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RTPI Scotland

Royal Town Planning Institute



**20 years and
counting, young
planners past,
present and future**

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EC3R 8DL

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of 2023. This year marks a significant milestone for us as we celebrate 20 years of the Scottish Young Planners Network (SYPN). Not only do young planners bring a unique perspective to the planning system, they are also going to be the future leaders of our profession. That's why it is vital that we should not only nurture their development but also co-develop a planning system with their close input. The SYPN has been a crucial vehicle to have these important discussions over the years. Beyond this the network has also proven itself to have a central role in developing professional networks, with many of these connections enduring long into planners careers, both on a personal and professional level. The jewel on the crown of the SYPN annual calendar is of course the annual conference which we are delighted to be holding in Stirling on the 27th

April. This is not one to be missed so make sure you leave a mark in your diaries.

We have some excellent articles in this edition looking at support for young planners, engagement with children and young persons, developing future leaders, green skills and routes into the profession. We also have some excellent contributions on the role of strategic planning in the West of Scotland, an introduction to the work of the Woodland Trust and an update on the RTPI Code of Conduct.

So here's a toast to our young planners and a toast to the future of our profession, which from my experience managing the network over the past few years, I can assure is a very bright one.

Robbie Calvert
Co-editor

Convenor's Comments: Planning's New Future



Kirsty Macari MRTPI,
RTPI Scotland
Convenor, Co-Head
of Undergraduate
(Architecture &
Urban Planning/
Contemporary Art
Practice) at DJCAD,
University of Dundee

Kirsty Macari MRTPI, RTPI Scotland Convenor, Co-Head of Undergraduate (Architecture & Urban Planning/ Contemporary Art Practice) at DJCAD, University of Dundee, discusses embracing change and the key role of the Scottish Young Planner's Network in the transformation of planning in Scotland.

The writing of the first column was going to be daunting, but so is taking a new role in your planning career or deciding to take your first steps into planning education, or even retraining from a previous career path. Having a little self-confidence in actions and choices is key but cannot be done without a team around you.

Speaking of confident teams - Scottish Young Planners Network is 20 years old this year! This evolving team of motivated and driven individuals, whether as a committee member or event attendee, are a valuable resource within Scotland. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of them, but particularly those who volunteer and give up their time to mentor, support, organise and inspire.

When I speak to current students or recent graduates, their experience is enhanced by what SYPN can offer. In Scotland, our geographic size allows us to be a community of practice and creates an opportunity to learn with and from others around us. There is no doubt that the ambitions for transformation of planning in Scotland requires developing new skills, embracing different processes, as well as ensuring

positive action. The SYPN network will be a key part of that progress.

Existing and future young planners are coming out of education with the energy and new skills that can be reciprocated back into the existing planning workforce, just as the existing workforce can coach, mentor and support them in return. Digital skills are a key example of this, where embedded within them already are the skills that are necessary in how we design, communicate and disseminate our future local development plans or carry out community engagement. They are also happy to test and research ideas that can demonstrate the future of a digitally enabled planning system. There are some interesting articles on what this could look like available here: <https://digital4planning.com/resources-2/>, as well as, <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/digital-planning/>.

We were all once young planners and many, I hope, are still young at heart. The passion that each of us has for driving change is always there in us but sometimes, and just occasionally, we lose our way. The changes and speed at which change is required can at times be daunting. If we take, for example, National Planning Framework 4, a significant and necessary shift in addressing complex social, environmental, and economic needs. A beacon for change of which planning is a key driver. Even with years of experience, transformation can be uncomfortable and the pressure to get change perfect is not always realistic.

That transformation needs two things:

1. Collective continuous learning beyond our CPD requirements
2. Progressive positive action

I was fortunate enough to meet Allistair McCaw, motivational speaker on coaching, leadership and attitude a few weeks ago and these words resonated when I thought about the work ahead as we deliver NPF4: "Celebrate any progress, no matter how small. Don't wait to get perfect. Recognizing your efforts each day helps build your confidence and motivation." Allistair McCaw, Habits That Make A Champion.

Individually, we might not be perfect (who is), but collectively we are. Every planner needs to be a champion. By building a collective, positive attitude towards change and delivery of actions, we will be responsive to the needs of our future places.

Let's raise a glass to 20 years of SYPN and to every planner around Scotland. ■

“Existing and future young planners are coming out of education with the energy and new skills that can be reciprocated back into the existing planning workforce, just as the existing workforce can coach, mentor and support them in return.”





Article:

Strategic Planning in West of Scotland, a retrospective



Stuart Tait MRTPI, Manager at Clydeplan discusses the West of Scotland’s regional planning success, whilst anticipating the future of the new Regional Spatial Strategies and their potential to add value to the new planning system in Scotland.

A brave new world for planning in Scotland is about to begin (again).

Following the latest review of the Scottish planning system, which has resulted in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, there will be another change in the role and status of both national and regional planning in Scotland.

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which was adopted and published by Scottish Ministers on 13th February, will for the first-time form part of the Statutory Development Plan along with the Local Development Plan. In turn, the regional Strategic Development Plans cease to be in effect and will be replaced by new Regional Spatial Strategies.

In this context, it is important to acknowledge that regional planning has been on a long journey which has taken us from Structure Plans to Strategic Development Plans, and now to Regional Spatial Strategies. Throughout this journey we have seen the value of regional planning both tested and stretched but it endures, albeit in this very changed context.

From being an integral component of the Statutory Development Plan system to one which sits outside that system, the consideration of cross boundary issues such as housing, retail, economic development, sustainable connectivity, and cumulative impact, and as we look to address the twin

crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss in a post pandemic world, these matters can only be effectively addressed by planning at the regional scale.

NPF4 sets the Glasgow City Region in the Regional Spatial Priority area imaginatively and inspiringly titled ‘*Central*’, an area which covers the most densely populated and most economically productive parts of Scotland namely the Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee and Perth city regions and Ayrshire.

“It seems very strange that at a time when the regional policy agenda and related governance is being promoted and strengthened, the regional land use plan which would support delivery of that agenda has been removed from the statutory Development Plan. This raises questions about whether the influence and value of the new Regional Spatial Strategies will be as great as they possibly could be. Time will tell.”



Stuart Tait MRTPI,
Manager at Clydeplan

The opportunities and challenges within each of these areas are very diverse in terms of both the scale and impact they can make in delivering and improving the economic, environmental, and social wellbeing of Scotland.

Given this diversity, greater articulation in NPF4 of these sub-regional (city region) geographies and the distinct challenges and opportunities they each face would have been useful. Perhaps it is here where the Regional Spatial Strategies can add ‘value’ to the new planning system.

Regional Spatial Strategies

The new Regional Spatial Strategies will no longer be approved by Scottish Ministers unlike their predecessor the Strategic Development - nor will they be subject to a formal Examination process, instead being produced and approved by local authorities.

The Regional Spatial Strategies, which will be considered in the development of future National Planning Frameworks and Local Development Plans, are to reflect and support the delivery of the Regional spatial priorities and the associated National Development set out in the NPF4.

The NPF4 spatial priorities for the ‘Central’ area include amongst other things, supporting net zero energy solutions including extended heat networks; pioneering low carbon, resilient urban living by rolling out networks of 20-minute neighbourhoods; future proofing city and town centres; accelerating urban greening; and target economic investment and building community wealth to overcome disadvantage – all to ultimately support a greener wellbeing economy.

Glasgow City Region

For the Glasgow City Region, the journey of regional planning can be traced back to the 1946 *Clyde Valley Plan* prepared for the then,

Clyde Valley Regional Planning Committee by Sir P. Abercrombie and R.H. Matthew.

In regional planning, the 1946 Plan is considered to be a seminal document which at the time brought the local authorities together to work towards producing a land use plan for the post-war planning of the Glasgow City Region.

It is that spirit and ethos of joint working which has been the foundation of successful regional planning in the Glasgow City Region ever since. The recognition of the interconnectedness and interdependence of a city with its surrounding towns and villages is the basis for regional planning, and as such is fundamental to the proper planning of any city region.

Today the eight local authorities of the Glasgow City Region remain fully committed to regional planning and the continued support for joint working by local authorities is evident in the Clydeplan.

Since 1996, the management model for the Clydeplan has withstood the stresses and strains of an everchanging world of regional planning. This resilient model is formed of a joint committee of councilors, supported by a small dedicated professional team, and led by a Management Team of senior planning officers from the constituent local authorities. Where other areas of Scotland have lost their dedicated regional planning teams, Clydeplan endures which is testament to its eight local authorities in recognising the value of planning at the regional scale.

In terms of delivering on the new duty to prepare the Regional Spatial Strategies and in support of the wider regional activity, this shared service model is perhaps even more relevant at a time of increasing pressure on the public finances and achieves the pooling of knowledge and experience in the form of, for example, Regional Economic Strategies and Growth Deals.

For several years, the key spatial principle of compact urban growth in the NPF4 has undermined the various regional plans for the Glasgow City Region.

Its focus on regeneration, improving environmental quality, inclusive economic growth, reducing carbon and development footprints, and improving connectivity through a sustainable transport system has seen the City Region’s priorities of the Glasgow City Region Green Network, Clyde Mission, Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership and the ‘Clyde Metro’ being identified firstly in previous regional plans - the Structure Plan and the Strategic Development Plan - and now as National Developments in NPF4. These initiatives are a testament to the value of regional thinking, joint working and agreed priority setting of projects of regional scale and impact.

Increasingly, city regions are becoming the focus for the Levelling Up agenda and Growth Deals that seek to address imbalances, primarily economic, between different areas and social groups across the United Kingdom. The Glasgow City Region is very much part of that agenda.

The City Region’s Regional Economic Strategy identifies the challenges and opportunities facing the city region and from a place perspective, the future Regional Spatial Strategy will be the spatial expression for addressing those challenges and opportunities.

However, in this context it seems very strange that at a time when the regional policy agenda and related governance is being promoted and strengthened, the regional land use plan which would support delivery of that agenda has been removed from the statutory Development Plan. This raises questions about whether the influence and value of the new Regional Spatial Strategies will be as great as they possibly could be. Time will tell.

Harking back to 1946 and the words of Mr. Hugh T. MacCalman, Chairman of the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Committee

“In the dark days of 1943 the Committee embarked upon a great task.....they met together as separately responsible authorities to pool their wide knowledge and experience and to secure the preparation of a common advisory plan for their guidance and benefit.....for the people for whom they were responsible would be able to enjoy a higher standard of life economically, socially and spiritually than they had enjoyed before”

Those words of some 77 years ago ring as true today as they did then. In a post-pandemic economy, and as we look to respond to the new challenges of climate action and biodiversity loss, hopefully the value of regional planning will be recognised and supported by all who have an interest in the proper planning of Scotland. ■



Q&A

Public Enquiries

Sepideh Hajisoltani MRTPI, Conservation Planner at Aberdeen City Council and Chair of the Scottish Young Planners Network 2023 answers our questions.



Sepideh Hajisoltani
MRTPI, Conservation
Planner for Aberdeen
City Council

1 Who has been the biggest inspiration or influence on your career and why?

Looking back at my career path, the biggest inspiration has been my experience in my home country in Iran, when I was involved in a regeneration and community-based natural disaster risk reduction project in the city of Ardakan- a historic city experiencing significant socio-economic challenges. As part of this project, I had the opportunity to live with the local community (mainly urban poor including internally displaced and immigrants) in the historic core of the city. This experience provided ample opportunities for observation of buildings and spaces and how they were used by the local communities of different ages and backgrounds. The numerous in-depth discussions with locals and other actors also highlighted how future scenarios for this area could unfold.

This experience raised important questions on the value of urban spaces and the significance of planning in unlocking potential, as well as the role of various actors in policymaking and implementation. My reflections on this experience resulted in a full scholarship for a multidisciplinary Master's degree at the **Development Planning Unit of the Bartlett at UCL**. One of the biggest inspirations during my studies and later in my planning career has been **Nabeel Hamdi** and his lectures, as well as his great book "**Small Change: About the Art of Practice and the Limits of Planning in Cities**" and his narrative of imaginative ways of thinking about the long-term effectiveness of intermediate and small-scale actions in urban development.

2 What do you feel is the biggest issue facing planners and planning at the moment?

I believe the biggest challenge for planners, particularly in the public sector where I am currently working, is maintaining the quality of decision-making with limited resources.

Young planners must get used to making difficult decisions to ensure they keep the right balance; however, such an approach would require substantial investment in the creation of training opportunities for developing resilience among young planners. Limited resources and heavy workloads could also have a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of young planners and negatively impact their job satisfaction.

3 Why is planning important?

Planning balances the environmental, social, economic, and political needs of urban and rural spaces and has close and complex ties with multiple aspects of our lives and significant impacts on our lives and well-being.

"I believe the biggest challenge for planners, particularly in the public sector where I am currently working, is maintaining the quality of decision-making with limited resources. Young planners must get used to making difficult decisions to ensure they keep the right balance; however, such an approach would require substantial investment in the creation of training opportunities for developing resilience among young planners."

4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning's role in creating great places for people?

There are various examples all over Scotland. I find the recent redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens (UTG) in Aberdeen city centre to be a very good example of creating inclusive spaces for the people of Scotland while respecting the heritage values of a historic site. This conservation-

led regeneration scheme removed a B listed building from the Buildings At Risk Register and introduced new uses for empty heritage assets. UTG was recently used for the Aberdeen Spectra Light Festival in Feb 2023, and it was great to see how the project created a platform for community interaction and social activity on cold winter nights.

5 What one piece of advice would you give an early career planner?

My single piece of advice is to use every single opportunity for networking and building connections with other planners in the sector. Building connections can be awkward at the beginning, and can even create anxiety, but I encourage young and early career planners to reach out to experienced planners and ask questions and share opinions. These

interactions are great for sharing insights and understanding the dynamics of the sector. SYPN and local chapters provide various networking opportunities, and I have hugely benefitted from these connections in my career.

Immaterial Considerations

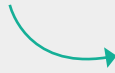
An irreverent look at the world of planning...

15 Minutes to Midnight?

Some of our keener eyed members may have spotted a number of commentators speaking about the '15 minute cities' concept being part of worldwide conspiracy, leading to a dystopian future where freedom to do what you want is curtailed. Indeed, Nick Fletcher MP asked for time in the UK Parliament to debate this "international socialist concept of so-called 15-minute cities and 20-minute neighbourhoods". Hmm.

Given this it was good to see a more humorous take on things by Gabriel McKay in The Herald, with his Q+A style piece "What are '15 minute cities' and how did they become a right-wing conspiracy theory?"

– See an extract opposite.



So, what's the problem?

It's all part of a shadowy plan by the New World Order to stop people ever leaving their own neighbourhoods.

Really?

Well, no, obviously. But according to your Olivers, Foxes and Petersons this idea about urban planning will bring about a dystopian world where we're divided, Hunger Games style, into disparate districts. A protest held in Oxford this weekend saw claims that people will be monitored by CCTV to ensure they don't leave their zones, with a permit required to do so under the guise of reducing carbon footprints.

Is there any evidence for that?

Of course not.

Who is behind this international socialist concept?

The World Economic Forum.

The organisation made up of the world's richest people?

Yes.

Do you actually believe that?

No it's about urban planning and traffic congestion, but bring it up next time your crazy uncle mentions 15 minute cities.

You can read the full piece at <https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23333114.15-minute-cities-part-culture-wars/?ref=psapp>



St Valentine's Day Massacre

We were interested and rather proud to see a piece in the Local Government Chronical by Megan Kenyon, on how her Valentine's Day visit to see a movie about a male stripper turned into a critique of how film makers portray planners. You can read her article "I went to see Magic Mike and found holes in the planning plot" at <https://www.lgcplus.com/politics/lgc-briefing/i-went-to-see-magic-mike-and-found-holes-in-the-planning-plot-16-02-2023/>

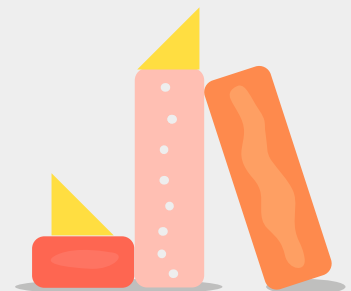
For the uninitiated "Magic Mike's Last Dance – The Final Tease" (gulp!) is apparently about male stripper Magic Mike who moves to London to direct a new show. His rehearsals are interrupted by the appearance of "stern looking men from Westminster Metropolitan Council" with official documentation saying that the show could not go on as its new set was considered a material change of use. The hero of our story – Megan, not Mike – outlines how the film's portrayal of planning and planning departments left her uneasy, especially at a time when we are struggling to recruit planning officers. Bravo!



The Danish have a word for it...

Many of us in the profession are advocates of Denmark's approach to planning, placemaking and urbanism, and the high regard their built environment profession are held in. Imagine our joy then, when we came across a useful and enjoyable toy for planners – below – in the Flying Tiger Copenhagen shop in Glasgow. Our only concern is that the Danish translations of City Building Blocks looks a bit like Baby Geek Loser.

Bybyggekloster Baby Geek Loser?



In Focus: Planning for our Living Legends

Suzie Saunders, Policy Advocate at the Woodland Trust, distinguishes between ancient and veteran trees, and in doing so, emphasises the need to protect them and the cultural, historical and ecological value they provide.



Suzie Saunders,
Policy Advocate -
Planning and Local
Authorities, at the
Woodland Trust

The National Planning Framework 4 has been heralded by Scotland's planning minister as a strategy to improve people's lives by making sustainable, liveable and productive places and ensuring that planning decisions address the twin nature and climate crises. Policy 6 of the NPF4 contributes towards delivering

is thought to be the oldest tree in the UK, at anywhere between 3000-8000 years old.

They are also of immense ecological value. [A single oak supports roughly 2300 different plants and animals through its lifetime](#), making it a Goliath of biodiversity. Each tree is an ecosystem in its own right. They deliver

this abundance in many different contexts from woodlands to parklands, and roadsides to even urban environments.

However, ancient and veteran trees are at risk from vandalism, climate change, disease and despite new planning policies, could be vulnerable to the impacts of development.

When retained within or adjacent to developments, ancient trees and veteran trees are at risk from root

compaction. BS 5837 (2012) requires a Root Protection Area (RPA) for trees, with the required radius capped at 15m. For an ancient or veteran tree this may not be enough. [A study of the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest \(2018\)](#) found roots spanning some 40m away from the tree. A similar demonstration at the Westonbirt veteran oak in Gloucestershire found roots spanning 23m from the tree. As best practice, the Woodland Trust along with partners like the Ancient Tree Forum suggest RPAs should be whichever is greater of:

- an area with a radius which is 15 times the diameter of the tree with no cap
- 5m beyond the crown.

Furthermore, we don't know where all our ancient and veteran trees are. For local authorities without tree expertise this could mean unintentional loss of immensely valuable trees. The Woodland Trust is attempting to solve this issue by collating records using our Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI). In Scotland, the ATI currently holds 17,000

records, but this is just the beginning with over 1,350 ancient trees and 5,200 veteran trees discovered across the UK in 2022 alone. This makes the ATI a valuable place to start a search for important trees but it's only a provisional guide.

“Continuity of these trees plays a key role in safeguarding this habitat for nature and climate. It is important to give the ancients of tomorrow space and time to grow. This is a consideration that should be taken into planning decisions involving trees.”

this ambition by strengthening protection for ancient woodland and veteran trees. But what is an ancient or veteran tree?

The terms ancient and veteran are sometimes used interchangeably, but we also make a distinction between them. Veteran trees may be a great size or age or display physical features such as trunk hollowing. By contrast, ancient trees are old in comparison with other trees of the same species. Thus, all ancient trees are veteran, but not all veteran trees are ancient.

These trees are special because they straddle both the natural world and the world of heritage. Take the Birnam oak near Dunkeld, one of the last remaining trees of Birnam wood immortalised in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; or the Cadzow oaks in Hamilton, planted during the lifetime of Robert the Bruce. These mark important cultural and historical moments. Some tree species like the yew can even reach many thousands of years in age. The Fortingall yew in Perthshire



Lastly, continuity of these trees plays a key role in safeguarding this habitat for nature and climate. It is important to give the ancients of tomorrow space and time to grow. This is a consideration that should be taken into planning decisions involving trees.

Thus, whilst the NPF4 provides the building blocks for protection for ancient and veteran trees, there is still some way to go. More information can be found from the Woodland Trust's Living Legends campaign which aims to improve the visibility and protection of ancient and veteran trees across the UK. ■

In Practice:

RTPI Code of Professional Conduct Revisions Now Live



Ruth Richards MRTPI, Complaints Investigator at the Royal Town Planning Institute

Ruth Richards MRTPI, Complaints Investigator at the Royal Town Planning Institute, informs us of the key changes to the Royal Town Planning Institutes Code of Professional Conduct following the recent publication of the revised Code.

On the 1st February the revised Code of Professional Conduct came into effect and all RTPI members are now required to comply with the updated and amended ethical standards.

Updating our Code of Professional Conduct is in line with good practice for membership bodies in relation to matters of governance and professional standards. The previous Code was written a number of years ago and came into effect in 2016, so a refresh and review was needed to ensure that it remained current. In addition, the RTPI has again committed to the International Ethics Standards Coalition where signatories agree to promote and embed good practice across the property and built environment sectors. It was important to ensure that our Code aligned with those standards.

Throughout last summer, members were consulted on the proposed changes via The Planner and through the Institute's all-member bulletin. The advice and comments received were taken into account and further amendments were made where needed. The key changes to the Code are:

- A clearer requirement not to offer or accept bribes
- A clearer requirement to apply reasonable standards of skill, knowledge and care to all work undertaken
- A clearer requirement to comply with CPD requirements
- A requirement to base professional advice on appropriate evidence and without improper manipulation
- A requirement to hold client money safely
- Embedding the existing supplementary regulations on advertising and the use of the logo within the Code
- Updated equality requirements

Other clauses have been rewritten in order to clarify the professional and ethical standards,

and to use plain and inclusive English to set out what is required of our members. This supports the Institute's objectives set out under its Royal Charter and demonstrates to the general public, politicians and decision-makers, as well as other professionals, that RTPI members are working for the common good and as revised clause 8 notes: "to maintain their professional competence throughout their career for the benefit of the public, their clients, the natural environment, and the quality of the built environment".

All of this work was guided by the experience of the Conduct and Discipline Panel (the Institute's formal peer-review committee of RTPI members and other professional lay members) who decide on complaints made about members and whether they have breached the Code. Some of the existing clauses had regularly been misinterpreted, particularly by complainants, and these needed to be clarified. New issues have arisen over the past few years including how members engage with social media, and about new working practices introduced as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The Institute receives about 40 new complaints each year and up to half of those are normally taken to a formal investigation and, therefore, considered by the Panel. Members also regularly have queries about how to deal with specific situations where ethical issues arise and can contact the Institute's complaints service for

advice. Our current 'Practice Advice Note on Ethics and Professional Standards' is in the process of being updated and expanded over the coming months to reflect the new Code and provide additional guidance to members about specific issues that more commonly arise.

Victoria Hills, Chief Executive of the RTPI said: "The RTPI continually aims to ensure our members work at the profession's highest standard. As such, it is important to regularly review our Code of Professional Conduct. As members of the International Ethics Standards Coalition, we are also ensuring our Code of Professional Conduct is aligned with International Ethics Standards."

The new RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, along with other information about ethical standards for professional planners and the RTPI disciplinary processes, can be found at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/professional-standards/> ■

“Other clauses have been rewritten in order to clarify the professional and ethical standards, and to use plain, and inclusive, English to set out what is required of our members. This supports the Institute’s objectives set out under its Royal Charter and demonstrates to the general public, politicians and decision-makers, as well as other professionals, that RTPI members are working for the common good.”

Article:

RTPI Explore

Machel Bogues, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager at RTPI, outlines the RTPI's focus on building a more inclusive planning sector and the success of the EXPLORE work experience pilot as part of this progress. **Gillian Dick MRTPI**, Spatial Planning Manager at Glasgow City Council, relays the positive experience of a local planning authority involved in the programme.



Machel Bogues,
Equality, Diversity,
and Inclusion
Manager at RTPI



Gillian Dick MRTPI,
Spatial Planning
Manager - Research
& Development, at
Glasgow City Council

Machel Bogues

At the RTPI, we are committed to promoting and supporting the planning profession to be as diverse as the communities it represents, to act inclusively, treating everyone fairly and seeking to provide a culture which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which and for whom we work. Planners and the planning sector create strong and sustainable communities, to do this effectively it is critical that there is a diverse range of planners making decisions.

Central to this is ensuring that we are reaching out to as broad and diverse a group on young people as possible to make sure that we introduce as many people as we can to the rich and rewarding careers that the planning profession can provide. Our EXPLORE work experience pilot, launched in January 2022, aims to do just that. By providing young people aged 16-18 a high-quality work experience, we aim to encourage young people, particularly those from Asian, Black,

minority ethnic communities and lower socio-economic backgrounds, to become planners. In our first year, we gave 100 young people the chance to explore the many rewarding roles and opportunities that the town planning profession can offer. Before the placement, 43% said they would consider a career in planning and afterwards 90% said they would now consider a career in planning.

A strong indication, should we need one, that exposure to the planning profession can and will increase interest in the profession. Creating a diverse talent pool is a long-term objective and there is a job of work to be done still to convert that interest into planners - but with EXPLORE we have a strong foundation to build on.

Gillian Dick

Glasgow City Council took part in the EXPLORE pilot programme. Three pupils from two High Schools in the city spent a week exploring what it means to be a Planner in the City. Taking guidance from our Education Improvement Service, we offered the opportunity to 14 – 15-year-olds (3rd year pupils in Scotland) who are at the point of deciding which subjects to follow in the latter part of their school career. The pupils came from diverse backgrounds with representatives from communities where English is not their first language. We operated last year's programme as an online experience, together with a project and our schools asked the pupils to "work from home" for the week.

Throughout the week we lined up several online conversations with:

- Early Career Planners
- The Head of Service
- Planning Technicians
- Policy Planners
- Development Management Planners
- Project Planners
- Mid-Career Planners

Through the project we introduce them to tools like [Placestandard.scot](https://www.placestandard.scot) and the varied roles that Planners play. We challenged the students to think about the places they spend their daily lives in and what those places mean to them.

There was positive feedback from the pupils, schools, Education Improvement, and our own Planners about how inspiring the conversations were. Some of our Planners stated that "it allowed them to think about the city through young people's eyes." The pupils stated that they "would definitely think about a career in planning and could see the links to Sustainability; climate adaptation and geospatial data opportunities that studying Planning could open up."

The new Planning Act in Scotland is challenging Local Authorities to take onboard young people's views and aspirations for their communities and the places that they use. Young people are engaging in Town planning through both real-world activities and the virtual gaming world (Fortnite and Minecraft) without realising - until they talked to Planners - that you could turn your hobby into a career.

Glasgow City Council has agreed to take part in EXPLORE in 2023 and we would recommend it to other Public Bodies. ■



Article:

Support for the Young - The Jim Boyack Memorial Trust



Andrew Ballantine, Planning Officer at Perth and Kinross Council and Trustee of the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust

Andrew Ballantine MRTPI, Planning Officer at Perth and Kinross Council and Trustee of the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust, examines the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust's annual grant award, and highlights its increasing importance with the current state of the economy in Scotland.

In the early 1990s, the Jim Boyack Memorial Trust was set up in memory of town planner Jim Boyack to support planning students in Scotland. At a time when planning is playing a significant role in tackling society's biggest challenges, the Trust recognises that supporting the planners of the future is vitally important. This is particularly the case where there is a significant shortage of planners across Scotland, including new entrants into the profession, recognised through the [Future Planners Project Report](#). The Trust aims to invest in tomorrow's planners by organising an annual grant award to assist students to enter, or continue, a planning course in Scotland. For last year's award, the Trust's work has been brought into sharp focus with the extent of financial hardship experienced by applicants. We are calling on you and the planning profession in Scotland to help support our planners of the future!

The 2022 Award

As part of the award process, we – as trustees – are required to consider each of the applicants' submissions and make an assessment on their merits. For last year's award it was immediately evident that students were facing significant financial hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis, and this formed a key factor in our decision-making. With multiple applicants stating that they were struggling financially, it made for an extremely difficult decision to distinguish between the submissions. In several cases financial hardship was compounded by applicants also having caring responsibilities. Compared to previous years, the extent of hardship experienced by applicants was unprecedented. Following a lengthy meeting scrutinising the submissions, we came to a decision to split the grant fund of £3000 to

two applicants, with each applicant receiving £1500.

Reflecting on the 2022 award, we – as a group – found this a particularly difficult year, not least knowing that many of the applicants were struggling financially and needed assistance. If this is likely to become the norm for planning students in Scotland, the work of the Trust will be even more important for future years.

Support Us

As fellow RTPI members in Scotland, we are calling on you to help support the Trust and future planners. Since 1993, the Trust has supported thirty-seven students in total with approximately £33,000 of funds awarded.

As a charitable Trust our ability to provide a financial award each year is dependent on donations. Usual fundraising activities including through RTPI Chapter events have been limited due to the pandemic which has limited the level of donations we are receiving.

For the price of a coffee each month (£3.00!) you can help provide funds so we can continue our work, or even better, help provide a larger financial award and/or support multiple students every year. Please visit our Support Us webpage to make a one-off donation or set up a regular payment. All donations, however small, make an enormous difference to our work, particularly during the tough economic circumstances we are currently experiencing.

Testimonials from 2022 award winners:

"The Jim Boyack Trust award continues to

strengthen inclusivity within the Scottish planning environment...I am thankful for my fortunate opportunity and appreciate this award to help many aspiring young planners in the future." Callum Connolly

"Reflecting on the 2022 award, we – as a group – found this a particularly difficult year, not least knowing that many of the applicants were struggling financially and needed assistance. If this is likely to become the norm for planning students in Scotland, the work of the Trust will be even more important for future years."

"The university fees and everyday expenses were unbelievably high. The call [from Jim Boyack representatives] made my day and the financial award was very helpful." Azin Shafiei Nasab

Thanks specifically to RTPI Scotland for their continued support, and past, current, and future donors who help keep the Trust alive. Thanks also to Sarah Boyack MSP for her longstanding support of the Trust.

Further information on the Trust and its work is available via [our website](#). ■

In Conversation: 20 Years of SYPN

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the SYPN, two former Chairs – **Andrew Trigger MRTPI** (2010/11) and **Stuart Salter MRTPI** (2013/14) – were invited to provide some reflections on what the SYPN has meant to them.



Andrew Trigger MRTPI,
Associate at Justin
Lamb Associates



Stuart Salter MRTPI,
Director at Geddes
Consulting

Q Why did you get involved in the SYPN?

AT: Having attended the very first conference as a student in 2004 the SYPN definitely piqued my interest and showed why the network was so needed. Then, starting out in Aberdeen City Council, I was actively encouraged to join and with regular trips to the central belt on offer, I didn't need to be asked twice!

SS: I started my planning career whilst undertaking my Master's degree at Heriot Watt in 2008 / 2009. Although it was the beginning of a new and exciting career, I did not have many peers within the profession other than those undertaking the degree. A steering group member mentioned the SYPN and encouraged me to join. I did so as soon as I could in 2010.

Q Has the SYPN had a positive influence on your career?

SS: Very much so! The SYPN enabled me to discuss the profession with not only peers who were at a similar point in their emerging planning career but also those who had extensive experience in the profession. Following completion of my degree, I knew very little about how either the development management or development plan processes were undertaken. Through the SYPN, I had access to a community of peers that were experiencing similar issues and seeking better understanding or had been there and done it all before. It is an open forum where the professionals are happy to share their thoughts. Fundamentally, those colleagues I met in 2010 have remained friends and contacts throughout my career. Now that I am past my sell by date for

a young planner, I continue to be actively engaged with the SYPN hoping to provide similar support as to what was freely given to me.

AT: Undoubtedly. Planning, particularly in Scotland, is a goldfish bowl of a profession. Being actively involved in the SYPN provided access to key decision makers – Scottish Government, MSPs, Heads of Planning, the wider RTPI and Key Agencies to name a few – and I'm still able to speak to many of those people now based on those early exchanges. I'm a great believer in 'it's who you know, rather than what you know'. The SYPN also gave me a really good introduction into the wider activity of the RTPI and helped lay the foundations for me stepping up to be Convenor of the 'grown up' network in 2022.

Q How do you think the SYPN has evolved since its inception and regarded in the wider planner sphere?

AT: From the outset, the SYPN has always been good at pulling a crowd and it's great to see that continue to this day. It recognised that there was a demand for putting on

events designed for those in the relatively early stages of their planning career, enabling members to engage more freely with their peers. It is perhaps fair to say that in the early days there was a bit more focus on the social element of the network and whilst that is still an important aspect, I think the SYPN has matured as an entity within the profession as demonstrated by the multiple requests to give evidence before the Scottish Parliament on the impact of planning reform.

SS: I believe Andrew has better knowledge of its evolution having been there longer than I have. Previously seen as an "young age" network, the SYPN developed the articles of association to include persons new to the profession at any age, which was great for me... The SYPN is certainly seen across the planning sphere in Scotland as an important stakeholder group to develop the profession not only in the RTPI, but also by Scottish Government. Certainly, more so now than when I joined, it is really great to see that it is such an important voice for the future of the profession. I think Scotland recently hosting the National RTPI Young Planners conference was a superb achievement for the committee

“For those contemplating getting involved with the SYPN committee we would both say – go for it! We both found it fun and rewarding and it definitely helped open doors in our careers. That said, you get out of it what you put in and it is important that every committee member actively contributes – the success is built on the different perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to this increasingly influential platform.”



involved. Congratulations on each successive committee building on the great work that has gone before, much to be applauded. That is the key to its continued success.

Q Where do you want to see the SYPN in the next 20 years?

AT: I think that the SYPN will continue to evolve as it needs to protect itself from being spread too thinly. Following the pandemic / lockdown, there has been a greater focus on the wellbeing of planners and with those new to the profession perhaps not being readily able to access colleague mentoring due to a greater degree of homeworking, I think this is where SYPN could have the greatest influence as a support network as opposed to just a 'networking' network. On past evidence, there will also be at least another two new Planning Acts to be involved with!

SS: More of the same really and I would agree with Andrew that the SYPN can play a greater role in mentoring and developing planners new to the profession, as well as creating awareness across Scotland as a whole.

Q What one piece of advice would you give an early career planner?

My single piece of advice is to use every single opportunity for networking and building connections with other planners in the sector. Building connections can be awkward at the beginning, and can even create anxiety, but I encourage young and early career planners

to reach out to experienced planners and ask questions and share opinions. These interactions are great for sharing insights and understanding the dynamics of the sector. SYPN and local chapters provide various networking opportunities, and I have hugely benefitted from these connections in my career.

Q What is the biggest highlight of your involvement in SYPN?

SS: Making friends who are passionate about the profession and will be there to discuss with you over a beer or two! Town Planning is a unique and exciting career that requires you to take into account a multitude of internal and external factors, which can be competing and are complex. Having the support from a peer group who are digesting all these factors is utterly beneficial for one's state of mind!

AT: There have been a number of fun aspects like challenging the Heads of Planning forum; helping deliver highly regarded conferences particularly at Hampden (twice) and crowing to the wider UK YPN how the SYPN had it sussed! However, corny as it may sound, the biggest highlight has to be the lasting friendships created through the SYPN and for that I will be forever thankful.

Q The Last Word

For those contemplating getting involved with the SYPN committee we would both say – go for it! We both found it fun and rewarding and

it definitely helped open doors in our careers. That said, you get out of it what you put in and it is important that every committee member actively contributes – the success is built on the different perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to this increasingly influential platform. Equally, it's important to re-emphasise that for the past two decades the SYPN has been open to all (age discrimination prevents otherwise!) and whether you choose to get involved with the committee or not, going forwards there continues to be numerous opportunities to get together with likeminded professionals to discuss the planning issues of the day – so what's stopping you? ■



Article:

Building Standards Workforce Strategy



Daniel Henderson,
Building Standards
Manager at City of
Edinburgh Council

Daniel Henderson FRICS, Building Standards Manager at the City of Edinburgh Council, discusses the ongoing Workforce Strategy of the Scottish Government's Building Standards Division and the recent launch of the Building Standards Modern Apprenticeship programme.

In October 2020, the Scottish Government's Building Standards Division launched a Workforce Strategy to address a multitude of issues across the Building Standards profession. These issues related to systemic failures which have allowed the Building Standards workforce to significantly suffer, with a lack of training for new entrants and a failure to address succession planning. Scottish Government workforce data published in 2021 indicated that of the circa 600 staff in Building Standards, 47% are over 50 years old and could leave the profession in the next 5 to 10 years. In simple terms, the profession is not attracting new talent to Building Standards – failure to act now would leave a considerable skill shortage.

A contributing factor to this was the lack of college or university courses providing relevant training. In response, a working group was created with representation from Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS), the Energy Skills Partnership (ESP) and the Building Standards Division (BSD). The primary aim of this working group was

to attract new people to the profession and create a Building Standards specific qualification. To fulfil these aims, it was determined that a new Building Standards Modern Apprenticeship would present an appropriate solution, offering new entrants the opportunity to work, earn and learn at the same time.

Fife College and Inverness College were engaged as joint training partners for the new Modern Apprenticeship, and it was established that their existing Architectural Technology Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma were aligned with relevant learning criteria for a Building Standards Surveyor. A mapping exercise was undertaken to identify further modules available throughout the college which were additionally suitable for the Modern Apprentice's development to enhance their learning experience. The Modern Apprenticeship would consist of online distance-based learning combined with learning in the work environment over a four-year period, leading to entry to degree level study at university.

Once the framework of the Building Standards Modern Apprenticeship was in place, it was crucial to gather support from Local Authorities to recognise the benefits of employing a Modern Apprentice. LABSS along with the Scottish Government engaged the Society of Local Authority Chief

Executives (SOLACE) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to rally support across Scotland. As such, an initial uptake of twenty-two Modern Apprentices was committed across a number of Local Authorities.

My role on behalf of LABSS was to project manage the delivery of the programme between all stakeholders, monitor progress and most notably engage with Local Authorities. As an example, template job descriptions were provided to participating Local Authorities to simplify recruitment processes where also creating a new post within an existing organisation.

The Building Standards Modern Apprenticeship formally commenced on 2nd September 2022 with Modern Apprentices from North Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, Fife, Dundee City, Aberdeen City, East Dunbartonshire, South Lanarkshire, the City of Edinburgh and the Western Isles Councils all starting their Building Standards career journey. The Building Standards Modern Apprenticeship will be critical to address medium to long term succession planning for the Building Standards profession.

We were delighted to recently welcome the Scottish Minister responsible for Building Standards, Patrick Harvie MSP, to formally launch the Modern Apprenticeship. The Minister was joined by over fifty attendees, including the first cohort of Modern Apprentices. It is our ambition that the new Modern Apprenticeship will serve as a pathway for new Building Standards professionals for many years to come. The Building Standards profession has been under the microscope in recent years and it is of paramount importance that we continue to commit to creating a competent, motivated and highly skilled workforce for the future. ■

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Article:

PAS Youth Engagement Work in Fife



Fleur Dijkman,
Volunteers and
Youth Programmes
Manager at Planning
Aid Scotland

Fleur Dijkman, Volunteers & Youth Programmes Manager at Planning Aid Scotland (PAS), reflects on a recent youth engagement project led by PAS, in partnership with Fife Council.

Approximately one in five people in Scotland (21%) are 19 years old and under, however young people are often conspicuous by their absence in planning decision-making processes. At PAS, we have extensive experience of helping to make planning more accessible, particularly for seldom-heard voices in our communities including children and young people.

“We are planning for young peoples’ now and future, so it is vitally important that youth engagement with the LDP is a key focus. By involving young people in the planning process, we can create places that meet the needs and aspirations of all members of the community.”

In summer 2022, Fife Council appointed PAS to help collect the ideas and opinions of young Fife residents in order to inform their next Local Development Plan (LDP), and so the ‘#FocusOnFife’ project was born.

Ramsay Duff, from the Policy and Place Team at Fife Council, said: “To make the next Local Development Plan (LDP) for Fife as representative and effective as possible we want to ensure we engage with as many people and groups as we can. All stakeholders have much to contribute and that includes younger people. At the end of the day, they are the ones who will live with the planning decisions we make today.

As part of Fife’s Local Development Plan engagement strategy, we partnered with PAS to engage with young people regarding their places. We asked them what works and what doesn’t about where they live and the

places they go, as well as the challenges they envisage their places facing, the Climate Emergency for example.”

One of the many changes created by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is that local authorities are now required to meaningfully engage with children and young people as part of preparing an LDP. Our partners at Fife Council have been keen to ensure that diverse voices of young people be heard and their participation encouraged, to ultimately help deliver places that work for everyone.

Ramsay Duff, Fife Council: “We are planning for young peoples’ now and future, so it is vitally important that youth engagement with the LDP is a key focus. By involving young people in the planning process, we can create places that meet the needs and aspirations of all members of the community.”

Between June and September 2022, through the #FocusOnFife project, PAS engaged with over 200 young people (aged 16-25) to better understand their perceptions of their local area. The engagement process involved digital surveys and in-person workshops across Fife. We reached out to a diverse range of people within the 16-25 age demographic, with participation from young people with a range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In particular we engaged with community groups, colleges, and university forums.

In total, young people across Fife made over 300 responses, which were then analysed through the Place Standard framework. Some of the key themes they brought up included improving play and recreation, public transport, facilities and amenities, and a

desire to live in places that feel safe.

Ramsay Duff, Fife Council: “It’s our intention to have ongoing engagement with young people and other stakeholders throughout the local plan process using various methods. A lot of recent engagement has been done interactively online due to the Covid pandemic and we see that continuing, indeed deepening, along with more traditional ways such as exhibitions and public meetings.”

The #FocusOnFife project marks the beginning of a new style of on-going dialogue about planning and place with young people across Fife. We’re delighted to see local authorities, such as Fife Council, proactively developing and enhancing their community engagement processes with young people. Overall, supporting more inclusive participation in planning.

Find out more about #FocusOnFife and other projects on our website www.pas.org.uk.

Are you ready to make a difference in Fife?

YOUR VOICE IS THE MISSING PIECE

Participate in our survey to earn 150 Young Scot rewards points and the chance to win a £25 gift card!

Article:

Chief Planners of Tomorrow

Olivia McQuaid, Development Planner at Peel L&P Group Management Limited, reflects on her experience on the ‘Chief Planners of Tomorrow’ work-shadowing scheme with Paul Macari, Head of Planning and Economy at Aberdeenshire Council, highlighting the importance of key skills such as communication and trust in becoming an effective leader.



Olivia McQuaid,
Development Planner
at Peel L&P Group
Management Limited

I took part in the RTPI’s ‘Chief Planners of Tomorrow,’ which gave me the opportunity to ‘shadow’ Paul Macari the Head of Planning and Economy at Aberdeenshire Council. RTPI’s ‘Chief Planners of Tomorrow’ is a work-shadowing scheme offering Young Planners the chance to step into the shoes of a Chief Planning Officer for the day. The RTPI describe this as an opportunity to ‘learn from the best’ which is something I have been fortunate to do throughout my career.

I have been fortunate to learn from inspiring and talented planners, including my first line manager who took the plunge into consultancy from the local authority, as well as my current line manager who has made the transition from consultancy to developer. Both senior managers taught me the value of

and knowledge, and ensuring everyone understands their role, the desired outcomes, and actions. This meeting also gave me insight into how councils are required to reflect the social element and local communities needs whilst acknowledging that developers require confidence in the economic viability of proposals.

I saw the many roles Paul was responsible for, including understanding both economics and politics in planning, and conducting a meeting with a councillor to provide an update for them to share at the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee. Paul demonstrated the need to be flexible – juggling multiple stakeholders, opinions, and views – working to ensure relationships are maintained and all voices are heard so that the vision of the Aberdeen City Region Deal continues to be delivered.

In this meeting, Paul’s ability to manage budgets and justify spends showed a strong management and awareness of the external influences that impact development – a skill mirrored in my

own line managers that reflects on how all planners need to be aware of the political and economic constraints they’re under, whether in the private sector or local government.

I also had the opportunity to attend an NPF4 Briefing Session with Scottish Government, allowing me to observe a range of planning leaders from a variety of backgrounds and expressing differing desires for the specific Council areas. This meeting highlighted how leaders were keen to take responsibilities and ensure the framework



attributes leadership to remain relevant and legible.

A key takeaway from my day with Paul was the importance of his leadership in developing and building a team that supports one another to deliver a quality planning service with honest communication and a clear understanding of the needs of its customers. As leader of the planning team, Paul’s importance and knowledge was in demand with meetings being added last minute and his attendance at both being made possible by Paul’s can do and flexible attitude. By communicating his thoughts concisely and effectively, Paul ensured that the members of his team representing the Planning Service understood the outcomes to be achieved and as such he was able to leave one meeting once his thoughts had been shared to join the next. This taught me the importance of building trusting relationships across teams to enable effective delegation.

This was a great and valuable experience that I would recommend all young planners to apply, to learn from the best and step into the shoes of great leaders. ■

“A key takeaway from my day with Paul was the importance of his leadership in developing and building a team that supports one another to deliver a quality planning service with honest communication and a clear understanding of the needs of its customers.”

leadership, hence why I immediately applied for this opportunity upon hearing about it: to see how strategic decisions are made by planners working for local authorities, and to give myself a holistic view of planning and the key leaders driving the industry.

The day began with a meeting with two senior case officers to provide Paul with an update on a Masterplan development. In this meeting, Paul’s leadership skills were highlighted showing the importance of listening to your team, valuing their expertise

Article:

Green Skills and Workforce

David Steen, Policy Advisor (Scotland) for the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC), discusses NPF4's role as a key driver towards net-zero transition, underlining the use of whole-life carbon considerations and retrofit first as key processes in its delivery.



David Steen,
Policy Advisor,
UK Green Building
Council

Scotland is committed to becoming a net-zero emitter of carbon by 2045 and has set a target to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 75 percent by 2030, relative to 1990 levels. The planning system is a key enabler in this transition, and indeed this level of systemic change cannot happen without intervention by local planning authorities. We are in a pivotal period in Scotland in terms of the political and delivery decisions being made that can keep us on track to meet our climate commitments. We have an opportunity to inform the direction of Scotland's built environment industry for years to come.

Our planning system is and must continue to be a key driver in creating resilient, net zero places that build on the best of what we have available right now while reducing our environmental impact both systemically and at the development level. The planning system is the gatekeeper of new build, and so can shape net zero development

and infrastructure right through to 2045. Yet planning also has influence over changes to existing buildings and the practicalities of net zero delivery on the ground. It has the granularity to recognise local distinctiveness, and (unlike building regulations) apply approaches and standards suitable for the locality. In all these aspects, our planning system needs a clear mandate from government to fully consider the climate implications of development in decision making.

Planners need clarity and assurance from government that aligns new development with our climate commitments and limits the scope of legal challenges if a proposal is turned down on climate-related grounds. We welcome the clear direction of NPF4 in requiring that development proposals minimise our contribution to climate change, respond appropriately to the requirement for resilience, and the explicit

support for retrofitting existing buildings as an imperative in our net zero transition. Filtering these policies through Local Development Plans and to implementation will remove ambiguity and allow for consideration of the whole-life carbon implications of proposals far earlier in the planning process. UKGBC encourages all stakeholders in Scotland's planning system to consider how the NPF4 policies on sustainable places are best worked out in practice. Early examples from across the UK of development applications being refused on whole-life carbon grounds demonstrate that

“Alongside this necessary top-down change, we need to be doing what we can now to make decisions that create buildings and places that are prepared for a net zero future, and don't lock in additional requirement for future change.”

the topic remains controversial, so we call on government and decision-makers at all levels to view net zero as a primary consideration at every stage of the planning process, and to craft legislation, policy, and plans that enable planners to do the same.

Alongside this necessary top-down change, we need to be doing what we can now to make decisions that create buildings and places that are prepared for a net zero future, and don't lock in additional requirement for future change. Considering the whole-life carbon implications of a proposal, encouraging and prioritising retrofit over new build, anticipating how proposed development will respond to a changing climate, and safeguarding nature recovery and biodiversity are all imperative as we collaborate in creating the future of Scotland's built environment.

UKGBC and the RPTI Scotland will continue to call for action in response to the climate emergency, and we welcome your feedback on lessons from how planning is responding at present, and on opportunities for effective implementation of whole-life carbon consideration in Scotland's planning system. You can get in touch by contacting david.steen@ukgbc.org ■



Article:

Future Planners - Different routes into the profession



Alan Blackie MRTPI,
Lead Officer at Fife
Council Planning

Alan Blackie MRTPI, Lead Officer at Fife Council Planning, discusses the ways in which Fife Council Planning Services are actively trying to promote the planning profession in Scotland and create opportunities for young planners.

The Future Planners report sets out recommendations to enhance recruitment, retention, and promotion of the planning profession in Scotland. (hopsotland.org.uk/research)

To ensure there is a streamline of planners in the early stages of their career coming into the profession, Fife Council Planning Services has developed a workforce strategy aimed at creating opportunities for a younger workforce. This has primarily been secured through Fife Councils Employability programme, and particularly its Workforce Investment Fund and service-matched funding to several full and part time positions. The Services budget has morphed to manage this continued and expected growth. We currently have an average workforce age of 42, with 28% of our colleagues under the age of 35.

Fife Council Planning Services have created several routes into the planning profession in Fife by working with planning schools, in particular the University of Dundee. These routes include a mix of full- and part-time positions, the part-time positions are aimed at students engaged in a course of planning study to gain 2 days per week experience over a period of a year. The full-time positions include 2-year graduate planner placements which are geared towards helping someone that has recently graduated gain the experience they need to become a chartered member of the RTPI. We are also about to embark on our second year of internships with students from the University of Dundee gaining 30 hours of work experience.

More recently, Fife College, in collaboration with the University of Dundee, has created a pathway into year two of the planning course at the University of Dundee through the HNC in Architectural Technology and HNC in 3D

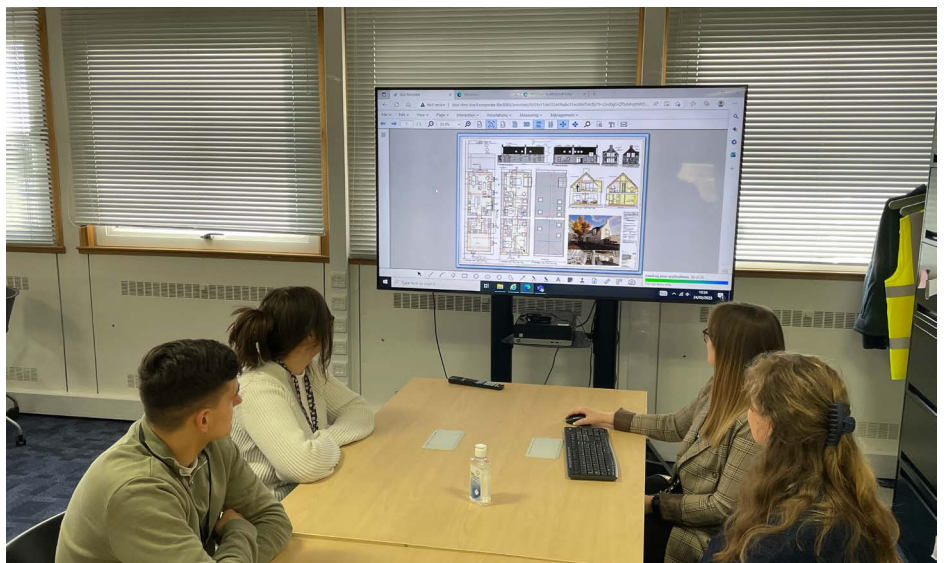
Design courses. We are actively working with Fife College to create opportunities for students through the HNC course to enable them to gain practical work experience within planning and to promote the profession. It is hoped that students will then be able to make an informed decision on whether they wish to pursue a career in planning.

On a personal level, I am very proud of what we have achieved in Fife, which has been due to the willingness of existing staff to mentor and coach individuals to enable new staff to transition into the planning workplace. This is equally rewarding for the individuals involved in coaching these staff. I started in planning 26 years ago working on the main planning customer reception area. I appreciate that not everybody can leave school and go straight into university, but by continuing to explore pathways into the profession, I would hope that more people would be interested in

getting into planning at an early age.

In Fife, we have a number of existing staff that have come through the placement route and have gone onto secure permanent employment with us and gained their membership. One example that stands out for me is a position we created for a school leaver, which led to them completing a distance learning HNC course and then making the transition to year 2 of the planning course whilst continuing to work with us on a part-time basis. That individual is now working as a Chartered Planner within our Major Business and Customer Service team.

Fife Council are continuing to do further work to promote planning and are reaching out through schools and careers fairs to promote the profession. I look forward to what we can do collectively across Scotland to build on this area. ■



Update: RTPI Update

Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland have submitted responses to the following consultations and requests for written evidence:

- Skills Delivery Independent Review Consultation
- Cycling framework for active travel
- Community Planning - call for views
- Consultation for Scotland's new historic environment strategy
- Local Development Plan Evidence Report- Defining Gypsies and Travellers' Consultation
- Inquiry into Public Administration - Effective Scottish Government decision-making
- Air Quality in Scotland- Call for Views

These are all published on the RTPI website.

Consultations currently under consideration are:

- Culture in Communities. Deadline 31st March
- Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee Inquiry into Scotland's electricity infrastructure: inhibitor or enabler of our energy ambitions? Deadline 18th April
- Community Wealth Building consultation. Deadline 25th April
- Scottish Government's Public Service Reform Programme - Call for Views. Deadline 1st May
- Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan consultation. Deadline 9th May

Parliament

RTPI Scotland met with a number of MSPs and provided briefing to all before the debate on the National Planning Framework, with the key messages being that we support its approval in Parliament. However, in taking forward the NPF4's implementation and delivery, three key considerations will be around how to resource the new system, how to ensure the production of a revised Delivery Programme which is fit-for-purpose and how to monitor progress and impact of NPF4. The briefing was quoted by a number of MSPs during the debate.

RTPI Scotland Director Craig McLaren has been asked to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament Finance and Public Administration Committee's inquiry into public administration and effective Scottish Government decision-making. This will take place on 2nd May.

Apprenticeships

Prior to Christmas, RTPI Scotland submitted a business case to the Scottish Government on the need for a Scottish planning apprenticeship programme and are seeking to discuss this with them. RTPI Scotland Director, Craig McLaren, had a post published on the RTPI Blog providing an update on this work which can be read [here](#).

Digital Planning

RTPI Scotland has been progressing work commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop a digital planning skills and capabilities programme. As part of this, Ekos have started work on the development of a skills programme, working with users of the planning system to ensure that the programme meets their needs and circumstances. We are about to appoint a contractor to develop an Online Good Practice Portal which will act as a one stop shop for examples of notable and new digital planning initiatives. We are exploring options on the development of a Skills Diagnostic Tool to ascertain if there are existing resources of this type that can be adapted to work within a planning context. We will look to develop materials for providing an introduction to digital planning, whilst we are also exploring how best to develop networks to support digital champions and digital planning disrupters.

Media

The following news releases have been published:

- RTPI Scotland has published its annual Resourcing the Planning Services report, outlining the current state of the planning profession within Scotland.
- RTPI Scotland said that the success of Scotland's new national planning framework will depend on new resources to support its delivery.

Social Media

The @RTPIScotland Twitter account has 4938 followers and the @ConvenorRTPIS account has 1667.

Bob Salter FRTPi

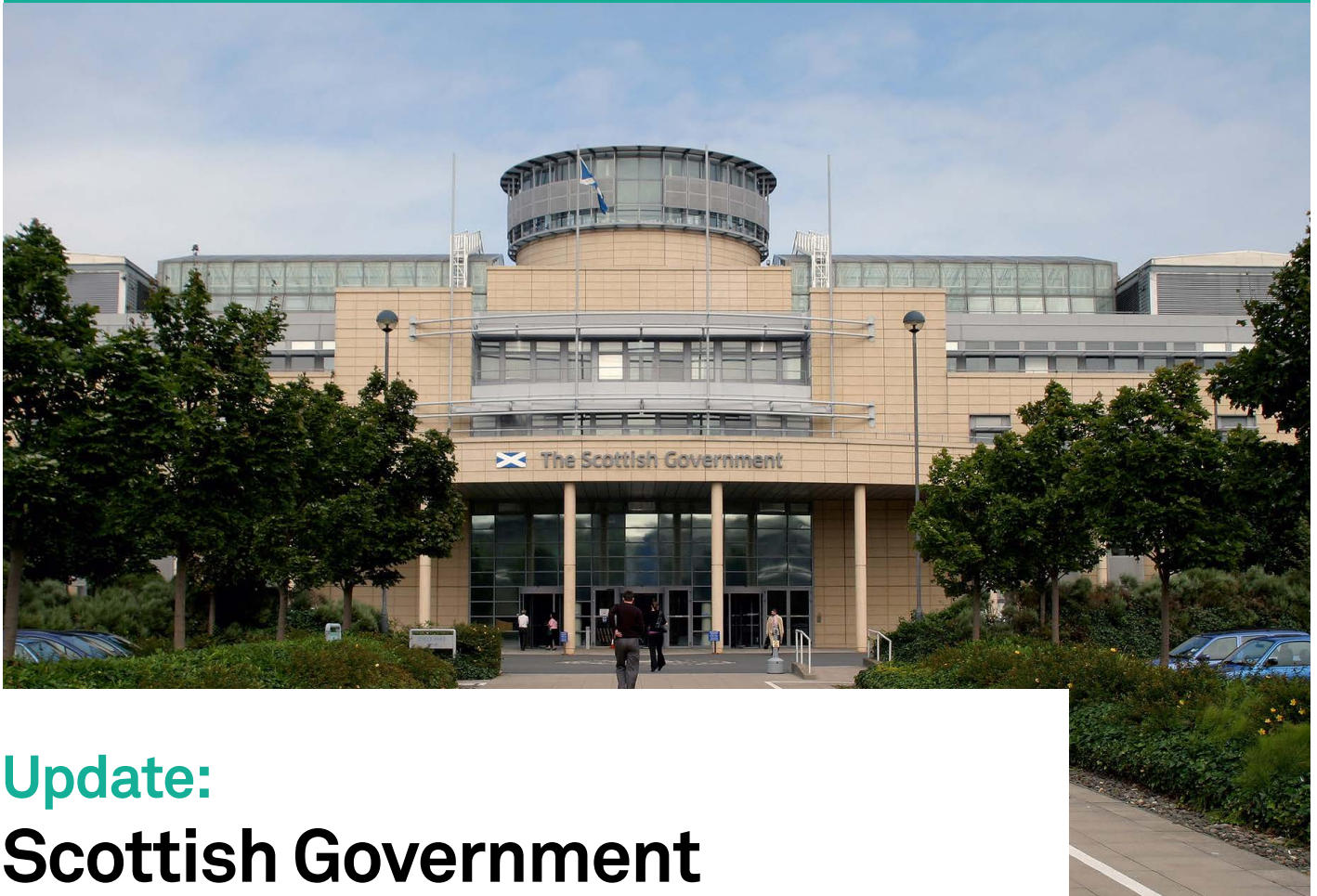
RTPI Scotland was delighted to present Bob Salter with his certificate of Fellowship at the recent member reception, where he gave

an inspiring speech outlining his absolute commitment to the profession. Bob is pictured with then Convenor, Andrew Trigger and then Vice Convenor, Kirsty Macari.

Robbie Calvert

Congratulations to Robbie Calvert MRTPI, RTPI Scotland's Policy, Practice and Research Officer who moves onto to a new role at Scottish Borders Council. All of us at RTPI Scotland wish Robbie all the best in his new position and would like to say thanks for his commitment, inspiration, and enthusiasm over the last few years. Good luck Robbie! ■





Update: Scottish Government

Already, 2023 is shaping up to be a massive year for the reform of Scotland's planning system. And it got off to a very prominent start with NPF4 adopted and fully in effect as part of the development plan alongside local development plans. This is signalling a new beginning for collaborative planning, shaping the future development of Scotland. After several years of legislation and policy development, the focus of Scotland's planning system is now firmly on delivery and on making positive change happen. There is more still to do, of course, and here we provide an update on some of the key strands of the full planning reform programme.

National Planning Framework 4

Following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January 2023, Scottish Ministers adopted and published [National Planning Framework 4](#) on 13th February. We thank everyone who has participated in its production over the last three years for your vital part in shaping NPF4. NPF4 now forms part of the statutory

development plan. It has superseded National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy (2014). On 13th February, Strategic Development Plans and associated supplementary guidance ceased to have effect and as such are no longer part of the development plan.

The Chief Planner and Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth wrote to stakeholders on 8th February to provide advice on the [transition to the new development plan system](#) and on some policy considerations.

The successful implementation and delivery of NPF4 will rely on delivery partners and stakeholders working together over its lifetime. The Scottish Government's Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division is now turning its efforts and resources onto supporting delivery. The first iteration of the NPF4 Delivery Programme was published in November 2022. It sets out further information on governance and collaboration, delivery mechanisms and infrastructure, funding, and finance. The Delivery Programme will be reviewed and updated six months after NPF4 adoption and then annually thereafter. Any feedback on the Delivery Programme is welcomed to help shape future iterations. Feedback can be sent to the NPF team at scotplan@gov.scot

Local Development Plan (LDP) Regulations and Guidance

Following consultation on draft regulations and guidance at the end of 2021, and the adoption and publication of NPF4, we are finalising regulations and guidance for local development plans. There will be two sets of regulations to bring the new system in – the main regulations for the new LDP system, plus Commencement, Savings and Transitional regulations which will bring the relevant provisions of the 2019 Planning Act into force. Following the Parliamentary process, we anticipate the regulations coming into force later in the Spring. Guidance will be published to support them coming into force. It will cover the aims and expectations for new style plans, the process of preparing a LDP, and advice on how plans can support the policy principles in NPF4.

Developing with Nature Guidance

In support of NPF4, NatureScot has published [Developing with Nature Guidance](#) on its website. This is new guidance that encourages developers and planners to deliver more for biodiversity as an everyday part of development.

This Guidance has been prepared to support application of NPF4 policy 3(c). It should be the starting point for applying policy 3(c) but will not cover all circumstances. This is non-statutory guidance and not part of the development plan. However, applicants and planning authorities are expected to give this guidance consideration through the site selection, design, and planning application process. It should be considered alongside the local development plan and any local guidance the planning authority may have itself prepared.

Permitted Development Rights

The continuing review of permitted development rights (PDR) is being taken forward on a phased basis, with each phase

focusing on new and extended PDR for specific types of development. Through the second phase of the review, consideration has been given to PDR in respect of: electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; changes of use in city, town, and local centres; and operational development at ports.

Following consideration of the responses to the [Phase 2 public consultation](#) which took place during summer 2022, [the Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development and Use Classes\) \(Scotland\) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023](#) was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 10th February 2023. Subject to Parliamentary scrutiny, the Amendment Order is due to come into force on 31st March 2023.

The Phase 2 measures:

- Provide greater flexibility to change the use of certain buildings and place furniture outside specified hospitality premises.
- Increase the scale of EV chargers that may be installed under PDR, broaden the locations where PDR apply and extend the scope of the PDR to include associated apparatus and equipment, including solar canopies.
- Align port operators' PDR with those of airports.

The [Policy Note](#) accompanying the statutory instrument provides more information.

Applicant Stakeholder Group

The NPF4 Delivery Programme includes a commitment to “establish an applicant stakeholder group who will feed into the High-Level Group on Planning Performance in order to identify priority areas for action”. The first meeting of the Applicant Stakeholder Group was held on 21st February. It was a constructive meeting, with the group considering indicators of good performance and identifying a range of issues alongside potential solutions to help measure and improve performance.

A representative of the group will join the next High Level Group meeting to provide feedback from the group discussions, providing a useful opportunity to ensure we are all focused across the sectors on supporting delivery of the reformed planning system.

Digital Planning Transformation

We are now entering a very exciting stage for the digital programme, with good progress being made on several strands of work towards a better digital future for planning services.

The Payments project is aimed at introducing a single central payment service for the current eDevelopment service. We have developed a prototype of this service and are gearing up to start on the development

of a working payment service in the coming months (the Beta phase).

Our Gateway and Smart Applications projects are both in the prototyping stage (the Alpha phase) having undertaken a period of information-gathering and speaking with partners and stakeholders about issues and opportunities (the Discovery phase). We have plans to take these forward and start development on new Gateway and Smart Applications services later this year (the Beta phases). Together, these two services will replace the eDevelopment service and make better use of data to improve functionality and the user experience. Until then, the [eDevelopment](#) service continues to play its role as a key service in allowing applicants and agents to submit planning applications, building applications, and appeals online.

We are currently holding a series of engagement sessions with our local and planning authority partners about the programme, with a focus on how we can work together to deliver this ambitious programme of transformation.

building in Scotland. Contractors have been appointed to build a first version of this 'digital front door' and will work with stakeholders to design and develop this over the next six months.

Staying In Touch

For the latest messages from the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division, follow us on Twitter [@ScotGovPlanning](#) and [@DigiPlanningSG](#) and register to receive our [Planning and Architecture news updates](#). ■

Update:

Key Agencies Group

Over the last few years, the activity of the Key Agencies Group has stepped up a gear as we welcomed planning reform and prepared for the implementation of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). As set out in our refreshed terms of reference, we will achieve this through place-based collaboration in line with the Place Principle. We are somewhat uniquely placed to help by combining the wealth of expertise, knowledge and evidence; improving outcomes through early collaboration; and delivering value for money through the alignment of resources.

Taking on the role of Key Agencies Group (KAG) Chair in December 2022 from Katherine Lakeman, SEPA, is a real privilege. I am delighted to support the group through the next year and see key pieces of work

come to fruition. Most notably, is the work of the KAG placemaking sub-group which has led on the development of a new offer of support to Planning Authorities, to help with the preparation and implementation of new-style Local Development Plans. The initial focus is on supporting a place-based approach to evidence gathering and reporting, laying the foundations for potential ongoing collective work on spatial strategies, place briefs and masterplans at the proposed plan stage. With promotional help through Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPs), the call for this offer received no less than 22 expressions of interest. Scoping meetings are intended for March to then select a number to work with intensively, gaining valuable learning to share with all other Authorities.

In addition, KAG will focus on the development of a new work plan which will set out how we will contribute to implementing NPF4 aims and policy objectives. This work began last month through the establishment of a new sub-group and will continue to gain pace throughout the year.

In addition, KAG continues to actively participate in quarterly meetings with the High Level Planning Performance Group, Chief Planner and Heads of Planning Development Planning group.

Heather Claridge MRTPI, Director of Design at Architecture & Design Scotland, Chair of the Key Agencies Group. ■

Update:

Scottish Young Planners Network

2023 is a very busy and exciting year as we celebrate the **20th anniversary of the Scottish Young Planners Network**. The anniversary milestone creates a timely opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the SYPN in addressing the needs of young planners in Scotland. Members of the Steering Group are busy finalising the programme of the annual conference '**20 Years of SYPN: Past, Present and Future**' that will take place on **Thursday 27th April 2023 at the Barracks Conference Centre, Stirling**. The aim of the conference is to stimulate vital discussions and debate on issues that are relevant to young planners. With the adoption of the NPF4, these include the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, creating healthy neighbourhoods, community

engagement and regeneration. We are also aiming towards other online and in person events in various locations in Scotland, to create opportunities for capacity building for young planners to enhance their knowledge and develop their skills.

In early February 2023, we welcomed two new members to our steering group. The applications were of the highest standard leading to very tough decisions for members and demonstrating the strength of Young Planners in Scotland. With new members joining we had to say farewell to Sean Kelly (Past Chair) and Hester Lavington (Student Representative) and thank them for their valuable contribution to the SYPN work.

On 16 March we will have a joint event with the Grampian Chapter to take a look around the recently refurbished Union Terrace Gardens in Aberdeen city centre. This will be a great networking opportunity for young planners in the North East.

Sepideh Hajisoltani MRTPI, Conservation Planner at Aberdeen City Council and Chair of the Scottish Young Planners Network 2023. ■

RTPI SCOTLAND CONTACTS



Kirsty Macari MRTPI
Convenor
Kirsty chairs the Scottish Executive Committee.

Contact
scotland@rtpi.org.uk
[@ConvenorRTPI](mailto:ConvenorRTPI@rtpi.org.uk)



Andrew Trigger
MRTPI
Immediate Past Convenor
Andrew convened RTPI Scotland in 2022.

Contact
scotland@rtpi.org.uk



Pamela Clifford
MRTPI
Senior Vice Convenor
Pamela chairs the RTPI Scotland Policy Subcommittee.

Contact
scotland@rtpi.org.uk



Laura Robertson
MRTPI
Junior Vice Convenor
Laura chairs the RTPI Scotland Careers, Education and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee.

Contact
scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Craig McLaren
FRTPI
Director

Contact
craig.mclaren@rtpi.org.uk
[@RTPIScotland](https://twitter.com/RTPIScotland)

Jennie Stansfield
Communications and Events Administrator

Contact
jennie.stansfield@rtpi.org.uk

Nick Springthorpe
Intern Project Officer

Contact
nick.springthorpe@rtpi.org.uk

Alexandra Elmslie
Intern Project Officer

Contact
alexandra.elmslie@rtpi.org.uk

Annette O'Donnell
Office Manager

Contact
annette.odonnell@rtpi.org.uk

Kirsty Holder
Digital Planning Programme Manager

Contact
kirsty.holder@rtpi.org.uk

Crea Barton
Digital Planning Programme Coordinator

Contact
crea.barton@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Scotland Chapters:

Central Scotland:
central.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
Dumfries&Galloway:
dumgal.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
East of Scotland:
east.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
South East Scotland Chapter:
southeast.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
Grampian:
grampian.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
Highlands and Islands:
highlandsislands.scotland@rtpi.org.uk
West of Scotland:
west.scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Scottish Young Planners' Network:
sypn@rtpi.org.uk

Other RTPI Contacts:

RTPI Membership:
membership@rtpi.org.uk
020 7929 9462
RTPI Education:
education@rtpi.org.uk
0207 929 9451
RTPI Media Enquiries:
Simon Creer
Simon.Creer@rtpi.org.uk

Editorial Team:

Craig McLaren, Robbie Calvert,
Nick Springthorpe, Alexandra Elmslie

Potential articles and photography are welcome. The Editors reserve the right to amend articles as necessary.

Enquiries to:

The Editors
Scottish Planner
RTPI Scotland
18 Atholl Crescent
Edinburgh EH3 8HQ.
Tel:0131 229 9628;
scotland@rtpi.org.uk

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For further information, please visit
www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland
[Twitter.com/RTPIscotland](https://twitter.com/RTPIscotland)

Scottish Young Planners Conference 2023: 20 Years of SYPN – Past, Present & Future

27th April 2023 – The Barracks
Conference Centre, Stirling



2023 is a landmark year for planning in Scotland. Since the 13th of February, the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) has been formally adopted by Scottish Ministers forming part of the statutory development plan in Scotland for the next 10 years. Now we look forward to implementation and delivery of the Framework alongside other provisions set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. However, this is not the only significant milestone of the year as we are celebrating 20 years of the Scottish Young Planners Network!

We will use this important moment in time to reflect on the past and present of the SYPN, and of course look to our new planning system with focus on topics such as the climate and biodiversity crisis, creating healthy neighbourhoods, community engagement and regeneration. This is a fantastic opportunity to build important networks with other young professionals and develop the critical skills needed to support you in your career.

Find a link to book your tickets here: [RTPI SYPN Conference 2023](#)