

The background image shows the interior of a modern cafe or bus station. It features a high ceiling with exposed metal ductwork and large windows. People are seated at tables, and there is a bar area in the background. The overall atmosphere is bright and contemporary.

THE NORTH WEST PLANNING YEAR A REVIEW OF 2021

Whitehaven Bus Station



RTPI North West
Royal Town Planning Institute

rtpi.org/uk/northwest

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The Boss



Following the remarkable events of 2020, I always knew my year as Chair of the RTPI NW in 2021 was going to feel like uncharted waters! Not only would I be adjusting to my role and responsibilities as Chair, but we as a Regional Management Board and Regional Activities Committee would be adjusting to new ways of working as we learned to live with the Coronavirus. As it happens, my optimism for the year ahead in last year's Annual Review turned out to be well founded. The Region and our industry have gone from strength to strength as the vaccine has rolled out across the UK and the world has opened up again. We've even had the prospect of foreign holidays returning!

Chair's Review of the Year

For my year as Regional Chair, my overarching aim for the year was for us to find our feet again, building on the new ways of working we found last year, as well as doing our best to return the 'in real life' functions of the RTPI which we all knew and valued. With the tireless help of Bev and the commitment of both our RMB and RAC that is exactly what we've done!

We started the year with our largest ever Regional Activities Meeting held digitally in January and mapped out a year full of activity ahead, including aspirations to deliver in person events in the second half of the year. We've managed to contribute in the region to a comprehensive national package of digital webinars and networking events on a broad range of topics. We've also managed to deliver specific regionally led CPD in response to requests from our members in the North West; our most popular being a series on Green Belt requested by Warrington Borough Council and generously hosted by Kings Chambers. Many of these events have been very well attended, with higher levels of engagement than even in 2020 when a digital webinar was the closest, we got to socialising! The use of this technology is set to continue and remains a positive legacy from the pandemic.

Most excitingly, we've managed to get back to IRL events (that's 'In Real Life' rather than 'Ireland' for those of you with a keen eye for European numberplate demarcations). Our Young Planners have led the charge and organised walking tours and participated in social events such as rounders. Excitingly, and unexpectedly, we've also managed to organise (again with incredible effort from Bev) an Annual Dinner, the keystone of our social calendar. It is a sincere pleasure to be back celebrating our profession's achievements with you all in person once again! This of course means a return to the presentation of awards in person.

This year's awards have a special feel to them and is a chance to focus on the people in our industry that make the difference to our profession; as well as the fantastic projects that we deliver. This year sees an increase in the number of entries to our Private and Public Sector Teams of the year awards which celebrates the contribution that collaborative working and forward thinking planners make to our lives; we have two very worthy winners of those awards in Nexus Planning and Halton Council respectively who both beat very stiff competition to claim their awards. I am also immensely proud to award my Chair's Award to Sam Stafford at Barratt Developments for his outstanding contribution to our industry and in promoting the planning profession and particularly during lockdown with his 50 Shades of Planning Podcast and national Property Professional FIFA Tournament.

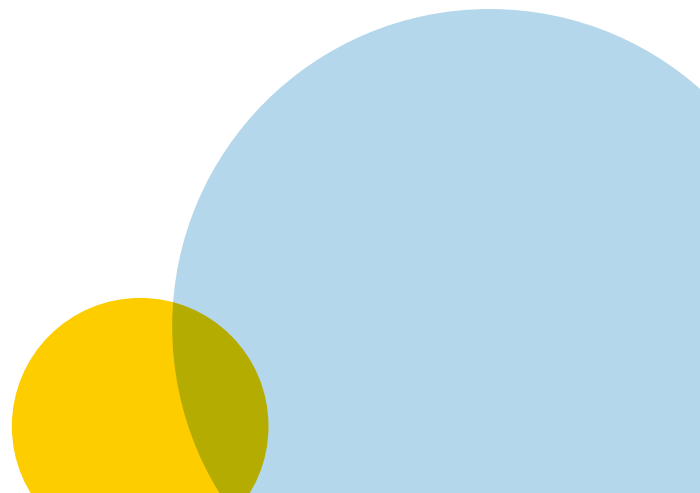
Of course, the NW continues to lead the way in the quality of its projects, and we have also been proud to see the winner of the National Silver Jubilee Cup Award for Planning Excellence being awarded to our very own Preston City Council and Hive Land and Planning for the Preston City Living Strategy.

So, it's with a very positive view which we look to next year. We have a number of new initiatives launched this year in line with our commitment to drive forward equality and diversity in our region and widen the reach of our friendly and professional network, including the emerging of our new International Task Group in the North West. We have had the support of student members from Liverpool and Manchester this year which looks set to continue. We have launched a 'Coffee with a Planner' initiative aimed at helping students into the professional and building their professional networks into the early years of their career.

It's therefore with great pleasure that I pass the baton onto next year's Chair, Kieran Blaydes. I've worked with Kieran in the RMB and within the Education and Careers group we both sit on and can assure you his enthusiasm and passion for the planning profession and his contribution to it is unflappable. I greatly look forwards to what he can achieve in the coming year. I'd like to thank him and the rest of the Regional Management Board, Regional Activities Committee and Bev for all their dedication this year and for their support.

Ian Gilbert
RTPI NW Chair 2021

ian.gilbert@bartonwillmore.co.uk



Regional Practice



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In this section we look at what the RTPI North West Region, its planners and volunteers, have achieved in developing, and rewarding, best practice in 2021.

RTPI North West Awards for Planning Excellence, 2021



In 2021 we received 16 entries to our Regional Awards and shortlisted 11 entries for further presentations and interviews that took place on 6/7 September. Submitted entries from across the region were considered in the following categories, which now align with the national RTPI award categories:

- ★ Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy
- ★ Excellence In Planning for Heritage and Culture
- ★ Excellence in Plan Making in Practice
- ★ Excellence in Planning for Communities (Small Schemes)
- ★ Excellence in Planning for Communities (Large Schemes)
- ★ Public Sector Planning Team of the Year
- ★ Private Sector Planning Team of the Year
- ★ Young Planner of the Year

These entries included a total of 6 within the public and private sector 'teams' categories. These were all strong submissions, and they highlight the strength of the planning profession and the talent that we have within the North West region.

The 2021 judging panel included representatives from the public and private sector: Chris Findley, Louisa Fielden, Jake Crompton, Matt Dugdale, Rebecca Dewey, Jan Lourens, Bob Phillips, Steve Thompson and Tom Royles.

The continuing pandemic and the Covid-19 restrictions meant that the award judges have had to do things differently again this year. Instead of the usual group site visits and meeting the award entrants in person, the entrants put together a digital presentation and were assessed following a series of online interviews.

Once again, this way of working worked very well, and the judges were all impressed with the way that the applicants were able to showcase their projects and demonstrate the pride in their teams online through the presentations and interviews. The award winners were announced at the RTPI North West Annual Dinner at the Mercure Manchester Piccadilly Hotel on 19th November, supported by an online video presentation broadcast on the RTPI YouTube channel.

★ WINNER

Chair's Award
Sam Stafford



In addition, for the first time this year, a special '**Chair's Award**' was given to the Personality of the Year for those whose experiences and achievements have significantly influenced their workplace, industry and the planning profession. The first winner of this award is **Sam Stafford**. Sam has provided an original insight and enthusiasm for planning through his '**50 Shades of Planning**' Podcast and other online activity, bringing planning to a wider audience than planning professionals. He has also helped us to stay in touch with his national Property Professional FIFA tournament - **well done Sam!**

★ WINNER



Excellence in Planning for a Successful Economy,
Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture - and Overall Winner

Whitehaven Bus Station Redevelopment, submitted by Copeland Borough Council/BEC

The decision on the overall scheme winner was a difficult one, as the entries were varied and of high quality. The judges did, however, agree that the worthy winner was the redevelopment of the former Whitehaven Bus Station into flexible employment space and community cafe. This was an excellent example of long-term partnership working and positive planning that is delivering wide ranging benefits to the West Cumbria community.

The £6.5m Bus Station development is pivotal in Whitehaven's transformation. The scheme re-purposes Whitehaven's historic gateway art-deco Bus Station into Cumbria's flagship digital and creative hub. Comprising of managed workspace, artisan food and beverage offerings as well as flexible workspace, the multi-use scheme reflects the post-Covid evolving world of office space.

This development brings city-style start-up space to the coast of Cumbria with 24-hour access, digital and prototyping suites and co-located business support services. Together, they deliver a development that will be instrumental in meeting west Cumbria's biggest challenge: economic diversification for job security and creation.



Planning for a Successful Economy

The judges felt the project was an excellent example of partnership working that is delivering positive benefits to the West Cumbria community, parts of which suffer from high levels of deprivation. The development team have also worked to ensure that the project provides wide ranging benefits to the local supply chain, including sourcing local food for its restaurant. The Bus Station development is already acting as a catalyst to investment with further developments being brought forward as part of the wider North Shore Regeneration programme.

The judges were impressed with the passion and pride of the whole development team and the determination of Copeland Council and its partners to deliver a scheme that met the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Planning for Heritage and Culture

The judges were particularly impressed with the commitment and determination of Copeland Council and its partners to retain the existing frontage and to use this as the starting point for the design of the development. Although the building is not listed, it is within a Conservation Area and the council, and its partners recognised the cultural and historic importance of this feature to the local community as a local landmark and meeting point for different generations. The retention of this important feature was supported by the local Civic Trust, and this is a good example of how local groups can help to play a part in the positive regeneration of their areas.

The judges also recognised the adaptability of the project team when addressing the technical challenges during construction and the determination of the team to fulfil their original objectives and provide a high-quality development throughout.

★ WINNER



Excellence in Plan Making in Practice
Baltic Triangle SRF, submitted by LDA Design



Working alongside Liverpool City Council, in partnership with the Baltic Creative and Baltic Triangle CICs, LDA Design have developed an ambitious and innovative Strategic Regeneration Framework for the Baltic Triangle. The SRF defines both a strategic urban vision and planning framework for this important creative and digital quarter, home to some of Liverpool's most exciting businesses and venues.

Recent pressure for residential growth in the area requires clear guidance, framed within a robust and landscape-led vision. LDA Design worked closely with the community and local businesses to shape the SRF, creating a shared vision for a liveable and prosperous future.

The judges felt that this was an excellent plan which was well connected to the site and its context which allowed it to focus not only on the area's heritage but its emerging culture of digital enterprise. They particularly liked the way in which the plan was driven by bottom-up consultation with the community, particularly the local CICs and aligned with their wider aspirations. The judges were impressed with how the very strong grid of streets had been used as the catalyst for the public realm interventions, setting the scope for how individual planning applications would respond to the places unique historic identity. Finally, they felt it is the way that the document was being used in a development management capacity to achieve better quality planning permission (and renegotiate existing ones) that really elevated this document and its relevance plan making in practice.

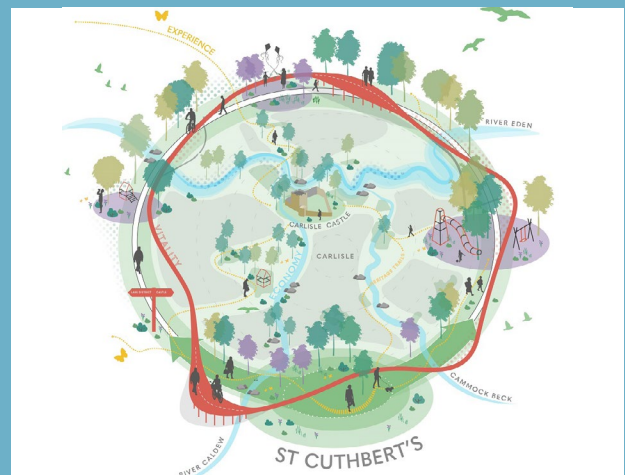
Commendation



Excellence in Plan Making in Practice St Cuthbert's Garden Village SPD, submitted by Carlisle City Council

This Strategic Design SPD amplifies policies in the Carlisle District Local Plan and is created for applicants and development management officers when developing and making decisions on development proposals in St Cuthbert's Garden Village. It particularly helps to interpret and articulate the Council's expectations for avoiding piecemeal development and encouraging innovative, high quality, comprehensive, landscape-led, sustainable place making appropriate for a Garden Settlement. In line with current and emerging national guidance, this SPD defines what is meant by 'beautiful' development in the context of St Cuthbert's and has been developed through extensive engagement.

The judges were very impressed with the overall, vision and aspiration for this project and a commitment by the City Council to deliver something that would, when delivered, be truly transformational for not only for the city, but for the wider region and the borderlands. The work was clearly the product of many years of extensive work, that integrated the project at every level of planning policy culminating with the excellent SPD that has recently been adopted. The work was well written, researched and well supported by technical survey and community engagement – the latter being praised for its innovative methods. Overall, they felt it was an excellent example of long term, robust policy making.



★ WINNER

Public Sector Planning Team of the Year **Halton Borough Council Planning Team**

The judging panel was enthralled by the breadth of work covered by Halton Borough Council's planning team. What made the submission even more impressive is the amount of work being produced by this small local authority team. It is evident that the teams across different disciplines, including highways, support each other very well and form a tightly knit unit that takes pride in their work. Halton continued to progress their emerging Local Plan during the Pandemic where many others opted to put their plans on hold. They successfully completed their virtual public hearing sessions earlier this year, which was a first for all involved in it.

The Development Management Team maintains good performance numbers whilst being proactive in negotiating improvements to schemes rather than just refusing applications. The work of the team over many years now has had a significant positive impact on how the settlements in Halton are perceived. The judges felt Halton's Planning Team were worthy winners of this category.



Commendation

Public Sector Planning Team of the Year **Rochdale Council Development Management Team**

The judges commented that through their submission and presentation, Rochdale's Development Management Team has proven the art of the possible by the transformation in the delivery of their Development Management services. The judging panel understand very well the challenges that would have been involved in persuading senior officers to invest more money into the service under difficult financial conditions and to bring about a true cultural shift in such a large and established organisation as the Council. The data and client reviews speak volumes of what the team has achieved in a reasonably short period of time.

The judges were particularly impressed by the way staff were empowered to re-invent the way they work to improve efficiencies and are allowed to manage their own workloads. The focus has shifted from the statutory timescales for dealing with applications to a more customer focussed approach whilst also generating much needed additional income to help sustain the new enhanced level of service delivery.

★ WINNER

Private Sector Planning Team of the Year
Nexus Planning



The judges were impressed with whole team approach to their presentation, and it shone through that the team are close knit and supportive of each other. Nexus has a range of internal working groups covering sustainability, social value and diversity to name a few. It was refreshing to see that all members of the team, regardless of level, are actively involved in these to help set the direction of the business and encourage continual development. The judges enjoyed a snippet of the “Nexus: Year in Review” series and it shows that the team are engaging and passionate about what they do. The growth aspirations of the business were evident with two additional professional planners due to start in the coming months to expand the team and respond to increased workload.

Nexus stood out to the judges as a consultancy which is professional, works hard to achieve positive outcomes for their clients and pro-actively engages staff to help shape the Nexus of tomorrow. The judges felt that the team were a worthy winner of this strongly contested category.

Commendation

Private Sector Planning Team of the Year
Avison Young

The judges recognised that in recent years the team has embraced a move from an independent planning consultancy, How Planning, to being part of one of the world’s largest global real estate companies, Avison Young. Despite becoming part of a much larger organisation, the team has been able to retain its own distinctive identity, and to develop its distinctive approach to team working whilst taking advantage of the broader skills within Avison Young as a whole. Indeed, the larger organisation has gained from the positive team working culture of its planning team.

The submission demonstrated real pride in the people who make up the team, and the support on offer to develop team members right from the start of their planning careers and then as their careers developed through to becoming leaders. The judges took note of the comments of a planning graduate who had recently joined the team, and the support which she was offered from the get-go. Team members are actively encouraged to think and work “outside the box”, and the judges were impressed with the overall team support of individuals, allowing them to develop and broaden their skills as planners. A culture of active collaboration and partnership was evident in the submission, as was a strong commitment to social and economic value in local communities. Avison Young are involved in some of the north west’s biggest projects, and excellent team working lies at the heart of their success over the last turbulent year.

★ WINNER

Young Planner of the Year

Olivia Pemberton

Olivia is a Senior Planner at Eden Planning and Development Ltd., having previously worked for Savills. She graduated from the University of Manchester in 2017. Olivia is a Chartered Town Planner and is currently Chair of the RTPI Northwest Young Planners Committee.

She has already gained a wide range of experience in the private and public sectors, including a recent 'secondment' to Flintshire Council to assist with their Development Management workload.

The judges said "We all thoroughly enjoyed meeting Olivia and hearing about her career to date. In only five years, she has already achieved so much; with demonstrable experience in both the public and private sectors, alongside her longstanding commitment to volunteering with the RTPI North West. We decided to award Olivia RTPI North West Young Planner of the Year 2021, as she outlined how she would continue to be a great champion for other Young Planners in our region and use the opportunity as a platform to raise the profile of planners more generally. We wish her the best of luck with the national awards".



The RTPI thanks **Tetra Tech Planning** for sponsoring this year's awards and for their continued support of the RTPI North West.

The quality of entries received in several categories was pleasing, given the impact of the pandemic on the wider development and construction sectors over the past couple of years. This has particularly affected the large and small development schemes categories, for which there were no award winners this year.

However, with activity picking up once again, the Judges are looking forward to seeing some of the innovative and high-quality developments now underway across the region being put forward for consideration next year!

The high quality of finalists this year made selecting the winners extremely challenging and the RTPI is grateful for the time and effort put into the Awards submissions by all the applicants.

Education, Careers and Mentoring Review of the Year

Despite the evident challenges throughout the last twelve months, the Education, Careers and Mentoring task group has continued to persevere with various methods to ensure we maintained our engagement with members throughout the region, as well as finding various means to still engage with those who aspire to become a planner in the future.

Our connection with the planning schools at the University of Manchester and Liverpool University has gained further momentum, with representatives meeting with both departments and being able to outline a partnership protocol to allow our relationship to flourish further. Work was also completed earlier in the year on a flyer which was distributed to students at both schools providing context to the RTPI's role in supporting their future careers and offering advice on securing job placements. We were extremely pleased to have Maisie and George, undergraduate students from the University of Liverpool, involved with the group during this period to support our work, as well as attend meetings and offer their perspective.

For the future, it is hoped that we can build on this and make greater connections with other relevant organisations in order to support and meet our targets.

The group are aspiring to build a stronger network of connections throughout the region to provide us with a better foundation in order to reach more of our members, as well as others who may consider planning as a career.

Education Network

Representatives of the group have continued to attend meetings with the RTPI's Education Network, chaired by Andrew Close. This provides a valuable opportunity for leads of task groups from all regions to discuss their experiences and activities. It also offers the chance for further discussion on national incentives. This includes the BALANCE (Build A Legacy and New Community Equality) project, which will be gathering greater momentum next year and will look to target education facilities and people in communities that are seen as under-represented.

Careers Roundtables

As we look to grasp the opportunity to re-engage with schools in the north west, one activity that will be key to establishing those close relationships will be the Careers Roundtables. The Roundtables is being piloted by the North West Education, Careers and Mentoring volunteers.

This will involve hosting a series of roundtables with several careers advisors or teachers from specific sixth forms and colleges in the North West where we will introduce the RTPI and explore future informal arrangements of how the RTPI can work more effectively with schools specifically to raise awareness of the career opportunities within the planning profession for local students. If you want the RTPI to engage with a school in your area, contact Bev Watson at beverley.watson@rtpi.org.uk

Schools Competitions

Once again volunteers within the group were on hand to support and judge entries for the World Town Planning Day schools competition, which went ahead on December 10th. This year it involved students from secondary schools. The students were tasked to discuss a topic linked to COP26, with a focus on climate change, urban regeneration and innovation. Students were asked to envisage themselves as a keynote speaker at a future conference, and from a town planning perspective develop their own ideas for a new sustainable community near to where they live. Based on the success of previous years, and the fresh perspective students can have on the planning world, we were once again not disappointed to the submissions we received.

Moss Madden Awards

The task group was delighted to take on judging the Moss Madden Awards for undergraduates in 2021. The post graduate awards were judged and announced in December 2021.

★ WINNER

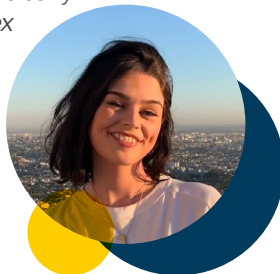
University of Manchester

Rebekah Ellis

'Skateboarding is not a crime: the exclusion of skateboarders in Manchester and its contradictions'

The undergraduate award was presented in October to Manchester University student Rebekah Ellis for their thesis "Skateboarding is not a crime: the exclusion of skateboarders in Manchester and its contradictions".

The judges said that the student had a strong methodical approach for investigating a unique and important area of planning that is not frequently considered. The objectives of the research looking at the perceptions of skateboarding, the role that planning and the built environment play in promoting or inhibiting the activity and ways in which positive planning and design play in facilitating skateboarding as an option for transportation and physical activity for people provided a thoughtful discussion. The thesis was clearly communicated and explained a complex topic well using understandable and approachable language. The case study was based in Manchester and created a thorough examination of a number of complex issues faced by the planning profession.



Runner Up

University of Liverpool

Daisy-Mae Arch

'A green solution, close to home: exploring the state of green infrastructure multi-functionality on new housing developments'

The runner up for the undergraduate award was presented in October to Liverpool University student Daisy-Mae for their thesis "A green solution, close to home: exploring the state of green infrastructure multi-functionality on new housing developments".

The judges were impressed with the student's through research resulting in creating relevant and applicable recommendations for planning practise across the country. The project was based in the North West and had two case studies from Sefton and South Ribble authorities. The research considered new housing developments and analysed how current planning policy impacts the delivery of green infrastructure. The judges felt the thesis explored the complex area of delivering green infrastructure well and provided robust recommendations for the planning system to enhance the delivery of vital green infrastructure for local communities.



Mentoring Opportunities with the new 'Coffee with a Planner' initiative

During the summer, the task group created opportunities for students to have informal mentoring with practising planners in the North West for career advice, feedback on CVs or to find out more about what planners do in their day-to-day roles. The task group matched planners who were working in fields the students were interested in for example, urban design or strategic planning. Both the students and the planners who volunteered fed back that they found the experience overwhelmingly positive. The task group would like to thank all those planning practitioners who volunteered their time to help students provide insightful and helpful mentorship.

Due to the success of the initiative this year, the task group hope to expand informal mentoring opportunities next year – so watch this space!

Acknowledgements

All of us within the Task Group would like to take this opportunity to extend their thanks to Tillie Baker, who has recently decided to take a break from leading the group whilst she is on maternity leave. Tillie has supported and led the group to many successes, including: improving connections with the universities, setting up and hosting numerous skills workshops, organising the Coffee with a Planner initiative and has continued to always make a positive impact to the group. Everyone in the task group wishes her the best in the future, and look forward to hopefully meeting her and her new daughter in person soon.



Newly Elected and Associate Members

Christopher Kempster Lake District National Park Authority

Sheikh Adam Mustafa Capita PLC - UK Headquarters

Aaron Jackson North West

Alastair Wager Herefordshire Council

Alexandra Gavin P4 Planning

Bryanni-May Cartledge JWPC Ltd

Calum Woods Holliss Vincent

Christian Orr Hollins Strategic Land

Christie Fraser Holliss Vincent

Christopher Heffernan The Mineral Planning Group Ltd

Elizabeth Slater Barton Willmore - Manchester

Ethan Grubb Isle of Man Government

Fiona Huyton Isle of Man Government

Georgina Iloff Avison Young - Manchester

Hannah McGuinness Axis

Hannah Wild Hollins Strategic Land

Hannah Rodger Gladman Developments

James Mercer Preston City Council

Jemma Brabrook Deloitte LLP - Manchester

Jeni Regan Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Jennifer Brow Ainscough Strategic Land

Jodie Farnill White Peak Planning

Joe Hobbs Homes England - Manchester

Jonathan Storey Pegasus Group

Jordan Clark Barton Willmore

Larna Smith Avison Young - Manchester

Leanne Turner Trafford Council

Lucy Furber Icen Projects - Manchester

Lucy Sykes AECOM - Manchester

Matthew Shipman Bellway Homes

Maximilian Kidd-Rossiter Lichfields

Naomi Howard PFK Planning

Nicola Jones Lichfields

Ollie Thomas Peacock and Smith Ltd

Philippa Davey Savills

Rebecca Whitney Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Robert Clarke Lancaster City Council

Sally Riley Redrow Homes

Selena Gaskarth Heaton Planning Ltd

Sophie Moore Berrys

Sophie Leech Oldham Council

Tamara Ettenfield Zerum Consult Ltd

Victoria Owen David Lock Associates

Vida Maliene Liverpool John Moores University

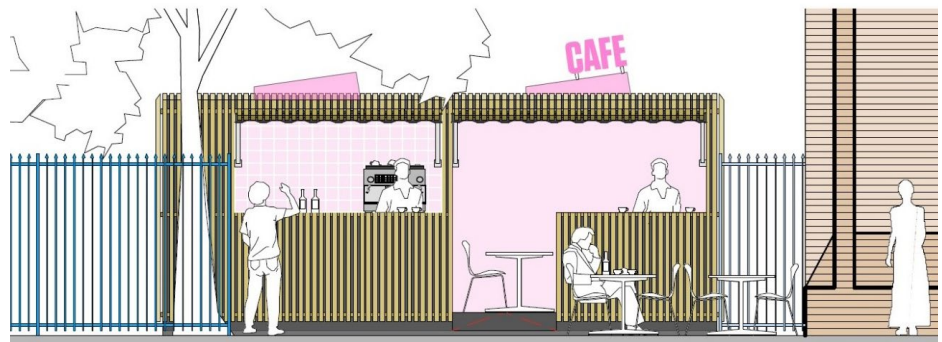
Zoe Whiteside Chorley Borough Council

North West Planning Aid in 2021

Much like last year, 2021 has continued to be a challenging time for providing Planning Aid support in the Region. The Planning Aid Task Group has continued to meet on-line since March 2020 and has offered assistance to communities in various ways, but not surprisingly many community groups have had other priorities than planning.

Work on Neighbourhood Plan preparation in the Region continues to slow, but there are some encouraging examples of groups re-forming and new groups submitting to become designated. Some groups have struggled to progress plans due to an inability to meet-up with members of their community in-person, although restrictions have now been fully lifted (for now) which should hopefully help matters. Some groups have also gotten to grips with technological solutions for hosting meetings, such as Teams or Zoom.

Whilst involvement with Neighbourhood Plan groups has reduced this year, Planning Aid has continued to support local authorities, community groups, and charities on various new projects.



*Great George Square Café
(Credit: Architectural Emporium)*

Lift the Lid is a project by Merseyside Domestic Violence Service (MDVS) that is set to transform a shipping container to create a Coffee Pod where every cuppa served will 'lift the lid' on domestic violence so that it is no longer a hidden crime.

For the past 20 years, MDVS has been helping the most vulnerable families in Liverpool. Its main aims are to safeguard women, children and young people through education, empowerment and prevention by tackling the root cause of the problem. The voluntary organisation offers support, advice and educational programmes, breaking the cycle of abuse and aiding the recovery process.

Planning Aid England (PAE) provided assistance for the preparation and submission of an application for full planning permission for the siting of a shipping container in Great George Square, Liverpool, near to the Chinese Arch, to be utilised as a café kiosk. Submitted in Spring 2021, a decision was expected in the summer but delays within Liverpool City Council planning department have led to a backlog in determining applications. A positive outcome is expected imminently.



Planning Aid England
Engaging Communities in Planning



Alchemic Kitchen 2.0
(Credit: ArchiPhonic)

Another charity PAE have supported this year, and continues to assist, is Feedback Global and their Alchemic Kitchen 2.0 project.

Feedback Global are based in Stanley Grange in Knowsley, where they have sited a container in an old farming courtyard. Stanley Grange was previously the Home Farm for the Knowsley Estate and was one of the mid Victorian “model” farms. The Estate is now a Grade II Listed Park and Garden.

Most of the farm has now been converted into tenanted business spaces but there is still a run of stables and a cow byre, and several barns which have been left unused since the 1980s.

Feedback Global have acquired the buildings from the Knowsley Estates (the Earl of Derby) to convert into workshop spaces and a cafe, which will be used to continue their work exploring how they can change the food system and create opportunities for the residents of Knowsley.

This has involved working closely with community organisations within Knowsley and the wider Merseyside area to deliver food skills training, support with food aid during the lockdown, campaigning for better fresh food access and piloting innovative ways to repurpose surplus food that might otherwise be wasted.

Planning Aid has been assisting the charity in achieving their vision for an incubator space for food related skills and production that can offer training and opportunities for people in Knowsley and foster entrepreneurship and aspirations to work or engage with the food sector.

Planning Aid volunteers have assisted in the planning and design process as Feedback Global prepares their bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Through Planning Aid, the charity has been able to access and obtain the technical information required to support their funding bid. If successful, Planning Aid will continue to guide the charity through the planning application preparation and submission stage.

Elsewhere, Planning Aid has help organise and run community engagement workshops for two local planning authorities in the North West who are currently preparing new Local Plans.

In early 2021 PAE organised and ran two workshops with Blackburn and Darwen Local Planning Authority. At each workshop a different team of three Planning Aid volunteers were involved – two chartered members one of whom (a North West based member) chaired, plus a non-chartered notetaker. So, a range of volunteering opportunities were created, and experience developed.

Following the experience with Blackburn and Darwen, Planning Aid reached out to other local authorities to offer a similar service. This offer was targeted at local authorities with higher levels of deprivation, where Planning Aid's assistance in engaging communities would be most effective.

In September and October 2021 Planning Aid ran three area-specific workshops to engage communities in the early discussions around the emerging Stockport Local Plan. The workshops were a success and provided the Council with a wealth of information aside from just views on the scope of Local Plan.

Become Involved

If you want to be involved in supporting local people with planning issues, then why not become a Planning Aid volunteer? To do so you first need to register on the RTPI website using the following link:

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/volunteering/how-to-apply/>

If also you want to help organise Planning Aid activities in the Region by being part of the Task Group, then contact Bev Watson beverley.watson@rtpi.org.uk

Webinars in 2021

In 2021 there have been few in person events and the Webinar has been king. Over 2021, the Region has delivered 14 main Webinars:

- ★ 3x Greenbelt webinars
- ★ 2x Neurodiversity webinars
- ★ 2x Article Clubs
- ★ Beginners Guide to Masterplanning
- ★ Healthy Planning
- ★ Green Infrastructure and Landscape
- ★ Enforcement
- ★ Transport, Sustainability and Climate Change
- ★ Designing out Crime
- ★ Delivering Homes



Also, several joint events including ***'Planner Live North' with the Yorkshire and North East Regions*** and...

Ask an Expert - Planning in the CPO Process

As part of the RTPI's Ask and Expert series the RTPI hosted this webinar with the CPA (Compulsory Purchase Association) to provide an introduction to planning in the Compulsory Purchase process.

The webinar was Chaired by our Regional Chair in the North West, Ian Gilbert who also sits on the CPA Futures committee; the CPA's equivalent of our Young Planners. The webinar was presented by Greg Dickson, Partner at Barton Willmore and Liz Neate, Director at Deloitte and was aimed at planners and surveyors at the start of their planning and compulsory purchase careers. The Webinar had over 100 attendees sign up and was well represented by planners and surveyors from a wide range of companies.

The webinar provided an introduction to planning as an integral part of the Compulsory Purchase process for both authorities acquiring land and for those having their land acquired. Not only are planners involved in promoting and securing consent for schemes that require Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) but they are also involved in establishing the alternative forms of development that may have been suitable and these considerations often form a key element of the compensation claim.

Greg Dickson gave an overview of the role that planners play both in the promotion of Compulsory Purchase Order and also objecting on behalf of affected landowners and will also explain how planning assumptions can inform compensation claim process. Liz Neate explained how the advice of planning professionals is used by valuers in compensation claims and in particular how planning professionals are used to understand what forms of Appropriate Alternative Development (AAD) can be considered.

Both Greg and Liz provided their top tips for entering this specialism for planners and for ensuring planners are able to perform well in the field.

We look forwards to working more with the CPA and CPA Futures as the CPO process features further in our professional lives as planners. Of course, CPOs for housing renewal projects is nothing new, but we are envisaging a potential step change in the UK, particularly as the use of CP powers to facilitate the delivery of new housing developments becomes more prevalent. Partly as Local Authorities once-again look to become developers in their own right, and partly as we see a surge of opinion towards the DCO regime expanding to enable housing-led schemes to be promoted as NSIPs.

We as planners will have a role in utilising CPOs to deliver economic, social and environmental change. As the demand for modern living that offers outdoor space grows, the impetus to deliver new garden towns and villages will become ever-greater. Town planners will need to address the limitations of both the plan making and development management processes in providing a desirable consenting regime for such projects. We look forward to working with the CPA and engaging in conversations on changes to the planning system.

RTPI North West Young Planners 2021: A Year in Hybrid

Reflections from 2020 highlighted a number of opportunities for the Young Planners Committee to extend our reach and offer to all of the young planner members across the North West. With new members joining the committee, momentum increased in the delivery of CPD and networking events across both virtual and in-person formats.

The beginning of the year stayed virtual with the committee continuing their Article Club webinars, kicking off the first session in March with a debate on the possibility of living 'off-grid', with speakers from Keel University, The University of Liverpool, Ecospheric and Rob Thompson Urbanism. The webinar invited members to discuss how to build an off-grid living lifestyle in the centre of a city, and whether the impacts of Covid-19 had made it more possible to live off-grid.

Throughout the year the committee continued to provide support to members going through the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) process which is now provided virtually at a national level.

In August the committee had our first in-person event since 2020. Members were invited to brush the dust off their networking skills at the Young Planners rounders social, where planners caught up with old colleagues and new faces who had joined the industry during the pandemic. The event proved incredibly popular with members meeting in Manchester with some very notable performances on the field and competitive edges shown!

Following the success of the networking event, the rounders social event took place again in September and hopes to continue again in 2022 once evenings become lighter. The committee are aiming to introduce more sporting and outdoor activities into the calendar in 2022 to provide a variety and range of events.

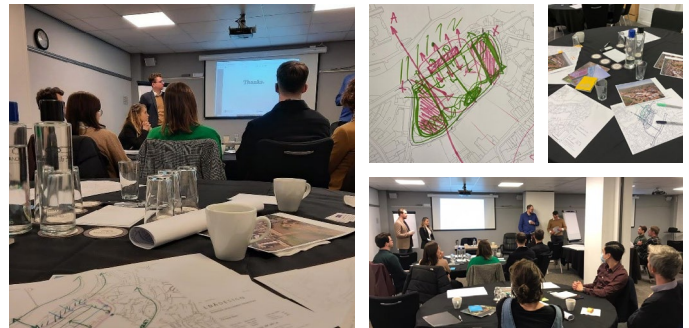


Expanding on our outdoor event offer, the Young Planners hosted a 'Welcome Back' walking tour of Manchester City Centre at the end of September, hosted by Urban Bubble and UrblInfo. The walk focused on what has changed in the property sector since the pandemic in terms of construction and new developments across the City Centre and provided a refresh for those who have been working from home for the last 18 months. The tour started at Circle Square on Oxford Road and the group worked their way through the City Centre, along Canal Street and then down to the New Islington Marina. The event was well attended by a mixture of public and private sector planners.



October saw the introduction of a new event, 'A Beginner's Guide to Masterplanning' in collaboration with LDA Design and EPR Architects. The event focussed an introduction to outlining the design and layout considerations for new or re-purposed spaces that are usually delivered through a 'masterplan' and emphasized the importance of in-person collaboration to resolve spatial planning issues.

LDA Design and EPR Architects presented how they approach masterplanning as a concept, and the main design principles and the drivers for change behind it. An interactive task was set for the attendees, where they split into groups and discussed between them how they would masterplan a real-world site, based on the principles laid out to them during the presentations.



As we look forward to 2022, we are excited to continue meeting in person but will continue to adopt a hybrid approach to events to ensure that we reach all of those within our geographic region. We thank our membership for their continued support, attendance and feedback throughout 2021, and look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.

Christmas Social

This year the North West Young Planners Christmas Social, kindly sponsored by Maddox Planning, was held at Escape to Winter Island. Winter Island is part of the popular Escape to Freight Island venue which is set within the historic industrial regeneration area, Mayfield Depot.

As part of the social, participants enjoyed ice skating set on a mezzanine floor overlooking the entirety of Winter Island. After, festive food including Bratwurst, and a choice of drinks were consumed, whilst socialising with peers from the planning and property industry. The event was sell out and well received by all.

MADDOX PLANNING



RTPI North West Annual Dinner

So, 2021 came and we weren't sure whether we were going to have our usual Dinner or not. It was looking very unlikely, so we started planning for 2022 instead. But then things took a positive turn and social events were no longer taboo, and Operation 'Organise a Dinner Pronto' got under way. Bev was her normal amazing self, and set about organising the whole thing with amazing speed, so a big thanks to Bev. Also, huge thanks to our sponsors who were approached at short notice with little information as to how many people would be able to attend or what entertainment we would be able to organise – so a big shout out to CMS, Hive Land & Planning, Curtins and Capita. And finally, a massive thank you to all of you who turned out to attend our 2021 Annual Dinner, which was organised and advertised at such short notice, it was amazing to see everyone!

As normal the Annual Dinner is a time for Planners across the Region to catch-up, network and celebrate and in 2021 this time meeting with other people in person felt incredibly valuable and special. **Photographs from the evening are shown overleaf.**

The Dinner also saw the celebration of the RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Excellence 2021 (this year kindly sponsored by TetraTech).

These awards celebrate outstanding projects that demonstrate the power of planning in our region. Entries reflect the diversity of planning achievement, whether in urban or rural areas, large or small in scale, involving new development, regeneration or conservation.

We also had the pleasure of a partially in person version of 'have we got planning news for you', Paul Tucker QC and Sasha White QC provided the in-person aspect, with Charlie Banner QC, Mary Cook & Chris Young QC all providing a virtual presence, to regal us with stories from the regular online show.

The show has been a regular favourite of many planners during lockdown providing humour and education, and it was good to get a flavour of what can happen behind the scenes.

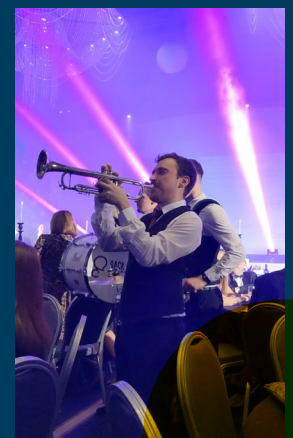
In addition, to that there was also opportunity for some singing and dancing with band Back Chat Brass, making their way through the throng of tables to entertain us. We hope that all who managed to attend enjoyed themselves and we look forward to seeing you again in 2022. Although please note that the Dinner will be moving to June in 2022, to allow for a change to the Awards programme.

With thanks to again to our sponsors.



Find more information on next year's Annual Dinner at the RTPI Events Page: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/>





Little Planners

Our Planning Community has increased this year with three babies born to North West committee members in 2021.



Juliette

Born: 24th June 2021
Weight: 5lb 6oz

Tillie Baker

Senior Planner
Ruth Jackson Planning



Olive Dorothy

Born: 1st July 2021
Weighing 5lb 13oz

Sam Leuty-Milner

Assistant Development Manager
Tesni Properties Limited



Imogen

Born: 3rd August 2021
Weight: 8lb 14oz

Jake Crompton

Associate Planning Director
Countryside

Many
congratulations
to all

John Frederick Norman Collins OBE

DipArch(Birm) SPDip RIBA FRTPI



Aged 97, John passed away peacefully on 23 October 2021. He was President of the Institute between 1980 and 1982. Born in September 1924 in Moseley he attended

King Edwards School in Birmingham before studying at the Birmingham School of Architecture. His studies were cut short by a call up to the RAF and despite never managing to fly he travelled to Cairo and Aden before being de-mobbed in 1947, whereupon he completed his studies and then attending the School of Planning in London from 1951 to obtain planning qualifications.

He was unusual, even for his day and age, in that he held dual professional status in architecture and planning. However, it was in planning where his core skillset would later lay.

His long and illustrious career began in Birmingham working for the City Council as a housing architect, and then, in 1955, as an architect/planner in Coventry. After this, he spent four years as a civil servant in Cyprus, working on War Office housing projects.

Returning to the UK he joined the newly formed Graeme Shankland Planning Consultancy to prepare the Liverpool City Centre Plan. This was followed by work on both the expanded town of Winsford and the regeneration of Bolton town centre. In 1967, he re-joined local government as Deputy County Planner for Cheshire County Council where he devised the Wirral Way Country Park. By 1974 he had become the County Planning Officer and amongst other things he led a jolly professional team and oversaw Local Government reorganisation and the publication of the exemplar Cheshire Design Guide.



John Collins

When County planner, John was involved in all aspects of research and plan preparation, leading to the first County Structure Plan and its first review. In the course of preparing regional planning guidance, John chaired the inter-authority working group of officers, which included members of the regional office of the former Department of the Environment. He also chaired the North West regional aggregates working party.

1982 was a special year for John, as he was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

For a while, John was a member of the Board of the Central Manchester Development Corporation, with his experience focusing on the practical promotion of mixed-use development in urban centres.

Following his retirement from local government in September 1988, he joined his former County Council colleague John Long to form the Long Collins Partnership, during which time he enjoyed a three-year spell working in Monserrat for the island's government and its attempt to establish new civic and community development in the southern part of the island around Plymouth which sadly became entombed in volcanic ash in 1995. One of his abiding memories from the idyllic times he spent here was to be invited aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia to enjoy sundowners in the company of Prince Philip just before he headed back to the UK in 1993. After John Long died, in 1996 the planning practice was amalgamated with Lawson-Price to become its Chester office, with John remaining as a consultant.

John never fully retired. He maintained an active role in regional RTPI affairs, took a keen interest in the RTPI's urban design group and sat on the City of Chester's conservation area advisory committee. He also continued to act as a consultant the architectural practice of Tweed Nuttall Warburton.

Together with Philip Moren, in 2002 he co-authored the RIBA Good Practice Guide 'Negotiating the Planning Maze', which was revised and updated in 2006 and 2009, and found its way onto the recommended reading list of several architectural and planning schools.

John was regional chair for both the RIBA North West and RTPI North West branches, taking over from the late Moss Madden as treasurer until 2003. He stayed on the Board until 2011 and took great pleasure in helping colleagues, supporting the regional administrator and providing an insight into the mind and workings of the Institute. He was a champion of young planners and enjoyed international networking forays, including to the Czech Republic.



As his eyesight and appetite for driving waned, he was forced to rely on his colleagues to give him a lift to RTPI meetings. It was on those journeys that, despite his great experience and connections, instead of name-dropping or sharing the glories of his younger days, or indeed talking solely about the planning profession, he demonstrated how self-effacing and humble he was by taking an interest in others and discussing ordinary day-to-day matters. He was truly a man for the moment, who was wonderfully engaging, humorous and thoughtful.

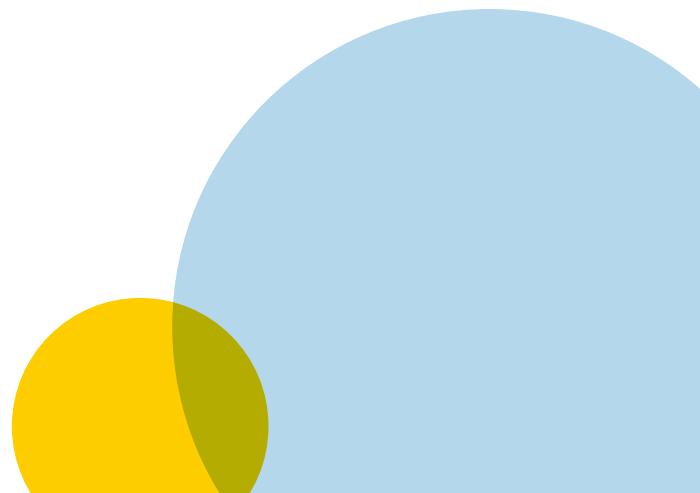
John was quite simply one of the most genuinely charming men you could meet: a real gentleman, who was down to earth and deeply admired by all who came into contact with him. He was immensely passionate about his children, whom he regularly mentioned with great fondness and pride. They had clearly benefited from his 'world view' of life and were spread across the globe. He loved his travels to see them and often shared the odd photo (pre-mobile phone snaps days) and funny stories with colleagues.

He spent his leisure time collecting and hoarding, loved taking family cinefilms, listening to Jazz and watching cricket, besides following Aston Villa FC and even having time to be church warden at St Peter's Church in Hargrave. But perhaps his greatest pleasure was to relax at Borth in Mid-Wales with his family and treasured mirror dingy.

John tragically lost his first wife, Jill, in 1973, with whom he had four children, but he found love again with Mary, his second wife whom he married in 1976, and adopted two further children. Mary passed away in September 2019. He was a devoted husband, father to six, grandfather to thirteen and great-grandfather to three, and a well-respected friend and colleague to many more.

Justin Paul and Philip Moren

November 2021



Regional Research



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The RTPI and North West planners have been working hard over 2021 to develop and influence planning academic research at all levels. This section looks at their achievements and the views of regional academics on key issues.

Research and Policy Update

In terms of spatial planning, both the Liverpool and Manchester city regions sought to progress their strategic plans during 2021. A consultation for an early phase of the Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) concluded in early February 2021. A main focus of the consultation addressed development management and related policies that would apply across the whole city-region as and when the SDS is due to take effect in 2023.

Unlike some other city region scale plans, that consultation did not include any details on how future housing requirements would be addressed at that level. Instead, it is understood that there is agreement for each of the six local planning authorities within the city region would aim to meet their own housing needs. There may be no redistribution of an aggregate housing requirement across the Liverpool city-region in contrast to some other sub-regions. For the plan examination, the SDS across the six authorities could result in housing numbers being left unplanned for. This may happen for example where some of the outer authorities with Green Belt designations do not wish to review their boundaries.

The city region plans for the Greater Manchester area with its ten local authorities (known as GMSF – Greater Manchester Spatial Framework) did not progress as intended following the announcement in December 2020 that Stockport Council had withdrawn from the GMSF. By February the other nine councils had agreed to carry on working together and in April 2021 the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (known as PfE) Development Plan was announced confirming joint working and also that the nine Councils would continue to work closely with Stockport Council to deliver shared ambitions across Greater Manchester. A joint Committee was set up for the 9 authorities with a Joint Development Plan amended, updated and renamed.



An eight week consultation period took place between August and October (Regulation 19) with a view to submission to the Secretary of State and then examination possibly by a number of inspectors.

Stockport Council is progressing its Local Plan, work on which commenced some years ago in parallel with the then GMSF. The Council has set out some Key Principles to guide planning policies including taking a brownfield-first approach to development and protecting its greenspaces as much as possible. The next round of public consultation for this Plan is likely to begin again in later Autumn of this year.

Another combined plan being developed in the region is the Central Lancashire Local Plan by the three Planning authorities of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble. Their timetable has a 'Preferred Options' draft Local Plan being published for consultation over the next few months with a potential adoption date of 2023.

In terms of national and wider research and policy, the international COP26 conference took place in Glasgow this Autumn. The RTPI has placed a spatial emphasis on the role of sub national governments across the world being given more power. This would include fiscal capacity and powers over land development as the international community needs to look to shift to a low carbon future. RTPI says that greater devolution globally can allow countries to build greener and more equal communities. An RTPI report has been produced which addresses the large inequalities exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic; it also considers how urban planning can bring some leverage to reduce socio-economic divides while also building low-emission communities. Three areas of Planning are particularly important, namely housing, health and wellbeing: economic sectors, production and consumption and travel and urban infrastructure.

As well as greater decentralisation the RTPI argues that countries must coordinate national and local urban policies to guide provision of genuinely affordable homes, low carbon transport and align strategies for employment generation. In order to deliver on the 2015 Paris Agreement governments should recognise the role of urban planners in coordinating low-carbon activity in areas such as housing and travel. The RTPI believes that a commitment to climate justice and disadvantaged communities should be the starting point for all urban planning activity. Also, crucial to delivering communities fit for the future is a renewed focus on participation and an understanding that planners must recognise the needs and aspirations of individuals, communities and businesses.



Neurodiversity is the diversity of human minds - it is about thinking, learning and communicating differently. Neurodiversity in town planning asks us to think about things in a different way. Over the last two years, at both national and regional level a number of events have taken place seeking to address questions such as: what is neurodiversity? why is this an important subject and why are we talking about it now? how can we support neurodiversity in the way we work, design and engage? In our region, both research and policy material are beginning to be addressed as applicable to neurodiversity and planning at different spatial scales. A recent publication by the British Standards Institution seeks to address the links between neurodiversity and the built environment. In the North West region some case examples (including with Model Design Codes) are to be developed with a view to a guidance note being made available.

Our region has continued to respond to RTPI consultations about a wide range of subjects during the year. As an example current consultations as at Autumn 2021 include the following: MHCLG (now Department of Levelling Up) consultation on the future of time-limited permitted development rights for the use of outdoor spaces (PDR), Ministry of Defence consultations on two proposed PDRs to both extend and alter existing buildings and construct additional buildings on the Defence estate without the need for planning permission (subject to certain limitations and within the perimeter wire of sites) and BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) on identifying whether the revised energy National Policy Statements presented are fit for purpose (i.e. whether they provide a suitable framework to support decision making for nationally significant energy infrastructure).

The Policy task group is also now monitoring the progress of the four garden villages within our region. Launched by Government in 2017, these garden villages are spread throughout England and designed to accommodate from around 1600 new homes to around 10,000. Their aim is to create community infrastructure with good transport links, and a range of other facilities to create local jobs and to boost the local economy. The North West schemes are at: Halsnead in Knowsley on Merseyside, Bailrigg in Lancaster, St Cuthberts near Carlisle in Cumbria and Handforth in Cheshire close to the Greater Manchester boundary with Stockport.

Two authorities within the region (Sefton and Hyndburn) were successful this year in being nominated for pilot projects in their areas for the National Model Design Code.

For Hyndburn the Huncoat Design Code will aim to set out in detail how future housing for this area can be brought forward through a Masterplan in order to meet high quality design standards. In Bootle the Design Code relates to an Area Action Plan for the regeneration of the town centre and its local area. For both projects public consultation is being undertaken.



The North West region was not so successful in being selected for another government pilot project, this one for Digital Planning tools. Ten local planning authorities in England were chosen for testing how local plans would translate into the proposed new planning system; as an example, this would involve moving detailed text documents onto interactive maps with accompanying annotated text. A range of different types of local Planning authorities have been selected for the pilots ranging from two London boroughs to the authority of Broxbourne (Hertfordshire) with a population of less than 100,00 residents.

A developing policy area for Planning is that of “social value”. There are wide ranging definitions as to what constitutes social value. What each of the definitions have in common is the recognition that social value includes economic, environmental and social outcomes all of which are referred to in the NPPF and which collectively focus on improving people’s quality of life and well-being.

Social value can encompass a variety of positive financial or non-financial community benefits, which typically cannot be defined by traditional market economics, including:

- Improving the mental health and well-being of individuals and communities;
- Enhancing employability and skills training;
- Reducing homelessness;
- Increasing access to quality public realm, green spaces and local amenities; and
- Reducing or mitigating adverse environmental impact.

Social value can be applicable for both Planning policy and decision making on applications. North West Planning authorities leading the way in this field include Liverpool City Region, Salford City and Manchester City. Although the concept of social value does not currently exist in any English planning legislation, the term has been gaining in importance within the Planning sector in recent years. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 was implemented in January 2013 and is presently being widely used within public sector procurement to build strong and long lasting partnerships across sectors.

This year has also seen further proposals for the re-structuring of the county areas of Cumbria and Lancashire. A proposal for a Morecambe Bay unitary council was proposed by three local authorities: Lancaster (in Lancashire) and Barrow and South Lakeland both in Cumbria. This was rejected by Lancashire County Council. Another proposal was for a North Cumbria unitary council. A series of locally-led re-organisations of local government in Cumbria and North Yorkshire took place in Spring 2021.

In July 2021 it was announced that Cumbria County Council would be re-organised into two unitary councils, one east and west of the County. The plan chosen by the then Secretary of State Robert Jenrick comprised an East unitary council covering the existing areas of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland and a West unitary comprising the existing areas of Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. A month later the cabinet of Cumbria (which was supportive of the creation of a single unitary council to cover the whole of Cumbria) responded by issuing a claim for judicial review against the Secretary of State’s decision. The position as at mid-October 2021 was that the Cumbria County Council was making arrangements to issues legal proceedings.

Freeports

Freeports are specific geographical areas with different tax and customs rules than the rest of the country, broadly consisting of customs and tax designated zones. In the March Budget of this year the Chancellor announced that the Liverpool City region would be one of the eight places in England to be granted Freeport status subject to successful development of a business case for the project.



The broad aim of Freeports is to boost the local economy, to enable sites and land across the City Region to attract new investment, to create quality jobs, support the wider economy and increase levels of innovation locally. Within the City region, a total of 16 specific sites have been selected comprising a mixture of purposes and areas. The primary customs site is designated on the Liverpool waterfront at the Port of Liverpool. In addition there are three joint tax and customs sites designated in St Helens and Widnes with the Wirral Waters site as the third area.

The remaining sites are distributed across the wider Merseyside city region apart from one other site. The Port Salford site within Greater Manchester has been selected as a Freeport site due to its proposed multi-modal terminal on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal. The modal freight facility and distribution park could become the UK's first inland waterway to be served by rail, road and sea.

Freeports have been around in different areas of Europe including in the UK in the 1980s and earlier this century, both with limited success. Similar to free zones, or 'enterprise zones', Freeports are designated areas subject to a broad array of special regulatory requirements, tax breaks and government support. The difference is that a Freeport is designed to specifically encourage businesses that import, process and then re-export goods, rather than more general business support or regeneration objectives.

Looking Forward

The RTPI team across the region, led by the North West Chair - Ian Gilbert, along with many other fantastic volunteers have excelled under the ever changing Covid-related restrictions we have found ourselves under. This Annual Review provides a compilation of the achievements and reflections from various volunteer groups and individuals who have continued to champion the planning profession despite these challenging conditions.

We owe a big thank you to Ian for his commitment and leadership as Chair throughout 2021. We are also sad to announce that long serving members, Julian Jackson, Justin Paul and Kim Cooper will call it a day on their years of voluntary commitments.

We can look back with pride and satisfaction at our achievements over the last 12 months. Not just within the RTPI, but the planning profession as a whole which has undoubtedly thrived across the North West. The private sector has continued to facilitate high quality and much needed development across the region to support the buoyant construction industry. Whilst planners within the public sector continue to operate effectively within smaller teams suffering limited government funding which has emerged as another key challenge for the planning industry.

Despite this challenge, public sector teams continue to drive forward the levelling up agenda with millions of pounds of funding secured following bids for regeneration projects across the North West including areas such as Barrow-in-Furness, Pendle, Burnley and the Wirral. Garden Villages are beginning to spring up across the region in places like Carlisle, Handforth and Lancaster which are to be delivered by funding streams coordinated with the help of public sector planners.



The New Boss



2021 is coming to a close and it has been a challenging year in parts for everyone. At times, it has felt like a very long hangover that has dragged on from 2020 but as the months

unravalled, normality is slowly but surely beginning to return to our lives and our workplaces.

2022 is now upon us and it is a year of even greater promise and excitement as we look ahead to a packed calendar which will ease us into a post-Covid world.

This year we aim to bring back the best of the in person events but not forget the benefits of attending sessions remotely. This is a key year to define the new norm for networking and CPD events. With this importance, great deliberation has been given to the events planned across 2022 and beyond which prioritises the support offered to members and reflects the emerging challenges the planning industry faces. These include key challenges such as the climate crisis and the housing crisis which are both central cogs within the governments levelling up agenda.

Building on our success of 2021, in the coming year we will aim to:

- Deliver a comprehensive calendar continuing to provide in-person and virtual attendance where possible to an even wider range of CPD and networking events targeting key topics, with reputable speakers.
- Following the formation of the LPA Champions, in 2022 we will look to explore how the RTPI can provide more support to public sector planners through this challenging time. This will be considered through engagement with the LPA Champions leading to specific CPD sessions and further support where possible.

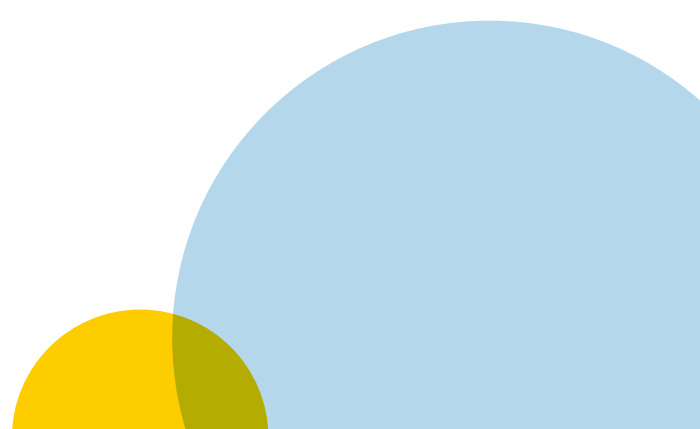
- Support the diversification of the planning industry by promoting equality and diversity which is to be led by the recently formed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) volunteer group and the Education, Careers and Mentoring volunteer group. The work these groups will carry out will aim to instil EDI principles within all aspects of the RTPI's member offer and promote the planning profession to the next generation of planners.
- Define the role of planners and the planning industry within the climate emergency and integrate this within our sessions moving forward.

Our region boasts one of the largest and most active networks of planning professionals in the UK and I'm sure you share my excitement looking towards 2022 to work together to tackle the challenges that are ahead, take the opportunities coming our way, and create a post-Covid world that we can thrive in for years to come.

Kieran Blaydes

RTPI NW Chair 2022

kieran.blaydes@kingswoodhomes.uk.com





RTPI North West
Royal Town Planning Institute

THE NORTH WEST PLANNING YEAR
**A REVIEW OF
2021**

Registered Charity Number: 262865

Registered Office Address:
Royal Town Planning Institute
41 Botolph Lane London, EC3R 8DL