

# PLANNING Horizons

## Why planning is critical to a healthy urban future

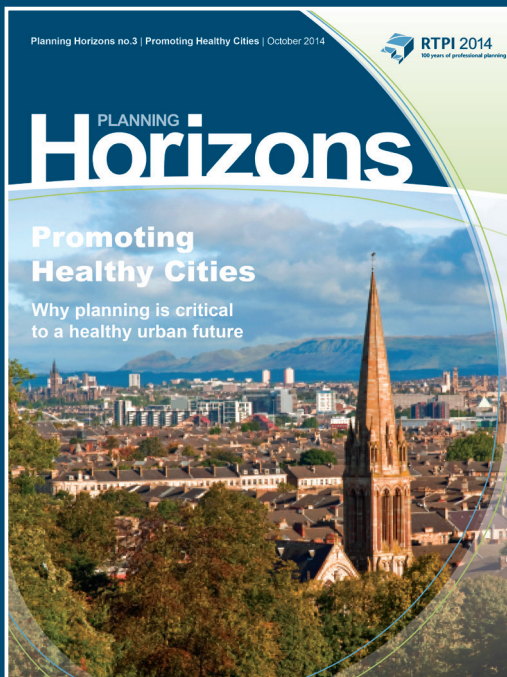
The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) was established 100 years ago. In one sense, we face many of the same challenges now as we did a century ago – the need for quality affordable housing, improved public health, and how to balance economic development with the protection of the environment.

In other respects, we are confronted by a wholly new set of challenges, such as climate change, demographic shifts (including an ageing society), the rise of 'lifestyle diseases', and increasing competition and inequality in a globalised world.

The RTPI's *Planning Horizons* papers, published during the Institute's Centenary Year in 2014, take a long-term as well as global view of planning and the contribution it can make to some of the major challenges we face in the twenty-first century.

### Environments are key to tackle the current urban health crisis

The rise of health challenges such as non-communicable diseases, combined with urbanisation taking place on an unprecedented scale, means that cities will be the places that help to determine the health and wellbeing of the majority of the population in the twenty-first century. As the costs linked to health conditions are increasingly unsustainable and are expected to increase in the years to come, we need to take a long-term, preventive and proactive view to promote healthy cities. The environment in which we live, work and spend leisure time has an enormous impact on our health and wellbeing.



The third paper in the *Planning Horizons* series, *Promoting Healthy Cities*, considers one of the most pressing challenges facing our societies – ensuring the health and wellbeing of people who live in cities. Some cities are facing huge growth, other are facing declining populations, but whether in the developed or developing world there remain significant and in some places growing inequalities in health and wellbeing.

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*Promoting Healthy Cities* summarises planning and health challenges and provides examples of where planners, other professionals and decision-makers are leading responses to these health challenges.



- A lack of adequate planning for urbanisation can result in sprawling environments, poorly connected places, limited access to services, housing and opportunities, exacerbating inequality, social exclusion and poor health.



- If planned well, cities expand the possibilities for economic growth, innovation and social development, and improve people's access to work, education, healthcare, housing and other services.



- Transport systems need to incentivise 'active travel' and tackle car-dominated environments.

## Healthy placemaking for all

In the twenty-first century, we need to develop a new urban agenda focused on healthy placemaking for all.

Planning in the broadest sense – from development management and infrastructure to the location of health and community services – can play a central role in creating environments that enhance people's health and wellbeing. We need to develop more integrated strategies for healthy placemaking, gather greater intelligence on the social and economic determinants of urban health to guide decisions and investments, reform and strengthen institutions to develop systems of governance that urban populations need, and involve more professions and communities to promote healthy cities.

The full report can be downloaded from the RTPI website at: [www.rtpi.org.uk/planninghorizons](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planninghorizons)

## The *Planning Horizons* series

The five RTPI *Planning Horizons* papers are:

- Thinking Spatially* (June 2014)
- Future-Proofing Society* (June 2014)
- Promoting Healthy Cities* (October 2014)
- Creating Economically Successful Places* (November 2014)
- Making Better Decisions for Places* (November 2014)

## About the RTPI

With 23,000 members worldwide working in the public, private, charitable and educational sectors, the RTPI is the largest institute for professional planners in Europe.