

RTPI Nations & Regions Panel

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES of the Nations & Regions Panel Meeting on 13 June 2023 - ONLINE ONLY.

PRESENT: Stefano Smith (Chair), Lindsey Richards (Vice Chair), Joe Warren-McCoy (Yorkshire), Andrew Dorrian (North East), Laura Robertson (Scotland), Joanne Harding (North West), Catharine McWhirter (Northern Ireland), Wendy Hague (East of England), Rachel Brown (Ireland), Harry Quartermain (South West).

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Woodford (Head of English Regions), Craig McLaren (Director of Scotland, Ireland, and English Regions), Roisin Willmott (Director of Wales and Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England), David Mountain (Research Manager), Daniel Slade (Policy Manager), Beatrice Crabb (International Lead) Kate Lawrence (Communications Officer).

APOLOGIES: Thomas Simnett (London), Benjamin Vickers (English Regions Trustee), Stephen Kemp (East Midlands)

MINUTE TAKER: Nadia Ismail (Governance and Compliance Officer)

Item	Description	Action
01	<p>Welcome, Introductions & Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair announced the second RTPI Nations and Regions Panel meeting and welcomed introductions from the Panel from each nation and region.</p> <p>The Chair noted apologies from Thomas Simnett and lateness from Rachel Brown and absences from Ben Vickers and Steve Kemp and Simon Taylor.</p>	
02	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <p>The Chair noted no declarations of interest from the Panel on any of the agenda items.</p>	
03	<p>Approve Minutes of Last Meeting on 28 March 2023</p> <p>The committee noted the following points on the minutes from the 28 March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few typos were noted, namely on page 5 which mentioned firearms for the Scotland Office, which should be fire alarms • RTPI Ireland “Flatley” should be “Slattery”. • London – mock planning ‘enquiry’ which should be ‘inquiry’ • Project One Institute: 26,000 delegate members registered and attended events, and 9,000 majority members did not attend events – does this mean that 9,000 	

	<p>attended events or 9,000 was the majority? Further clarifications of statistics are needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of England Menopause event: More information requested on this event which was noted as postponed with further dates not yet confirmed. Wendy Hague to follow-up offline. 	
<p>04</p>	<p>Action Log</p> <p>The Chair noted that the formatting of the action log needs to be clearer, in order to identify concluded actions.</p> <p>Outstanding actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Item 1: An update was provided in the March 2023 meeting on the Big Conversation. In relation to this RTPI plans to develop a campaign on the wellbeing of planners. The communications team have put out a tender for a Misinformation and Welfare Communications Campaign, with a central focus on support for planners experiencing stress and abuse. This has received a high amount of interest, with 17 applications received so far. The campaign is due to be released on World Town Planning Day on 8 November 2023. The tender document can be circulated to panel members. - Action 8: to be closed. <p>The Panel discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions raised on the timing of the launch of the wellbeing campaign on the same day of the World Town Planning on 8 November, and in light of anecdotal evidence of the pressure faced by planners, this campaign should take place sooner. It was explained that the launch was related to the necessary timescales involved, but that RTPI would continue to focus on this issue in the build up to the launch. <p>ACTION: Update format of action log</p>	<p>NI</p>
<p>05</p>	<p>BOT / GA <small>VERBAL UPDATE</small></p> <p>The Vice Chair provided a brief update on the Board of Trustees meeting on 24 May 2023, as the General Assembly (GA) meeting was discussed at the NRP meeting in March. Some of the key items discussed and approved at the Board Meeting included the finance report, with three key areas approved for funding: the Welfare Campaign, the Manifesto – ahead of the 2024 elections – and £35,000 for Planning is Global, based on supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Board also approved the Audit Committee’s Annual finance report.</p> <p>The Vice Chair also briefly noted the development of the RTPI’s Digital Transformation strategy, the revised timeline for the Education Policy Review – to allow for more collaboration and consultation – and the extensive discussion on the Brand Strategy, which is subject to further discussion at the July Away day. Additional items covered in the Board of Trustees meeting were the President and CEO’s report which referred to the American Planning Conference, the Global Planners Network and the on-going engagement with the Planning Officers Society – which is holding a conference in May 2023. Other key events coming forward are the national Minerals Conference and the RTPI Research Awards. Further, the nominations closed for the RTPI’s Awards for Planning Excellence – with a total of 274 entries – the Vice President also noted the</p>	

Scottish Young Planners Conference which took place in April and the upcoming National Planning Conference on 9 and 10 November.

Panel members noted the following:

- There should be some contingency arrangements for the Manifesto if a general election is called earlier.
- As part of the direct debit initiative roll-out, there should be clear indication of the [tax relief](#) option on RTPI subscription payments which aren't often clearly indicated for professional subscriptions.
- There should be a clear indication of the value of membership as fundamental to information delivered on increased subscription fees.

06

Nations and Regions VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair invited updates from Panel members on activities conducted across their nations and regions since March 2023, in addition to the updates circulated in the NRP highlights.

Scotland:

- RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence
- Scottish Young Planners Conference (27 April): a well-attended event with good debates and discussions.
- Sir Patrick Geddes Lecture (25 May): online event and very well attended
- Workforce strategy: focused on adequate supply of planners in Scotland, to ensure support for people to have a smooth journey through the different stages of their careers and ensure well skilled and resilient planning workforce.

Northern Ireland

- Policy group: policy group meet-ups, such as site visits to the new transport hub in Belfast.
- Aims to ensure involvement and capacity building with local people to ensure community-level participation and engagement.
- There have been discussions on budget cuts such as cuts for Community Places – NI equivalent to Planning Aid – which provides planning advice and support to communities.
- Webinar on Incorporating Energy into Historic Settings -two experts from England and Wales presented their work on National Trust policies. Positive experiences from the event with 65 people registered.

Ireland

- Annual Lecture: lecture on sustainable urban design principles by Professor Matthew Carmona (UCL).
- Annual Dinner (1 June) – attended by Victoria Hills, Planning Regulator among others. Awards were given to high achieving students in planning schools in Ireland. Thanks were given to Craig McLaren for his support.
- President's Visit in July and conference in September, and continuous engagement with Ireland Planning Institute on MoU to streamline more CPD

courses and events and to engage with ministers in Ireland on legislative planning policies.

North-East

(See NRP highlights from 13 June)

Wales

- Spring conference (30 March) went well, with preparations underway for the Wales Planning Conference on 22 June – which is based on climate action. Some of the speakers include Julie James (Minister for Climate Change, Wales)
- Promoting Planning as a career: 23 June from RTPI to market for planning.

West Midlands:

- Committee meetings are being held in two venues which also offer hybrid.
- Face to face events planned on heritage and planning law
- Webinars on: Politics in Planning and Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure: 124 delegates
- Study tour of Coventry
- Annual Ball and Award Ceremony on 30 June, with expected good attendance rate
- Webinar on logistics and energy might be moved into 2024

London

- Events programme, aligned with themed months, progressing well and seems a good approach to take. Most events are very well attended with many having sold out.
- Pleased with 23 entries for the London awards. Excited to have Amy Lamé as keynote speaker.
- podcast programme continuing development.
- Young planners particularly active, working on summer social boat party. Regular CPD events with around 1 in-person and 1 virtual event per month.

Yorkshire

(See NRP highlights from 13 June)

North-west

- In-person attendance to CPD events has increased.
- Annual dinner – 350 delegated booked to attend the NW annual dinner.
- Young Planners activities – increased activities in the young planner task group, such as [Coastal Week](#) with site visits and social events.

East of England:

- In April, a fully booked in-person APC workshop was held in Norwich and hosted by Graham Bloomfield, E of E RAC member and RTPI assessor.
- The RTPI Young Planners set up a Bridging the Gap: Providing Affordable Housing in Rural Areas webinar, attracting over 200 attendees. The Young Planners have several events coming up in the next couple of months, including

a football tournament and walking tour of the riverfront Regeneration at Fletton Quays, Peterborough and a webinar on Nutrient Neutrality: Norfolk Update.

- Fantastic turnout at the RTPI New Settlements Conference, which was held on 06 June; attendees heard from various expert speakers who explored solutions for building inclusive, environmentally conscious and resilient settlements. A walking tour of Letchworth followed the conference; positive feedback was received from all attendees.
- A working group has now been set up in the East of England RMB/RAC for the presidential visit, which will be taking place in Lowestoft, Suffolk, on 12 October.
- The awards judging process for the E of E has now taken place, and we are all looking forward to the ceremony at Hatfield House on the 22 June, where Lord Salisbury will join.
- RTPI East of England's Coastal Communities webinar is coming up on 06 July as part of RTPI Coastal Week.

The E of E RMB asked the Panel to note:

- Potential impact on fall of income due to concentration on remote CPD and to highlight the benefits of networking and wellbeing from in-person events.
- Contribution of reserves for joint in-person events (under 5K) to be discussed with RTPI
- Decreased number of international students at accredited planning schools, which led to less income for universities, and therefore supports the scoping of new planning schools overseas.
- Awards: number of submissions have decreased, quality has declined, and they seem slightly rushed.

The Head of English Regions noted that the Awards project manager is conducting extensive work to improve the quality of the Awards. A questionnaire has been distributed to all judges asking for their insight and feedback into developments, such as the criteria, process and questions to be included in a guidance document next year. Any judges on the Panel were encouraged to fill out the form.

The Panel noted the following:

- There could be an option for feedback from people who have submitted their work, i.e., in the application process, to better understand some of the barriers and/or concerns faced in the submission processes for RTPI awards.

South West

- **President's Visit:** 7 and 8 June. On day one Sue will start off at Teignbridge DC where the focus will be on the work as a pathfinder for Design Codes. Afterwards she will then visit to the Council's largest allocation in the extant local plan, SWE1, South West Exeter in under construction and is an example of a mixed use development with varied cross-discipline and stakeholder involvement. On day two she will visit Bath and North East Somerset Council to see examples of joint work with the Regeneration Service to deliver on the aspirations of communities through Town Centre Regeneration supported by CIL funding and Masterplanning and delivery of projects at in the heart of Bath's World Heritage Site city centre. Sue will then have lunch and networking at UWE (accredited Planning School) to talk about research, then onto Brabazon, the new arena development in a former Concord Hanger. Sue will then conclude with a speech at the RTPI SW Annual Dinner and host a table of Senor/Heads of Planning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar Events: All core regional events are going well (5 out of 6 being offered as hybrid) attendance is above expected. Seminars delivered included Housing the Unmet Need with a focus on the ageing population, Build to rent, HMOs, CO Housing, accessibility. Back to the drawing board =- getting design and planning right which looked at the latest policy, good design, Inspectors view, design codes and some workshops. Forthcoming seminars focus on Renewables, Regeneration, CPD DAY (multiple choice workshops) and Planning law update. - Webinars: Recently completed a series of renewables webinars with UWE which looked at siting challenges, Nationally Significant energy projects, Community engagement and end of life. Forthcoming webinar on digitalising planning and development underway for a webinar focussing on inclusive planning. - Annual Dinner – 8 June, Bristol: Record year for the dinner with over 280 attending. This year has included a top table for Heads of Planning. No after dinner speaker, just entertainment from a Mindreader, Food Scientist, Magician and Casino tables. - Summer Reception: After a successful 2022 inaugural event, this reception will again celebrate the Awards, RTPI Volunteers, New Members. - Young Planners: Two new YP groups for the region – Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. First events coming up on Heritage Action Zones and BNG. Social planned including walking tour and paddleboarding. Other YP groups doing well, working on some events for the Devon/Somerset/Cornwall area. - Awards: Awards judging completed, noted that the quality of entries were not as of a standard of previous years with some entrants being too premature. - Branchout e-magazine: Committee agreed to a revamp of Branchout to be more focussed on case studies/sharing best practice and less on what the regional branch have been doing, The latter would be communicated via the website and E-bulletins - Policy and Research: Working group have help collate some recent consultation responses from local members, but noted the very little comments sent in. Assume comments direct to Policy or organisations completing their own responses. 	
07	<p>Middle East De-brief – feedback from Panel <small>PAPER ATTACHED</small></p> <p>The Head of English Regions invited the Panel to provide their perspectives and experiences with international groups and contacts within their respective locations, with particular focus to be placed on section 4 ‘future opportunities’. areas Areas where the the Nations and Regions Panel can contribute include: involving international young planners in areas such as webinars and training.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this is a great opportunity for the Panel to provide input into this international initiative, and highlighted key statistics such as 3,000 urban planners in UAE and 50 members across the region as an opportunity to grow membership through areas such as: young planners network, MoU, accredited planning courses etc.</p> <p>The committee members noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The contribution to GDP, quality of life and climate mitigation and resilience in key infrastructure to be highlighted from consultancies overseas. - To discuss the opportunity with key national planning schools of establishing branches overseas. - To move away from a colonial approach to planning school, and to learn from international partnerships through their practises, i.e local climate resilience and mitigation measures. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An opportunity to feed into local and international groups within Nations and Regions – and to take the opportunity to source trainers for CPD courses from abroad to conduct courses based on their specialism i.e climate action courses. 	
<p>08</p>	<p>Elections – BOT/GA/Presidential + Nations/Regions <small>VERBAL UPDATE</small></p> <p>The Internal Communications Officer gave a brief update on the elections for 2023, and the key methods to increase engagement in the elections, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted communications by sharing the roles to members that are relevant to them and their membership level - Working closely with Volunteer Coordinator to bring elections for governance roles in line with volunteering across the institute to encourage consistency – i.e format, layout of the information, website design and emails – to focus more on the benefits of volunteering for both individual and organisation. <p>The Panel noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include the role titles on a regional level in a more condensed manner and to be consistent across advertisements. 	
<p>09</p>	<p>Project One Institute – Business Plan + Reserves <small>VERBAL UPDATE + PAPER CIRCULATED</small></p> <p>The Head of English Regions provided a brief update on the Regional Reserves and related projects, which are as follows:</p> <p>Local Authority training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northwest Region: LPA Engage – three training sessions delivered at a cost of around £4300 - West Midlands: 1 of 3 planned training events of up to £10k, due to take place in July 2023 - Northeast region: working group considering similar options <p>Early Career Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 grants of up to £50k - <p>Support to fund volunteer coordinator roles for 2023 and 2024</p> <p>The Research Manager introduced the Early Career Research grants and highlighted the importance of ECR after doctoral studies, for the development of planning research and to support accredited planning schools in their research capacities. There were three centrally funded research grants in 2022 which were thematically broad. The paper outlines a detailed list by topic to enable deeper conversations and engagement with researchers.</p> <p>The Head of English Regions noted that the deadline has been extended, to allow for feedback on topics from RMBs and committee members, and for the committee to bring forward ideas based on their topics of interest and on section 3.</p> <p>It was noted that the deadline for regions to respond to contributions to ECR grants from their regional reserves is 20 June 2023.</p> <p>The Panel noted the following:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NW RMB agreed that 10K would be too much for one region to fund for one project – and would prefer a shared contribution model and to have a wider discussion on drawdown on reserve within NRP. <p>ACTION: Set-up a separate sub-group for regional reserves outside of NRP.</p>	SW
10	<p>RTPI Networks Review and Practice <small>VERBAL UPDATE</small></p> <p>The Policy Manager gave a brief background on the RTPI Networks Review, which comprise of networks based on various specialism within membership, i.e., Urban Design Network, National Association of Planning Enforcement, Young Planners and the operation and engagement varies depending on each network. The Policy Manager highlighted governance discrepancies between networks and RTPI as an organisation, and a lack of formal terms of reference, and high administrative burden for staff involved in the networks. The primary aim is to increase membership value and engagement, and there are five primary stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting scope – understanding what members want through research 2. Evidence gathering – assessing how networks are functioning in practise, and barriers to joining networks through surveys with members who aren't in networks 3. Internal feedback from RTPI staff 4. Best practise comparisons from other institutes. 5. Implementation of recommendations <p>The committee noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Vice President welcomed the initiative as a positive way forward to engage with more members on topics relevant to them. The VP also noted the GA is aware of issues affecting networks – such as a lack of feedback, dialogue, and engagement from networks. <p>ACTION: In-depth discussion with NRP and Policy Manager on RTPI Networks Review and Practise to be prioritised in the September agenda.</p>	SW
11	<p>Project One Institute - Events Strategy: An International perspective</p> <p>The International Manager provided a brief update to the NRP on how to incorporate international dimensions in their events programme. The RTPI's international strategy has several pillars, i.e supporting planning, knowledge, and practise on an international level – and to develop a focus group for mutual learning. There are several RTPI international groups established in the devolved nations, and on a regional level and the RTPI have encouraged international groups to take a coordinated approach, such as webinars and events. So far, the pilot of this started at the start of the year, with three events organised in different regions and nations, based on their thematic interests i.e flood mitigation and sustainable urban drainage in London and conducted a webinar with Bloomberg in New York.</p> <p>The International Lead noted that WTPD provided a great opportunity to bring in collaboration and good practise from an international level last year, with more activities to take place this year.</p>	

	<p>The Chair welcomed international engagement in nations and regions events.</p>	
	<p>Any Notified Business Not Otherwise on the Agenda</p> <p>The Head of English Regions encouraged submissions from the NRP for nominations for the Gold Award, which is scheduled to take place every 2 years. Please see more information provided on the RTPI website.</p>	