



**RTPI Northern Ireland**

# **Northern Ireland Planning Conference**

## **Embracing the plan-led system in Northern Ireland**

**6th September 2023, Europa Hotel, Belfast**  
**Useful Resources**

## Welcome to the Northern Ireland Planning Conference 2023 Embracing the plan-led system in Northern Ireland

In today's conference we'll be shining a light on the operation of the plan-led system in Northern Ireland.

The plan-led system introduced in 2015 set in place the Local Development Plan (LDP) requirements and we are now seeing LDPs taking shape and progress through the adoption process.

We will be looking at what this means for decision making, how decisions should be taken under LDPs, and how can communities engage.

Keep an eye on our social media updates and join in the conversation: #NIPlannerLive @RTPINI

On the following pages we've included some information on our current projects and other events and resources that you might find interesting.

The speakers' biographies are available [here](#).



**A big thank you to today's conference sponsor for their support:**



Francis Taylor Building

## **Francis Taylor Building - FTB**

FTB is a barristers' chambers with a leading reputation for planning, environment, infrastructure, licensing, compulsory purchase and land valuation, rating, local government, ecclesiastical and religious liberty, regulatory crime and associated aspects of EU law.

Chambers has a reputation for excellence in planning and related areas of law and is consistently featured in both Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500 for our expertise and leading role in the field.

We are instructed by both the private and the public sectors. Whilst our private clients include many of the country's largest commercial operators, Chambers is also respected for its work on behalf of community and interest groups, small businesses and individuals. Our work in the public sector is for local government and for other public bodies.

Chambers undertakes work in all areas of planning law, appearing at:

- Planning and enforcement appeal inquiries
- Development plan inquiries
- Examinations in public and in the law courts when challenges are made to administrative decisions



# Embracing the plan-led system / 6th September 2023

## Programme

9.30am **Welcome:** Catharine McWhirter MRTPI, RTPI NI Chair

### **Keynote address:**

Julie Thompson, Deputy Secretary for Climate, Planning, and Public Transport, Department for Infrastructure

### **Setting the Scene: what do we really mean by Development Management? -**

Janet Askew MRTPI, visiting Professor of Planning Law at Ulster University

### **The PAC approach to appeals: supporting the plan led approach -**

Andrea Kells MRTPI, Planning Appeals Commission

10.45am **Break**

11.00am Welcome back!

### **Decision Making in a plan-led system -**

Gregory Jones KC, FTB

### **The role of planning obligations in delivering for communities -**

Tom Evans, Placemaking and Strategic Planning Manager, City & County of Swansea

### **The role of the OEP and how it works with planning decisions -**

Craig McGuicken, Northern Ireland Lead, Office for Environmental Protection

12.15pm **Lunch and networking**



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- 1.00pm **Panel Discussion: The approach needed to adapt to the plan-led development management system**  
Chair: Chris Bryson MRTPI, Gravis Planning and RTPI NI Senior Vice Chair
- Denise Dickson MRTPI, Head of Planning, Causeway Coast and Glens
  - Mark Hand MRTPI, Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding, Monmouthshire County Council
  - Pamela Clifford MRTPI, Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager, West Dunbartonshire Council
- 2.00pm **Break**
- 2.15pm Welcome back!
- Guidance on decision taking in planning in NI -**  
Colette Kane, NI Audit Office
- RTPI probity advice -**  
Ruth Richards MRTPI, RTPI Complaints Investigator
- Exploring Case Law on Material Considerations -**  
Richard Honey KC, FTB
- 3.30pm **Closing remarks -** Catharine McWhirter MRTPI, RTPI NI Chair





## The Big Conversation NI - Understanding the pressures of the profession to better deliver the planning system

Planning plays a crucial role in delivering a wide range of valuable outcomes – addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies, economic development and supporting communities across Northern Ireland.

However, it is widely recognised that Councils, along with the wider public sector, are struggling to meet expectations and unlock the value planning has to offer. RTPI NI recognises that addressing this at the current time is not straightforward and there is a need to consider a range of solutions.

We would like to better understand the well-being of planners in Northern Ireland, and RTPI NI is exploring the issues, impacts, causes and potential solutions to support the profession deliver the planning system.

We are asking planners across the profession in Northern Ireland to tell us of your experiences of working in the planning system today. We want to understand more clearly the pressures you are facing. The survey is aimed at the whole profession in Northern Ireland (RTPI and non-RTPI members) - across all sectors and geographies - to understand experiences of working in planning in 2023 in Northern Ireland.

We will use the results from this Conversation to develop our own work programme and inform DfI and other relevant stakeholders, so they can also address issues raised.

The survey can be accessed at:

[www.rtpi.org.uk/BigConversationNI](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/BigConversationNI)

Please complete the survey by Monday 16th October 2023 at the latest.

**Please do respond, as the more evidence we have, the more value and impact this will have.**





## RTPI Member Value Survey

RTPI members come from a range of sectors, locations, and stages in their careers. It is the work of the RTPI to understand the challenges that its members experience, and to support them appropriately.

That's why we have launched a survey for members, lapsed members and non members. Current members should have received a personalised link.

All responses are anonymous and confidential and the survey results will be invaluable in helping to inform our future activities.

For more information please go to: [www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/member-survey/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/member-survey/)

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## Nominations invited for the RTPI NI Executive Committee

Nominations are now open for roles on the RTPI Northern Ireland Executive Committee, starting from January 2024. Look out for the e-mail from mi-voice.

The following roles are available:

- Junior Vice Chair (2023) - and progressing to Chair in 2025
- Corporate Members (3 positions) (2023 and 2024)
- Associate or Legal Associate (1 position) (2023 and 2024)
- Licentiate or Student Representative (1 position) (2023 and 2024)

Our Executive Committee members come from the public, private, academic and third sectors and play a vital role in supporting our members - volunteering their times, enthusiasm and expertise in planning. Find out who is on the 2023 Committee.

Nominations close **5pm on 29 September 2023**.

For more information, contact [northernireland@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:northernireland@rtpi.org.uk).



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## The National Planning Conference

The Royal Town Planning Institute and the Planning Portal are hosting the National Planning Conference 2023 in Birmingham on 9th and 10th November.

Join us to engage in discussions about the most important topics in UK planning and building.

Early-bird tickets are available.

For all the information and how to book go to:  
[www.nationalplanningconference.co.uk](http://www.nationalplanningconference.co.uk)





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