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**Editorial**

Will 2019 go down in posterity as the year in which a teenager finally galvanised the international action long needed on climate change? We know the time for prevention has long gone, but is there still a sliver of a window of opportunity for mitigating against the worst impacts, and preparing ourselves to live in a transformed world?

Transport is by a distance Scotland's largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and so our final Scottish Planner of 2019 is timely. Alison Irvine of Transport Scotland introduces the new, nearly final, National Transport Strategy. It is fantastic to see how the direction of the strategy has evolved since the early engagement stages in 2018, with clear focus now given to the climate emergency, as well as health and wellbeing, equality and economic prosperity. We also look at what transport's responsibility for climate action means in practice in Edinburgh, the Highlands and Orkney.

Planners are going to have a critical role to play in adapting our places to be resilient

to the impacts of climate change. So it is timely to congratulate all of those Scottish members of the Institute who have qualified as Chartered Town Planners in 2019, as well as to welcome all those who have joined us as Associate, Licentiate, and Student members.

Congratulations are also due to the Scottish Young Planners' Network, which has made a successful bid to host the Institute-wide Young Planners' Conference 2020. We are all looking forward to hosting young planners from all four nations and beyond, and highlighting the best of Scottish best practice, in Edinburgh in October of next year

It feels trite to say it given my opening remarks. But what's it all for if we can't take a few days a year to eat, drink and be merry with loved ones. So we wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas, and when it comes, a happy new year. There's work to do in 2020, and maybe just maybe, we've made a tentative first grasp of the nettle.

– Kate Houghton - Co-Editor

# Convenor's Comments:

## You don't have to wear Lycra to cycle!

**Julia Frost, Convenor of RTPI Scotland 2019**



**Julia Frost**  
MRTPI  
Convenor  
RTPI Scotland  
[@convenorrtpis](https://twitter.com/convenorrtpis)

Hello

I can't believe this is my last article as Convenor for the Scottish Planner, and what a fantastic year to have been Convenor: a new Planning Act; the celebration of 25 years of the RTPI in Scotland with a Parliamentary Reception on 30 October; the 70th Anniversary of World Town Planning Day #WTPD2019 with a "Through the Years, Across the Globe" event at Dundee University on 8 November; and a presentation to the Hong Kong Institute of Planners, in Hong Kong, on their 40th Anniversary.

We've also tried new ways of doing things this year: an annual debate series #theplanningdebate with Addleshaw Goddard discussing, this time, how to break the infrastructure deadlock; an annual member's meeting, open to all, at the end of my Convenor's term of office; and the setting up of RTPI Scotland's International Planning Group.

As Convenor I've also had the privilege of getting to know Ian Tant, RTPI President, who has taken a real interest in Scottish planning. It was great to see him in Scotland twice this year – once to visit RTPI award winning projects and to view the passing of the Scottish Planning Bill (now Act) in the Scottish Parliament, and again at our recent Parliamentary Reception.

I hope you enjoy this 'transport edition' of the Scottish Planner. We need to encourage more healthy forms of transport. As someone who cycles to work every day I take a keen interest in cycling infrastructure. I don't wear lycra; I don't cycle fast. I'm one of those cyclists you see elsewhere in Europe who cycles with their work clothes on, even 'posh' clothes for an event (and hope for the best!). I notice there are surprisingly few people who cycle like me, and we need to make it easier for more to follow suit. Sustrans, and others are, of course, doing fantastic work in this regard but so much more needs to happen at the local level.

I attended this year's Paths for All expert lecture. There was much talk of the health and financial incentives to walking and cycling. As a society we need a whole systems approach which take risks to make changes for the greater good. An individualistic focus will only get us so far, but that is not to say that

individual action is not important. Citizens want to be part of the solution. Victim blaming and convincing people they are wrong does not work. What does work are incentives which add value, integrated community wide programmes, social support interventions, and programmes which focus on influencing social behaviour through marketing / value systems. We need to create new social norms. What's also important is that we all do it together.

In true collaborative style I asked my PAS colleagues to comment on the topic of transport and planning:

- "CEC City Centre Transformation projects and GCC Avenues projects are leading the way".
- "PAS community led plans always have an active travel / connectivity element, focusing on walking, cycling, legibility (signage)".
- "The importance of high quality transport infrastructure not only guarantees convenient affordable and fast travel but the economic viability of places and regions".
- "How much influence has 'Designing Streets' had on promoting sustainable transport and the built environment we see?"
- "LAs need to feel confident that they are able to identify infrastructure needs and priorities clearly, as a piecemeal application by application approach will never deliver wider benefits".
- "We need to really learn from international good practice".
- "TRO and RSO applications to adjust road layout/parking/loading etc can be equally as contentious as planning applications".
- "Shared spaces can be contentious as they bring, arguably, equally dis/benefits to different groups – so what is in the public interest...?"

I'm sure you'll find the answers to some of these issues /questions in the following pages. Enjoy, and keep active!

My very best wishes,  
Julia. ■

## Article:

# Desert Islands Discourse



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## Iain McDiarmid, Executive Manager for Planning at Shetland Islands Council, asks if the National Islands Plan is in tune with current island thinking

*“The proposed National Islands Plan sets a direction of travel for the Scottish Government and provides a framework for action in order to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities.”*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/proposed-national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

Or does it?

### “Oblivious” – Aztec Camera

Probably the vast majority of you reading this will indeed be totally oblivious to the Islands Plan, and the Islands Act of 2018 which proceeded it. To most of you we may just be floating points on a map (wasn't Shetland east of Aberdeen, now its way up there?) but I dare say you would recognise all the 13 strategic objectives (too long to repeat here) highlighted in the Plan.

### “Do I Wanna Know?” – Arctic Monkeys

Maybe not but you should do. The Islands Act put island proofing in to legislation for

the first time. Whilst there has been informal islands proofing, particularly in the planning world, for a number of years, this is the first time that consideration of islands Impact assessments are a legal requirement. Impact assessments have primarily been thematic up until now – but Islands Assessments are spatial.

### “Word Up!” – Cameo

In terms of the accuracy of content, there is very little to fault with this document.

### “Wordy Rappinghood” – Tom Tom Club

And what a lot of words there are. This is a document undoubtedly written with an islands' perspective, but much of the document could be applicable to any rural, or even urban, area. For example, the commitment to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals needs to be restated, but it applies to everyone in Scotland, and, in general, there is too much detail on generic issues. For example



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**Iain McDiarmid**  
MRTPI  
Executive Manager  
Planning  
Shetland Islands  
Council

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*“The health and wellbeing of people on our islands is also a product of their ability to make daily choices that keep them fit and well, both physically and mentally. Whilst the high quality natural environment on our islands is acknowledged in National Planning Framework 3, our approach to new development and improving our places remains strongly supportive of the provision of places for children to play safely, places for recreation and high quality design which makes places attractive to be in and well connected by walking, cycling and public transport.”* This is a valid statement – but it applies to everywhere surely?

**“I Feel Love” - Donna Summer**

There is a lot of admiration for the scenery, culture, heritage and the quality of life on islands. Unfortunately, I am not sure there is a great deal of love flowing in the opposite direction. There may have been many meetings on many islands – including an island called Brae, which I have yet to locate (maybe the Scottish Atlantis?). But there were only 394 electronic submissions from a population of over 100,000. Yes, some submissions represented many residents but how many people are actually aware of this document? By comparison, Shetland’s Place Standard consultation received over 900 responses and nearly 4000 individual comments from a population of 22,000.

**“In Remote Part / Scottish Fiction” - Idlewild**

The lobbying of Scottish and UK governments during the *“Our Islands, Our Future”* campaign only involved Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles and spawned the Islands Act. The Islands Plan is not just about island authorities but all 96 inhabited islands. This, to my mind, weakens the Act and Plan. There is very little similarity between Bute and Barra, other than they are both surrounded by water. There is a big difference between Arran and Foula when it comes to proximity to Scottish Mainland services (e.g. try several hours on a ferry, a bus to Lerwick, 14 hours on a boat to Aberdeen – and then go to visit family in hospital, go on holiday ...). Some islands are therefore much more remote than others. In Shetland, we have some islands connected by fixed links to our Mainland – others require significant transport infrastructure and costs to support.

**“Boys in the Better Land” - Fontaines D.C.**

*“if you’re a rockstar, pornstar, superstar, doesn’t matter who you are, get yourself a good car and get out of here”* – well once you

have spent a few hundred pounds on a ferry, and if there is space on it ...

**“Blue Monday” - New Order**

These days, no plan is complete without reference to Brexit, the great unknown that hangs over all our communities. For some of us, the future strategic outlook may not be to the south, but north and east as we explore the Nordic and Arctic connections that were so important to Shetland for many centuries. Those connections may regain prominence.

*“For the Plan to lead to meaningful, positive and sustainable change there needs to be a gradual progress of ownership, monitoring and accountability. First, island communities need to feel that the Plan reflects their voices and their vision.”*

The Islands Plan compliments the Shetland Partnership Plan (our community plan) and its Participation, People, Place and Money priorities. Plans are being developed to deliver each of those priorities, and the Islands Plan will support this work.

**“Silver Lining” - First Aid Kit**

At present, we are being encouraged to form Regional Spatial Strategy partnerships. It is difficult to see the benefits of Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles and Argyll and Bute developing a regional spatial strategy as suggested. We are neither regionally or spatially related after all. But the Islands Plan may fulfil the role of a strategy for islands that we can support and take responsibility for. Perhaps the Islands Plan is the link between the national and local level – with our own LDPs identifying the unique circumstances of each island?

**“Dreams” - Beck**

So how does all this fit in to NPF 4 and SPP?

The significant changes to the planning system that emerged in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 were subject to informal islands’ proofing. This ensured that there could be flexibility to take account of the nature of development on islands which is very different from, for example, the central belt.

*“Although the next National Planning Framework is to set targets for the use of land for housing we note the recommendation from the Strategic Islands Group which advocated some areas such as islands to set targets locally based on their distinct development*

*context and demand profile.”*

There is definitely an opportunity to strengthen local democracy in islands communities. But only, I think, in island authorities. The Plan will be less effective when islands are subordinate to a much larger, mainland authority.

We are being encouraged to take ownership of the Islands Plan. But in the world of planning *“... National Planning Framework 4 must contribute to the following six outcomes:*

- *Meeting the needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing*
- *needs for older people and disabled people.*
- *Improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland.*
- *Increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland.*
- *Improving equality and eliminating discrimination.*
- *Meeting targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gasses.*
- *Securing positive effects for biodiversity.”*

Rightly or wrongly, we will be committed to those nationally determined outcomes.

**“Lose Yourself” - Eminem**

The Islands Plan has been criticised for the lack of smart objectives, defined outcomes, or proposals for monitoring success. I am not sure that was ever the purpose of the Plan. If it had been too specific, there would undoubtedly have been accusations of centralisation, lack of flexibility, and a “one size fits all” mentality.

The intention is that, by spring 2020, “the Plan will be accompanied by an Implementation Strategy that will detail the

actions and set-out in full, these measures and indicators. The Plan and its indicators will build upon the National Performance Framework (NPF) outcomes and indicators and upon

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is for the island communities to fully engage in that process and ensure that this opportunity to create a document with purpose and impact is not missed.

As Eminem said *“You only get one shot ..... this opportunity comes once in a lifetime”*

The views in this article, if not the lyrics, are the author’s own. ■

**“There is very little similarity between Bute and Barra, other than both are surrounded by water.”**

## Q&A

# Public Enquiries



**David Leslie**  
OBE  
MRTPI  
Chair of Heads of  
Planning Scotland  
and Chief Planning  
Officer at the City of  
Edinburgh Council

## David Leslie, OBE, MRTPI, Chief Planning Officer at The City of Edinburgh Council and Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland answers our questions

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

It is 40 years since I started studying town planning at university and since then I've met so many people involved with the built environment who have influenced my planning career. I guess I could fill this page with names! I draw inspiration daily from the people around me, whether they be work contacts, professional contacts or through community engagement. Early in my career, I started volunteering with Planning Aid and I drew inspiration from working with community representatives who had little experience of the planning system but whose enthusiasm for better places was infectious. Nowadays, I am regularly inspired by my colleagues in Heads of Planning Scotland whose leadership and drive to improve our planning services is truly energising.

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

Planners must do more to demonstrate the value of planning. Working in the public sector, we know that we can create significant long term benefits for society but not everyone credits us with that. A public sector planning career brings opportunities to influence so much in our communities. However, the value of planning is often overlooked. I love having conversations with people from outside the planning profession who have that "light bulb" moment of understanding that the improvements they are praising are indeed the result of long term spatial plans and planners' effective management of change. Planners need to keep promoting an understanding of their work to a wider community.

### 3 Why is planning important?

Planners contribute in so many ways to improved economic, social and environment outcomes. At a time when society is focusing on sustainability issues and discussing actions that many planners have been promoting for decades, we need to maximise the potential of the planning system to be proactive. Delivering good quality sustainable places doesn't happen without good quality planning. There has been useful research undertaken on how we can monitor outcomes from planning so that we can demonstrate its importance. As the reform of the Scottish planning system progresses we need to build on that research and ensure we use balanced and understandable indicators of planning performance so that there is wider recognition of the potential of planning.

### 4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning's role in creating great places for people?

I suppose that I will be accused of being biased if I say Edinburgh! Of course, working in planning in Edinburgh starts with a very high bar in terms of quality of place. So we need to have high expectations of quality when setting out development frameworks for redevelopment or urban expansion areas. Over recent years, the transformation of areas such as Holyrood, Quartermile and Fountainbridge and its canalside developments are all great examples of strong spatial planning. The waterfront developments in Leith and Granton are now entering a new phase and the plans emerging for new mixed use urban districts in west Edinburgh will set the framework for creating great new places over the next decade.

### 5 Do you envisage that Edinburgh City Centre Transformation will shape future development in the city, and if so, how?

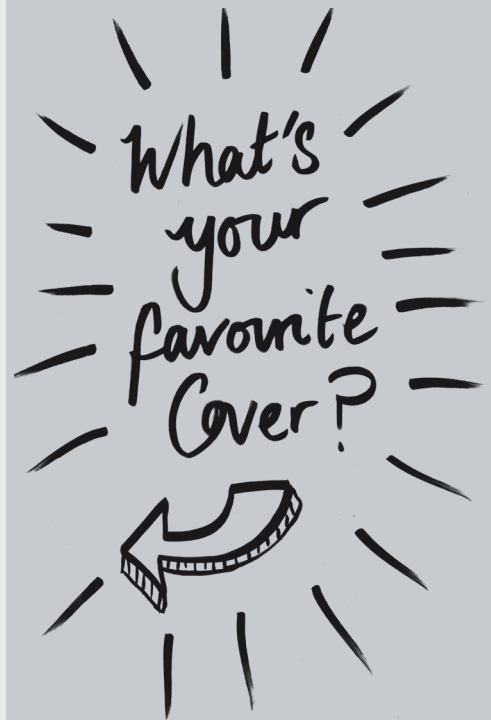
The project is an exemplar of engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to explore long term vision and consider how to reach a consensus on the drivers for change and the desired outcomes. That is a model which can be followed in other areas of significant change in Edinburgh. The process of early engagement for City Plan 2030, the next local development plan for Edinburgh, has sought to take a similar approach. A multi-disciplinary project approach supports the value of planning and takes delivery beyond that which planners can achieve alone. That's a lesson for other town centre visions too. ■

# Immaterial Considerations

2019 marks 5 years since we introduced the new look Scottish Planner.



We thought that was a great excuse to celebrate the creativity of our graphic designers, and run a vote to find the most popular cover of the last 5 years.



Thank you to Becky, Shiny and Adrian at Barton Willmore for your fantastic ideas, and of course thank you to Barton Willmore for their continued sponsorship.

Type in this link to your browser to vote online: <https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/b43esd27-ae4blpa4>.

We'll include the link in the next Member Bulletin, as well.

# In Focus: Good planning is good for your mental health

**Sarah Lewis, RTPI Planning Practice Officer,**  
introduces the Institute's newest online Learn module

The RTPI is in the early stages of a new programme of work examining the role of town planning in promoting good mental health. Across the UK:

- Approximately 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem each year;
- Mental illness is the largest single burden of disease, and is more common, long-lasting and impactful than other health conditions;
- Mental ill health is responsible for the loss of an estimated 72 million working days at a cost of £35 billion each year;
- Half of all mental health illnesses are established by the age of 14 (excluding dementia);
- Over 2.2 million people aged 75 and over live alone in Great Britain. Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone.

The intention of highlighting these figures is not to make the problem seem insurmountable. But, we know that where you live can have a direct impact on your mental health - the mental health charity MIND has found that four in five people with mental health problems have lived in housing that worsened their condition - and so the aim is to make the case for town planning taking a prevention role in mental health. So what can planning do in practice?

### Saying no can be a positive

Plans for 200 one- and two-bed assisted living units for over-55s in Catterall, near Preston, were submitted for planning approval. Although within walking distance of Catterall's services, the site was divided from the village by the A6, a "busy high-speed

commuter road" with narrow footpaths. The Planning Inspectorate rejected the application at appeal as it would "create an isolated enclave with limited opportunities for integration with the wider community". Good planning can prevent the creation of places that isolate, and therefore exacerbate poor mental and physical health.

### The therapeutic benefits of spending time in a natural environment are well established.

Forest bathing - originally a Japanese practice - has the power to treat physical and mental illnesses. It boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure and aids sleep. The healing properties of nature are being used in the new Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary - the Garden Hospital.

The hospital was planned to bring the wider rural landscape in which it sits into the site and building. 17 courtyards and gardens that optimise views and natural daylight are integral to the design of the 344 bed hospital. The result is an uplifting, therapeutic and person-centred environment for patients, staff and visitors. Beds can even be wheeled outside.

This approach is rooted in evidence of improved health outcomes and faster healing times.

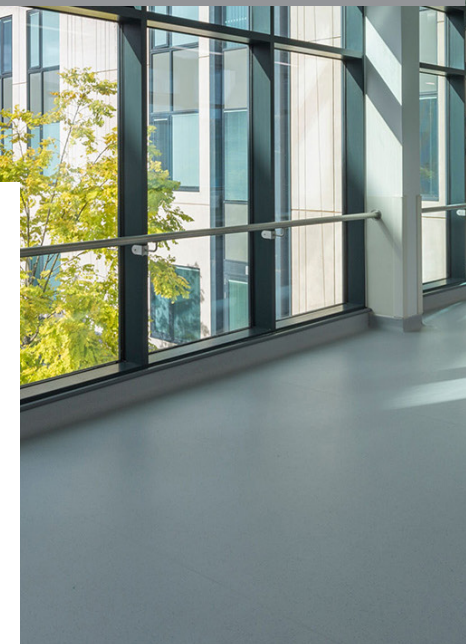
A senior planning officer was embedded in weekly NHS project meetings from early in the pre-application stage, allowing the work to proceed to tight timescale.

### A burden for planners?

Is considering the impact of the built environment on mental health just one more problem to solve for town planners? I would argue not. Planning for mental health can meet many other planning objectives. Adding more green space to redevelopment doesn't just support improved mental health, but also air quality, biodiversity and the vitality and aesthetics of the high street.

The RTPI recently published a free, short online CPD training module expanding on the themes above. Further research into the policies and practices that enable healthy placemaking is also underway, focusing on tackling and accommodating

mental health related issues. If you would like to join the debate please get in touch. More details are available on the RTPI website [www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/research/projects/health-and-planning](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/research/projects/health-and-planning). ■



**Sarah Lewis**  
MRTPI  
Planning Practice  
Officer, RTPI



# In Practice: Greener routes to climate resilient communities

**Abi Gardner** of NatureScot explains how the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention Programme is building climate resilience and creating links between communities in Glasgow

As part of our Climate Change Commitments, Scottish Natural Heritage is working with partners to ensure that new development uses nature-based solutions to assist the transition to Net Zero and help deliver places that are resilient to climate change.

Through the European Regional Development Fund and our Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention Programme, we are currently generating investment of £37.5m in urban green and blue infrastructure. One of the aims of the programme is to increase the resilience of some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities to climate change by increasing and enhancing urban green infrastructure, enabling people to make healthier and greener travel choices.

Designing places for a low carbon future means changing how we travel and providing the infrastructure needed to support those changes. Many of our phase one projects demonstrate how accessible and integrated walking and cycling routes can improve place quality, with some of the new cycling and walking paths now joining-up communities

previously separated by physical barriers such as derelict land or waterways.

One such project is Fernbrae Meadows on Glasgow's south side. An abandoned golf course has been transformed into a multi-functional community urban park that benefits both people and nature. Linking the areas of Castlemilk, Fernhill and Cathkin, the new park is already increasing the sense of community, with over two-dozen events held in the Meadows last year. Included in the greenspace are allotments, outdoor exercise areas, and active travel routes connected to nearby mountain bike trails. A 'Friends of' group drives activities and helps care for the park, while a number of school visits

have proved that the park also provides great opportunities for outdoor play and learning.

Similarly, the Canal and North Gateway project at Firhill on the north side of the city saw a new all-abilities access path leading through the Claypits Local Nature Reserve. In the first six months, the path saw 30,000 visitors. Moreover, the planned construction of a bridge over the canal will enable communities at Hamiltonhill to access the new health centre at Woodside via a new green route.



The programme's phase two projects are also now underway, with another eight projects in the works. For example, over the next couple of years we'll see Glasgow's City Centre Avenues project transform the city centre streetscape and public realm, making it more accessible and safer for people to walk, cycle and use public transport, as well as greener, more sustainable, and more economically competitive. The project includes continuous footways and segregated cycles lanes interspersed with elements of green and blue infrastructure including a sustainable urban drainage system incorporating street trees, swales and rain gardens.

Like the residents of Malmö, Copenhagen and Oslo, the people of Glasgow will soon discover that climate resilient places are also good places to live, work and play. Good places to connect with nature – and with each other.

Our climate change commitments can be found on our website at [nature.scot](https://nature.scot.nhs.uk).



**Abi Gardner**  
NatureScot  
Placemaking Support  
Officer

# Article:

## Delivering the vision for transport in Scotland – why it’s important to align transport & land use planning



**Alison Irvine**  
 Director of  
 Transport Strategy  
 Analysis at Transport  
 Scotland

**Alison Irvine**, Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis at Transport Scotland, considers the challenging but exciting times ahead for transport and land use planning collaboration

Planning Bill: Passed. Transport Bill: Passed. National Transport Strategy: Reviewing Consultation Responses. New National Planning Framework: Work under way. New Strategic Transport Projects Review: Work under way.

Next?...Bring it all together in the context of climate emergency, inclusive growth, poverty action, health priorities, place principle, emerging regional economic strategies and against a backdrop of ongoing Brexit and wider world uncertainties. The planning and transport professions can now go on to grasp the opportunities that will come as result. Through sharing and co-ordinating our strategies to aligning our evidence bases we can help improve lives in Scotland for all of its citizens, businesses and visitors.

Of course, we aren’t starting from scratch - stronger alignment between planning and transport has been long been the goal with successive Scottish Governments setting the challenge over the last 20 years through legislation and guidance. I am confident that by strengthening how we work together we can realise the benefits of that continuing dialogue.

### A new National Transport Strategy

Scotland’s new National Transport Strategy will provide the catalyst for the changes we need to see, to address the climate emergency and improve people’s lives.

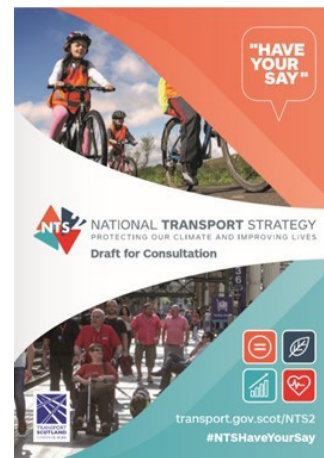
Recognising the important role the transport system plays in our society, the Scottish Government announced a collaborative review of the NTS Strategy in 2016 to set the vision for the next twenty years. Since this announcement, Transport Scotland has worked with over 60 transport partners, including academics, service providers and environmental groups, to establish the key priorities and to set out a compelling vision for Scotland’s transport system. A research and evidence base was established to inform the process and engagement events have reached over 5,700 stakeholders in rural, island and urban communities to encourage them to have their say on how the system should be developed.

The resulting draft Strategy advocates a vision for a sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. It signals the future direction of transport in Scotland and provides the context within which decisions should be made at national, regional and local level.

The Strategy sets out four priorities with associated outcomes to deliver its vision.

### Positive strides

Transport Scotland and its partners are already taking bold steps in promoting the growth of electric vehicles, taking forward measures to tackle urban congestion and improve air quality and invest in public



	<p><b>Promotes equality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will provide fair access to services we need</li> <li>Will be easy to use for all</li> <li>Will be affordable for all</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Takes climate action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will adapt to the effects of climate change</li> <li>Will help deliver our net-zero target</li> <li>Will promote greener, cleaner choices</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Helps our economy prosper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will get us where we need to get to</li> <li>Will be reliable, efficient and high quality</li> <li>Will use beneficial innovation</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Improves our health and wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will be safe and secure for all</li> <li>Will enable us to make healthy travel choices</li> <li>Will help make our communities great places to live</li> </ul>

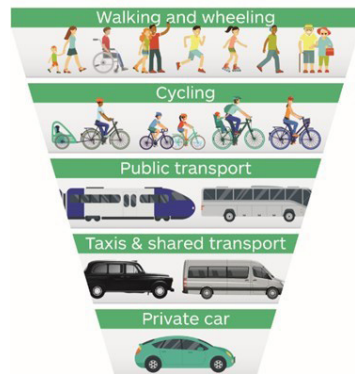
transport and active travel. Across the board, the agency continues to embed the refreshed Sustainable Travel Hierarchy which places walking, wheeling, cycling and public and shared transport above single occupancy private car use.

However, these actions will only take us so far and there are unbreakable interdependencies between transport and land use which need to be managed and developed as part of wider solutions. To ensure that we create successful places in future we recognise that we need to encourage modal shift and manage the demand for transport and will work with partner organisations to further embed the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making across a range of policy areas. Transport Scotland is reviewing the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and investment decision-making processes. This will strengthen our approach to capturing equalities and sustainable transport impacts. It will be the lens through which Transport Scotland will fulfil its role in the development planning and management functions. We are looking to others with a role in this to adopt a similar approach, with planning professionals in particular having an important role in reducing the need to travel unsustainably through effective land use decisions.

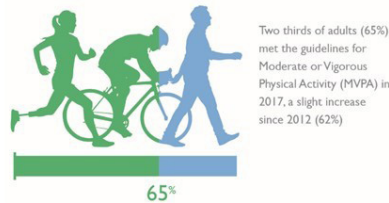
**Recognising the challenges**

A number of transport-related challenges are highlighted throughout the NTS document, including how people encounter problems when trying to access the services they need; businesses still face congestion and delays when reaching their customers; and vehicles continue to emit greenhouse gases

**Prioritising Sustainable Transport**



**Moderate or Vigorous Physical Activity**



and pollute the places we live and work. If the NTS is to be a catalyst for change then it must successfully tackle challenges involved through the global climate emergency, social isolation, regional differences, safety and security, integration, resilience, trade and connectivity and many other aspects.

The NTS recognises that transport has

the greatest impact on the environment and that urgent action is needed to respond to the global climate emergency. The Strategy also recognises transport’s role in reducing inequalities and to help to meet The Scottish Government’s Child Poverty targets.

In solving these problems and delivering the strategy it has to be recognised that transport is a derived demand and therefore it is not possible for the transport sector to solve these issues in isolation.

**Governance and collaboration**

The NTS work to date has also included a review of transport governance arrangements for Scotland. Since the original Strategy was published, there have been a number of key regulatory and other changes which impact on these arrangements. For example, voluntary Regional Economic Partnerships (REPs), stemming from The Scottish Government’s Enterprise and Skills Review in 2016 have been developed in some areas to support the delivery of city region and growth deals and also consider wider economic development opportunities through collaborative working involving local authorities, the private sector, enterprise and skills agencies, tertiary education and the third sector.

In some cases, the boundaries of current

and proposed regional working do not align with existing geographies. The recently approved 2019 Planning Act has also brought forward changes to how land use, transport and infrastructure planning are considered, particularly at a regional scale. Transport planning, infrastructure and operations are an essential part of an inclusive and net-zero carbon economic future and we will seek to develop collaborative working and better alignment of relevant actions through current and emerging groupings across a range of sectors.

The new arrangements for strategic planning introduced by the legislation mean that planning is better placed than ever to be more open, agile and influential in wider regional collaboration. Planning and Architecture Division brought together authorities at the start of October to explore the potential for regional spatial strategies. If planners across Scotland are up for the challenge and open to new, more collaborative ways of working, early outputs from regions across Scotland could be used to inform the draft NPF4 next year. Transport Scotland looks forward to supporting this work and the emerging NPF4, to ensure strategic scale planning aligns with, and is supported by, the ongoing Strategic Transport Projects Review.

**Delivery**

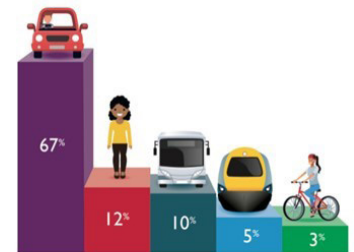
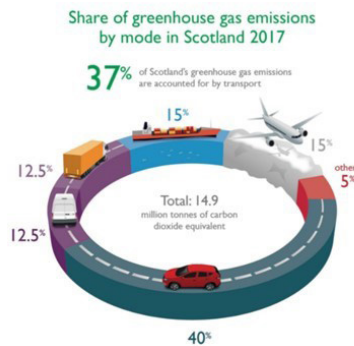


Figure 14: Transport mode share for work in 2017

Drawing all of this together effectively puts the need for collaborative working between transport and land use planners at the forefront of efforts to reduce the need to travel unsustainably, optimise our existing communities and infrastructure and achieve Scotland’s world leading social inclusion/cohesion, environmental and net-zero targets. Delivering on these actions and the ambitions of the Place Principle in this context should enable a future Scotland which is a great place to live, work and do business.

As transport and planning professionals we all have a role in delivering outcomes for future generations. From local and central governments and regional transport partnerships implementing policies, to businesses and individuals taking account of their actions and impacts when making travel decisions we will need to work together and understand how our policies and actions affect others. With a focus on productive cross working arrangements between organisations I believe that we can take on and solve many of these cross cutting issues and use our collective evidence, resources and professional influence to best effect.

The draft NTS can be found at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45149/national-transport-strategy-draft-for-consultation-july-2019.pdf> ■

Article:

# Edinburgh City Centre Transformation



In September, Edinburgh agreed a 10-year plan to deliver real, constructive change in the Capital, with the approval of the City Centre Transformation strategy. **Councillor Lesley Macinnes** and **Daisy Narayanan** give a politician's and official's perspective on building the consensus needed to support such an ambitious project

## Transport and Environment Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes

In Edinburgh, we are reshaping a living, breathing and successful city.

Because, for all its success, like other cities across the world, Edinburgh faces significant challenges – from rapid population growth, from congestion and poor air quality. And all in the context of an increasingly urgent climate change crisis.

It is abundantly clear that the status quo is no longer an option for Scotland's Capital.

In Edinburgh, we have a growing reputation for pushing progressive, sustainable transport policy. From committing 10% of our transport budget towards developing cycling infrastructure to the delivery of a successful tram service as well as becoming Scotland's first 20mph city. Next year we will implement our ambitious plans for a citywide Low Emission Zone while also rolling out a network of electric vehicle charging hubs across the city.

But while we pride ourselves on this forward-thinking approach, it's not enough to

deliver such projects in isolation. I established the City Centre Transformation to address the varied transport, place-making and social challenges Edinburgh faces. We took a holistic and collaborative approach, seeking to put people at the very heart of the Capital's public realm, where transport is seen as an enabler, not a dominant, oppressive force.

Of course, this is about getting the infrastructure right. Through the City Centre Transformation, we will overhaul our public spaces, vastly improving ease and access for walking and cycling, creating places for people to relax, interact and enjoy our historic environment. But to truly realise the benefits, we have to understand the intangible too. What do people – residents, commuters, visitors, children, young people – expect from these places?

It is people who must shape our streets, neighbourhoods and, ultimately, cities. And it is only through a collaborative and evidenced approach, and confident political and civic leadership, that we can make this happen. We need to ensure that our streets reflect the



**Cllr Lesley Macinnes**  
Convener of the City of Edinburgh Council Transport & Environment Committee



**Daisy Narayanan**  
Project Director, City Centre Transformation  
City of Edinburgh Council on secondment from Sustrans

communities that live, work and play along them.

In September we made a great stride toward realising this, with the approval of the City Centre Transformation Strategy, a 10-year plan to transform our city centre and put people back at its very heart.

Public support has been every bit as important as political buy-in and extensive engagement has demonstrated a real appetite for change. Almost 80% of respondents to our latest consultation backed plans to reduce the dominance of motor vehicles on our streets and to increase pedestrian and cycling access.

As part of the broad spectrum of organisations whose views we actively sought, we have welcomed positive responses from those representing people with mobility issues, like RNIB, as well as representatives from the business community and heritage bodies. Equalities and accessibility have been at the heart of our approach.

This is undoubtedly a major project, requiring significant ongoing investment, but our project team has worked hard to ensure that initial funding for key projects is broadly already in place. Effective implementation is crucial in considering the benefits that will be delivered – we simply can't ignore the need to change the way we interact with our city.

Interventions will be game-changing in terms of the way people move around our city, how services are delivered and the positive impact it will have on the quality of life for all who live, work or visit here.

With our population set to expand rapidly over the next 20 years and our city community's many challenges, including the increasingly urgent issue of an effective climate emergency response, this strategy will help us to build in resilience. We can ensure Edinburgh's centre continues to thrive, delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for everyone.

**Daisy Narayanan, Project Manager, City Centre Transformation**

In April 2018, I joined the City of Edinburgh Council to lead this hugely ambitious and exciting project. The project team we brought together was truly multidisciplinary as we were clear from the outset that the project should exemplify a place-based approach.

Amongst the ambitious interventions it encompasses, the strategy will deliver car-free streets in the core of Old Town, a pedestrian priority zone, a free city centre hopper bus, a walking and cycling bridge, four lifts to help with vertical connections and other measures like greening and wider pavements.

Much more than just a ban on cars, our plan is to nurture the activity and interaction that flourishes where traffic is removed –

places with people at its heart. Ask anybody about the spaces where they enjoy spending time, and it's much more likely to be a place with a variety of sounds and sensations, with green spaces to think and where children can explore, rather than a street dominated by noisy, heavy traffic.

Of course, this kind of change comes with its challenges. For a start, by our nature, we are wary of change itself. We are used to doing things a certain way and to ask people to look at their approach to travel differently can be difficult. But by speaking to people about what we're trying to achieve, really telling a story around City Centre Transformation and the impact it will have on accessibility and equality, we have been able to start a valuable, meaningful conversation.

This kind of communication has been key when it comes to working with partners. Place-making isn't just about streets, roads and transport. It's about housing, economy, air quality, noise pollution, health and wellbeing. If we can work together with stakeholders from across health and emergency services, academia, transport policy, local business and culture, then we can create truly people-focussed places.

Pilot projects have been invaluable to the

strategy? We began by involving stakeholders, groups and organisations from across the city, holding workshops and conversations to gauge interest and thoughts. From two months of engagement we gathered more than 300 ideas which, through further discussion and analysis, we managed to distil down to 15 place-based interventions.

Bringing the people of Edinburgh along with us has been paramount to the development of our vision, and during the summer we put our draft proposals for City Centre Transformation to the public for feedback. More than 3000 people told us what they thought, with the vast majority supporting our aims to reduce the number of motor vehicles in streets, create more pedestrian and cycling space and enhance public realm.

Thanks to this response, we have been able to refine our proposals and in September, to present the finalised strategy and a ten-year delivery plan. This has been based around six city centre principles focusing on inclusivity, liveability and putting people first, guiding not just the strategy but providing a foundation for the delivery of all projects that will be delivered under the City Centre Transformation umbrella.



development of our strategy too, letting us experiment, test, collect data and eventually, with public buy-in, leading to permanent changes. In Edinburgh, the launch of Open Streets days – when on the first Sunday of every month 13 streets in our Old Town are closed to traffic and opened to people – has been an important tool for assessing the different ways in which we can use our city, and the impact car-free streets can have.

So how did we go about creating a

There is a strong sense of urgency to what we're trying to achieve, in light of the recent declaration of a Climate Emergency, a recognition that we need to join leading global cities in tackling similar issues and that we need to build resilience within our city centre to tackle challenges of the future. Most importantly, we need to ensure that the city centre is inclusive, accessible safe and pleasant for all. ■

# Article:

## HITRANS

### – Planning for transport in the climate emergency

**Gavin Barr**, Director of Development and Infrastructure at Orkney Islands Council, Jayne Golding, Projects & Policy Officer at HITRANS, and Malcolm MacLeod, Executive Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment at Highland Council, explore some of the strategic priorities for transport in Scotland’s largest and most sparsely populated region, as policy making grapples with a response to the Climate Emergency

HITRANS, the Regional Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands, is at an important crossroads. With a draft refreshed Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) approved by the Partnership Board and all constituent local authorities, the renewal of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) has been a key moment to ensure that policy goals and delivery priorities are aligned. These strategy renewals come at a crucial moment, as Scotland refocuses on how to build a nation fit to face the consequences of climate change.

HITRANS has welcomed the NTS vision of a sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system, and embraces the Government’s leadership in setting ambitious targets to tackle climate change. The RTP anticipates being one partner in a collaborative effort to make the Highlands and Islands the world’s first net zero aviation region. Likewise, the partnership has ambitions to identify similar strategies for other modes, while ensuring that lifeline routes and services can be maintained and improved.

The Highlands and Islands has the highest percentage of people who cycle to work; a strong record to build on. The RTP is keen to encourage more active travel both for everyday trips in the urban centres but also to unlock the tourism potential which

attractive longer distance routes can provide. Settlements like Elgin and Inverness (highest % of cycling for a city and large town in Scotland) are, with the right investment, well placed to become exemplars for Active Travel.

Gavin Barr and Malcolm MacLeod are both advisors to the HITRANS Board, and both planners. They outline some of their priorities at the interface between development and transport strategy below.

#### **Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council**

The UK is an Island nation. Orkney is a community of Islands, 17 inhabited Islands in fact. A place where daily commute on an 8 seater aeroplane or on board a ferry ploughing some of the strongest tides on earth is normality. Over millennia Orkney has been and remains an outward looking and globally connected place – centred in part on Scapa Flow, the largest natural harbour in the northern hemisphere.

For 21st century Orcadians transport connectivity is more than convenience. It is lifeline – an enabler or, where deficient, a disabler of business and social wellbeing. Planning has a key role to unpack some of these considerations through our endeavour to understand the uniqueness of individual places - qualities which must be valued and sustained - alongside the reality of more connected and dispersed global networks



**Gavin Barr**  
MRTPI  
Director of Development and Infrastructure at Orkney Islands Council'



**Jayne Golding**  
Projects & Policy Officer, HITRANS



**Malcolm MacLeod**  
MRTPI  
Executive Chief Officer for Infrastructure & Environment at Highland Council



HITRANS Active Travel - photo credit HITRANS

to communities and an economy centred on walking, cycling and using public transport.

In Highland, the recent boom in tourism focussed around the Isle of Skye and the North Coast 500 has placed new pressures on the Council. Road Maintenance issues as well as the need for enhanced facilities including car parking are being brought to the fore. We need to work with Scottish Government and the Island Authorities to ensure that the very real needs of rural communities are represented in the new National Planning and Transport Strategies. This will hopefully translate into a much needed financial recognition of the

of trade and societal expectation. Through direct engagement with communities and translation of these perspectives to inform national scale infrastructure and investment priorities, planning can contribute to sustaining, and vitalising, communities.

Orkney is leading the world in low carbon (hydrogen and EV) transportation solutions and trialling Internet of Things/Mobility As A Service based innovation. However, alongside these opportunities there is a serious backlog in investment and underfunding of critical air, ferry and road infrastructure (services which have been evidenced to fall well below Scottish standard measurements of baseline for 21st century living). This must be resolved, and presents a significant opportunity to plan afresh for low carbon technology solutions.

NPF4 is a further opportunity to meet the challenges and opportunities of communities across Scotland - manifest in the global climate emergency. Orkney Islands Council looks forward to playing our part – a challenge which for Orkney and for Scotland presents an opportunity to rethink and re-plan, turning transport lifelines into community enabling solutions fit for the future.

**Malcolm McLeod, Highland Council**

The Highland Council is facing significant challenges: We have the greatest length of roads to maintain and operate in Scotland, and these assets continue to increase in length with new developments being delivered, particularly in the Inner Moray Firth area. The Council, like the Scottish Government, has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, a challenge we must address.

Yet, this presents us with a great opportunity to change the narrative about transport. Yes, in Highland we have an important rural population and economy that will depend more on private vehicle use than other more urban parts of Scotland. But we also have bustling villages, towns and the City of Inverness. These centres of services, employment and commerce are the hearts of our communities, where we think we can make the greatest impact on transport to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. We need to be confident as professionals that all levels of government can work together to implement the policies and funding mechanisms required to make healthy, sustainable transport an everyday choice.

We've got major pipeline projects underway, including a suite of active travel improvements, significant rail improvements better connecting the Highland region, and the dualling of the A9 and other major trunk roads. How we respond to these major schemes through the Plan and the built development that follows – all whilst pressures on budgets, priorities and the environment rise in parallel - will dictate how effective planners can be in shifting

additional pressures that are being placed on us all as many more people experience our wonderful places!

We're confident that we are on the right track but we recognise the need for robust national policy to set the stage through National Planning Framework 4 and Scottish Planning Policy. Early indications are reassuring (for example the Programme for Government commitment for £500M for bus priority infrastructure) and the message from the NTS2 is equally encouraging. Provided the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 investment decisions reflect the hierarchy of NTS2 and support the country to thrive, transport may well present one of the game changers for Scotland's sustainable future in the age of climate and ecological emergency. ■



HITRANS Electric Taxi Launch - photo credit HITRANS



Glasgow Subway

## Article:

# Transport at last has its place in the sun?

**Bruce Kiloh, Head of Policy and Planning at the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, raises the stakes for the transport sector**

Recently I gave a presentation to a cross-sectoral group with the brief of 'transport as a 'barrier' to inclusive growth'. I was immediately struck by the work the transport industry still has to do in changing the narrative. Especially other people's perspective on what we do and its wider societal effects. So my presentation ended up with the title "Transport: Essential for Inclusive Growth". More positive, more upbeat, more reflective of the real potential transport has to transform lives and places.

That experience is perhaps emblematic of the fact that for too long we in transport have had to sit and watch as other sectors, from development management to healthcare and all points in between, place an all-too-convenient blame and negative spin on transport to perhaps mask their own shortcomings in being able to actually 'plan ahead'. A new housing development with no bus service? A new healthcare facility that centralises services for a wide area, but poor public transport? Job centre moving location but fares to get there are too high? Not our problem, mate, speak to the transport bods.

But it would appear the tide is turning. Be it the significant beneficial effects of walking and cycling on our physical and mental wellbeing, the negative effects of congestion on our road networks and therein on our environment and economy, or more acutely, the essential need for a switch to sustainable

modes to help address the climate emergency, transport appears at last to have emerged from the shadows to take its well-deserved place in the sun.

Unfortunately, however, that bright sunlight has exposed some fairly deep current issues in Scotland's transport system. The continued and seemingly unassailable dominance of the private car in our towns and cities. A bus network reducing in coverage with passenger numbers going through the floor. Rural towns and villages seemingly cut off from the outside world through lack of effective public transport. People in poorer communities forced into car ownership they can barely afford in order to survive. A rail network which often can't seem to keep up with demand. And I've not even mentioned holes in our roads.

The reasons behind these and other transport issues we face can be complex, wide-ranging, and ultimately, may not entirely be within our gift to change. But there is cause for hope. The new Transport (Scotland) Bill, while not a panacea, does show potential for positive progress through provisions such as Bus Service Improvement Partnerships. The new National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Projects Review give us the opportunity to lay out a collective 20 year plan for positive change and transformational investment. The new Climate Change Bill emissions reductions targets give us a statutory timescale to work to of 2045 – and there's nothing like a deadline to focus minds.

At SPT, we're working on our new Regional Transport Strategy which we hope will set a bold and ambitious blueprint for transport in the west of Scotland for future years.

It has become a bit of a cliché to say that it is an 'exciting time' to work in your industry. In fact, for transport in Scotland, I'd go harder – this is 'make or break time'. If we don't act now on many of the issues noted above, their negative impacts may be irreversible. Not just in relation to the climate emergency, but for the people in cities, towns and villages across Scotland looking to make a positive future for themselves and their communities. It's time for those in the transport industry, and those in the many other sectors we partner with, to work together, use the tools available, be bold and ambitious, and deliver the transformational change our country so desperately needs. ■



**Bruce Kiloh**  
MRTPI  
Head of Policy & Planning, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport



# Article:

## Accessibility for people with sight loss - Getting to A to get to B



**Anne-Marie Barry**  
Policy & Campaigns  
Manager at Guide  
Dogs Scotland

### Anne-Marie Barry, Policy and Campaigns Manager at Guide Dogs Scotland, outlines the challenges faced by people with sight loss when accessing public transport

The challenges faced by people with a visual impairment when accessing public transport are twofold: getting from the point of origin to, say, a travel hub and, secondly, accessing public transport to get safely to the correct destination point. Overcoming these challenges requires changes to the design and layout of the public realm and ensuring that public transport is fully accessible. People with a visual impairment should be able to access the public realm with the confidence that necessary adjustments have been made to allow for independent travel. The article below explores some of the key challenges.

#### Understanding visual impairment

First, it is important to understand that levels of visual impairment vary from mild, moderate, severe to blind, each level requiring specific support and adaptations. The degree to which a visual impairment impacts on a person's mobility will in part be determined by accessibility of their environment including the public transport system.

#### Accessing the public realm

The design and maintenance of the public realm makes a difference to how easy or difficult a journey is. Features such as tactile paving, controlled crossings and clearly delineated curbs, separating pedestrians and cycle and vehicles, create navigation points essential for people with a visual impairment.

People with a visual impairment rely on clear walking routes to travel safely and confidently. Street clutter can be difficult to navigate, turning a simply journey into an obstacle course. Guide Dogs research found that the most common obstacles are wheelie bins, overhanging branches, A-boards and pavement parked cars. These obstacles can be unpredictable, adding time and effort to

every journey and making it impossible to plan a route.

The growth of shared spaces means that towns are becoming increasingly inaccessible for people with a visual impairment. Two features of concern are the removal of the kerb so that vehicles and pedestrians use the same surface and the removal of controlled crossings. Guide dogs struggle to assist their owners in shared spaces because they are trained to stop at kerbs and crossings. Research carried out by Guide Dogs indicates that two thirds of those surveyed felt less safe in a shared space than in a traditional street layout.

#### Accessing public transport

For many disabled people public transport is vital to enable them to travel independently. 'Floating' bus stops present a new challenge; this is where bus stop is separated from the pavement, often by a zebra crossing which goes over a cycle lane. The lack of noise

from cycle traffic noise means that it can be difficult for someone with a visual and/or hearing impairment to judge when it is safe to cross.

The gradual introduction of audio visual (AV) next and final stop announcements allow all passengers to identify their bus stop without having to rely on the help of bus drivers, other passengers, or attempting to try and keep track of where the bus is on its journey. AV announcements are particularly important for passengers who are blind or partially sighted. The technology enables passengers to travel independently who may otherwise find it difficult to identify their stop along a route.

We cannot underestimate the importance of front line staff receiving appropriate training; transport providers can work to improve the accessibility of infrastructure, but, without the right level customer service, people with sight loss will continue to face barriers. ■



Robert & Guide Dog Winnie in Glasgow - Photo credit Guide Dogs Scotland

# Article: Inter City Express - a divided network



**Paul Tetlaw**  
Convenor of the  
Transform Scotland  
Policy Forum

Scotland's rail network in the Central Belt has seen major investments over the last few years with new lines, electrification and new trains. This has led to improved journey times by rail and the opportunity for many more people to choose the train over the car and therefore opt for a much safer form of transport. Much the same is true on routes south to England where passenger numbers on both the East and West Coast Main Lines continue to grow. Looking further

ahead, the Scottish Government has been an enthusiastic advocate of high-speed rail from Scotland to the south in order to encourage modal shift to rail and further improve journey times.

The picture north of the Central Belt provides a stark contrast, as demonstrated by the map provided. Successive Scottish Governments have focused capital expenditure on roads, with £3bn being committed for dualling the A9 and a further £3bn for dualling the A96 in recent years. Due to a failure to provide adequate investment in rail infrastructure north of the Central Belt, rail in many cases is not time-competitive with travel by car, leading to people choosing to travel by road. Journey times by rail are demonstrated in the map provided.

that it takes to go north to Inverness.

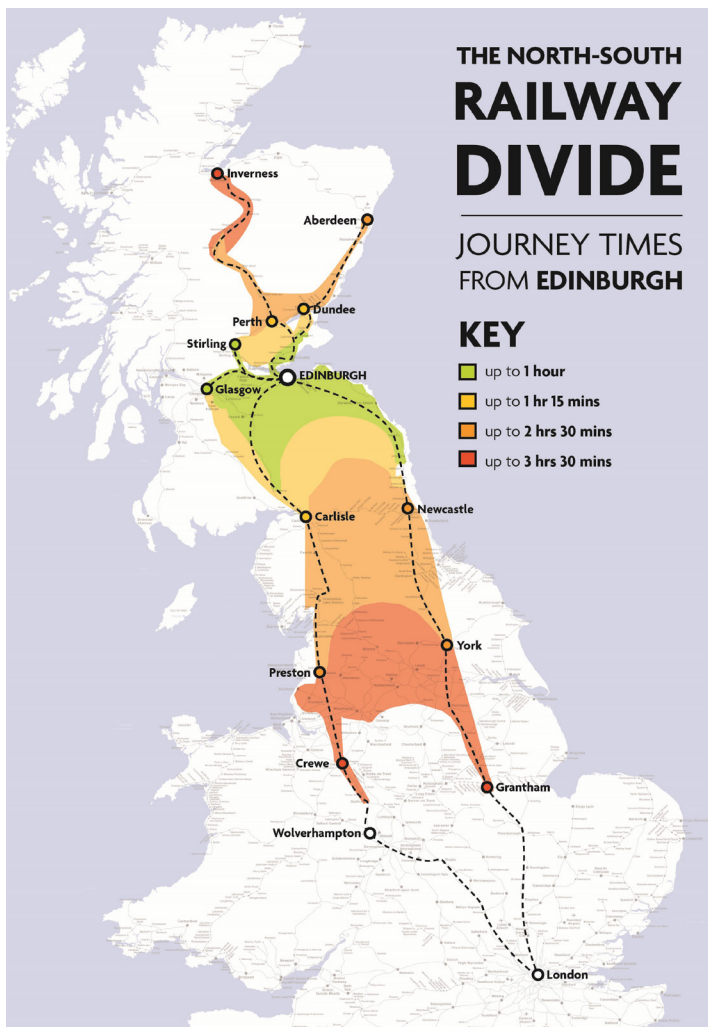
Similarly, journey times between Edinburgh-Carlisle are faster than between Edinburgh-Perth, despite Carlisle being around double the distance from Edinburgh than Perth. Journey times between Edinburgh-Perth are around 75 minutes, compared to around 45 minutes by car. This is due to rail services to Perth having to travel round the Fife coast. For commuters, business travellers and tourists alike, travel by rail is clearly uncompetitive with the car. The reinstatement of the direct rail line between Edinburgh and Perth would reduce journey times by around 40%.

If the Scottish Government is to achieve its stated ambition of "making rail travel between the cities quicker than by car" then substantial improvements are urgently needed on the rail routes to the north. As others have said before, they are currently not fit for purpose and certainly do not represent an inter-city rail network fit for the 21st century. There needs to be a rebalancing of capital expenditure from road to rail in order to deliver a competitive and reliable rail network which works for commuters and tourists alike.

Earlier this year the Scottish Government declared a Climate Emergency in recognition of the global threat we all face unless urgent action is taken. This is a welcome statement from the Government but must be accompanied by radical changes in transport policy to prioritise the sustainable modes. Prioritising rail over road on inter-city routes is a key element of this but we need to go further.

There is also a pressing need to create a truly integrated sustainable transport network. Stations are often not the end point or start point in a journey so we must plan and deliver high quality active travel routes to stations as well as true integration with bus, tram and ferry services.

These combined measures will help to create a country that can deliver on its climate change targets as well as addressing more immediate concerns around congestion, local air quality and poor health resulting from inactive lifestyles. ■



### Not fit for purpose in the 21st century

Aberdeen is just 130 miles north from Edinburgh and yet the journey time is the same as that to York -- some 205 miles to the south. For Inverness, 175 miles north of Edinburgh, the contrast is even more striking: by opting to travel south, one could instead be in the West Midlands almost 300 miles south of Edinburgh in the same time

## Update: HOPS



HOPS Senior Vice Chair, Forbes Barron, Glasgow and HOPS Manager, Jim Birrell, attended a meeting of the **High Level Group on Planning Performance**, co-chaired by the Planning Minister and COSLA, on 10 September. This key meeting was the first to follow the new Planning Act. Performance management, the move to planning outcomes, the National Planning Performance Co-ordinator and early stakeholder consultation on Planning Fees and Performance, likely in December, were all on the agenda.

HOPS was represented by 8 councils, and the HOPS Chair and Manager, at the **Scottish Government Workshop on Planning Performance and Resources**. The way forward for planning performance and planning outcomes was discussed, in particular the new Planning Performance Improvement Co-ordinator. This role will be crucial for supporting councils and identifying performance improvements.

The annual **Scottish Government/HOPS meeting** took place on 21 and 22 November and included vital updates on the Planning Bill Work Programme, and NPF4, Regional Spatial Strategies and Digital Planning.

From a standing start HOPS' use of Twitter has accelerated rapidly and we now have over 1880 followers. We are looking to further enhance our **profile** and coverage of planning and planning matters over the coming months **with blogs, articles and links to related articles and Tweets**.

HOPS is supporting **RTPI research into Measuring Planning Outcomes** as a Project Adviser. Scottish pilot councils will also be involved in early 2020 once the research team has been appointed and submitted their report. More details are included in an RTPI blog.

The **HOPS Business Plan** is being continuously updated to ensure that our activities remain focused on our priorities for

planning reform, repositioning, streamlining and resourcing the planning system.

HOPS has been commissioned by Scottish Government to undertake research on **Education Infrastructure**, for submission to the Scottish Futures Trust. HOPS is part of a working group looking at national guidance, firstly on secondary school capacity. A pilot survey of 4 councils, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Fife and Renfrewshire was completed in October to inform the Scotland-wide survey that is due for issue before the end of the year.

Following delays and rephasing of the Strategy, HOPS continues to support **Digital Planning** and collaborate with the PAD Digital Planning team. It is essential that this workstream continues as it will significantly enhance planning processes, and data gathering and mapping capabilities.

**Jim Birrell, HOPS Planning Manager**

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## Update: SYPN

The Scottish Young Planners' Network has been working hard to submit a bid to host the UK-wide RTPI Young Planners Conference here in Scotland. I am so delighted to announce that ours was announced as the successful bid at 2019's conference in Newcastle. The 2020 Young Planners' Conference will be hosted in Edinburgh – following Belfast, Manchester and Nottingham in recent years. This is an incredible achievement for us as the SYPN steering group and for planning in Scotland generally – the last conference over the border being Glasgow in 2007!

It is now over to us as a group, with the help of the RTPI, to organise the 2 day conference – workshops, plenaries, study tours and the Gala Dinner. The theme is still to be locked down, but we are keen to explore where the past, present and future collide in a celebration of the role of our built heritage in

delivering great places now and for the future.

The search for sponsorship is underway and there are a number of parties already looking to offer their support. That being said, we would welcome any suggestions from the wider network.

A number of us headed down to this year's conference in Newcastle and Gateshead which was hosted by the RTPI North East Young Planners. Highlights from our steering group members included a session on coastal regeneration (featuring Silver Jubilee Cup winners Orkney Islands Council), and regeneration rooted in industrial heritage. It's safe to say we have some very big shoes to fill!

It's a busy year ahead for us, but an exciting one, so please save the date, and we look forward to seeing you there – watch this space!

**Lisa Proudfoot – SYPN Chair 2019/20**

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### SAVE THE DATE:

RTPI Young Planners Conference  
30 - 31 October 2020 in Edinburgh  
McEwan Hall  
Gala Dinner at National Museum of Scotland

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## Update: Scottish Government News

After spending much time and energy over the last few years talking about legislation and process change – and with more of that still to come – it has been good to turn the spotlight back onto what it's all about. About the influence of planning, and of planners, in supporting the creation of great places across Scotland.

We have just celebrated some fine examples of that influence with the SAQP winners; clearly showcasing what we achieve when planning goes well. More on that below.

Following on from the passing of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, we also give an update on what's coming next with the continuing reform of Scotland's planning system.

### SAQP2019

The Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning ceremony took place on 20 November at the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh. The evening marked the 20th Anniversary of the Awards as well as the 10th Anniversary of the Designing Places Student Competition. Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning presented award winners with their certificates and closed proceedings with an address covering key highlights of what had been achieved over the last two decades, both from a national and a local perspective.

For the first time in the history of the Awards, there was a 'double whammy' celebration. 'Carron Dams Local Nature reserve: A Dam Fine Place', entered by Falkirk Council, won not only Overall Winner for 2019 but also the People's Choice Award. Congratulations to Mandy Brown (Falkirk Council) and the team as the judges were

carried away by the creativity of this initiative and the depth at which just one project had an impact on school children of all ages, as well as for the wider community. Drama, history, sculpture, photography and nature were all choreographed out of outdoor learning space. Plus, in the team's own words "behind all the activities that they were able to maximise from the place, the bottom line was all the fun was really education by stealth"! The judges not only felt that the enthusiasm was infectious but, at its core, the project was embedded within the planning strategy for the area.

This year there were 54 entries under the five categories of Partnership, Place, Plans, Process and People. The judges shortlisted 34 projects and 24 were recognised with an Award, together with that Overall Winner. A fly over of all the shortlisted projects plus further information are available on the Scottish Government website, and that is well worth a look.

For sure, it was a landmark night for planning in Scotland. During the last 20 years of the SAQP there have been 4 Personal Achievement Awards, 4 People's Choice Awards, over 130 Commendations and almost 150 Awards. All starting with the first, in 1999, for the New Lanark Mill Hotel.

Let's look forward to the next 20 years of SAQP and all that it brings!

A special thank you goes to this year's judges: Irene Beautyman; Helena Huws; Lisa Proudfoot; and Simon Rennie MBE. Note: Simon Rennie MBE had a non-participatory role in the decision of the Overall Award Winner.

#### SAQP 2019 Image, L-R:

Mhairi McAinsh  
(Larbert High School)

Claire Martin  
(Scottish Wildlife Trust)

Mandy Brown  
(Falkirk Council)

Kevin Stewart MSP  
(Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning)

Cllr Cecil Meiklejohn  
(Leader, Falkirk Council)

Mike Ewart  
(Central Scotland Green Network Trust)

### National Planning Framework 4

Now that the statutory framework has been set, we're delighted to be underway with work on Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework. This is now a massive priority for us and we have been getting on with much of the early work to set up the process and design a wide programme of engagement and collaboration.

In line with the provisions of the new Act, the NPF will incorporate our national policies and will now need to be approved by the Scottish Parliament before it can be adopted by the Scottish Ministers. This will strengthen scrutiny and we will seek to develop a strong consensus on its content from early in the process.

Whatever the final content of NPF4 may be, we can expect it to have a very different look and feel to its predecessors; not least because of its new place as part of the development plan, but also because the Act sets a series of very clear outcomes to which the NPF must contribute. We have also committed to explore radical options that will help address the global climate emergency.

This presents an exciting opportunity for all of us to work together to shape the future direction for development across Scotland over the next three decades, and to stimulate

confidence and clarity for all that planned development is expected to be delivered.

We have set a testing timetable and programme for NPF4, which should lead to it being adopted in 2021.

### Transforming Planning in Practice

Turning back to our new Planning Act and further changing legislation, there is a continuing programme of system reform flowing through the implementation of the Act, and beyond. We have published our intended work programme Transforming Planning in Practice. There's a lot in there and at the Scottish Government we are clear that we cannot, and certainly would not, deliver that alone. You have a major part still to play in the new planning system.

We recognise the scale of the task that still lies ahead to complete these reforms. And we also recognise our need to fully involve planning stakeholders in the detailed design of the new system; at the same time as involving those same people in the development of NPF4. So we have sought to stagger the Act's implementation through a series of work packages rather than pushing it all forward at once. Working that through, we intend that almost all of the new Act will be in force by the end of 2021.

Implementation is underway. We recently celebrated World Town Planning Day by bringing the Purpose of Planning into force; along with the Act's provisions that allow us to move on with NPF4. And more of the Act will fall into place in the next few weeks; for example enabling the appointment of Scotland's first National Planning Improvement Coordinator.

Other early actions include a consultation, coming soon, on changes to the planning fees regime and on progressing the package supporting better opportunities for community engagement and the introduction of local place plans. We are also embarking on a wide programme reviewing permitted development rights, and published our proposed programme for that in early November. We'll say more on the continuing reforms in future editions of Scottish Planner as the work and thinking develops.

Of course all this process change has to mean something; and it does. Achieving high standards in the delivery of vital development and in the quality of our places have been central to the reform programme from the outset. So we can look forward to many more reasons to celebrate planning's great achievements for years to come.

SAQP 2019 Overall Winner - Carron Dams Local Nature reserve - A Dam Fine Place



# Update:

## RTPI Scotland Update



RTPI Scotland's Annual Review for 2019 can now be read online at [www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland).

Some of the highlights are:

- The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 received Royal Assent in 2019. RTPI Scotland engaged with and influenced the Scottish Government and main political parties on the establishment of Chief Planning Officers, a new statutory purpose for planning, the introduction of Regional Spatial Strategies and new approaches to performance.
- we gave 21 consultation responses to Government and Parliament
- we celebrated 25 years of the RTPI Scotland office
- we issued 4 editions of Scottish Planner
- over 50 events were organised by the Chapters for members across Scotland
- RTPI Scotland is represented on 23 different advisory groups
- we had 4200 followers on Twitter
- we issued 14 news releases

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On 30 October RTPI Scotland celebrated 25 years of its Scottish office with a reception in the Scottish Parliament. The event was hosted by Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport Monica Lennon MSP. Other attendees included the RTPI President Ian Tant, RTPI Scotland Convenor Julia Frost, and Sarah Boyack MSP.

### ENGAGEMENT

RTPI Scotland has met with, attended or presented at the following:

**Wheatley Group**  
**A+DS**  
**Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland**  
**High Level Group on Planning Performance**  
**UN Liveable City Conference**  
**RTPI Northern Ireland Annual conference**  
**RTPI Board of Trustees**  
**Infrastructure Commission for Scotland**  
**Scottish Government Planning and Architecture Division**  
**Scottish Labour Housing Commission launch**  
**Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee**  
**CIH Scotland**  
**Scottish Government Digital planning**  
**Zero Waste Scotland Circular Economy for the Built Environment conference**  
**HOPS Executive Committee**  
**Scottish Property Federation**  
**RTPI Fellow's Reception**  
**Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning**  
**CACHe Housing and Development Forum**

### COMMUNICATIONS

RTPI Scotland has issued the following news releases:

- 31 October 2019 - RTPI Scotland hosts Parliamentary Reception to mark 25th anniversary
- 23 October 2019 - Transport strategy must consider planning, says RTPI Scotland
- 18 October 2019 - Director of RTPI Scotland calls for clear guidance for Chief Planning Officers
- 05 September 2019 - RTPI Scotland welcomes government's renewed focus on planning

The [@RTPIScotland](https://twitter.com/RTPIScotland) Twitter account has 4226 followers and the [@ConvenorRTPI](https://twitter.com/ConvenorRTPI) account has 1392.

### POLICY UPDATE

RTPI Scotland aims to lead thinking on how planning can create great places for people. We do this by:

- Responding to policy consultations from Scottish Government, agencies and other organisations; and
- Discussing planning issues with policy makers including Ministers, MSPs and Civil Servants.

We are always keen to receive comments from members on any policy issues. Please contact Kate Houghton, RTPI Scotland's Planning Policy and Practice Officer, at [kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk) if you would like contribute to our responses to national consultations. A list of consultations currently under considerations can be found at [www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-scotland/policy-and-research/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-scotland/policy-and-research/).

## RTPI SCOTLAND CONTACTS



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Julia chairs the Scottish Executive Committee and the Scottish Forum for Planning. She also represents Scotland at the RTPI General Assembly

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**Craig McLaren, FRTPI  
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Craig leads on public affairs, stakeholder relationships, development of CPD and skills, and communications. He is Co-Editor of Scottish Planner and Secretariat to the Communications Education and Lifelong Learning Subcommittee.

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**Jennie Stansfield  
Communications and  
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Jennie coordinates RTPI Scotland communications, including bulletins with information about chapter and national events. She is responsible for keeping the RTPI Scotland's website up to date, and assists with the delivery of CPD events.

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

## Empower others...



## ... with a phone call

### Become a PAS Advice Service Volunteer!

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. What might just take a short phone call for you can make all the difference to a member of the public who has no knowledge of the planning system.

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.

Over the course of a year, our Advice Service volunteers typically take on a minimum of six cases. As an Advice Service volunteer you can count your volunteering hours toward your Continuing Professional Development. We'll also invite you to our Advice Service Forum to share experiences, network and learn something new.

For a chat to find out more, please get in touch with Erin Fulton:  
email [erin@pas.org.uk](mailto:erin@pas.org.uk) or call 0131 220 9730.



Planning Aid for Scotland, known as PAS. Registered Address: 3rd Floor, 125 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4AD.  
Registered in Scotland SC143209. Registered Charity SC021337



# 2020 training programme announced

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

The graphic features a dark blue background with abstract curved shapes in orange, teal, and light blue. At the top right, there is a speech bubble containing the text 'RTPI CORE CPD'. Below this, the RTPI logo (a stylized building) is followed by the text 'RTPI Training' and 'Royal Town Planning Institute'. The main headline '2020 training programme announced' is prominently displayed in white and orange. At the bottom, the website URL 'www.rtpi.org.uk/training' is provided in teal.

## Include your advert in Scottish Planner

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Email [kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk) for sizing and pricing

The graphic has a dark blue background with several overlapping circles in shades of blue, green, and yellow. In the top right corner, the RTPI logo is followed by the text 'RTPI Scotland' and 'Royal Town Planning Institute'. The main headline 'Include your advert in Scottish Planner' is written in a large, bold, yellow font. Below this, a horizontal dotted line separates the headline from the contact information, which includes the email address 'kate.houghton@rtpi.org.uk' and the phrase 'for sizing and pricing'.