



RTPI

Royal Town Planning Institute

Planning Theory Advice Note

Supplementary Guidance

For Chartered Associate APC and Experienced Practitioner APC membership candidates

Published August 2019



**This supplementary guidance must be read
alongside main guidance available at:**

www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc

www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc

**Your application will be rejected or deferred if
you fail to comply with the main guidance.**

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1. General information

1.1 Who is this advice note for?

This advice note is applicable to Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) candidates applying for:

- Chartered membership via the Associate Assessment of Professional Competence (A-APC): www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc.
- Chartered membership via the Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC): www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc.

See section 4 of A-APC Guidance June 2019 and section 4 of EP-APC Guidance June 2019 for competency requirements.

1.2 How to use this advice note

This advice note provides supplementary guidance on how to frame your response to APC competency *C13 Specialist knowledge and planning theory*. It **must** be read in conjunction with the **main guidance available at: www.rtpi.org.uk/apc**.

You should bear in mind that the body of literature on planning theory is vast and cannot be realistically distilled into one note. The RTPI does not aim to be reductive, simplistic or overly prescriptive in discussing planning theory, but seeks to clarify what is meant by ‘theory’ within an APC context and how it can be demonstrated within the written submission.

Why planning theory? Inspiration and grounding for your professional practice

‘Planners should be capable of moving in a discretionary way from one theory to another using them as **working tools**, and not as dogmatic features.

Instead of believing in a specific theory and its foundational invariants, planners would benefit more from understanding the diversity of standpoints, and through this obtain inspiration for their professional practice.’¹

¹ António Ferreira, Olivier Sykes & Peter Batey (2009) Planning Theory or Planning Theories? The Hydra Model and its Implications for Planning Education, Journal for Education in the Built Environment, 4:2, 40, DOI: 10.11120/jebe.2009.04020029

2. Planning theory within the APC

2.1 What is planning theory?

Planning theory provides you with a framework to make sense of what you do. It can be divided into two broad types, both of which are acceptable for the APC.

THEORIES OF PLANNING

Theories of planning, also known as paradigm theories (why planning exists and what it does). Theories of planning often answer the question ‘why’? For example, why intervene in land and property markets and where does land use regulation fit in with this?

THEORIES IN PLANNING

Theories in planning, also known as close-to-practice level theories (prescribed methodologies for how to do planning, or how to go about it)². Theories in planning often answer the question ‘how’? For example, how should a city be developed to ensure good transport links, or how should it be planned to incorporate suitable housing stock.

Given the planning profession’s relationship with the social sciences, there is a broad spectrum of theory which you could consider e.g. theories of social justice, human rights and equality. While these theories may be appropriate to your case study, you need to ensure that there is an adequate link between the theory and implications for your planning specialism.

2.2 Planning theory vs. planning practice

Candidates need to ensure that they do not confuse the practical application of planning (e.g. discussion of policy and case law) with planning theory. Policy is often a **product of** theory. The assessors are, however, expecting to see that you have thought about the **theory behind the product** (or practice).

For example, you could reflect on what led to a certain policy being developed, why was a framework or policy adopted? Or you could consider how property markets react when specific planning tools are implemented, how does this accord with theories on property market operations or theories on land supply?

² Kristian Olesen (2018) Teaching planning theory as planner roles in urban planning education, Higher Education Pedagogies, 3:1, 23-39, DOI: 10.1080/23752696.2018.1425098

2.3 Criterion (c) of C13 Specialist knowledge and planning theory

To demonstrate criterion (c) of this competency you need to: “Identify and reflect on the implications a planning theory has for your area of specialism”. Quoting or copying a theory will not meet this competency, assessors are looking for you to show an understanding of how the theory links with your area of practice.

You may find the following approach helpful:

- **Introduce the theory** – explain what it is and what it means to you.
- **Discuss the implications of the theory for your practice** – reflect on how the theory links to the specialism within your case study e.g. maybe you think the theory is flawed, or think it does not work in practice, or maybe, if that theory had been adopted more closely in the case study, a different outcome could have been achieved.
- **Cite relevant texts** – what source material did you use to gain an understanding of the theory?

Use your word limit carefully – given the overall word limit of the submission, you would not be expected to spend more than 300 words on demonstrating planning theory.

Argue your point

Don't be afraid to present an opposing view to the theory – just make sure to justify your position.

2.4 Suggested reading list – examples

The following list of literature aims to provide you with an introduction to planning theory; and look at why and how we plan. Please note that this list is **non-exhaustive** and should only serve as a **guide to stimulate thought**. To meet criterion (c) of *C13 Specialist knowledge and planning theory*, you should identify specific reading which is relevant to your specialism and case study.

GENERAL INTRODUCTIONS TO PLANNING THEORY

- Allmendinger P (2017) *Planning Theory* (3rd edition), Red Globe Press.
- Couch, C. (2015) *Urban Planning: an introduction*, London, Palgrave.
- Cullingworth, B., Nadin, V., Hart, T., Davoudi, S., Pendlebury, J., Vigar, G., Webb, D. and Townshend, T. (2015) *Town and Country Planning in the UK* (15th edition), Abingdon, Routledge.
- Gehl, J. (2010) *Cities for People*, Island Press.
- Greed, C. with Johnson, D. (2014) *Planning in the UK* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morphet, J. (2010) *Effective Practice in Spatial Planning*, London, Routledge.

INTERNATIONAL

- Hall, P. (2014) *Good Cities Better Lives*, London, Routledge (*implications and case studies from Europe*).
- UN Habitat (2015) *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning*, UN Habitat.

WHY PLAN?

- Bramley, G. (2003) 'Planning regulation and land supply in a market system' in: T. O'Sullivan and K.Gibb, (eds) *Housing Economics and Public Policy*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Cheshire, P.C, Nathan, M. and H.G. Overman (2014) *Urban economics and urban policy*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.
- Evans, A.W. (2004) *Economics and Land Use Planning*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Harrison, A.J. (1977) *Economics and Land Use Planning*, Croom Helm, London.
- Whitehead, C.M.E. (1984, 'The rationale for government intervention', in Dunkerley, H. (ed) *Urban Land Policy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 217-225.

HOW WE PLAN

- Allmendinger, P (2001) *Planning in postmodern times*, London, Routledge.
- Booth, P.A. (2003), *Planning by Consent: The Origins and Nature of British Development Control*, London, Routledge.
- Collini, S (1989) *J. S. Mill: 'On Liberty' and Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, H (2010) 'Just planning. The art of situated ethical judgment', *Journal of Planning Education & Research*, 26, 92-1067.
- Fainstein, S.S. (2010) *The Just City*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Flint, J. & Raco, M. (2012) *The Future of Sustainable Cities*, Bristol, The Policy Press.
- Friedmann, J. (1987) *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative Planning*, Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke.
- Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.
- Rydin, Y. (2011) *The Purpose of Planning: Creating Sustainable Towns and Cities* Bristol, The Policy Press.

RTPI LIBRARY SERIES

The RTPI Library Series examines all aspects of spatial planning theory and practice from a comparative and international perspective: www.rtpi.org.uk/library-series.

3. References

The following sources were used to draft this advice note:

- António Ferreira, Olivier Sykes & Peter Batey (2009) Planning Theory or Planning Theories? The Hydra Model and its Implications for Planning Education, *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*, 4:2, 40, DOI: 10.11120/jebe.2009.04020029
- Kristian Olesen (2018) Teaching planning theory as planner roles in urban planning education, *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 3:1, 23-39, DOI: 10.1080/23752696.2018.1425098



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PLANNING THEORY
ADVICE NOTE
RESOURCES



**Access all resources including main
guidance at:**

**www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc
www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc**

**Contact the Membership Team:
membership@rtpi.org.uk
+44(0)20 7929 9462**

Thank you for reading this guidance.

**FIND OUT MORE:
www.rtpi.org.uk/a-apc
www.rtpi.org.uk/ep-apc**