

PLANNING Horizons

Why planning is needed in a fast-changing world

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

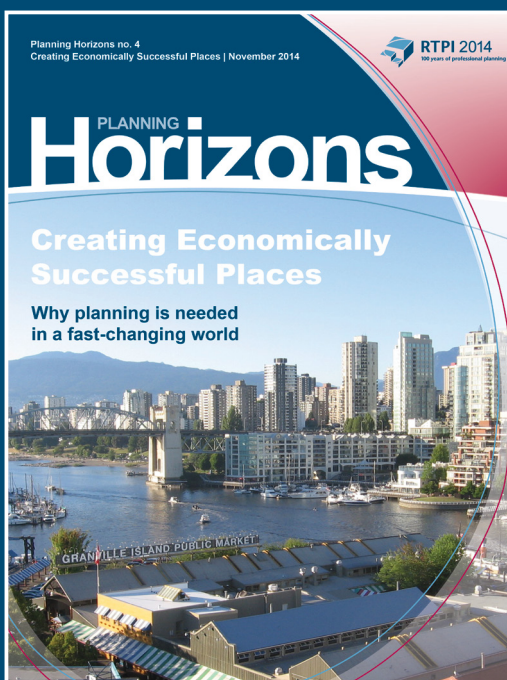
In other respects, we are confronted by a wholly new set of challenges, such as climate change, demographic shifts (including an ageing society), the rise of 'lifestyle diseases', and increasing competition and inequality in a globalised world.

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

Our economic future depends on creating successful places

The global economy is changing faster than ever. Increased competition, the rise to prominence of economies such as China and India, technological change, flows of financial capital and other factors mean that existing industries and old certainties are being challenged as never before. Such changes may be global, but their impacts are felt locally in and around our towns and cities. In addition, in the wake of the financial crisis and in the face of threats such as climate change, there are increasing debates about the stability of our economies and whether there are environmental limits to growth.

All this means that, in the twenty-first century, what makes an 'economically successful place' goes well beyond a narrow approach to development. Planners have a critical role in helping communities at all levels prepare for and navigate these challenges. In particular, planners can help to create quality places to live, work and invest in, as the fundamental basis for successful, sustainable economic development in a fast-changing world.

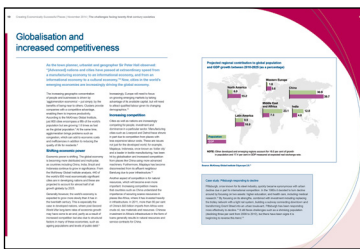


The fourth paper in the *Planning Horizons* series, *Creating Economically Successful Places*, considers the major economic trends that will shape societies in the twenty-first century – from population change, globalisation and competition, technological change, inequality and social cohesion, to the increased scarcity of natural resources such as water and food supplies exacerbated by over-use and climate change impacts.

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The challenges facing twenty-first century societies

Creating Economically Successful Places considers the major economic trends that will shape societies in the twenty-first century, and how the better use of information, rethinking institutions, and stronger capabilities amongst planners and leaders can respond to these challenges.



- The flow of people and ideas in an increasingly globalised world is leading to rapid urbanisation, depopulation in rural areas, and pressure on the sustainability and liveability of some places.



- Global challenges such as an ageing population, inequality and environmental limits are felt locally in our towns and cities.



- Successful places require ingredients that go beyond the immediately economic including attractiveness, diversity, quality of life, and pleasant environments, underpinned by bold but flexible visions for the future.

Meeting challenges economically and socially

In a fast-changing and uncertain world, it is not possible merely to 'predict and provide'. In fact, it is precisely because of the uncertainties of the future rather than in spite of them that places need to have a vision of their own future. This needs to centre on creating and sustaining successful places – attractive, liveable, accessible, connected, vibrant places that are able to attract people and investment that will be crucial to healthy economies that meet people's needs.

Given these global challenges, planners need to be at the forefront of a much broader approach to the economic development of places to avoid complacency and prepare for a fast-changing world, and decision-makers need to work with planners and communities to set a broad vision, encourage places to work cooperatively with one another and avoid working in departmental silos.

The full report can be downloaded from the RTPI website at: www.rtpi.org.uk/planninghorizons

The *Planning Horizons* series

The five RTPI *Planning Horizons* papers are:

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

About the RTPI

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