

Independent Consultants Network 2018 Conference

DEIRDRE WELLS, RTPI ICN CHAIR

Historic York was the backdrop to the annual ICN event. Its theme was 'Making a Difference', which concentrated on improving our professional performance on behalf of a wide diversity of clients, while reflecting our fundamental aims of delivering good-quality developments that practitioners can be proud of.

For most of our working lives, Network members work independently with limited access to advice from colleagues. The Network, however, provides a highly valued virtual office for daily discussion and sharing learning. Our annual conference adds to this, enabling us to learn together, to develop ideas and to cement the bonds between us.

Social bonding is a significant part of the event. Thus a walking tour of the city, led by the Civic Trust, kicked off informal discussions of townscape and heritage issues in our own areas. Regret was expressed by many about the continuing shortage of heritage skills in local authorities, and its adverse impacts.

An evening reception sponsored by 39 Essex Street Chambers, The Planning Portal and Terraquest took place in the York Art Gallery – chosen to stimulate the aesthetic aspects of our work. Delegates were able to have direct access for the evening to expert speakers, government, Planning Portal and RTPI representatives.

After an opening exhortation to 'Make Planning Great Again' from the Chairman, RTPI Chief Executive Victoria Hills opened the conference proper by making it clear that she valued input from the Network as the RTPI developed research programmes and strategies. Barrister Richard Wald then considered possible challenge areas arising from the new NPPF and the topic of effective challenges in a wider sense, with advice usually reserved for clients.

MHCLG Infrastructure lead David Waterhouse spoke about the new NPPF and a focus on quality, delivery and developing more land in the right places, underwritten by environmental protection and securing benefits. Several areas in policy where



flexibility and responsiveness to local conditions are emphasised were highlighted, plus the need to plan holistically especially with large-scale change.

Afternoon workshops were diverse, but all were designed to stimulate fresh thinking. We had the benefit of experts in Neighbourhood Planning to thank for an exploration of effective community engagement, with a distillation of practical advice. A factor that came to the fore was the importance of people skills in facing community groups, as well as a well-financed and organised process. A focus on the real outcomes sought is sometimes absent in non-professional groups, and firm guidance is essential.

Research and a survey of network members in advance had established significant

concerns about the appeals system and quality of decisions. Steering group members led a brainstorming session to identify areas for change and potential solutions, which we will discuss further with senior members of various organisations, where we have already established a willingness to work together. This was a particularly useful session with structured discussion rather than stories of disappointment.

A legal expert gave the third workshop a concise, imaginative and entertaining presentation on the proper (and to many unexpected) use of Section 73 applications.

Design excellence as a driving force in new development was the theme for the final plenary session given by Colin Haylock, linking with other discussions on engagement with others and personal satisfaction in our profession.

Although sad to see him go, the Network was grateful to have the chance to thank Robbie Calvert, RTPI network manager, for his partisan, skillful and cheerful support.

The event enjoyed exceptionally high levels of participation, shared learning and enjoyment. It has become a fixed part of the Network's calendar, to be repeated next autumn with the help of our much-appreciated sponsors.

3 POINT PLAN

A planner explains how they would improve the Scottish planning system

Petra Biberbach

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, PLANNING AID
SCOTLAND



Our network of 400 volunteers (almost one in five planners in Scotland) volunteer with PAS for the opportunity to develop new skills, work hands-on with communities and explore aspects of the profession outside their day job.

Through our Advice Service, skills programmes and place-based projects, our volunteers give not just their time, but also their knowledge and skills to help individuals and communities across Scotland engage with the planning system.

The Scottish planning system is currently going through reform, with new legislation making its way through the Scottish Parliament.

There are growing calls for a system that favours inclusivity and collaboration over confrontation, with interest in the potential role for mediation in the planning system – early and sustained dialogue that can lead to improved outcomes for all.

As part of improving outcomes for communities, the planning profession increasingly has the chance to initiate and facilitate dialogue between all areas of policy that impact on place in order to integrate the physical place with health and well-being and wider policy agendas.



1
An increasing number of planners recognise volunteering as a key part of their professional development

2
We need a more holistic and collaborative system rooted in place

3
Planning can play a lead role as facilitator in all the issues that impact on place

STATS OF THE MONTH



According to 2018 UNISDR
European Forum on
Disaster Risk Reduction,
14 cities in the UK are
involved in international
partnerships and global
initiatives to build resilience
and adaptation.

7.5 million acres of land
in England and Wales are
still 'missing' from The
Land Registry. Despite
being set up in 1862, the
Register is only about
80% complete.



7.5m

POSITION POINTS

REGENERATING SEASIDE TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES

RICHARD BLYTH, HEAD OF POLICY AND RESEARCH
The RTPI recently provided written and oral evidence to the House of Lords Committee for regenerating seaside towns and communities. We believe that enforcement powers can provide a crucial response to tackling substandard accommodation in these areas. We are interested in the possibilities for neighbourhood plans to impact on the issue of second homes, but with the caveat that plans can only influence new-build and have no impact on existing stock – this only works at the margin.

INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS

TOM KENNY, POLICY OFFICER
The RTPI recently provided written and oral evidence to the House of Lords Committee for Intergenerational Fairness.
We believe that planning can play an important role in promoting intergenerational fairness, in particular by identifying and balancing needs between and within generations. This can be achieved by incorporating need into plan-making at an early stage including setting housing targets, encouraging multigenerational housing, creating equitable places, and engaging with communities. Planning can help deliver compact, mixed-use, public transport-friendly settlements that work for all generations.
However, this requires proper resourcing and planning is not a 'silver bullet' solution for intergenerational inequality. Other tools, for example, a move towards running public finances on a 'balance sheet' rather than 'cash flow' basis, would allow greater investment in future generations.

Planning *with* rather than planning *for*

DR AUDE-BICQUELET-LOCK, DEPUTY HEAD OF POLICY & RESEARCH

This edition explores perspectives on reconciling different world views that planners face in community engagement, asking us to reflect on principles of 'true' engagement and participation.

Planners must actively respond to the demands of constituents; planning is at its best when it is responsive to diverse actors, neither presumptuous about their needs nor dismissive of their considerations. As a result, it is more likely that constituents

will care, listen, and act in ways shaped by planners' work.

John Forester warns against top-down planning. Despite planners' good intentions in such scenarios, it is not about making decisions for people but *with* them. Planning, argues Forester, is "inescapably relational, not just informal". Planning is thus less about collecting information than about being accountable, respecting others' concerns, recognising others' autonomy and thinking about what "we could do together".

Lieselot Vandenbussche similarly explores the developmental challenge of assessing how stakeholder relations evolve throughout time and why they may evolve as they do. Vandenbussche explores the regeneration efforts of Katendrecht, Rotterdam, and finds that "the pinnacle of the collaborative partnership... was characterized by the simultaneous accommodation of opposing values... rather than a uni-dimensional emphasis on consensus".

The interface – the free section of the journal – looks at the challenge of addressing deeply polarised planning cases. Willow Lung-Amam and Gerardo Sandoval tackle the challenge of planners supporting immigrant communities while Ann Foss takes on the challenge of climate change.

Planning Theory & Practice is an internationally regarded research journal. RTPI members can receive a significant subscription discount. Volume 19, issue 4 is out now.

Plan your CPD with new guidelines

ANDREW CLOSE, HEAD OF CAREERS, EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Institute has adopted a Core CPD Framework as a long-term strategy to guide your professional development and training needs. It supports the policy of 50 hours of CPD that all members must record over a two-year period – other than retired or student members.

Developed with member, employer and sector research, the framework identifies a programme of CPD that covers the key professional skills and planning knowledge topics that are core for members to meet the planning challenges of today and the future. Look out for the logo as the programme is rolled out.

The 10 topics are:

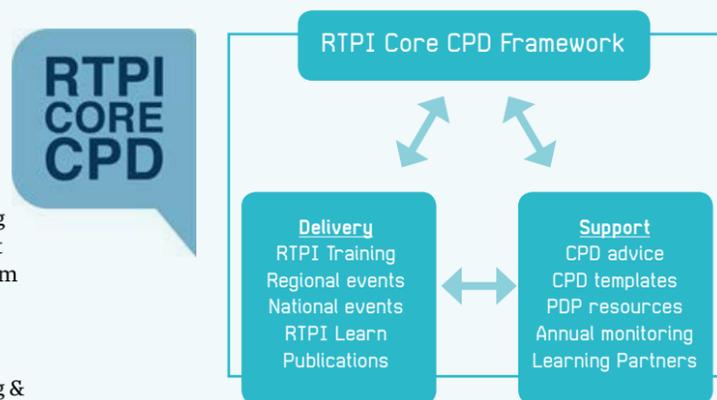
- Professional Skills
- Championing Planning
- Business Development
- Ethics & Professionalism
- Digital Planning
- Design
- Planning Knowledge
- Infrastructure Planning & Economic Development
- Health & Inclusive Planning
- Housing
- Environmental Planning
- Planning Law & Process

The 2019 National Training programme is fully aligned to the framework, delivering quality and expertise. Other conferences and regional

events also form part of the RTPI's CPD package. CPD takes many forms – conferences, training events, online learning, work-based learning, and so on. For example, the topic 'championing planning' is at the heart of the profession. Your focus for this topic might be on leadership, mediation,

negotiation, political awareness, community engagement, or volunteering and advocacy, and you can choose how you learn about them. See these websites:

- bit.ly/planner0119-cpdframework
- bit.ly/planner0119-cpdmembers



RTPI ACTIVITY PIPELINE

Current RTPI work – what the Institute is doing and how you can help us

APPLY TO BE AN RTPI FELLOW

Being recognised by your peers as a Fellow is one of the highest professional attainments. Could you be next? The RTPI is inviting suitably qualified members to apply. Applicants wishing to be conferred must be Chartered Town Planners and will have made a major personal contribution to the planning profession in regard to:

- **Leadership:** The applicant has shown leadership in their field, developing and delivering a vision, encouraging others and advancing the environment in the sector in which they operate.
- **Innovation:** The applicant has demonstrated the ability to deliver new and creative solutions to existing and/or emerging issues and challenges in their area of spatial planning.
- **Contribution to others in the profession and the community.** The member has been actively engaged in developing and supporting other members of the profession and/or the community.
- **Whether the member's contribution is above and beyond that expected of an ordinary competent professional planner.**

Applications for Fellowship are considered by the RTPI Nominations Sub-Committee. To apply, you prepare a 1,000-2,000-word statement addressing the criteria, which is supported by four Chartered Town Planners. Full details can be found at: www.rtpi.org.uk/fellow.

Read the profile of Fellow Professor Cecilia Wong FRTPi here: bit.ly/planner0119-wong

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE RTPI PLANNING CONVENTION 2019

The RTPI Planning Convention is the largest national planning event of the year for industry professionals from all sectors. This year's conference will take place on 19 June in London. Expect a packed and thought-provoking programme brought to you by the industry's most influential names, sharing their expertise through a mix of keynotes, plenaries, interactive workshops and debates.

Tickets will go on sale on the RTPI website shortly.

For more information see: bit.ly/planner0119-convention

MAKE THE NEW YEAR YOUR YEAR WITH RTPI PLUS

This January, enjoy discounted gym membership at thousands of gyms, leisure centres and health clubs across the UK and Ireland. Virgin Experience Days are also on offer this month with up to 20 per cent off*. These discounts are available through RTPI Plus – a scheme available to most classes of membership that offers a wide range of savings and benefits that can help you save on lifestyle, travel, insurance and business products.

Start saving now: bit.ly/planner0119-rtpiplus
*T&Cs apply. See website. Discount code cannot be used against the Excluded Range or against already discounted products.

VOLUNTEER-LED E-MAIL ADVICE SERVICE MARKS ITS FIRST YEAR

Planning Aid England's email advice service has celebrated its first anniversary since becoming a volunteer-led service. The service provides free planning advice to help members of the public effectively engage with the planning system.

This service is delivered by a team of chartered volunteers who respond to enquiries on planning topics including planning applications, change of use classes, planning appeals and enforcement. User satisfaction levels for the service are regularly over 80 per cent.

Chartered volunteers based across England have been recruited and trained to deliver advice, each working up to 2.5 hours a week answering email enquiries.

With local authorities increasingly charging for planning advice, the service has a high demand and responds to more than 150 emails a month. The service's professional and impartial advice supports members of the public who are faced with new developments in their local area but who know little about town planning and its complex processes.

Volunteers report enjoying the role; one describes it as "the highlight" of their week. Another volunteer said: "It is satisfying to think that I am able to help guide members of the public through the often complex planning system. It has also increased my own knowledge of parts of the planning system I don't get involved with as part of my day job, and I no longer have to worry about fulfilling my CPD requirements!"

2019 NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

The RTPI has launched its annual programme of national training events, starting in February. The 56 courses, which include 11 new topics, will be delivered at 14 locations across the UK.

Designed and delivered by industry subject experts, RTPI national training reflects the needs of planners. Attending these courses will help you to expand your technical knowledge and skills, meet your CPD requirements, gain inspiration, learn about all the latest developments, and reflect on the impact you can make in your practice – everything you need to grow as a planning professional.

The sessions are delivered in either a Briefing or Masterclass format. Briefings offer a combination of the latest updates with case studies giving practical insights into current issues. Masterclasses focus on specific technical and key development areas.

All courses are aligned to the RTPI Core CPD Framework and support the UN Sustainable Development Goals where possible.

Prices start from as little as £199+VAT. RTPI members and non-members can book online at www.rtpi.org.uk/training with special rates for multi-buy purchases.

The national training programme is part of a wider CPD programme and complements RTPI conferences, regional training events and RTPI Learn online modules.

- To find out more, visit rtpi.org.uk/training, or get in touch with our specialist in-house training team: t: +44 (0)20 7929 8400, or email training@rtpi.org.uk

CORRECTION

Frances Haire MRTPI was listed as from 'Unmanaged Regions & Nations' in the 'Chartered Members' section of November's edition. This was incorrect and should have been 'London'. We apologise for this mistake and inconvenience caused.