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 **RTPI Scotland**
Royal Town Planning Institute



**Planning
for COP26**

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Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Scottish Planner. As mother nature begins her gentle wind down into her wintery slumber, the planning and policy world is doing quite the opposite, waking up after its summer siesta like a flurry of autumnal leaves. With the draft NPF4 just around the corner, its looking like its going to be a spirited end to the year too.

Scottish Parliament is now back in full swing and there has been plenty keeping us going here at RTPI Scotland. Most of our recent focus has been on engaging with the newly elected MSPs, especially members of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee. In our conversations so far, it's been really heartening to see a real shift in how politicians from across the board think and talk about planning. We reckon there has been a noticeable change of tone around

planning; with a renewed emphasis placed on the solutions that planning can bring to a range of areas and the importance of ensuring we have a strong functioning and effectively resourced planning system.

Of course, we have also been hard at work with arrangements around COP26 which this edition is themed around. We have some fantastic contributions looking at how planning and planners can address the climate crisis and I hope it brings you a sense of optimism about what proactive steps we can all take in our personal and professional lives to address this challenge. I like to think that a confident planning system, with its long-term vision, can enable us to anticipate, mitigate and adapt to future scenarios, allowing us to embrace the future, not fear it.

– Robbie Calvert - Co-Editor

Convenor's Comments: Beware of unintended consequences



Barbara Cummins
MRTPI,
Convenor,
RTPI Scotland
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This edition of our Scottish planner has its focus around COP26, so we have articles that range from active travel, renewables, heat networks and green initiatives to Scotland's Climate Assembly and carbon conscious places. There is so much information on responding to the climate emergency and the issues themselves seem so huge it can be overwhelming. It is clear we all have a role to play so what can any of us do as individuals and planners?

I have been reading about how the UK measures the impacts we are having on our planet, and it got me thinking about the consequences of the everyday decisions I make. We all know our impact isn't just, for example, emissions from driving our cars, but manufacturing and disposal and transportation to the bring the car or its parts to Scotland. I hadn't really realised that when the UK measures its emissions it isn't actually counting the transportation or manufacture in other places – so are we thinking about the total impact of our activities when we chose what to buy and from where?

Every decision we make has consequences for people and the planet. One area of my life that has bothered me for some time is that of "fast fashion." I know I ought to be buying ethically and sustainably. Whilst I do have quality natural material made items; including quite a lot of wool, I also buy fast fashion. I believe we need a fundamental rethink about our attitudes to consumption and what that is doing to our planet but not only is it easier said than done, there would be a consequential huge impact on our high streets and on the people who rely on its manufacture for a living if we all suddenly changed our habits.

Many of you will know that my personal Twitter handle refers to my love of knitting, so you won't be surprised to hear that, in thinking about fashion and unintended

consequences, I have taken an interest in the British wool industry. British wool is more valued for its use in carpets than clothing. The biggest consumer of carpeting is the hospitality industry, so the wool industry has been badly affected by the pandemic. Many wool producers are getting so little some are simply not selling. Might the ultimate result be they stop producing a material that isn't valued by us as fast fashion consumers? What would the impact be on our landscapes as a result?

Every decision we make in life impacts on someone and that impacts on a place.

Of course, how we live and what drives our economy has repeatedly changed over time and our places have adapted to respond to that. The landscapes we enjoy today have been fundamentally shaped by the changing activities of many generations. The difference today is that we get a say in any agenda for change. I don't need to remind any of you that the purpose of planning is to manage the development and use of land in the *long-term* public interest. We have a key role in presenting the evidence, considering all the consequences and looking for the right balance between competing interests when making decisions and advising politicians. We are told humanity is at a key moment in the face of the changing climate, all the little decisions we make daily will cumulatively make a difference; every small action counts. As citizens we can make a difference and as planners we have a critical role to ensure we are successful in our efforts to **#PlanTheScotlandWeNeed. ■**

“...Every decision we make
in life impacts on someone
and that impacts on a place”



Article:

The heyday of the planning profession is coming



Photo: Alexey Fedorenko

Dr Wei Yang FRTPI RTPI President, discusses how the planning profession can address the twin crisis's of climate change and biodiversity loss through a long term, strategic and multi-disciplinary approach.



Dr Wei Yang FRTPI,
RTPI President

In a recent ['Generation Z' survey](#) carried out by Amnesty International, climate change ranks highest as the most important issue facing the world amongst 18-25 year olds. As the RTPI President, I have the privilege of meeting many young people. From our conversations, I can feel the strong sense of urgency and the desire to change. But I also hear their frustrations - many principles they learned from schools cannot be fully applied in the 'real world'. "This is not how we do things" as they were told.

It is a time filled with clashes between high-level ambitious policies and tendencies of carrying on 'business as usual'. Government departments and professionals are still working in the way they did in the 20th century. However, to tackle climate change and other pressing issues, transformative changes need to start from how we work with each other, how we share our data and knowledge, and how we communicate with the general public.

"It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, oceans and land". It took more than three decades for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC) to get their message listened, but sadly we do not have another three decades to plan our actions. [The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#) (2021) warns of increasingly extreme heatwaves, droughts and flooding, and a key temperature limit being broken in just over a decade. The danger is on every country's doorstep. Nowhere is safe on this planet.

Although grim, there is still a final hope. Scientists say a catastrophe can be avoided if the world acts fast. Last December, the IPCC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) came together for the first time. The scientists warn that climate change and biodiversity loss have largely been tackled separately, even though both are driven by

"...utilising place-based spatial planning in a long term, strategic, multi-disciplinary approach can be a transformative solution to coordinate the efforts from different professionals to tackle the grant challenges of our times."

human activities, and both have impacts on each other (IPBES & IPCC, 2021). Climate change and biodiversity decline must be tackled urgently together, and with pollution and waste – they are immediate threats to humanity and the planet. The scientists are calling on countries to protect entire ecosystems rather than iconic locations or species. Treating climate, biodiversity and human society as coupled systems is key to successful outcomes from policy interventions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated strong connections between our living environment and public health, in both physical and mental terms¹. The most vulnerable communities experienced the worst impacts from the pandemic globally². The Institute for Healthcare Improvement's "Triple Aim" framework has suggested that in addition to the patient experience of care, 'improving the health of populations' and 'being a good steward of the per capita cost of care' should also be seen as important public health aims.

How our living environment is planned has direct influence on people's daily activities, their health and wellbeing. People's choices for healthier lifestyles are limited by the built environment. It is evident that the vast amount of research and studies are calling for one thing – utilising place-based spatial planning in a long term, strategic, multi-disciplinary approach can be a transformative solution to coordinate the efforts from different professionals to tackle the grand challenges of our times. It is also the most direct way to influencing human activities and lifestyles. Working in silos and non-place-based policies will lead us to the dead end – a catastrophe.

I believe it is time for the planning profession to take a leadership role in forging a common and collaborative sense

of purpose with other good forces in the wider society. The professional boundaries are merging; what joining us together is our shared sense of purpose - what should be done now to make our world a better place for our future generations.

This is the message I am going to take to COP26 - the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow this November.

This reminds me when Thomas Adams (1871-1940) initiated the Town Planning Institute in the 1910s, he wanted the institute to act as a forum for all of the environmental professions and as a sponsor of research into planning problems. A professional institute in planning would 're-integrate the sharply divided environmental professions and oversee technical training' (Simpson, 1985)⁴. Adams saw no fundamental distinction between professionals and amateurs, and in the view that both needed education in the appreciation of environmental problems and possibilities. I believe this is the approach we still need to take now – to welcome anyone with a shared vision to work together with us.

Planners, we come from communities and work for public interest. We are distinguished by our primary commitment to the benefit of the public and the longer-term interests of society (ECTP-CEU, 2013)⁵. Our connection with the public is the foundation of the profession. Planners need to work with communities and draw on local knowledge on the ground. From the last 19th century, work of Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) promoted

observation of communities based on the scientific method and civic surveys. Planning is people centric and is about the future; it's a subject that relates to everyone's life. The fundamental objective

of the planning profession is to create a balanced system for people, nature and society to co-exist in harmony. The full remit of spatial planning covers land and marine areas - it deals with our relationship with natural and

“Our connection with the public is the foundation of the profession. Planners need to work with communities and draw on local knowledge on the ground.”

built environments. As an applied social, environmental and behavioural science, it synthesises a variety of perspectives and approaches and is the glue that binds built and natural environment expertise together to create a better future for public interest.

Integrated spatial planning can be used as the leverage to develop a long-term vision and framework for citizens that considers multiple scales, balancing competing demands and directing resource-allocation decisions (Albrechts, 2004)⁶. But to unlock its full potential, there is an urgent need to cultivate a sustainable research, practice, and education eco-system for spatial planning to fully embrace the data and technological advances. It will enable a better engaged plan-making process and a much broader interdisciplinary collaboration, and it will allow everyone to think intelligently about the future to support well-informed decision-making.

I am full of hope for our profession. The heyday of the planning profession is coming. As UN Environment Programme suggested on the International Youth Day 2021 in August, planning will be a popular profession for young people seeking for green jobs. Let's do our best to create opportunities for our future generations to unlock their full potentials to **plan the world we need.** ■

¹ IPBES & IPCC (2021), IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop report on biodiversity and climate change. <https://ipbes.net/events/launch-ipbes-ippc-co-sponsored-workshop-report-biodiversity-and-climate-change>

² Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future, <https://unhabitat.org/cities-and-pandemics-towards-a-more-just-green-and-healthy-future-0>

³ How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ccsa/documents/covid19-report-ccsa.pdf>

⁴ Simpson, M. (1985), 'Thomas Adams and the Modern Planning Movement: Britain, Canada and the United States, 1900-1940. (London and New York, MANSELL: An Alexandrine Press Book).

⁵ ECTP-CEU (2013), The Charter of European Planning 2013 - The Vision for Cities and Regions – Territories of Europe in the 21st Century.

⁶ Albrechts, L. (2004), 'Strategic (Spatial) Planning Re-Examined', Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design, 31(5), 743-758.

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (2021), GEO-6 for Youth, <https://www.unep.org/resources/geo-6-youth>

A skilled workforce, including not only people who have scientific, engineering and management qualifications but also those who carry out traditional craft and technical jobs, is needed to support a green economy.



Skills needed for future green jobs
Image Source: GEO-6 for Youth, 2021
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Q&A

Public Enquiries



Sarah Shaw MRTPI,
Head of Planning,
Glasgow City Council

Sarah Shaw MRTPI, Head of Planning at Glasgow City Council answers our questions.

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

My career route to Planning is a good example of the multidisciplinary nature of planning: I came to it through an interest in environmental law, as opposed to a straight planning or geography undergraduate route. I was influenced early on by my tutor Jean Forbes in the planning course in University of Strathclyde. Subsequently I have been lucky enough to have great managers, who have mentored and encouraged me and from whom I have learnt not only about planning but about how to cope under pressure, how to problem solve and how to think logically and laterally.

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

One of the greatest challenges currently facing planning is resourcing. Local government funding and lack of ability to resource local planning authorities services adequately, has an effect on the ability of both planning authorities and private sector development to meet the challenges and requirements of the statutory planning system. It also affects the ability of planners to act in collaboration with designers to achieve the best place based outcomes. Despite this, here in Glasgow we have been able to bring in graduates through a successful programme which has been running for a number of years, looking to develop the planners of the future and bring in people with fresh skills and approaches.

3 Why is planning important?

One of the great strengths of planning is its varied nature and the fact that it influences and is influenced by so many different elements in the environment- urban design, flooding, biodiversity, low carbon technologies, transport, law...but this also sometimes makes it difficult for non-planners to see the strength of planning, or its role in being the “glue” that holds the development of places together. Planners are used to change, and have had to learn and embrace these new topic areas. That’s what keeps planning interesting – and enables planners to find their own strengths and areas of expertise.

4 What are the greatest challenges and opportunities facing Glasgow and moving forward how can planners help?

In Glasgow, we face the same challenges as many planning authorities. The main issues facing Glasgow today are those of climate change and the need for climate adaption, not only with the impact of rising sea levels along the Clyde, but the linked challenge of embedding net zero carbon in the way we approach development in the City. A just transition is of particular importance in the City and many of the areas which are most at risk of the effects of climate change are also those with the least resilience. Planning can help build that resilience. Our built heritage offers an opportunity for re-use and adaptation of resources, as well as making it a beautiful City. Another important issue

is the need to reimagine the City Centre, with changing patterns of retailing, and to encourage more people to come and live in the City Centre. The City is fortunate to have its many town centres, which are the focus of 20 minute neighbourhoods, and we look to strengthen these. We are also focussing on nature based solutions and increasing the green spaces and green corridors within the City, increasing biodiversity and providing amenity for residents as well as reducing the effects of climate change. Another challenge for all authorities including Glasgow is the need for improved infrastructure investment in a joined up manner. Here we need to apply the place principle - the fundamental need to align services along a shared understanding of place for better outcomes for people and communities. We have some great examples of working together with other stakeholders, Universities, developers and agencies to achieve innovative and inspirational solutions both in infrastructure and the built environment generally- examples being the Athletes’ Village, Laurieston, the Canal developments and many more. ■

In Practice: The Long Term Public Interest: Delivering High Quality Placemaking in West Dunbartonshire

Robert Richardson, Doctoral Researcher in Urban Studies at Glasgow University and **Pamela Clifford MRTPI**, Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager at West Dunbartonshire Council look at high quality placemaking in West Dunbartonshire.



Robert Richardson,
Doctoral Researcher
in Urban Studies,
Glasgow University



**Pamela Clifford
MRTPI**,
Planning, Building
Standards and
Environmental
Health Manager,
West Dunbartonshire
Council

Delivering the benefits of placemaking has never been more urgent. However, achieving this through the planning system often remains difficult locally, despite the aspirations of the national policy framework. West Dunbartonshire Council has been addressing this challenge through several innovative measures to change the area's planning and development culture and increase its prosperity. The Council's approach continues to evolve alongside the national policy agenda, and our collaborative research is identifying how lessons from West Dunbartonshire's experience can support the planning community in delivering the quality of places Scotland needs.

The placemaking focus of national planning policy emphasises the holistic



benefits of high quality design. Community engagement, health and wellbeing, and sustainability, have all been central to measures including the Place Principle, the Making Places initiative, and the Place Standard. However, the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) Position Statement takes this further with the commitment to delivering "healthier, inclusive, sustainable and well-designed places"¹, and by recognising the potential of '20 minute neighbourhoods' for creating sustainable and healthy urban centres. The benefits to society of placemaking are therefore widely accepted, and are underpinned by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, particularly its definition of the purpose of development planning: "to manage the development and use of land in the long term public interest"².

The reality of translating these aims into practice is far from straightforward, and is not helped by a series of pressures on local planning authorities. Research published in June 2021 by RTPI Scotland found that since 2009, local government planning services have experienced a 42% reduction in budgets, and nearly a one third reduction in staffing³. The effect on design capacity is clear; a 2018 survey by Heads of Planning Scotland found that 15 of 35 responding planning authorities named design as one of their top areas of skills shortage⁴. This compounds the battles

that planning authorities face, particularly in areas with lower development pressure, when persuading developers to improve proposals.

Despite a challenging background, West Dunbartonshire Council has recognised the transformative potential of placemaking in an area with high levels of multiple deprivation. Spearheaded by a former elected Councillor, Patrick McGlinchey, in 2017 the Council agreed funding to trial new initiatives it hoped would help raise the design quality of local development. This investment has evolved over time into a broader placemaking culture to support the Council in delivering the aims of NPF4 and the Planning Act, including reducing inequality and improving health and wellbeing.

The Council's commitment in 2017 encountered resistance given the pressure on Council funds; including from those who argued that the funding could be better utilised by paying for two social workers. However, the timing was crucial, with several of West Dunbartonshire's key regeneration sites coming forward, including Queens Quay in Clydebank, Dumbarton Waterfront, and the City Deal project at the former Exxon site in Bowling. Members of the planning service acting as place champions helped secure the buy-in of senior officers and elected members, who recognise the long-term benefits that high quality placemaking will bring to West Dunbartonshire's health

and regeneration ambitions- including the provisions of jobs, homes, and future prosperity.

The initial centrepiece of the Council's investment has been the Place and Design Panel. The Panel comprises a pool of experienced built environment professionals, who on a voluntary basis, review draft policy and pre-application proposals in a workshop-style setting. This enables the Council to access external design expertise cost-effectively, and promotes placemaking early in the planning process. Reports of Place and Design Panel discussions are a material consideration in planning decisions, and applicants are expected to demonstrate how they have responded to the recommendations made. The Panel is pitched to the development community as an enabler which aims to nurture design quality, and although its collaborative ethos and workshop format are challenging to replicate online in pandemic times, a trial proved successful. It will continue as part of the Council's wider placemaking culture, supported by a dedicated Placemaking Co-ordinator with a remit to assist the Council's implementation of the requirements of the Planning Act and NPF4.

Several other initiatives support the Council's placemaking ethos, including briefings for elected members about major development proposals, which won a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning in

2018. The briefings allow councillors to raise questions at pre-application stage, and are a valuable means of engaging them in conversations about placemaking.

Enhancing the knowledge and interest of elected members is vital if ambitions for better placemaking are to be upheld by planning committee decisions. The Council's planning service has previously sought to raise aspiration among councillors through study visits to exemplar developments, including the regeneration complex at Kings Cross in 2018, and several quality housing developments in Manchester and Liverpool in 2019.

This internal culture strengthens the position of development management officers who uphold placemaking values when negotiating with developers. During a research interview for this project, a planning officer reported that "the culture is you can be quite candid with developers. Not to the point where you're rude, but if something doesn't work, you should be able to say".

“The Council’s steps towards a placemaking culture have been institutionalised, and are having an impact.”



This approach was echoed by a developer, who following the approval of their planning application, agreed that the planners were “very robust in their statements about what they wanted to see”. Where developers may have approached with poorly designed proposals in the past, expectations are shifting.

The Council's steps towards a placemaking culture have been institutionalised, and are

having an impact. In February 2020 the Council agreed to make permanent the trial funding it agreed in 2017, and raising design quality and promoting placemaking values remain a priority despite pressure to see development

on the ground. The first developments on Queens Quay, including a care home, health and care centre, energy centre, and affordable housing, all provide a benchmark for the quality desired. They also reflect the importance to the site of health and wellbeing outcomes, which the design codes for Queens Quay will support the Council in delivering. Meanwhile, the Place and Design Panel has informed major private housing developments at the Council's former office site at Garshake Road in Dumbarton, and Rosebery Place in Clydebank. The design of the Council's own housing sites, such as Aitkenbar near Dumbarton, results from a close working relationship between the planning and housing services, and their shared commitment to delivering well-designed homes.

West Dunbartonshire's approach demonstrates a culture which can support planning authorities to pursue higher quality places. This has taken strong leadership, ambition, and commitment to the long term impact of good design and placemaking. However, this is no simple task in a context of resource constraint, multiple-deprivation, and the urgent need to adapt to a post-pandemic and zero carbon future. The Scottish Government has a significant role in supporting local planning authorities in this mission, including through further entrenching design and placemaking within the national policy framework. The aforementioned RTPi Scotland research calls for a reinvestment in Scotland's planning system, identifying several likely staffing challenges in the coming years. Supporting skilled planners in authorities like West Dunbartonshire Council is therefore essential if the benefits of placemaking are to be achieved, and the public interest purpose of planning is to be consistently realised in practice.

A recent article from this collaborative research project- ‘Design Governance, Austerity and the Public Interest: Planning and the Delivery of ‘Well-Designed Places’ in West Dunbartonshire, Scotland’- is available open access in *Planning Theory and Practice* online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2021.1958911>. ■

¹ Scottish Government (2020). Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework Position Statement, p.37. Available online: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-fourth-national-planning-framework-position-statement>

² The National Archives (2021). Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Available online: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents>

³ RTPi Scotland (2021). Resourcing the Planning Service: Key Trends and Findings 2021. Available online: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8575/resourcing-the-planning-system-key-trends-and-findings-2021-final.pdf>

⁴ Birrell, J. (2018). Heads of Planning Scotland Survey on the Use of Shared Services and Planning Skills Across Scotland. Available online: <https://hopsotland.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/final-report-skills-and-shared-services-survey-october-2018.pdf>

In Focus:

The Jim Boyack Trust



Andrew Ballantine
MRTPI,
Planning Officer
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 discusses the vital support the Trust can provide to planning students.

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 (including Climate Change, Biodiversity loss, COVID recovery, affordable housing) the Trust recognises that supporting the planners of the future is vitally important. As fellow RTPI members in Scotland we are calling on you to help support the Trust and future planning professionals.

Jim Boyack and the Trust

Jim Boyack was Senior Vice Convenor of RTPI Scotland when he died in 1990. The Trust was established in gratitude for his life and distinguished work, enthusiasm and contribution towards planning in Scotland.

The Trust aims to invest in tomorrow's planners by organising an annual award to assist students to enter or continue on a planning course in Scotland. The Trust comprises a group of volunteers who meet quarterly to manage the running of the Trust as a charity and administering the award. The purpose of the Trust is to endow and provide for the making of an annual award to planning students undertaking or extending their studies in Scotland. The award particularly considers the needs that the student states in their application for the bursary. This may include various needs, for example:

- support for family commitments
- support for field trips or other necessary study
- support to lessen the need for part-time working to support their studies

I was lucky enough to be the beneficiary of the Trust award in 2010 whilst I was studying for my masters degree in Aberdeen. The additional financial support was hugely beneficial, allowing me to support my young



family whilst having the funds to participate in a study trip to Berlin as part of my studies. Since 1993 the Trust has supported 35 students in total with over £30,000 of funds awarded.

The 2021 Award

The 2021 award will be open for applications in the Autumn. Planning Schools in Scotland will receive further information from the Trust in due course notifying students how and when to apply. Please keep an eye out for when the application window is open if this applies to you!

Support Us

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.

We are calling on all RTPI members in Scotland to support our work. For the price of a coffee each month (£2.50!) 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 supporting the planners of the future.

Sarah Boyack MSP & trustee: "It's been a real privilege to be involved with the Trust over nearly 3 decades now. My dad started his working life as an architect and studied to be a planner mid-career so he would have loved to see the work the Trust has done with the support of our trustees and RTPI members to give not just financial support, but access to the RTPI Scottish Conference, enabling them to network over the years too."

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](#). ■

Article: Regional Transport Strategies



Anna Herriman,
Senior Partnership
Manager at SEStran,

Anna Herriman, Senior Partnership Manager at SEStran, looks at how Regional Transport Strategies can support Scotland’s carbon net zero ambitions.

SEStran is currently developing a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the period up to 2035. The RTS sets the framework to which local transport strategies in the region should be aligned, and its national context includes planning, transport and climate legislation and policies. The target to reach ‘net zero’ in Scotland by 2045 (sooner for some of our partners) is therefore embedded in our developing strategy, and in the wide range of work we undertake.

With Covid-19 still impacting on peoples travel choices, the extent to which current behaviours will be sustained is unknown. Accordingly, our tactics for getting to net zero need to meet short and longer-term challenges.

Active Travel

Our Strategic Network sets out a longer-term plan for a comprehensive network of active travel routes connecting people, places, and jobs. This is important in a region where some villages lack even public transport links to neighbouring towns. As an alternative to developing local sections of active travel paths, the strategic network seeks to make connections, to build a regionally, and potentially nationally, significant travel network.

GO e-Bike is a regional e-bike sharing programme that caters to the specific needs of each community it operates in. With over



100 bikes in use, bikes are replacing car journeys in St Andrews, supporting those in transport poverty in Fife and West Lothian, and connecting town centres to train stations in East and Midlothian. GO e-bike has also introduced e-cargo bikes to replace van journeys and support businesses and charities in moving goods and equipment.

SEStran’s behaviour-change and training initiatives focus on enabling much greater (and safer) take up of cycling / bike riding. ‘Do the Ride Thing’ promotes positive behaviours – and this has become more relevant during Covid-19. Coordination of Bikeability, family led, e-bike and cargo bike training (all delivered through our partnership with Cycling Scotland) brings a consistent offer and approach throughout the region.

Public transport

The impacts from Covid-19 on public transport operations have been enormous. Especially for bus, though, the sudden drop in journeys was preceded by a decade of falling patronage. We don’t yet know how many users will return to public transport yet ensuring that bus can be faster than car remains a key priority to encourage public transport use.

SEStran is working alongside its partners on bids to Transport Scotland’s Bus Partnership Fund, a fund created to deliver physical measures like bus priority lanes. Our aim is to maximise the level of bus priority in the region and ensure that the various bids are complimentary.

Ensuring people feel safe and secure when using public transport is also essential to supporting returning passengers. SEStran’s Real Time Passenger Information is a network of bus arrival time screens at travel hubs across the region. Thistle Assistance, now a Scotland wide scheme, supports users with a discreet card and App; for the App, a fully accessible app-based journey planner is being developed. Our participation in Scotland’s Hate Crime Charter similarly

focuses on ensuring people are safe using public transport.

“As an alternative to developing local sections of active travel paths, the strategic network seeks to make connections, to build a regionally, and potentially nationally, significant travel network.”

Innovation

Finally, we have an important role in bringing forward innovative studies, trials and opportunities that help in the challenge to reach net zero. Through our five Interreg (EU) funded projects we’ve shared European best practice in

sustainable mobility. As a partner in Share-North, we’ve helped facilitate and fund the region’s first shared mobility hub (named Journey Hub) in East Lothian which began operating in May 2021. Our three-year long ‘Surflogh’ project has demonstrated how last mile cargo bike logistics can be commercially viable in a real-world setting. And in collaboration with Transport Scotland, we are exploring technology-based Mobility-as-a-Service and Demand Responsive Transport trial projects to develop better journey options for people in the region. ■

Article: Clyde Climate Forest

Max Hislop, Director of the Clyde Climate Forest, discusses the recently launched Clyde Climate Forest project.



Max Hislop, Director of the Clyde Climate Forest

The Clyde Climate Forest was launched on the 1st of June and enthusiastically endorsed by the eight Leaders of the councils that comprise the Glasgow City Region Partnership. Welcoming the launch, Mairi McAllan, Scottish Government's new Forestry Minister said:

"This is a significant and well-timed initiative showcasing all that is good in tree planting as we approach COP26. It is also a first for Scotland, with eight local authorities working together with government and other partners on a major woodland creation initiative."

A £400,000 grant from the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund as well as £150,000 from Scottish Forestry will kick-start new tree planting proposals and supports a project team over the next two years.

The Clyde Climate Forest (CCF) has a headline target to plant 18 million trees over the next decade (equivalent to 10 trees for every person living in the region), and has specific aims based on three 'C's':

Canopy

Urban trees provide cooling in heatwaves and surface water management for cloudbursts, whilst also providing some carbon storage and wildlife habitat. Even a moderate increase in canopy cover can aid adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change.

The CCF aims to increase the average tree canopy cover to 20% across urban Glasgow by 2032 - by working with communities in neighbourhoods with low levels of canopy cover to design and deliver tree planting

opportunities. It will take up to 1.5 million urban trees to be planted to achieve this target.

Connectivity

Native woodlands provide essential ecosystem services and wildlife habitat.

Creating woodland connections helps to reverse habitat fragmentation caused by decades of urban development, protect biodiversity, and offer woodland species migratory routes as the climate changes.

The CCF aims to increase the average broadleaved woodland network

area by 20% by 2032 – by working with landowners at over 200 target locations to create new native woodland connections and achieve a contiguous migratory corridor from the Southern Uplands to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

Carbon

New forests are effective carbon sinks and can provide natural flood management, construction timber to substitute for high emission steel and concrete, and wildlife habitats.

The CCF aims to increase forest and woodland cover in Glasgow City Region to 20% by 2032 – by facilitating the creation of 9,000 hectares of woodland (approximately 18 million trees) and will require a doubling of the current rate of woodland creation. This is commensurate with the woodland expansion target for Scotland in Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan.

How Planners can help

The Planning System is an important mechanism to assist in the delivery of the CCF's aims:

- Built development should be designed to achieve a minimum of 20% tree canopy cover;
- Positive effects for biodiversity should be secured from development, including the funding for native woodland connections as part of a nature network; and,
- Developers should be encouraged to deliver net zero developments by off-setting residual carbon emissions through Woodland Carbon Code registered tree planting projects.

If you are a planner in Glasgow City Region and you wish to find out more about the CCF please get in touch. See our website for more information www.clydeclimateforest.co.uk. ■



Article:

Scotland's Climate Assembly

Josh Littlejohn, co-convenor of Scotland's Climate Assembly, discusses the Assembly's remit and recently published report recommendations.



Josh Littlejohn,
co-convenor of
Scotland's Climate
Assembly

Global policymakers head for Glasgow this November for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, hard on the heels of an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report that sets out in chapter and verse what "code red for humanity" now looks like.

With the eyes of the world turning towards Scotland for a way forward on climate, there is a special focus on what new steps we in Scotland will now take to address the crisis.

The report of Scotland's Climate Assembly could scarcely have come at a better moment. Independent of government and grounded in the Scottish Parliament's Climate Change Act (2019), the Assembly's remit was to respond to the question: "How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?"

The Assembly's report establishes 81 recommendations from ordinary citizens to achieve 16 key goals, all of which were agreed by overwhelming consensus. The recommendations address a wide range of issues including, environmental impact in public procurement, domestic heating, agriculture and land use, transport (including air travel), taxation and the economy.

The Assembly is made up of a "mini-Scotland" with over 100 members broadly representative of the country in terms of age, gender, household income, ethnicity, geography, rurality, disability, and attitudes towards climate change. Members took evidence from over 100 expert speakers.

The Assembly's Statement of Ambition, agreed by all members, is a bold declaration aimed at the whole of Scottish society, from government to businesses, communities and individuals. "As a nation we have the

opportunity to be pioneers, by taking immediate action to empower our next generations to lead sustainable lives by setting up the framework now," Assembly members write. "If we fail to act now, we will fail our current and future generations, in

Scotland and across the world."

The recommendations are ambitious and innovative. They are also realistic and achievable, as long as they are backed by political will from policy-makers. There is a mandate here

from Scotland's people to provide genuine global leadership on climate.

For example, the Assembly calls for the creation of a National Nature Service aimed at creating jobs in rewilding and environmental protection, enhanced training and opportunities in green jobs, a program of public education on climate issues, and a single "oyster card" for Scotland that would help integrate the country's transport system. Another recommendation is to retrofit all existing homes by 2030, with all new buildings to be required to meet highly energy efficient Passivhaus standards.

We expect a thorough and committed response from Government as to how the Assembly's report will be acted upon. The experience of meeting online during a period of major crisis and decisive government action has shown that big changes can happen quickly if there is sufficient urgency and political will.

Scotland's Climate Assembly established a world first among such citizen bodies by involving children in the Assembly's work, with 100 children across the country taking part. There was no question about the sense of urgency they brought to the Assembly. As

10-year-old Maya, a climate investigator with the Children's Parliament from the Highlands, tells us: "I've never known a time when the climate emergency didn't threaten my future. I can't see a world without it. It's something me and my friends are growing up with."

Scotland's Climate Assembly has shown that ordinary citizens must be at the heart of shaping the big changes that lie ahead in response to the climate emergency, leading these changes rather than being passively acted upon. "As a society we will need to change and adapt to meet the challenges, and recognise that there will be costs," members write. "But failure to act now will mean greater expense, and more difficult changes in the future, in order to avoid catastrophic costs to the planet." ■

"If we fail to act now, we will fail our current and future generations, in Scotland and across the world."



**Scotland's Climate
Assembly**
Seanadh Gnàth-shìde
na h-Alba

Article:

Renewables & Planning

Morag Watson, Director of Policy at Scottish Renewables, looks at how delivery of renewables can be supported by planning.



Morag Watson,
Director of Policy at
Scottish Renewables

COP26 will be the biggest summit the UK has ever hosted. It is being described as the most significant climate event since the 2015 Paris Agreement. Cutting carbon emissions is of course at the centre of what all COPs must deliver.

In the decade to 2020 Scotland almost tripled its renewable energy capacity, from 4.3GW to 11.9GW. In fact, Scotland has decarbonised more quickly than any G20 economy since 2008. Much of that progress was driven by a target that, by 2020, the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's electricity consumption should come from renewables.

Today, the equivalent of 97.4% of Scotland's electricity consumption is provided by renewables. Around two thirds of that renewable electricity comes from wind power, with the remainder coming from a mix of solar, hydro power, tidal and more. What we know as an industry is that while Scotland has made great strides in cutting carbon from the production of electricity, there is still much to do.

Scotland's climate change targets are some of the most ambitious in the world. To meet them, governments and industry must work together to ensure that the renewable energy projects we need to deploy to reduce the carbon emissions produced by our energy sector happen in the most timely and cost-effective manner.

The Scottish Government has a broad range of levers available which would enable projects to proceed where, at present,

they may be stalled. For example, our planning system must be reformed with the achievement of our net-zero target at its heart.

The Scottish Government stated in Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) Position Statement (published in November 2020) that "We cannot afford to compromise on climate change. If we are to meet our targets, some significant choices will have to be made".

Scottish Renewables welcomes this statement and believes that, in addition to longer-term actions that should be integrated into NPF4, there are immediate actions that the new Scottish Government can take to increase the deployment of renewable energy to meet 2030 targets.

These include directing planners to give considerable weight to the statements made in the NPF4 Position Statement supporting the deployment of renewables, as well as the urgent need to combat the climate emergency and meet Scotland's climate change targets, when determining renewable energy proposals.

Longer-term measures include granting consent in perpetuity to onshore wind farms and giving weight to all material economic and social benefits flowing from the construction and operation of wind farms in decision making under NPF4.

This will be important for enabling the development of new sites which are necessary to combat the climate crisis, as well as for proposals to repower or extend the life of our existing renewable assets.

Policy decisions made at both Holyrood and Westminster have enormous consequences for our industry.

The appointment of a Cabinet Secretary for Net-zero, Energy and Transport after May's election - called for by Scottish Renewables in our manifesto - is a significant step in the right direction and shows the importance of the energy sector to our economy and our climate ambitions.

"Our world-leading natural resources can provide Scotland with enormous opportunity to improve our wellbeing, strengthen our economy, sustain our environment, and set us on the path to becoming the renewable powerhouse of the world."

We look forward to working with the Cabinet Secretary and his colleagues across government to make sure that our industry can play its fullest role in the transition to a healthy, prosperous low-carbon future for Scotland.

Our world-leading natural resources can provide Scotland with enormous opportunity to improve our wellbeing, strengthen our economy, sustain our environment, and set us on the path to becoming the renewable powerhouse of the world.

Together we can work to create a society where low-carbon affordable energy produced using Scotland's abundant natural resources is the new normal. ■





Article: Climate Ready Ken

McNabb Laurie, Galloway Glens Team Leader, looks at the 'Climate Ready Ken' project in Dumfries and Galloway.

In 2020, Loch Ken in Dumfries & Galloway was chosen as one of two 'localities' to receive support from Adaptation Scotland, aiming to provide more resilient communities in the face of Climate Change. This led to the innovative 'Climate Ready Ken' project which is currently underway in partnership with the Loch Ken Trust.

Loch Ken is approximately 10 miles long, running through the Glenkens to the outskirts of Castle Douglas in Dumfries & Galloway. It is the largest body of water in southern Scotland and forms a vital part of the Galloway Hydro Scheme. This was constructed in the 1930's, adopting an innovative 'all-river' approach to hydro-electric generation, with each drop of rainfall generating electricity up to five times as it travels down the valley.

Loch Ken Trust is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), established in 2020 and aiming to protect and care for the Loch, with its enviable location within the Galloway Glens Scheme area, the broader Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere and the Galloway Dark Sky Park.

The Loch Ken area has, like everywhere in Scotland, evidenced a changing climate in recent years, resulting in a number of challenges – particularly with flooding (including a particularly bad Storm Frank flood event in December 2015) and recent wildfires in the adjoining Galloway Forest Park.

On a regional level, Dumfries & Galloway has one of the most ambitious regional carbon reduction targets, aiming to be a Net Zero Carbon region by 2025. This target is supported by a 12-point plan, with dedicated resource and a lead officer. With the region-wide focus on this reduction of carbon emissions at a regional level, the Climate Ready Ken project has provided the opportunity to consider the separate point of 'Adaptation' within the local community. Irrespective of the success on a regional or global level at reduction of carbon emissions, our communities are going to have to 'adapt' to the impact of climate change. Continuing as we did before is not an option.

The Climate Ready Ken project is underway, with work taking place on many levels. Drawing upon experience elsewhere, Adaptation Scotland have provided valuable input on cutting edge engagement and consultation techniques, with work getting underway despite ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. The Loch Ken Trust, supported by the wider Galloway Glens Scheme, has been able to undertake a number of consultation work with key stakeholders around Loch Ken – from the National Farmers' Union to the Council's roads department. This is working to compile information on how climate change is impacting the Loch Ken community and what actions could be taken to make it more resilient in the face of Climate Change. August 2021 saw the first in-person engagement event, with attendance at the Castle Douglas Bike & Food Festival.



The project runs until March 2022 and has a number of aims. On the broadest level, the project is giving a focus to the topic of 'Adaptation', and the need for communities to adapt to the impact of climate change. It has already achieved much towards this aim.

On a local level, the project aims to establish a toolkit of adaptation actions that will make the community around Loch Ken more resilient in the face of our changing climate. The project team are ambitious and consider success of the project not only being the identification of actions, but when these are actually implemented by the local community in years to come.

Our climate is changing. The Climate Ready Ken project aims to establish an exemplar approach for how a discrete locality can come together around that point and adapt to become a more resilient community.

For more information on the Climate Ready Ken project and the work of the Loch Ken Trust, visit www.lochken.org.uk. ■



McNabb Laurie,
Galloway Glens Team
Leader



Article: Carbon Conscious Places

Jim MacDonald, A&DS Chief Executive, discusses the whole place approach to addressing the net zero carbon challenge taken through the Carbon Conscious Places project.

Ahead of COP26 in November and in the face of a climate crisis, the design of Scotland's towns may seem small beer compared to the future of life on earth. Indeed, with the sheer scale of change required to reverse the continuing rise in average global temperatures, it could be tempting to conclude that nothing we do here will make any difference. Tempting but wrong. Wrong because tackling climate change at the global level means action by all of us at a local level. This means how we plan the future of our villages, towns and cities will play a pivotal role in making the just transition to an inclusive net zero carbon economy. By working together to find the best solutions for each place, we can all play our part in a global effort.

Architecture and Design Scotland: Our Strategy

Working together sits at the heart of our strategy which aims to see collaboration in planning and designing our places become the norm across Scotland. To achieve this, one of our priorities is to make change easier for everyone. This means promoting the benefits of creative, design-

based approaches. It means using these to create a shared vision for a place, one that everyone with an interest in that place has been engaged in. It also means recognising that each place is different and getting the right solution to its individual opportunities and challenges is essential to addressing them. Above all perhaps, it means building awareness and trust around collaboration in places and showing how much more can be achieved working together than working alone. The importance of place and planning is also recognised in Scotland's Climate Change Plan which is committed to delivering a place-based approach to the green recovery. As part of this, the Scottish Government will work closely with those communities and organisations that need change, are undergoing change or affected by change, to create shared visions for a low carbon future. At the same time, reforms to the planning system aim to focus more time and expertise



Jim MacDonald, A&DS
Chief Executive

“The key thing for me is to make sure that such plans are prepared collaboratively across all sectors”

on places and people and the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods will prioritise quality of life and health alongside net-zero ambitions.

Which is where planning comes in. Its *raison d'être* is to reconcile a range of sometimes competing interests in the future development of our places. Planning is therefore ideally placed to be the forum for creating shared visions of the sort of places we need to tackle climate change. What's more, these visions can be presented via a range of existing planning 'vehicles' from Local Place Plans to Development Plans.

The key thing for me is to make sure that such plans are prepared collaboratively across all sectors. In this way they can make life a lot simpler – one plan for a place not many – and ensure that everyone's interests are accounted for, not just those with the means to advance their interests via a local plan enquiry. I also know from conversations with colleagues from all sectors that this is something most people want too so the challenge now is to make the changes required to do things differently. Always keen to experiment, A&DS has been busy testing some of these principles.

Carbon Conscious Places

Recently, we spent a year working in four local authorities to pilot Carbon Conscious Places, where practitioners adopted a whole place approach to meeting the net zero carbon challenge. Through rethinking how we move about, how we live, how we support city, town, and rural communities and how we become more self-sufficient, the four places were able to consider different ways to address carbon emissions, as well as how to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We used four scales of place – an urban neighbourhood, a city centre, a town, and a rural community to illustrate what Scotland in 2050 could look like if we work together and support a holistic approach to designing for the changing climate and delivering on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Each example shows

a combination of measures to reduce, repurpose and absorb carbon and adapt to the impacts of climate change, providing ideas and inspiration for others to follow.

Climate Action Towns

This summer with support from Scottish Government we have embarked on further work in this area in the shape of Climate Action Towns.

We believe that if we are to achieve the emission reduction targets of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act and adapt to the impacts of the climate and ecological emergency, we need to move beyond initiating conversations and start to work together to deliver change. For this reason, the focus of Climate Action Towns will be on small towns with little historical involvement

in climate action. The plan is to support these communities to develop a methodology for an effective approach to communication or the initiation of collective action to tackle the impacts of climate change through mitigation, adaptation, and behaviour change. Like the rest of our work, Climate Action

Towns will rely on collaboration between communities, the local authority, third sector organisations and other stakeholders, to deliver place-based responses to climate action. The work aims to identify a range of opportunities appropriate to each town, for example adaption to climate change risk, the creation of resilient food networks, the adoption of the 20-minute neighbourhood, reducing fuel poverty or creating community renewable energy systems.

In addition to scoping out plans for tangible change on the ground, the aim is to build capacity within the communities to take these plans forward, to share the learning with other communities and to establish a network across the towns from which others can draw support and inspiration. By involving local authorities and other stakeholders alongside the communities, we are confident the plans will be more robust and therefore the ideas in them are more likely to be delivered.

What next?

Whether this moves things in the right direction or not only time will tell but I am hugely encouraged by the appetite I see across the country to plan for low carbon places and to address a whole host of other issues at the same time. And with the focus in NPF4 on people, place, and planet there is the opportunity to create a new generation of spatial plans that will deliver a zero-carbon future for Scotland. ■

“Which is where planning comes in. Its *raison d'être* is to reconcile a range of sometimes competing interests in the future development of our places.”



Article: Planning & Heat Networks



Stefano Smith FRTPI,
Director of Stefano
Smith Planning

Stefano Smith FRTPI, Director of Stefano Smith Planning, looks at the critical role of planning in the delivery of net-zero and low carbon heat networks.

District heating and heat networks have an important contribution to make in cutting carbon emissions. They supply heat from a central source to consumers, via a network of underground pipes carrying hot water. Heat networks can cover a large area or even an entire city or be fairly local supplying a small cluster of buildings.

The decarbonisation of heat over the next two decades will be one of the greatest challenges in hitting Scotland’s net-zero target and the planning system will have an important role to play in facilitating the roll-out of low-carbon heat by increasing usage of heat networks, which enable harnessing renewable sources of heat in rivers, sewers and the ground. Planning policy is vital given heat networks’ spatial characteristics– they must be built in dense areas and across multiple developments. Development planning in combination with planning obligations and conditions has proven to be successful in enabling rapid deployment of heat networks in London.

The NPF4 is a long-term spatial plan to 2050 which will set out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The Programme for Government notes that

NPF4 will explore planning options that radically accelerate the reduction of carbon emissions. The emerging draft NPF4 identifies 14 National Developments. One of the draft National Developments includes the Bandeath District Heat and Low Carbon Area which was promoted by Stefano Smith Planning at the NPF4 Call for Ideas stage on behalf of Bandeath Holdings Limited.

The Scottish Government has proposed a mandatory requirement on local authorities to produce a **Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)** to zone areas most suitable for heat networks in existing buildings and land for development. It will be vital that NPF4 clearly states that LHEES district heat zones and the new-build areas flagged within them, as well as potential sources of heat, should be integrated into Local Development Plans (LDPs).

Where appropriate, suitable developments within these zones should be directed to use heat networks through planning obligations and conditions. Scottish local authorities will need direction through NPF4 to achieve this.

There are more than 830 heat networks in Scotland, but the sector has been unregulated to date. The Low-carbon heating and the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 sets up a regulatory and licensing system for district and communal heating with the aim of accelerating its use in Scotland. The Scottish

Government’s aim is that low carbon technologies, such as heat networks will supply heat to 35% of domestic and 70% of non-domestic buildings by 2032.

Case Study - Bandeath District Heat, Low Carbon & Sustainable Development

The Bandeath Major Full Planning Application for a low carbon, sustainable development was granted conditional planning permission by Stirling Council in June 2021. This innovative development at Bandeath Industrial Estate in Throsk will recover heat from the River Forth to supply heat to glasshouses for the commercial

growing of tomatoes reducing ‘food miles’, as well as contributing to the wider district heat network. The district heating element of the proposed development consolidates and builds upon Stirling’s pioneering green heat network strategy in delivering low carbon energy and bringing environmental and economic benefits across the city region. It is a real collaborative approach between the private and public sectors which will make a significant contribution to the Bandeath District Heat and Low Carbon Area.

Scottish Government is moving towards a joined-up strategy that provides a clearer path for individuals and organisations to follow. Although the planning and regulatory steps are moving towards a comprehensive strategy – Draft NPF4 and the Act (still to be brought into force) - this needs to be accelerated in response to the urgency of the climate crisis. ■

“The decarbonisation of heat over the next two decades will be one of the greatest challenges in hitting Scotland’s net-zero target.”



Update:

Heads of Planning Scotland



Pam Ewan, Head of Planning at Fife Council

I was delighted in June to pick up the reins of Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) from Forbes Barron, Glasgow City Council. The past 16 months have been challenging for us all individually, as organisations and as a profession. My thanks go to all of you working in the planning system, from all sectors, to help keep the planning system moving. Planning authorities have played a crucial role in keeping the lights on and helping Scotland's economy throughout the pandemic.

These are incredibly challenging times for colleagues working in planning authorities across Scotland. We continue to see an increase, in some areas substantial increases, in planning applications being submitted at a time when resourcing is tight. In parallel, most authorities are also gearing up to commencing local development plan reviews and awaiting NPF4 and related Development Plan regulations. The focus of HoPS work will be in responding to key national consultations, working together across Authorities on the implementation of new Regulations as they emerge, continuing to press for national changes to planning fees to properly resource planning, working collaboratively to encourage people into the profession, and undertaking research to inform our work.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting the new Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth, Tom Arthur MSP. The Minister's recognition of planners and planning throughout the pandemic and the important role in Scotland's economic recovery was very welcomed.

Whilst we will all be reflecting on the positives we can take throughout the past 16 months, it is clearly evident that our move to a digital planning system in respect of development management should have longer lasting effect and benefits. HoPS certainly would like to see many of the temporary changes that were experienced through the Coronavirus Act made permanent to reduce the need for paper copies, direct more digital engagement and continue the emphasis

on digital. The role of digital is critical and we welcome progress of the Scottish Government's programme for digital for planning.

HoPS continues to focus on those challenges and opportunities which are common and have a shared agenda across Scotland's planning authorities. We continue to work collaboratively with a range of organisations, including SOLACE, LABS, SCOTS, and REHIS.

Every planner and professional working within Scotland's planning system has an important role to play in Scotland's economic recovery. Whether that be in scoping future policy, delivering environmental planning projects, planning and delivering developments, climate action or planning applications and enforcement. Each and every one of you have a key role in working together to best ensure that we continue to create really good quality and healthy places.

HoPS continue to press Scottish Government for a review of planning fees. Properly resourcing planning authorities has possibly never been more important as it is now. This is not the only solution, and we also have to work collectively to ensure we are all encouraging people into the profession, whether that is through universities, placements, apprenticeships and other sources. We need to ensure we have a good supply of planners ready to assist in delivering Scotland's economic recovery.

Whatever your role, take pride in what you have achieved over the past 16 months. Don't become overwhelmed with high workloads, be open and honest with your conversations and look after your well-being. ■

“My thanks go to all of you working in the planning system, from all sectors, to help keep the planning system moving.”



Update: Scottish Government

A regular update on planning at the national level from the **Scottish Government's** Planning and Architecture Division.

It has been a busy summer at the Planning and Architecture Division; a period which has included the retirement of Chief Planner John McNairney CBE and seen progress across substantial programmes including the preparation of Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework, reform of the statutory planning system, digital transformation and an increasing focus on the quality of places, along with continuing steps to maintain planning through the coronavirus pandemic.

Here we give an update on news and activity over recent weeks across some of the workstreams of the Planning and Architecture Division, and point to what you can expect to see soon.

Chief Planner Appointment

Following the retirement of John McNairney in August, and after an open competition, the Scottish Government has appointed Dr Fiona Simpson as Chief Planner. Fiona will lead the work of Planning and Architecture Division, bringing together our work on planning reform, spatial planning and policy, performance and casework, place and digital transformation of the planning system to deliver on our national outcomes.

Programme for Government 2021-22: A Fairer, Greener Scotland

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22 was published on

7 September. The core priorities include leading Scotland safely out of the pandemic, urgently confronting climate change and driving a green, fair economic recovery, along with plans to help secure a just transition to net zero.

The programme sets out actions that we will take over the next twelve months and also across the next five years of Parliament. It contains some specific commitments that will be of particular interest to planning professionals, including those relating to:

- extensive public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny on National Planning Framework 4;
- delivering an effective, fair mechanism for

capturing a share of the increase in land value;

- reforming and modernising the compulsory purchase system;
- defining 20 Minute Neighbourhoods and supporting the roll-out of the Place Based Investment Programme;
- introducing a new 'Our Place' website containing information, tools and resources to help support the development of places and services that improve our health, prosperity, and quality of life, and protect our environment; and
- beginning delivery of the 5 year £35 million digital transformation of planning, starting with digital engagement and improving online application processes.

You can see A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22 at: www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/.

Coronavirus Legislation

Following a Bill process before summer recess, the Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Act 2021 is extending the two earlier Scottish Coronavirus Acts beyond their expiry date of 30 September 2021, to 31 March 2022. Some planning-related provisions in the Acts are to be continued for now; those which enable the extension of duration of planning permissions and listed building and conservation area consents and the online publication of documents when physical publication is not appropriate (either due to significant risk of transmission of coronavirus or as a result of any restrictions in place). The provision which has allowed for members of the public to be excluded from local authority meetings due to risk to public health is being expired with effect from 30 September 2021.

The Scottish Government has subsequently laid in the Scottish Parliament the Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. Subject to Scottish Parliament scrutiny, these regulations will come into force on 29 September. Alongside the Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Act 2021, these regulations will have the effect of further extending certain temporary provisions which have been in place during the pandemic:

- Duration of consents: planning permissions, listed building consents and conservation area consents currently due to expire by 31 March 2022 will be extended to 30 September 2022.
- The suspension of requirements for a

physical public event (which should be replaced with virtual events) as part of pre-application consultation requirements will remain in place until 31 March 2022.

- Suspension of the requirement for hard copies of environmental impact assessment reports to be made available at a physical place is also continued to 31 March 2022.

Consistent with the expiry of the arrangements allowing the exclusion of members of the public from local authority meetings, another effect of the regulations is that the requirement for Local Review Body meetings to be held in public will apply again from 1 October 2021.

Planning Reform Programme

Also as a consequence of the continuing coronavirus legislation, regulations have postponed the introduction of changes to pre-application consultation requirements, including raising to a minimum of two public events and specifying an application would need to be made within 18 months. Those changes are now scheduled to come into force on 1 April 2022.

In July, we published Planning Circular 2/2021 containing new guidance on the promotion and use of mediation in the Scottish planning system. This implements the requirement introduced by section 40 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

Beyond these, we have continued to prioritise elements of the wide programme of planning reforms and implementation of the 2019 Act.

Substantial progress is being made with the drafting of National Planning Framework 4, which we will publish this autumn for extensive public consultation and Scottish Parliament scrutiny. This work has been subject to substantial input from our planning community and beyond through earlier engagements and we are very grateful to all who have participated. To a similar timetable, we are preparing to consult on future regulations for development planning, open space strategies and play sufficiency assessments.

The public consultation on the arrangements for the content, preparation, submission and registration of local place plans closed in June. Alongside the consultation, we published a draft 'How to' Guide for producing local place plans. We are now developing the regulations and preparing the consultation responses and analysis for publication, coming soon.

Our work on preparation of new planning fees regulations has re-started after being paused

last year, drawing on the earlier consultation on planning performance and fees. We recently published the analysis of responses for that consultation.

You can keep up-to-date and view all planning reform consultations and legislation at www.transformingplanning.scot/planning-reform/.

Digital Planning

The Development.scot service recently celebrated a significant milestone, having now received one million planning and building standards submissions online since the service's introduction in 2016. The service has brought estimated savings of £127 million for applicants and £42 million for Scottish authorities.

Building on these successes and following the launch earlier this year, progress is being made with the substantial digital transformation programme, including the appointment and first meeting of the Digital Planning Transformation Programme Board in July and the first procurement opportunity issued which is aimed at improving fee payments for applications. There is much more to come soon.

You can keep up-to-date with progress on the digital programme on our Digital Planning LinkedIn page and at www.transformingplanning.scot/digital-planning/.

Staying In Touch

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



Update: RTPI Update



The Scottish Planner Live – Planning for a Green Economy

This year's RTPI Scotland Annual Conference will be held online on 7 October.

As thinking turns to a post Covid recovery many planners are asking what it will look like. A focus on a green economy is seen as key to this, but what does this look like and how do we make it happen? This conference will bring together a range of perspectives to explore what they think a green economy should comprise, what is needed to deliver it. It will also look at leading practice in a range of different settings, examine what planners can contribute and what is needed to initiate changes required. Confirmed speakers include:

- Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth
- Barbara Cummins, Convenor, RTPI Scotland
- Wei Yang, President RTPI
- Professor Mike Danson, Professor Emeritus of Enterprise Policy, Heriot-Watt University
- Dr Oliver Escobar, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the University of Edinburgh
- Stefanie O'Gorman, Director City Economics, Ramboll
- Martin Elliot, Director of Strategic Planning, Leeds City Council
- Debbie Mackay, Director of Planning, Savills
- Sarah Longlands, Chief Executive, Centre for Local Economic Studies
- Victoria Hills, Chief Executive, RTPI
- Pam Ewen, Head of Planning, Fife Council and Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland

Details at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/rtpi-nations/scotland/scotland-events/scottishplannerlive/>

Thinkpiece papers

RTPI Scotland is publishing a series of thinkpiece papers to stimulate discussion and debate on topics areas which we will feel need further exploration to support Scottish Government to develop and advance proposals to improve the planning system. These will look at how the planning system can support rural planning; the role of the

Office of the National Planning Improvement Coordinator; and guidance on the role and experience of Chief Planning Officers. We welcome comments and views either direct to scotland@rtpi.org.uk or on social media using the hashtag #rtpithinkpieces.

Policy Consultations

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

- Local Place Plan regulations consultation
- Short Term Lets draft Licensing Order and Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment consultation
- Call for evidence on the development of the National Economic Transformation Strategy

Consultations currently under consideration are:

- Call for evidence on the ability of communities to influence planning decisions for onshore windfarms. Deadline 6th October
- Call for evidence on the Aquaculture regulatory framework review. Deadline 10th October
- Local food for everyone. Deadline 26th November

Digital Planning

RTPI Scotland is working with consultants Ekos and with the Scottish Government Digital Planning Team to deliver research to assess the current 'state of play' regarding skills and knowledge on digital planning. This has:

- assessed the level of skills and knowledge on digital planning
- assessed level of skills and knowledge gaps on digital planning
- developed a baseline to allow for the mapping of progress
- identified the challenges and opportunities to inform the development and delivery of skills programme

The second stage of the research aims to scope and test what an effective skills development programme could look like. This will inform the drawing up of a capacity building programme including a menu of tools

and activities that will support the upskilling of planners on digital approaches.

Chief Planner

RTPI Scotland has welcomed the appointment of Dr Fiona Simpson as the Scottish Government's new Chief Planner. Fiona is a member of the Institute has worked closely and constructively with RTPI over the years in her role as Assistant Chief Planner. RTPI Scotland Convenor Barbara Cummins said "Our warmest congratulations go to Fiona on her appointment. We very much look forward to working with her in her new role, building upon the very good relationship we have as we look to the range of opportunities and challenges ahead."

Engagement

RTPI Scotland has met with Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth congratulating on him on his appointment and requesting a meeting to discuss the National Planning Framework, investing in planning services, Local Place Plans and 20-minute neighbourhoods.

We have also met with the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport Michael Matheson regarding Net Zero policy in the NPF4, COP26 and his role in cross-government co-ordination of infrastructure and 20-minute neighbourhoods. We have also had meetings with a number of members of the Local Government, Housing and Planning committee, including the Convenor and Deputy Convenor, setting out our thoughts on priorities within the Committee's remit.

Communications

The following news release has been published:

More support required to help Scottish communities plan their places <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/news/2021/june/more-support-required-to-help-scottish-communities-plan-their-places/>.

Social Media

The [@RTPIScotland](https://twitter.com/RTPIScotland) Twitter account has 4651 followers and the [@ConvenorRTPI](https://twitter.com/ConvenorRTPI) account has 1642. ■

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Barbara chairs the Scottish Executive Committee. She also represents RTPI Scotland on the Policy, Practice and Research Committee.

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For further information, please visit
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[Twitter.com/RTPIScotland](https://twitter.com/RTPIScotland)



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Your expertise as a planner can have an enormously positive impact on people's lives. Our Advice Service volunteers help individuals and community groups across Scotland to understand and participate in planning processes.

We have a large number of volunteers who take part in our wider activities and place-based projects, however, we are specifically looking to recruit MRTPI planners to volunteer for our Advice Service.

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**For a chat with our Volunteer Manager to find out more,
please get in touch with Erin Fulton:**
erin@pas.org.uk - 0131 659 9778



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