



INPERSPECTIVE

SUMMER 2020

CONTENTS

1: The Chair's Word

2: Plan The World We Need

3: The Green Belt and Local Communities

4: Priorities for Planning Reform in England

5: The Duty to Co-operate in Planning for Strategic Matters

6: Planning for play

7: Planning with communities CPD

8: Meet the Young Planners

9: Planning Aid England Update

10: Zoning: An RTPI briefing

11: RTPI News: - Apprenticeships

- Agent Plan-It's Challenge for Change?

- Wider Insights from the Profession - Part 2

**For further information
on any of the articles
or events featured.**

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The Chair's Word

Well here we are, over half-way through the year and over 100 days of Lockdown will have passed. As I have flippantly commented to friends and family, we don't need the constant marketing reminders that these are *“strange and unprecedented times”*.



**Eleanor Gingell,
MRTPI**

RTPI South East,
Chair

It is easy to become caught in a cycle of anxiety and pessimism about our future. However, listening to the radio - one advantage of working from home along with better coffee- I have stuck by the figure that just 6% of people want things to return to how they were prior to lockdown. It seems that time away has made others reflect on the world around them. Positive changes that people cited included a reduction in traffic, cleaner air, increases in wildlife, and a stronger sense of community.

These are all things that, as a profession, we have strived to achieve. I have yet to meet a planner who wanted to make the world a worse place for people to live. This is why I am genuinely excited about the launch of the RTPI's national campaign [‘Plan The World We Need’](#). The campaign places planners front and centre to help the country recover from the impacts of Covid-19 in a resilient, sustainable way that involves the community. Hopefully, the campaign will provide the antidote to my cynicism about the latest proposals to reform planning that are due to land over the summer and provide us with a renewed enthusiasm for the good that planning, when done properly, can achieve. (Yes, I did draft several versions of this piece on previous reforms but felt that maybe we all needed something a little more uplifting!)

As is usual for this time of year we are starting to draft our business plan for 2021. One of the objectives we remain committed to is increasing the diversity of our committee. I am immensely proud of the work to date. However, there is still a long way to go. The [RAC](#) has committed to being more proactive and our first step will be to work to improve links with schools and colleges. In the shorter term, we would love to have members from across the whole of the region. For some, the process of joining the RAC may be confusing. To address this, as with the General Assembly and other RTPI positions, elections to the RAC have been moved online.

The region is a great way to be involved in RTPI activity with direct benefits to members. If you are interested, information can be found through our regional coordinator Susan Millington southeast@rtpi.org.uk.

Finally, in the absence of physical meetings, our 2020 events have gone virtual. This is a massive step and something as a committee we have been trying to implement for several years. Our first virtual events formed part of The Planner Live and included the annual lecture with Oxford Brookes University. For the remainder of 2020, we can look forward to the President's visit, online CPD webinars, and awards. Whilst I miss the opportunity to dress up and meet people in person, by moving these events online planners from across the whole region are able to attend without several hours travelling- and that has to be something worth celebrating.

**Get in touch to
contribute to the
Regional magazine**

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Plan The World We Need

The contribution of planning to a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery

To recover from Covid-19, we need to make plans. These must be holistic in nature, integrated in structure, and resourced for delivery. They need to accelerate progress to a zero carbon economy, increase resilience to risk, and create fair, healthy and prosperous communities. At this critical moment in time, our paper reflects on the current situation, and what needs to change.

Chapter 1 summarises growing calls for a green recovery, and why planning is essential for delivering change on the ground. It explains how planning originated as a public health intervention, helped the UK rebuild after World War II, and has since evolved into a unique approach for place-based systems thinking. As the recovery gains pace, planning will be critical for directing investment to solutions which balance economic, social and environmental objectives.

However, the UK and Ireland's capacity for proactive planning is unevenly distributed. Chapter 1 describes how, over multiple decades, a reliance on market-based solutions reduced planning to a more reactive and regulatory tool for managing growth. Prosperous areas have reinvested some of these proceeds into better planning, attracting the investment needed to enable sustainable development, tackle inequality, boost resilience and cut emissions.

But struggling areas, including those affected by de-industrialisation, have lost valuable tools to shape their future. A lack of joined-up planning and investment at the national level, coupled with the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis, has seen the gap widen between successful and struggling places.

The Covid-19 pandemic has layered new challenges onto these existing vulnerabilities, exposing weaknesses across the built environment that undermine resilience to risk. **Chapters 2 to 5 examine the impacts of Covid-19 on the built environment, across four themes:**

- **Health and wellbeing:** The disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on vulnerable groups, especially BAME communities and older people living in deprived neighbourhoods
- **Economic sectors:** Changes to the economic landscape, including the loss of employment in at-risk sectors, growth in others, and the shift towards remote working
- **Travel and transport:** The challenges of reallocating road space to enable walking, cycling and social distancing, especially in areas designed around the car
- **Net zero carbon:** Risks to the investments needed to decarbonise buildings, energy and transport, delaying progress towards carbon reduction targets

In a fragile economy, with pressing social and environmental challenges ahead, recovery packages must be carefully designed and deployed.

To assist this process, governments should:

1. Complement capital investment and support for individuals and businesses with the necessary resources and tools to plan effectively for the recovery, at a range of scales
2. View local and strategic plans as key mechanisms for directing stimulus measures towards place-based solutions which have local support and deliver multiple benefits, following the priorities set out below



◀ BACK TO CONTENTS

Chapters 2 to 5 contain our priorities for a place-based recovery, across four themes

- Tackling place-based inequality: Delivering affordable and high quality housing in the right locations, regenerating deprived areas for the benefit of existing communities, and improving access to key services, amenities and infrastructure
- Enabling a green industrial revolution: Actively planning for the growth of sectors which deliver emission reductions, environmental gains and jobs, while helping places adapt to shifting economic and labour markets
- Prioritising healthy and sustainable modes of transport: Integrating temporary active travel measures into strategies which lock-in behaviour change and support regeneration, and plan for growth that helps public and shared transport to recover
- Accelerating the deployment of zero-carbon infrastructure: Local and strategic planning for energy efficiency, renewable energy, smart grids and nature-based solutions to flooding and overheating, guided by ambitious policies and standards

Achieving these will require a re-imagining of planning, which goes beyond purely statutory and regulatory functions, or a narrow zonal system. **Chapter 6** starts by describing planning tools and approaches that can support a holistic recovery: allowing for direct engagement with diverse local communities, supporting local leadership and visioning, collaborating across geographical and sectoral boundaries, and providing flexibility and adaptability.

However, to ensure a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery, actions are also needed by the UK Government, the devolved administrations and the Irish Government.

Chapter 6 sets out key areas for change at the national level

- Governance and resourcing: Create powerful and effective structures for cross-boundary strategic planning across the UK and Ireland, and invest in the planning services needed to engage with communities, businesses and infrastructure providers
- Joined-up national strategies: To support the above, develop strategies which deliver investment in genuinely affordable homes, retrofit existing buildings, cut emissions from heat and transport, and plan networks of multi-functional green infrastructure
- Common objectives and metrics: Breaking with past trends by testing plans, infrastructure decisions and bailout packages against common objectives for the future, with clear metrics and targets for decarbonisation, resilience, health and social justice
- Data and technology: Establishing regional data observatories to provide common data and analysis for plan-making, and investing in open source digital planning tools for scenario modelling, public engagement and coordination with infrastructure providers

The long-term impacts of Covid-19 on the economy and society remain uncertain, with new information emerging every day. Some of the information and analysis contained in this paper represents a snapshot in time, and the RTPI will continue to monitor these trends, update our assumptions and provide more detailed recommendations as the situation develops.



Download the full pdf version here

>>>

Read RTPI Response to Committee on ...
Climate Change 2020 Progress Report to Parliament >>>

The Green Belt and Local Communities

Having covered my research on the Green Belt's governance in a previous edition (InPerspective, Summer 2019), I now explore the very controversial but fascinating topic of the Green Belt and local communities. Clearly, there is a sharp divergence of views between campaigners and planners with local communities being fiercely protective of 'their' Green Belt and campaigning very vigorously on it.

However, developers and planners, concerned about meeting housing need, often view campaigners as being unrepresentative NIMBYs who want to protect their own interests. Indeed, the lack of trust in planning has been highlighted as a key issue by Grosvenor

(2019) and, although some planners have argued the Report is too simplistic (for example: Smith, 2019), I found mutual distrust between developers/planners and campaigners to be a key issue regarding Green Belt.

Why do people support the Green Belt?

The popular support for the Green Belt is apparent but why is this and what motivates people to support them? Although this might seem a straightforward question, it is notoriously difficult establishing people's motives! National polling data for CPRE (Ipsos MORI, 2015) shows the Green Belt commands significantly greater support from property owners than social or private renters (72% compared to 58%/57% respectively) but the policy still commands widespread popular support. The consensus among most of the planners interviewed seemed that Green Belt is largely supported for emotional reasons because of fear of change and a popular love of the countryside rather than just material, economic reasons. Consequently, the underlying motivation was argued to be fear of change whilst Green Belts, as the strongest protection against development, were the most legitimate campaigning technique or method used by campaigners.

The Green Belt and Planning Knowledge

The Green Belt is probably the most well-known but poorly understood planning policy by the public. This highlights a key juxtaposition: it is regularly argued that people getting involved in planning is an inherently 'good' thing yet planners are often frustrated with people campaigning on Green Belts. Planners therefore get understandably frustrated with campaigners and often resort to 'evidence' and dismissing campaigners as misinformed and unrepresentative. Campaigners usually feel powerless/voiceless and resort to direct campaigns/politics whilst accusing (and seeking to discredit) developers as wanting to 'ruin' the Green Belt to make profit. Things get even more complicated when 'professional' campaigners get introduced. Using 'planning speak', they often produce 'evidence' showing that housing 'need' can (supposedly) be 'easily' accommodated on non-Green Belt, brownfield land and accuse planners of not understanding the strategic purpose of Green Belt through assessing it as 'parcels' of land and releasing Green Belt on a piecemeal, incremental basis!

Oxford Green Belt at Boars Hill (Author's Own)

◀ BACK TO CONTENTS

Moving Forwards on Green Belt - Debate, Governance and Education

Having problematised the issue, how should planning policy and we as planners best respond?

The need for a great Green Belt debate

I fear Green Belt debates often gets confrontational and caught up on the specifics of sites and the intricacies of policy. However, there needs to be broader, honest public debate on the existence, purpose, and function of the Green Belt in the 21st century, particularly the trade-offs involved.

Governance

Arguably, the problem of governance, especially around Duty to Cooperate, is causing lots of problems and mutual distrust. Some retired planners stressed the importance of historical networks and forums, like the West Midlands Forum and Regional Assembly, to make planning decisions in a transparent and deliberative way.

However, the current system creates unpredictability for developers and undermines uncertainty for campaigners regarding the Green Belt. If the Green Belt were managed regionally for the long(er) term, it would help foster mutual trust.



Education

People knowing about and being interested in Green Belts is probably overall a good thing in terms of engaging people in planning. However, arguably more planning education is required. Ideally, this would be in the National Curriculum for Geography to increase public awareness of planning from a young age. Nevertheless, as a minimum, both local and national politicians should receive planning training. Another brilliant idea is the 'Planning School' lecture series for the public which is supported by the London Society.



Above: Housing development in the West Midlands Green Belt (Author's Own)

Left: [Charles Goode presenting at the RTPI South West on his research](#)

Any other recommendations on Green Belts?!

Charles Goode is a Doctoral Researcher in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Birmingham where he is supervised by Dr Michael Beazley and Dr Austin Barber. He is researching the Green Belt and the housing crisis and is keen to get as broad a spectrum of views as possible on the issue so has interviewed a range of planning stakeholders across the country. He is therefore very interested in the views of RTPI South East members on the Green Belt - feel free to contact him via email about the project: C.Goode@pgr.bham.ac.uk

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Priorities for Planning Reform in England

In March, MHCLG set out the government's vision for housing and planning in [Planning for the Future](#). Central to the delivery of this vision will be an upcoming Planning White Paper, which aims to ensure the planning system harnesses innovation and stands ready to meet 21st century challenges.



We welcome many of the proposals and support the vision of a resilient, well-resourced system ready to deliver nationally and for communities. However, we are concerned that some of the proposed reforms are influenced by an incorrect diagnosis of the problems, and accordingly will not help deliver the government's objectives.

With the benefit of the expertise of our members and our experience of past planning reforms, we outline our vision of how to deliver on the government's goals, while avoiding any potential pitfalls. We observe that

while government recognises the need for a properly-resourced and improved planning system, it can also portray planning as a regulatory barrier to delivery. We provide evidence that demonstrates the risks of market failure from uncontrolled development, and recommendations for how better planning can be part of the solution to both our housing crisis and the government's wider objectives.

We put forward five main recommendations for reform that can deliver on the vision of a planning system for the 21st century.

This paper demonstrates how a well-resourced, digital planning system is essential for the delivery of the government's built and natural environment goals, and how a user-friendly system is an essential support for a 21st century levelling up agenda.

We put forward five main recommendations for reform that can deliver on the vision of a planning system for the 21st century. This will be followed in the coming months by a detailed paper on how planning should respond to the impacts of Covid-19 and ensure a sustainable economic recovery.

The objectives of planning reform

We structured this paper around the objectives of planning reform we have observed in [Planning for the Future](#) and other recent statements from the government.

These objectives are:

- Ensuring affordable, safe and secure housing for all
- Creating beautiful, sustainable places
- A clearer, more efficient, and more accessible planning system

In keeping with the government's broader objective of ensuring planning is ready to tackle 21st century issues, we also suggest three additional objectives for planning:

- The climate and environmental emergency
- Economic recovery and levelling up the nation
- Improving health and wellbeing

click here for more information on ...

[Planning for the Future >>>](#)

Five recommendations for planning reform

Based on years of research and the expertise of our members, we have identified five key recommendations for reform. Government should:

1. Invest in place.

We urge greater investment in planning as a prerequisite for achieving many of the government's objectives. We welcome increased funding for infrastructure and affordable housing, to which should be added a major grants programme to stimulate housebuilding by councils, housing associations and SMEs. This investment can help to maintain delivery and stimulate productivity, including in the aftermath of Covid-19. We also recommend that Chief Planning Officers become a statutory position, to enable better coordination of this investment.

2. Refocus planning on 21st century issues.

While housing delivery is crucial, policy must give more priority to key issues including decarbonisation and climate resilience, design and beauty, connectivity and accessibility, wellbeing and public health, and economic growth. Housing is currently crowding out the other important objectives and preventing a holistic approach to planning. The government should also measure what matters by assessing how well planning has contributed towards all of these objectives.

3. Display leadership on the digital transformation of planning.

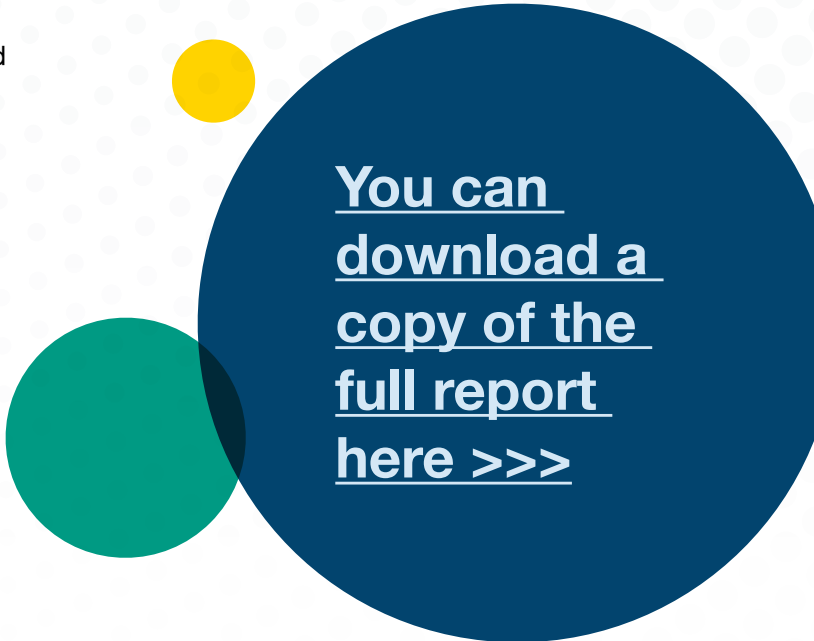
Harness technological innovation to foster more efficient and inclusive planning, building upon the innovations by planners under the Covid-19 lockdown. This should include making all planning documents machine readable, standardising terminology and processes across government, developing common evidence and analytical capabilities, and investing in open source tools which can be used across the development sector.

4. Provide a clear direction for strategic planning.

Addressing 21st century issues requires long-term strategic planning across wide geographical areas and sectors, which aligns and integrates the economic, infrastructure and environment priorities of local authorities and other stakeholders. The government should provide a clear direction on the level and scope of strategic plans, supported by place-based infrastructure funds and incentives for engagement in plan-making. Examination processes must be appropriate for strategic plans in different parts of the country.

5. Support a strong, plan led system.

We welcomed the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission's finding that the emphasis in planning should be on proactive plan-making. Government should also consider whether more fixed time scales and consistent structures are appropriate for local plans and should incentivise other statutory consultees to engage. It should also support local authorities to play a greater role in strategic land assembly. We do not believe that increased use of zoning is practical or desirable.



[You can download a copy of the full report here >>>](#)

The Duty to Co-operate in Planning for Strategic Matters

There is a famous quote that says:

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

Some have attributed this to the Greek philosopher Socrates who is seen as the first moral philosopher of the Western ethical tradition of thought however it is doubtful that he actually did say this. Nonetheless the quote is apt when dealing with the plan-making system in England.

Moving seamlessly from Socrates to Lord Eric Pickles (MP as was) takes us back almost exactly ten years ago when the then new Coalition Government abolished Regional Spatial Strategies and with it the regional tier of the English planning system.

Part of wider planning reform, the move was intended to encourage local authorities to work together across their boundaries through a strengthened duty to co-operate, driving house building through new incentives and removing top down targets.

Arguably, this played well to the crowd and it delivered on an election promise. Regional in the context of planning for development was never to be mentioned again, replaced by localism.

Roll forward a decade and there are serious concerns about plan-making in England especially, with the Duty to Cooperate under section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 being a stretch too far for some local authorities.

In recent times the DTC has or seems likely to become the downfall for plan-making in locations such as Sevenoaks, South Bucks and Chiltern and St Albans.

Increasingly the correspondence associated with plan-making including at examination is fractious and up the ante so to speak.

A simple internet search reveals much commentary on DTC but not in a positive light.

Planning reform seems ever present and no more so this year with the Government reaffirming construction and housebuilding as important sectors in the road to recovery from the economic downturn brought on by the pandemic.

The pace of change needs picking-up though. In Planning for the Future, published in March, was the following statement:

“... the government will require all local planning authorities to have up-to-date local plans by December 2023. The government will prepare to intervene where local authorities fail to meet the deadline in accordance with the existing statutory powers, considering appropriate action on a case by case basis.”



David Bainbridge
MRTPI
Planning Director
at Savills

At the time of writing this we are eagerly awaiting a policy paper on planning and later in the year a Planning White Paper. We have to hope that the forthcoming changes will include means by which to achieve effective strategic planning across local authority boundaries.

There are of course good examples including in Oxfordshire where the Growth Board made-up of the partner authorities in the County has achieved consensus on matters such as housing requirements, key priorities for infrastructure funding and provision and every potential that within a few months there will be a full complement of Local Plans.

Cross-boundary co-operation does not respect County-lines; look at the interaction between parts of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

There is such an imperative to planning strategically in these locations and for authorities to have up to date plans in place where a Green Belt authority. Sites which are otherwise sound but caught-up in the overall delay or failure of a plan stifle delivery of new places and much needed new homes and jobs.

Looking ahead positively there are reasons to be optimistic that planning at a more regional level can emerge without trampling on the remaining whispers of localism. Without this plan-failures over co-operation matters will seriously undermine the ability to achieve up to date plans by December 2023.



Planning for Play

Eleanor Gingell MRTPI
Principal Planner, WYG

(views are in a personal capacity)

If you've ever watched a group of young children, you may have observed them creating imaginary worlds with an exhausting amount of energy. Play is how children learn to understand the world around them. The benefits are well documented encompassing social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Yet, how we plan for play appears to have dropped off the agenda in recent years, with no detailed or high-level planning policy in place at a national level.

Our response to the provision for children's play has at best, become formulaic; an afterthought to ensure that boxes are ticked and the numeric requirements in an aging SPD have been met resulting in a 'KFC playground', a coin termed by the landscape architect Helen Wolly, where standard kit (easily maintained and brightly coloured) is fenced off and a safety surface is added.

However, for the period of lockdown, these areas were also closed and so we would have to explore our environment to find new opportunities for play. Faced with weeks of lockdown and in the need to find our own play opportunities we started to look elsewhere. Indoor spaces have been repurposed. Under the kitchen table a 'Den' has appeared; in our small garden plastic dinosaurs have roamed through seedling forests and the wildlife (mostly snails) have been named and domesticated.

Interestingly, others had also begun to question how we plan for play.

Yet it is outside, in the planned environment, we have been forced to alter our behaviour the most. It has been a privilege to be locked down in Milton Keynes with its vast open spaces. However, despite growing up here, it is only since lockdown that I have discovered bridleways high with cow parsley, woods full of wild garlic and trees to climb on, alleyways between buildings and appreciated the connectedness of the open spaces.

Our favourite place became the archaeological remains of a roman villa with stones laid out on top to aid interpretation.

These different spaces, each with their own sensory experiences, have enabled play opportunities without standardised play equipment. Perhaps, most importantly, as an adult I have also enjoyed them.

The first Women in Planning South Midlands coffee break focused on urban design. Interestingly, others had also begun to question how we plan for play. Is it time we moved away from standardised equipment and created environments that facilitate opportunities for play and revisited the 10 principles promoted by Play England?

With no policy on play in the NPPF, it is up to us as planners, working with urban designers and landscape architects to take this opportunity to re-think our approach post Covid-19 and put a variety of play opportunities back on the agenda.

Get in touch to contribute to the Regional magazine

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← BACK TO CONTENTS



RTPI South East Seminar: **Planning with Communities**

Brian Whiteley MRTPI
Planning Aid England

Held on Tuesday, 11 February 2020 at the All Saints Centre, Friars Walk, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2LE

1 *Localism in a Protected Landscape: reflections on 30 Made NDPs* Amy Tyler-Jones & Hannah Collier, South Downs National Park Authority

At the close of 2019, the SDNPA made its 30th Neighbourhood Development Plan. This presentation covered the role of the National Park Authority in supporting communities across the Park through their neighbourhood planning journey and reflected on the successes and challenges along the way. Views were offered on whether neighbourhood plans have been an effective tool to engage communities in planning for a protected landscape.

Hannah ran through some of the background facts relevant to their local NDPs, e.g. the AONB designations across the Park, which covers some 87 miles of high quality landscape stretching west to east from Winchester to Eastbourne. Altogether 12 different local planning authorities operate in the Park, which contains 176 parish and town council areas. 30 of these have made NDPs in place with a further 26 in preparation.

Local NDPs had covered a range of local objectives apart from simply designating new housing sites. These ranged from new footpaths (e.g. at East Meon), car parks, local green space designations (at Findon), renewable energy (at Lavant) and historic orchards (at Bury).

Amy stressed the NPA has a duty to foster the area's economic future as well as to conserve and protect the high quality landscape. This was a constant balancing act for the Authority. Its support for individual NDPs coming forward also stretched officer resources. They each take 2-4 years on average to prepare, and rely on volunteer commitment to prepare them over that period – something which cannot be guaranteed, with some personnel turnover inevitable and resulting in the need for further training support by NPA officers.

NDPs increasingly have needed more technical evidence base preparation – with sustainability appraisals, objectively assessed housing needs, viability assessments, etc. These need consultant support and their preparation can further extend the preparation period. Some groups decide to leave technical areas to Local Plan policies as a result – e.g. light pollution or flood risk.

2 *Lewes Neighbourhood Plan – Pioneering an Ecosystem Approach to Neighbourhood Planning* Amy Tyler-Jones & Hannah Collier, South Downs National Park Authority

Ian outlined how preparation of their NDP took six years. It is the largest town in the SDNPA area with a population of c.17,000. To meet their Park Plan objective they needed sites to accommodate 220 homes in the plan period, eventually identifying capacity for 283.

Richard noted how a significant factor influencing their thinking on the plan was the [2013 Farrell Review](#). They had encouraged initial engagement in the plan by asking people to submit photographs on Instagram to show key aspects of the town that were important to them.

Before policies were firmed up a series of public exhibitions were held in Lewes to gauge local residents' and businesses' opinions. The steering group also undertook public group walks around the town to analyse its topography and walkable areas - and how that affected people's behaviour (e.g. children's walks home after school). One outcome in the Plan was the new riverside walk proposal; another an analysis of important views out to the surrounding countryside from the town centre.

3 *Warnham Neighbourhood Plan* Roger Purcell, Warnham Parish Council / Alison Eardley, Alison Eardley Consulting / Norman Kwan, Horsham District Council

Horsham District Council played a key role in co-ordinating neighbourhood plans throughout the district, providing templates, informal guidance, reviews and health checks prior to formal submissions. Since the NDP was made preparation of the Horsham Local Plan has progressed and resulted in a further 50 homes being allocated to Warnham parish. This has resulted in some local disillusionment with the NDP process; it certainly points to a greater need in future for alignment of Local Plan and NDP preparation in the District.



◀ BACK TO CONTENTS

RTPI South East Seminar: Planning with Communities (cont.)

4 *Community Engagement Fit for the Future? Emerging Community Engagement Technologies in South East England*

Dr. Caglar Koksal, University of Manchester & Nikolas Koschany, Troy Planning + Design

Community engagement in England has traditionally been top-down - many local plans and development management processes are driven by planners informing the community of changes, rather than granting agency. Technology provides the opportunity to change this process and shift a top-down paradigm to a process of engaging the public at all stages in the planning process. From interactive allocation maps and planning notices to augmented reality, join us to see how technology can be used as a tool for community empowerment!

Nikolas outlined how their research in conjunction with the University of Manchester involved writing to all local authorities across the country and doing sample interviews with a selection. It aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of different engagement techniques. A key finding was that community engagement by local authorities remains “analogue” in character. Despite various reports since the 1969 Skeffington findings, most rely on doing little more than meeting statutory minimum requirements for their own work and often under-fund support to NDP groups.

5 *Community Engagement in Peacehaven* James Boot, Freelance Community Planner

Peacehaven was built for veterans’ housing following World War One, developed mostly as chalets and bungalows on sets of individual housing plots – much on the lines of similar communities at Jaywick and Cliffe. Its demographic character is now changing with much younger people coming to live in the area. The NDP has had to manage their expectations on how changes to their homes might take shape in future and local green space assessments helped show where future housing development might be steered towards around the plan area.

Focus groups rather than general public meetings have been found the most useful way of involving and engaging people and encouraging them to contribute their thinking on how the town should develop in future. To help with gathering evidence base information on the plan area the NDP group made use of students’ help with surveys, etc. – from both the universities of Brighton and Kent.



6 *Public Engagement during and after Neighbourhood Plan Preparation* John Wilkinson, Locality

Future housing development is probably the most contentious area for NDP preparation. As a help here the basic grant for NDPs of £9,000 is supplemented by a further £8,000 where housing allocations are to be made. Nevertheless, if consultants are engaged to help a group preparing a NDP, that is not a great deal of grant money and groups might still find it helpful in addition to engage a number of volunteers to help with work.

Get in touch to contribute to the Regional magazine

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RTPI South East Young Planners' Networks are an opportunity to ...

- Foster professional relationships
- Network with other professions
- Develop soft skills in project management and leadership
- Contributes to career progression
- Promote Planning
- Inspire the next generation
- Share experiences
- Support L-APC Candidates
- Have fun and socialise with like-minded people



Meet some members of the Thames Valley Young Planners Network steering group



Rachel Woodman - Rachel has been chair of the Thames Valley Young Planners since the end of 2018, and part of the group for over 2 years. She has worked in the Waste and Renewables sector since she graduated from Cardiff University in 2017. Rachel worked for Severn Trent Green Power, as the Land and Planning Manager for their portfolio of Anaerobic Digestion Facilities, Compost Sites, Solar Panels and Wind Turbines. Rachel is currently working as a Senior Planner at Bidwells. The Young Planners Group has been a great way for her to expand her network and keep up to date with policy and projects outside of Planning for Waste and Renewables.



James Griffin - James has worked as a Graduate Planner at Savills in Oxford since September 2018. Previously, James worked for Capita subsidiary Urban Vision providing support to local authorities in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester. He graduated from the University of Birmingham with a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning in 2017. James has been a member of the Thames Valley Young Planner's Steering Committee since September 2019.



Laura Robinson - Laura Robinson is a Planner at Barratt Homes, joining them in April 2020. Previously, Laura worked at WYG for two years after completing her Spatial Planning Masters' Degree at Oxford Brookes University. Laura joined the Thames Valley Young Planner's Steering Committee in January 2019, and enjoys attending regular events organised by the group across Oxford, Reading and Milton Keynes. She is keen to support and assist in the group's expansion to attract more Young Planners from private consultancies, house builders and local authorities, as well as continuing to host a range of both social and informative events on a regular basis.



Amy Powell - Amy Powell is a Graduate Planner at Edgars, she joined Edgars in September 2019 under their RTPI Trailblazer Apprenticeship scheme and is currently completing her master's degree in Chartered Town Planning at London South Bank University. In Amy's role at Edgars she supports the team of planners by conducting background research, supporting application submissions and project managing larger projects. One day a week Amy attends University, Amy joined the Thames Valley Young Planner's Steering Committee in March 2020 and is keen to support the cohort of apprentices she studies alongside, extend her professional network by way of organising and attending CPD events and further supporting the role of the RTPI by membership of the group.



Planning Aid England

Engaging Communities in Planning

Planning Aid update:

- PAE continues to deliver planning advice via our volunteer-led advice email advice service, which can be accessed via advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk. A huge thanks to our volunteers who are helping to ensure that this service runs smoothly by providing timely and accurate email advice.
- Planning advice is also available via planningaid.co.uk.
- PAE volunteers are continuing to deliver 1:1 support for our casework clients via remote channels, again many thanks to all those volunteers involved in supporting casework.
- The development of PAE's new RTPI Learn CPD module on Planning and Community engagement is progressing and, in light of the current circumstances, we are particularly mindful of creating content about virtual engagement practices. The module is scheduled for launch later this year.
- PAE staff continue to engage in community consultation for NSIP projects via remote channels and, in due course we will share our experiences/ lessons learned from this shift to virtual engagement, should it be helpful for your own practice.

Planning Aid England offers planning advice and support to individuals and communities. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in planning their local area, and provide people with the knowledge and tools to achieve this.

[**You can register to be a volunteer here >>>**](#)



Zoning: a single page

1. What is zoning?	4. Types of planning system		
<p><i>"Zoning is a land use planning practice which focuses on 'dividing' a local authority's area into different parts where some uses are permitted, while others are forbidden by right"</i> (Lichfields, 2018)</p>	<p>Discretionary planning</p>	<p>The basis of the UK's planning systems</p> <p>The Local Planning Authority (LPA) prepares a development plan outlining a positive vision for the future of their area, and a framework for addressing economic, social and environmental priorities including housing</p> <p>Represented by elected councillors, the LPA decides on planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, providing flexibility</p>	
<p>2. Recent commentary</p> <p>The Centre for Cities have proposed a flexible zoning code designed by national and devolved governments. Public consultation frontloaded into the creation of the local plan. National government to continue as "referee" setting the rules and enforcing them across "players" in local government. Unclear regarding the type and scale of legislative change needed.</p> <p>Policy Exchange recommend a binary zonal land use planning system. Local authorities would control the rules in local plans for new development. That would be the only stage when local politicians and the public could comment.</p>		<p>Zonal planning</p>	<p>Specific zones are allocated for different types of development and non-development, with planning permission automatically granted if a development meets zonal requirements. Multiple versions exist, for example in the USA, Canada and Germany</p> <p>Consistent features include a zoning map and accompanying regulation, and less flexibility.</p> <p>Many European countries do not use zonal plans across entire cities. Instead, targeted zoning is used to control development when planning strategic urban extensions, or in sensitive historic environments.</p>
<p>3. The RTPI's view: Plan the World we Need</p> <p>Our new campaign describes how planning can accelerate progress to a zero carbon society, increase resilience to risk, and create fair, healthy and prosperous communities.</p> <p>The planning system already contains tools and initiatives which provide targeted zoning powers. These include Local Development Orders, Permission In Principle and brownfield land registers. But now is not the time for a major overhaul of England's planning system.</p> <p>In our Priorities for Planning Reform in England we set out sensible alternatives. These include a refocusing on 21st century challenges, a clear direction for strategic planning, and technological innovation.</p> <p>Proper investment in place, including public-sector planning, can deliver the Government's objectives while avoiding major disruption.</p>	<p>5. Zoning: pros and cons</p>		
	<p>6. RTPI tests for zoning</p>		<p>Certainty</p> <p>Pro: Reduces risk by guaranteeing that any development can proceed if compliant with zonal requirements</p> <p>Con: Increased certainty reduces flexibility, innovation and the ability to quickly respond to changing circumstances. Reduces certainty for developments that do not fit with zonal requirements</p>
<p>Politics and democracy</p>	<p>Pro: A greater focus on the plan-making process, with the frontloading of decision-making and public consultation to create zoning maps and regulations</p> <p>Con: Hard to genuinely engage with communities about changes that may not happen for many years, and lack of opportunity for communities to be involved in detailed matters like design and amenities after zone has been 'made'</p>		
<p>Opportunity cost</p>	<p>Pro: Provides greater certainty for developments that comply with zonal requirements</p> <p>Con: Remodelling the English planning system would be complex and create uncertainty during an extended transition period whilst 'upstream' (early) consultation on zones was undertaken. Zoning plans can become outdated and require frequent amendments.</p>		

RTPI NEWS

Summer 2020

Wider Insights from the Profession

Part 2 - The Planning profession's rapid response to Covid-19

This second paper contains essays from experts in the planning profession on the profession's rapid response to Covid-19.



[Download the report in PDF here>](#)

COVID-19 Update

Read our summaries of the latest government updates relating to the economy and planning via our website.

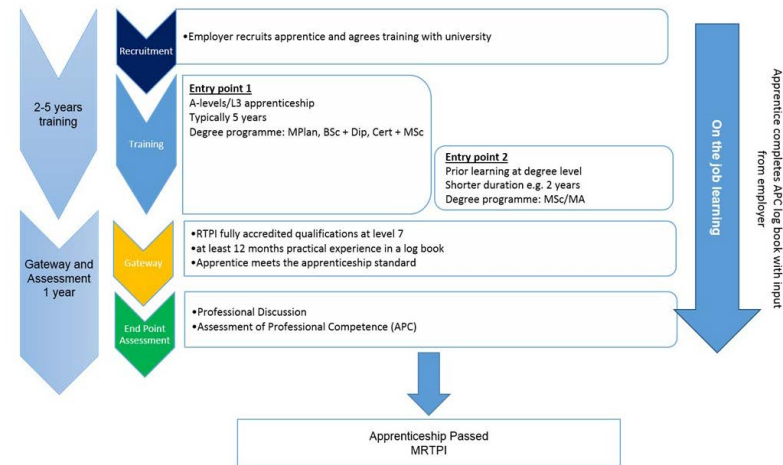


[Read update from the RTPI in response to COVID-19 >](#)

RTPI Apprenticeships

[Click here to find out more >>>](#)

Our built environment is changing fast and to face the challenge of planning our future towns and cities you need up-to-date skills. However, you don't need to sit in a classroom all day to get them. An apprenticeship is a real job with training and can be a first step to a career in town planning and Membership of the RTPI.



Agent Plan-It's Challenge for Change?

Will you accept the Challenge for Change?

What do YOU think we could change to create better and more sustainable communities? I want to hear your ideas and the ten best ones will each win £50 Amazon vouchers for themselves, as well as for their schools!



[More detail here >](#)