames Water logo. You might think of ports, overhead powerlines and fibre optic broadband cables. Some of you, having spotted the title of this article, perhaps had a pleasant vision of a tree (hopefully the right tree, in the right place).

A wider range of green and blue features are just as deserving of categorisation as ‘infrastructure’, which is after all a basic requirement for the effective operation of society. The newly updated definition of green and blue infrastructure in the National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges its importance to “nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.”

Green spaces have a role to play in reducing stress and additionally encourage people to participate in physical activities

Whilst green and blue infrastructure is regrettably often viewed as an environmental tick-box exercise, it provides less often appreciated social and economic benefits, reflecting its contribution to the three interconnected facets of sustainable development which form the basis of national planning policy.

The social benefits include a positive influence on physical and mental health: nearly 40 years ago it was observed that hospital patients with a view of broadleaved trees experienced shorter stays in hospital and re-quired less pain relief than patients with a view of a brick wall (Ulrich, 1984).

Green spaces have a role to play in reducing stress and additionally encourage people to participate in physical activities, with associated health and wellbeing benefits. In fact, it has been found that communities which benefit from access to green spaces rely much more on active modes of travel for transportation (Zlot and Schmid, 2005).

The correlation between health and green spaces is so strong that the further one lives from a public green space the more likely one is to be obese (Nielsen and Hansen, 2007). Having publicly-accessible green and blue spaces nearby promotes informal social interactions and a sense of place, as well as providing an educational resource for the children who will one day be its custodians.

Research carried out in the South-West of England indicated that people generally have a positive opinion of trees near their home, with the trees’ aesthetic contribution to the area being the highest-valued benefit (Flannigan, 2005). House purchasers will pay a significant premium of up to 11% for proximity to a well-managed green space (CABE, 2005).

The visual amenity benefits provided by green and blue infrastructure assets attract tourism and inward economic investment, with green views and proximity to active travel net-works proving appealing to



businesses (Eftec, 2013). Research also indicates that large trees located in public areas have been associated with a reduction in crime rates (Donovan and Prestemon, 2010) and the presence of vegetation improves local perceptions of safety (Garvin et al., 2012).

Green and blue infrastructure also reduces the burden on healthcare providers by positively affecting human health, as well as reducing expenditure on electricity by improving the energy efficiency of buildings (Forestry Commission, 2010).

All of these benefits in addition to providing shade, improving urban air quality, providing habitats and foraging opportunities for biodiversity, reducing flood risk and adapting to climate change.

Looking back at the dates of the studies I have referenced above, it can be seen that none of this is new: whilst the literature has continued to evolve, the benefits of green infrastructure have been well-understood for many years. It is, then, with great frustration I observe that the opportunities that green and blue infrastructure present are not better exploited. Inclusion of green and blue infrastructure within development proposals can so often solve more than one problem. For example, the provision of ponds can address policy requirements concerning Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, biodiversity net gain and additionally provides a landscape feature of interest.

Similarly, the provision of a nature trail can address open space/recreation needs, improve connectivity for both people and wildlife, and improve the visual amenity and natural surveillance of an otherwise disused or underused area of the site. A green wall, like the fantastic example pictured, is built-

in beauty, a natural cooling and noise attenuation system, and frankly, a marketer's dream. Whilst the retention in situ and supplementation of existing green and blue infrastructure features is usually best, in certain circumstances translocation (for example, of hedgerows) can be a more sustainable solution and provides the immediate benefits for visual amenity and attractive habitat afforded by maturity. If this is all sounding quite expensive, consider that green infrastructure can improve stormwater quality, irrigate the landscape and reduce the need for manual watering and associated maintenance costs. Rough grassland banks and areas of wildflower planting are also low maintenance but important habitats.

In my experience, it is the small to medium-sized development proposals that tend to overlook the importance of green and blue infrastructure. This is particularly unfortunate because of the cumulative gains that sites of this scale can deliver. The (relatively) easy part of green infrastructure is delivering something on site - depending on the scale of the proposal this could be anything from a green roof or using hedges as garden boundary treatments, to providing a new country park.

However, the benefits and opportunities presented by green infrastructure features are only realised when those features are connected and this is particularly so where the existing urban layout does not allow for the creation of new green spaces. Beyond providing wildlife with migration opportunities, safe and attractive corridors maximise human use and appreciation of the green and blue infrastructure assets around them. A multi-functional, properly connected green and blue infrastructure network is much more than the sum of its parts.



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Green Growth Boards and the need to be ‘larger than local’

Although I am relatively new to planning – having joined the RTPI just over six months ago and worked in infrastructure strategy consultancy prior to that – I already feel immersed in the challenges and opportunities within planning policy.

Local authorities are facing some of their greatest challenges in delivering upon the Government’s ‘levelling up’ agenda, addressing the housing shortage, leading the post-Covid economic recovery and [combatting climate change](#).

However, whilst the prominence and visibility of planning continues to grow, the system has been severely under-resourced for decades, with local government planning departments having to cope with a 42% reduction in funding over the past decade alone.

Joined-up spatial planning

The challenges local authorities face and the impact of their work goes far beyond their physical boundaries. Local authorities must be brought together to combine their local expertise and align their own interests in order to deliver positive growth for their regions.

In [our response to the Planning for the Future white paper](#), the RTPI proposed the introduction of Green Growth Boards to facilitate co-operative strategies for climate action, infrastructure, housing provision, the environment and other areas. The role of planning and the interlinking of local authorities was also highlighted in the recent [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#).

We have already seen examples of this joined-up spatial planning throughout the UK in co-operative ventures such as the [Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan](#), [Leicester’s Strategic Growth Plan](#) and the [Liverpool Spatial Development Strategy](#). All three of these plans have seen multiple authorities join together to manage their region’s largest challenges and opportunities to help establish a clear direction for their futures. As Leicester’s plan states, they recognize the need to be ‘larger than local’.

The three regions mentioned above are all earmarked to deliver positive growth in the near future as part of the ‘levelling up’ agenda - the co-operation and holistic approach to planning that they have undertaken should be encouraged.

Bespoke regional frameworks

Whilst each plan is slightly different, they all recognise the need to have a core and consistent planning framework. Whether it is the linking of Leicester’s key infrastructure projects (namely, the A46 priority growth corridor, the Leicestershire International Gateway and the A5 improvement corridor) or the inclusion of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc in Oxfordshire’s plan, these approaches to spatial planning are wide-reaching and all encompassing.

The RTPI’s call for an additional [£500m investment in England’s planning system](#) would help ensure that local authorities, irrespective of their locations, would have the capacity and capabilities to create these frameworks from which they can establish holistic approaches to planning in their communities and further afield.

Across the board, the RTPI has consistently supported a holistic approach to planning, in which local authorities can create bespoke frameworks for their regions to deliver positive and meaningful growth in these trying times. We are currently undertaking research into examples and best practice for these co-operative approaches to spatial planning and will be presenting our findings later in the year.

Getting everyone around the table who has an interest in investing in place will be critical. We think Green Growth Boards are a good starting point.

Harry Steele RTPI - Infrastructure Specialist

Harry Steele is the RTPI’s Infrastructure Specialist. This is the latest in a series of weekly blog posts from RTPI planning experts on the Institute’s key asks of the government concerning reform of the planning system



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A chat with...

Edward Cheng

Mott MacDonald

Member of the Regional
Activities Committee



A bit about you

I am a Chartered Town Planner and currently DCO and Statutory Processes Manager at Highways England. I completed my postgraduate planning degree at University of Westminster and previously worked in Local Government. In 2019 I took a break from planning and undertook a MBA at the Chinese University of Hong Kong – where I focused on infrastructure development and financing – specifically the Belt and Road programme – and I had the chance to visit Kazakhstan. I will be joining Mott MacDonald as a Principal Town Planner from September 2021

Why you chose planning?

I was interested in cities and places early on but took a circuitous route into planning. Following my undergraduate degree in Philosophy and International Relations at Reading University I was still unsure on what career to pursue. When I was job searching in 2007 the financial crash meant graduate opportunities were really limited. I took a role in local government in Manchester because it was a part of the country I didn't know and wanted to. I moved into a transport planning role and was lucky to receive a DCLG bursary to study for a planning degree at Westminster. From there I have sought experience in different roles and locations to build my knowledge and career. The planning profession is broad and the issues we deal with are too so its worth getting experience across different aspects. I really enjoy this variety and the opportunities for learning new things.

What do you do in your current role?

In my current role I provide advice and support project teams on the planning process required to gain consent for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and other highways schemes. Highways England is the applicant that has submitted the most Development Consent Order (DCO) applications for NSIPs under the Planning Act 2008 and we have a strong pipeline of schemes to deliver on behalf of the Department for Transport going forward. I get involved in a range of activities that inform applications including consultation planning, design, case-making and stakeholder engagement. Infrastructure planning is a really interesting place to work at the moment with hot topics such as the levelling up agenda, climate change and carbon.

What you do when you are not planning?

When I'm not working I play hockey at a local club, spend time playing with my daughter and trying out new sports. I recently took up golf during the lockdown just because the was one of the few things open!

Why you joined the committee?

I volunteered for the committee in 2020 because I was working planning policy at the time but in a transport planning role - I wanted to broaden my network in the South East but also be involved in discussions with other planners from the region, talk about planning as well as support the region in influencing the RTP1. I have found there are many opportunities to do this through the development of CPD activities to national consultation responses as well as engagement with young planners. There is also an excellent social side and hopefully we will see more in person events planned in 2021/22.

The Shortlist:



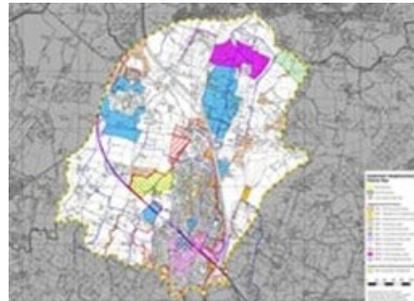
The RTPI represents 26,000 planning professionals worldwide and promotes spatial planning, shapes policy and raises professional standards. The RTPI South East Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate outstanding planners, plans and projects that demonstrate the power of planning in our regions.

The awards highlight exceptional examples of how planning and planners have a positive impact on our quality of life in creating exceptional places and protecting our environment. In recognising and rewarding excellence we aim to inspire others to achieve the same high standards.

Read more below about the 2021 shortlisted entrants ...

Plan Making Practice and Planning Delivery

- **Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, entered by Squires Planning Ltd**



Southwater have taken neighbourhood planning to heart. A team of interested local people have, with consultant support, prepared a development strategy for their community that not only takes local and national requirements into account but will also deliver meaningful benefits for local people.

The community wanted to maintain a single centre settlement, the plan not only achieves this but also allocates land for 450 homes set amongst 8ha of public open space, introduces tree planting requirements, identifies Parish Heritage Assets and Local Green Spaces, and much much more. What's more, it received 2,440 (82.5%) yes votes at referendum.

- **Winchester City Council Local Plan Consultation entered by Winchester City Council**

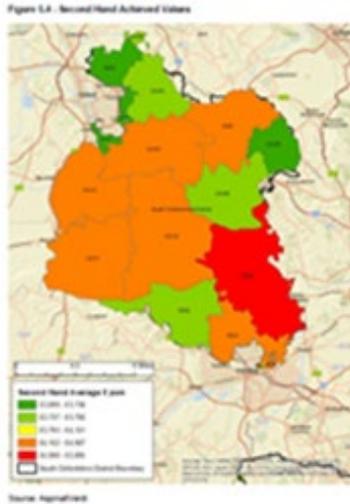


The approach towards community engagement on a Local Plan that took place during a national lockdown demonstrates how technology can be used in a positive way to engage with a range of audiences across different age groups. The Strategic Planning team used a variety of techniques including the opportunity to participate in several interactive events rather than Officers just presenting information.

The new Local Plan website is designed to be easy to read, visually interesting and appeal to all especially a younger audience. The outcome of the consultation has been extremely positive and inclusive.

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- **Local Plan and CIL Economic Viability Assessment, entered by AspinallVerdi - Property Regeneration Consultants**



AspinallVerdi provided economic viability advice for South Oxfordshire DC on the new Local Plan. AspinallVerdi provided innovative site promotor engagement appraising a long-list of potential strategic allocations. Land owners and site promoters were challenged to provide transparency of benchmark land value (BLV) and any guaranteed minimum values before site allocations.

This led to strategic site promoters providing transparency around BLVs – ‘actual’ minimum land values – stress-testing the consequences of strategic infrastructure cost. This led to the inclusion of Paragraph 014 in the the PPG - enabling other Authorities to gain greater confidence about delivery - not just viability.

- **Earth Trust: Earth Lab entered by Earth Trust**



Earth Trust is an environmental learning charity championing accessible green spaces for all. They care for diverse green spaces of different sizes; smaller wildlife havens and iconic landscapes including over 1,200 acres of farmland, wetland, woodland and five community reserves.

Their mission is to give people access to and experience of the environment through natural green spaces and together understand what we can do to care for the planet. Earth Lab brings their engagement vision to life; it is a demonstration of how we can inspire people to think about how their decisions could better protect the environment.

Planning Team of the year

- **DHA Planning team**



DHA has grown to be the largest independent multi-disciplinary planning consultancy in the South East, offering town planning & development, transport, design, environmental impact, infrastructure and land advice and support to clients across the UK.

Founded in 1986, DHA has been built on the performance of its expert and highly motivated team, thanks to its investment in staff development and a commitment to delivering high quality support and planning advice.

DHA recognises its role in supporting the economic development of the area it serves and is an active member of those organisations and partnership responsible for driving growth and employment.

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• **Bloomfields Chartered Town Planners**



Bloomfields is an independent firm of Chartered Town Planners providing planning and development consultancy services. In 2013 the practice merged with Lambert & Foster to build upon the reputation of both companies and to expand their level of services.

However, the practice maintains its ethos of personally managing each individual case. Bloomfields' philosophy is to provide honest, clear and sound planning advice with the highest standard of professional integrity.

Young Planner of the Year



Chloe Duggan
AssocRTPI, Stantec

Chloe Duggan is a planning consultant currently working for Stantec UK delivering a range of strategic, high profile infrastructure projects across the UK. Having started her career in transport planning, Chloe made the move into town planning two years ago with clear enthusiasm and commitment to the sustainable delivery of major projects and the positive engagement of communities as part of the infrastructure planning process.

Chloe is a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in planning, and planning as a career path for young people, playing an active role in Stantec's multidisciplinary Developing Professionals Group and Women in Planning.



Joshua Mellor
MRTPI
Barton Willmore

In his role as Planning Associate at Barton Willmore, Joshua leads on a variety of major development schemes across the South-East, using his passion for planning as a tool to improve the quality of places in which people live, work and play, the quality of the natural environment, and securing betterment for climate change and health and wellbeing.

Joshua strives to meet and exceed the expectations of others, formulating and delivering planning strategies for clients across a variety of sectors, whilst ensuring the next generation of planners are well equipped to continue achieving outstanding results and planning excellence.

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Zoe Knott MRTPI
Nexus Planning

Zoe Knott is an Associate Planner with passion and drive for promoting planning and sustainable placemaking, currently working at Nexus Planning in Reading with a focus on residential development.

She leads on a number of large-scale residential developments, often also leading the EIA. She is an excellent team worker, and cares about the progression of those around her and promoting the profession. Zoe is former chair of Surrey Young Planners and has taken an active role in diversity and inclusion at Nexus Planning as well as recruiting Planning Apprentices.

Chair of RTPI South East Chair of the judging panel Gareth Giles FRTPI said:

“There were many strong entries this year, and those shortlisted are of the highest calibre, highlighting outstanding planning projects and professionals within the South East Region. The Judging Panel have a difficult job to pick category and overall winners.”



The winners will be announced on 18 November. Good luck to all the shortlist nominated for the prestigious regional planning awards. The RTPI South East Awards for Planning Excellence 2020 are headline sponsored by **Savills**.



RTPI President tours Kent- 'The Garden of England'

On 1 October Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) president Dr Wei Yang FRTPI toured the South East region of Kent. Wei began the day with a visit to [A.C. Goatham and Son Ltd](#), largest British fruit growers and have been all about British apples and pears since 1947.

Dr Wei Yang commented: *“There is no better time to visit Kent - ‘The Garden of England’ than a sunny autumn day for the Royal Town Planning Institute Presidential Visit to RTPI South East. It’s not only beautiful, but also fruity and sweet.*

The visit to [A.C. Goatham and Son Ltd](#) - one of the largest British fruit growers, was very special. It’s amazing to learn how scientifically based the fruit growing industry is and how vital proactive rural planning is to their sustainable business development. Rural planning plays a significant role in our net zero, natural capital gain and food security agenda. The RTPI is going to carry out a Rural Planning Research. I hope the Southeast Region can participate and contribute to the research proactively to offer your expertise”

Wei then received a tour of [Ashford Borough Council](#) in the afternoon to meet the planning team led by Simon Cole, Head of Planning & Development followed by a tour of regeneration projects in Ashford Town centre. The day ended with an engaging Q&A and discussion with the Kent Young Planners and apprenticeship students.

Wei said “I was also delighted to visit [Ashford Borough Council](#) in the afternoon to meet the planning team led by Simon Cole, Head of Planning & Development and understand their current opportunities and challenges. Ashford town centre is an exemplary long-term public realm improvement and urban regeneration project. I have long wanted to visit. Glad I had the opportunity to have a tour guided by the remarkable planning team behind the success.

It was great to meet RTPI Young Planners co-chaired by Molly How and Graham Wilson in the Region as well. It’s lovely to meet our ambitious young planners and apprenticeship students in person.”

A chat with the judges ...

Why did you join the judging panel?

Thank you to all judge's this year.
The panel comprises:

- **Chair: Gareth Giles FRTPI**,
Whaleback Planning and Design
- **Simon Taylor MRTPI**, DLUHC and RTPI SE Chair
- **Eleanor Gingell MRTPI**, Cherwell District Council
- **Stephanie Weeks MRTPI**, Carter Jonas
- **Stephen Harness FRTPI**,
Defense Infrastructure Organisations
- **Dr Christopher Maidment MRTPI**,
University of Reading
- **Joanne Dennis-Jones MRTPI**, GL Hearn Limited
- **Daniel Young MRTPI**, Oxford City Council



Gareth Giles FRTPI
Chair of the Judging Panel

*Whaleback Planning
and Design*



Simon Taylor MRTPI
Chair of RTPI South East

DLUHC

“It is a privilege to Chair the Judging Panel for the Regional Awards this year which is always an enjoyable and inspiring process. We had many excellent entrants making a huge contribution to our industry and I want to wish the best of luck to all involved”.

“I am hugely honoured to be part of this year’s judging panel for the Regional Awards, as it is an opportunity to celebrate and champion our amazing work throughout the South East. I hope that everyone, not only celebrates with us, but to feel proud and inspired with what is happening in our Region. Good luck to all our entrants!”

Chat with the judges ... *(continued)*



Eleanor Gingell MRTPI

Cherwell District Council



Stephanie Weeks MRTPI

Carter Jonas



Stephen Harness FRTPI

Defence Infrastructure Organisations (DIO)

“I became a Judge as an opportunity to celebrate and share the success and help to raise the awareness of the positive contributions that good planning makes”.

“It is a privilege to be invited to be a judge on this panel for the first time. The professionals, teams and projects that have been nominated are exceptional. It has been an interesting and truly inspiring process.”

“Being a judge is a privilege and I’m keen to see achievements recognised and championed as good practice for others to learn from and follow”.



Thank you to our generous Headline sponsor **Savills** for their continued support of the Awards for Planning Excellence.

Read more about the judges [here >](#)

Chat with the judges ... *(continued)*



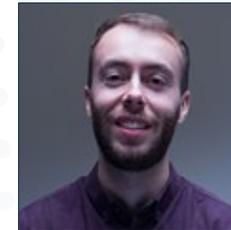
Dr Christopher Maidment
MRTPI

University of Reading



Joanne Dennis-Jones
MRTPI

GL Hearn



Daniel Young MRTPI

Oxford City Council

“I really enjoy learning about the people and exploring the interesting projects that are entered into the awards – it’s great to be part of recognising what good planning can achieve!”

“Being a judge for these awards is the easy bit; driving innovation, striving to meet the sustainable development goals, focusing on delivery and keeping the wheels turning during covid is the inspiration. Thank you to all who entered in allowing us to share and learn from your success”.

“I took part in the judging of the RTPI regional awards because I see it as an opportunity to recognise the best and brightest in our industry. It’s great to see the amazing contributions that planners are making every day across our region and important that we celebrate that”.

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Meet with ...

Paula Oniya

Consultant

Member of the Regional
Activities Committee

A bit about you

Ideas, thoughts and experiences can often form people's ideology and identity. I have often found that nothing much changes in life unless people want to change. The same things that cause divisions can also be used in positive healthy ways to bring people together; this to me is the circle of life.

I am Architect and specialise in Urban Design, an untapped field that encompasses the realms and elements of Architecture and Spatial Planning in the built and natural environment. I have also attended courses in Psychology at Redbridge College and leadership in Business Analysis at the University of Toronto. My educational background allows me to engage with business leaders and groups from different backgrounds in both public and private sectors.

I focus on promoting healthier workplaces and workspaces. My leadership skills revolves around mutual respect, problem solving, demonstrating the benefits of emotional intelligence and how it supports overall well-being. This increases diversity of thought that benefits professionals from different backgrounds.

Why you chose planning?

I like to think I did not choose planning; planning chose me. A vacancy at a local authority in London opened the door for me to planning and what was then building control. As a full time employee, I have worked for local authorities in London, Epping Forest District Council and the Town of Richmond Hill in Ontario, Canada, I often look back with fond memories when I recollect the time I spent with some of the people I worked with on a number of projects. To me, that is the joy of planning.

Planning can also be a chosen profession that brings together a diverse group of people from different backgrounds with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Although as individuals we may not always agree on several issues, I lean on a phrase attributed to the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg of the US Supreme Court; just because you disagree does not mean you have to be disagreeable. Between all planning professionals, one can choose and agree to disagree to find a common sense of purpose.

What do you do in your current job

I am a self-employed Consultant. I also volunteer and get involved with freelance work every now and again. This allows me to use my well-developed skills in a variety of different ways and in various fields.

What do you do when you are not planning

When I am not working, I usually like to spend my leisure time discovering healthy and fun things to do preferably with others who share my common interests.

I participate in walking netball and football with a great bunch of people locally. I also enjoy playing board games, swimming, dancing and without too much persuasion, join in karaoke. To me, getting together with close friends and family is the order of any day as they keep me amused, grounded, and provide support whenever I need it. They are truly awesome.

Why did you join the committee

I joined the committee because sometimes in life we only get once chance, one opportunity. So when an opportunity presented itself, I volunteered in a bid to contribute meaningfully and give back in positive ways to others in the profession. It has also been a great opportunity for me to meet people, network with other individuals and become part of a great team. Easily one of the best things I have done during the lockdown period.



A Fair COP26



Craig McLaren

RTPI's Director of Scotland, Ireland and English Regions and is leading on COP26 for the Institute.

The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, or [COP26](#) as it is better known, is to take place in Glasgow between 1 and 12 November.

COP26 is the first opportunity for countries to upgrade their [Nationally Determined Contributions towards meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement](#) and the themes of the summit are:

- Adaptation and resilience
- Energy transition and clean growth
- Nature based solutions
- Accelerating the move to zero-carbon road transport.
- Financing the transition

The RTPI aims to use COP26 as an opportunity to increase understanding of the role planners and planning can play in tackling climate change across each of the four UK Governments, the Irish Government and other national governments internationally. In doing this we are using our engagement to underline how planning can help to achieve net zero carbon targets and to highlight what is needed to support this.

Our key policy asks are based on the [Plan the World We Need](#) research we published last year and focus around COP26 agreeing that:

- Governments pledge tougher emission cuts by 2030
- Governments publish plans on how they will reach 2050 net zero carbon which recognise the role that planners, planning and planning systems can play in this.
- Richer nations fulfil their pledge to help poorer countries to protect themselves against climate impact and decarbonisation

The RTPI Presidential team will be in Glasgow for part of the summit to push our case and engage in debate and discussion. We are exploring how best to make opportunities to meet with key policy makers, influencers and partners at the sessions and during our time at the summit. [The programme for the summit](#) has given each day a theme and we are particularly keen to engage on those days on adaptation, gender, transport and cities, regions and the built environment. We also plan to blog on each of these themes throughout the summit.

In the run up to COP26 have organised a number of events for members that will explore the issues being discussed. We have already held the Irish Planner Live looking at the challenges and opportunities of net zero in terms of compact growth, transport and energy.

[The Northern Irish Planner Live](#) covered issues including practical climate action for planners, sustainable infrastructure planning and creating sustainable neighbourhoods, and, [The Scottish Planner Live](#) takes place on 7 October and will examine how we can plan for a green economy.

The Annual Young Planners conference on 29 October "Our Place In a Climate Crisis" will look at how we can reduce carbon emissions, protect communities and habitats and work together to tackle the climate crisis and will ask how planning can address the climate crisis and what is the place of Young Planners in responding to this.

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We have already seen [The Planner magazine's](#) September edition include a number of articles on planning's role in delivering the COP26 goals whilst the new issue of The Scottish Planner journal will look at COP26 from a Scottish perspective and the latest RTPI Cymru journal [Cynllunio](#) has features on COP26, climate change and zero carbon.

During the summit itself we will be organising a face to face and webcast event in Glasgow called The Race to Zero: How to Plan the World We Need. This event will be led by the RTPI with support from our global sister Institutes in the Global Planning Network and the Commonwealth Association of Planners and will comprise a series of presentations that highlight the critical role of, and opportunities for, towns and cities across the globe to address climate change and achieve zero carbon places.

We are delivery partners for the [UK Green Building Council's virtual pavilion](#) which will include a virtual exhibition space and we are working with them and other built environment organisations to develop a number of virtual events that will take place during the summit.

Today sees the launch of our [new web hub](#) that will provide all the details of our activities. We are encouraging members to check in on this regularly to hear about our activities, new publications and events which will be taken forward as part of our COP26 programme.



Back to school, back to championing planning?



Andrew Close MRTPI Director of Education and Profession

Andrew is responsible for Institute-wide education policy and accreditation procedures, student advice and support including the RTPI Bursary project, lifelong learning and CPD monitoring and standards, and the RTPI Future Planners volunteer initiative to promote planning as a career choice to young people.

Taking my two nieces around the Science Museum during the school holidays was a timely reminder; (i) always remember to pack snacks, (ii) the need to book everything in advance, and (iii) that the impact of planning and planning skills can be found in all experiences. A six-year-old asking – do they have roads on the moon and how will they decide how to build houses if we live there, and then sitting on top of a bus as we headed back home and counting all the shops (or lack of) on a street, gave me ample opportunity to practice talking about spatial planning, location of development and land use mix without the jargon. She is a future planner in the making.

It struck a chord with me given the importance of outdoor spaces for all of us, particularly for school children ...

Of course Science or Technology are topics that link to the work of a planner, alongside other school subjects such as Geography. We just need to champion it! At the beginning of the summer holidays, the Institute published its [Children and Town Planning: Creating Places to Grow](#) report. It struck a chord with me given the importance of outdoor spaces for all of us, particularly for school children over the past 18 months and more. The research gives practical advice to professionals working within the UK and Ireland planning systems and looks at how to involve young people in what their built and natural environment should look like.

Link it to your CPD

The school return therefore got me thinking that it offers potential for the Institute and its members – as individual ‘ambassadors’ of the profession to reconnect with education engagement programmes while taking into account government and employer guidelines and RTPI policies and protocols. Did you know that ‘Championing Planning’ is one of the [ten Core CPD topics](#) that the RTPI recommends to its members?

The RTPI’s ‘Future Planners’ initiative, pre-Covid, was a good way for volunteer ‘ambassadors’ to raise awareness of town planning. It has championed what a great career it is to primary and secondary pupils, building on an [annual career talks programme](#) to university students and promoting new work-based study routes such as degree apprenticeships.

After my recent London day out, I am directly aware that it is a way to practise communication, advocacy and negotiation skills.



Back to school ... (continued)



Look out for World Town Planning Day or Agent Plan-It

Planners have started to tap into the [‘Minecraft generation’](#) which is great to see, and there is more we can hopefully do. Our cartoon and comic [‘Agent Plan-it’](#) developed and broadcast with Fun Kids

Online, the UK children’s radio station, has been a starting point to help champion planning to a new audience who don’t just accept what they see around them, without knowing the history of the environment or appreciating what goes behind the development of an area.

‘Old skool’ techniques can also work well to engage young people in the environment around them and the ever-pertinent issue of planning for sustainability. With [COP26](#), climate action is centre stage, and this will be the focus for another RTPI schools competition. Last year, over 200 UK pupils [took part](#) and this year we are aiming even higher.

The competition details will be available on social media in the lead up to World Town Planning Day on 8 November. You can champion planning by promoting to your own children’s (or nieces’, or friends’) school teachers!

Get your thinking caps on

While organized programmes of in-person schools engagement remains on pause for the time being, have a look at the advice and reporting requirements on the [RTPI Ambassadors web page](#) including access to member-only information.

[Online brochures and flyers are available](#) as well. So would you be interested in ‘homework’? Remember if it properly meets your personal development plan objectives, it could also be counted as CPD. Planners are creative problem solvers. As well as that material from the Institute, the [practice advice note](#) lists three resource packs for professionals, which could be adaptable for an (online) classroom event: [Place Standard](#), [Voice Opportunity Power](#) and [Building a Community in a Day](#).

Stories, plans and visuals of development schemes which the RTPI education team can turn into a lesson and case studies for teachers would be gratefully received. You might also want to volunteer at work to organize an insight day for a student or class as this [excellent RTPI blog](#) from Richmond and Wandsworth Councils attests, and even get the RTPI president to be part of the panel.

Exploring routes into the planning profession through apprenticeships, 8 November

To coincide with World Urbanism Day this event hears from a selection of RTPI apprentices who reflect on their experience as an apprentice and their aspirations for their careers to encourage others to consider the apprenticeship route into the profession.

Aimed at school and college leavers this event introduces the apprenticeship route as an entry into the profession by providing experiences of current apprentices. The event will also focus on the motivations behind wanting to go into the planning and the aspirations apprentices’ have to shape the world in which we live.

Get to know...

Will Sparling MRTPI

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Member of the Regional Activities Committee



A bit about you

I'm a chartered town planner with almost ten years' experience in development management, local plan making and supporting communities to prepare neighbourhood plans. I also have a background in research having completed a PhD looking at two urban neighbourhood planning case studies in Leeds. My current role is with South Oxfordshire District Council as a Senior Major Applications Officer.

Why you chose planning?

As with many of us, planning chose me. After completing a Geography degree at the University of Central Lancashire, circumstances meant I had a choice of studying for a Masters degree in either housing and development or Town and Regional Planning at Leeds Beckett. It was the right choice as I have been involved in some remarkable development projects and met some exceptional people within the profession and the community. Their commitment to getting planning right stands out for me.

After completing my Masters degree I was lucky to have an opportunity to carry out primary research into the preparation of two urban neighbourhood plans. The people involved grasped the opportunity to plan for their area and shape development for the next 30 years. This really moulded my approach to planning by trying to make it easier in the face of complexity, whilst seeking to analyse and explain the "why" of decisions I am making. I would encourage all planners to work hard to explain those reasons having regard to the power and influence over decision that planners often wield.

What do you do in your current job

My current role involves determining major planning applications on behalf of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. We have an innovative structure where our team spans two districts in Oxfordshire and we work hard together to make planning work to deliver local priorities. I am accountable to a broad range of local and national politicians, local communities and senior officers in addition to other stakeholders and of course applicants. The biggest challenge is providing good levels of customer service in the face of squeezed resources.

Why did you join the committee

My interest in RTPI activities began in around 2012 when our lecturer encouraged students to volunteer with Planning Aid England. Neighbourhood plans had just been introduced and communities and the profession were pivoting and adapting as best they could. As a student it was great because we were all learning so much from each other. From there I joined the Yorkshire region RAC, where we supported Holbeck to prepare their neighbourhood plan alongside the local planning authority. When I moved to Oxfordshire, joining the South East RAC seemed the logical step where I have been involved in committee proceedings and organising a couple of events. I also volunteer for Planning Aid England national casework.

What do you do when you are not planning

Outside of work I enjoy playing football, swimming and cycling.

Planning and the growing challenges faced by displaced people

As the climate crisis deepens, environmental stress will produce not only more extreme weather events but also new slow onset hazards - such as droughts and epidemics. Climate-related hazards can build up and have profound effects on societies by compounding and accumulating risks.

This will make communities progressively more vulnerable and increase the likelihood, severity and complexity of humanitarian crises and displacement situations. For example, rapidly sheltering people fleeing violence today needs to consider the risk of a COVID-19 hotbed.

We already know that getting global rapid urbanisation right can help achieve far reaching sustainability objectives relevant to improving humanitarian outcomes. This is illustrated by the target dedicated to preventing deaths and losses in disasters under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities[1]. In the lead up to COP26 in Glasgow, we are launching a report that shines a light on some of the ways global urbanisation can help displaced people recover from displacement - and benefit host communities.

Forced displacement is increasingly common, with more people forced from home than ever before. Many of them can find refuge in and around small and medium-sized towns - where most global urban growth is expected. These places already have fewer services available and receive less development support from national and international actors. However, many towns and cities could turn displacement into an opportunity: displaced people can help local economies to thrive by contributing their knowledge, social networks, entrepreneurial abilities, labour, etc. to expanding urban centres.

In the lead up to COP26 in Glasgow, we are launching a report that shines a light on some of the ways global urbanisation can help displaced people recover from displacement - and benefit host communities. Successfully responding to such processes in parallel will be a major challenge in the next decade. Aligning interventions to respond to displacement with local trajectories of inclusive urban growth can become an avenue for capturing part of the prosperity that generally accompanies urbanisation, supporting recovery and contributing to the sustainable development of host communities.

For example, in Uganda, the national strategy Uganda 2040, identifies opportunities to align the growth of secondary towns, such as Arua, with a development approach to responding to displacement.

However, in many places that have little planning capacity such opportunities might not have been identified. For example, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridors are expected to mostly benefit the already more affluent eastern Pakistan, with fewer gains in terms of connectivity in the west [2]. However, that is where hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees are hosted in settlements - in many cases for over four decades.

In their respective time cycles, both urbanisation and displacement processes are expected to happen rapidly. As displacement situations become increasingly protracted, disconnected locations to host the displaced can lock in inequalities and favour unsustainable patterns of spatial development and regional inequalities. Spatial decisions taken during a response can have long lasting consequences and considering their potential in terms of development might make a significant difference for displaced people and their host communities.

However, due to political opposition, lack of capacity and the rapid evolution of many humanitarian situations, the displaced can be cut off from the opportunities of urbanisation and remain stuck in disconnected places putting growing pressures on the capacity of humanitarian actors.

Our new report aims to advance spatial coordination across the efforts of humanitarian and development actors so that they can jointly build a stronger consensus around locations to host the displaced that are not only safe, but also accessible, connected to employment opportunities, aligned with prevalent settlement patterns and, where these exist, contribute to development plans and strategies.

We brought together the evidence on how humanitarian response to displacement influences urbanisation processes and land values in a place, the gaps in our current understanding of inclusive urban economic growth in displacement settings and the conditions for it to happen. In the report we also consider the obstacles to interpreting displacement data according to their urban context, the planning expertise used by different actors in a displacement setting and the tensions between planning objectives and humanitarian principles.

Our report builds on the learning accumulated over more than a decade, during which the context of humanitarian response to displacement has gradually been shifting towards urban areas and the need to link humanitarian and development efforts has been formalised in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Today the majority of the 80 million forced from home - 1% of the global population - are estimated to find refuge in cities, however it is not clear how those hosted in expanding peri-urban areas and in the outskirts of towns are included in this count. Internal displacement is on the rise and traditional solutions for refugees - return, resettlement, and local integration - are becoming more elusive. In this context, the opportunities to support the self-reliance of the displaced while supporting towns and cities to grow sustainably through context-appropriate and strengthened planning approaches become increasingly relevant.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 See all the SDG11 targets and at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>
- 2 Zhao J, Sun G and Webster C (2021) Does China-Pakistan Economic Corridor improve connectivity in Pakistan? A network assessment. Accessed on 13-08-2021 at <https://bit.ly/2VP5KDX>



Dr Michele Vianello
**International Policy and
Research Officer**

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RTPI Online Events 2021

This is where you can access the most cutting-edge events on planning. Brought to you by our Regions and Nations, this calendar of webinars replaces our face to face Regional and National event programmes, and brings all our events under one roof, keeping you connected and up to date digitally, wherever you are based.

The RTPI Online Events series is FREE to members. Non-member tickets cost £25. The RTPI South East 2021 online programme provides free CPD for members. Undertaking CPD is an important part of maintaining your competence as a professional.

The CPD programme could count towards your minimum 50 hours of CPD activity in each two-year period. Read more about [CPD requirements](#) and assessment as an RTPI member.

Rural Planning - South East

[Tuesday, 2 November \(12:30-13:45\)](#)

What is the role of planning in the rural areas? This event will look at the association between our ever-changing planning system and the future of the countryside. Speakers will explore the effective integration and balancing of economic, social and environmental factors in promoting sustainable development of our rural areas.

Confirmed speakers:

- Chair: Laura Archer, Portsmouth City Council
- Rural diversification schemes: Tom Ogden, Bloomfields Chartered Town Planners
- Biodiversity Net Gain: Georgina Timmi, ECOSA
- Nutrient neutrality: Daniel Carter, Ashford City Council
- Law Update: Kevin Leigh, 33 Bedford Row

Current issues in waste planning

[Tuesday, 23 November \(12:30-13:45\)](#)

Planning for waste management is an essential but often overlooked area of planning. This event will focus on current issues in waste planning, including:

1. Discussion on waste management planning and its importance in planning reforms
2. The impacts of climate emergency in waste planning
3. Opportunities and Challenges in Waste Applications
4. Duty to Cooperate and Waste Planning

Decarbonising the transport network in the South East

[Monday, 6 December \(12:30-13:45\)](#)

Transport planning has a critical role to play in addressing climate change. In July the Government published its decarbonising strategy which sets out the pathway to net zero transport in the UK. This webinar will look at the challenges and potential solutions to delivering the strategy in the South East. Speakers will explore:

- Decarbonisation of transport through the Planning System
- What investment is needed to support decarbonisation of the network in the South East
- The approach to decarbonising different sectors (Highways, Aviation, Rail)
- Legislative changes to support decarbonisation



**More
events
can be
found
here >**

Newly chartered members

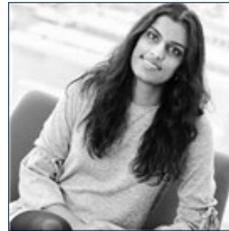
Congratulations to the newly Chartered members from the region (August 2021)

- Laura Baker
- Emily Hall
- Rebecca Hoad
- Nyra John
- Tsz Lok Ng
- Harry Andrew Palmer
- Sangeeta Ratna
- Caroline Downie
- Andrew George
- Elizabeth Withall

Last chance to book the Young Planners Conference, Friday, 29 October

Join us in Edinburgh in person or online for the RTPI's first ever hybrid conference!

Hear what they have to say :



Nyra John
MRTPI

“For me, planning is so important for making sustainable places and environments whilst balancing the needs of local communities and it’s great to have recognition from the RTPI as a Chartered Member for the often challenging, but important work I have undertaken in my career so far.”



Sangeeta Ratna
MRTPI

“A Chartered membership is an acknowledgement of my contribution to the built environment as well as an encouragement towards planning the desirable world for us and our future generations.”



Tsz Lok Ng (Jeffrey)
MRTPI

“RTPI has arranged a wide range of supporting events and online learning materials related to APC. Candidates are strongly encouraged to join those events to be familiar with the APC guidance and assessment”