



RTPI North East

mediation of space · making of place

Royal Town Planning Institute

Annual Review 2016



North East

Chair's Foreword by Martyn Earle

A passionate RTPI Region

RTPI North East is an enthusiastic, passionate and proud member of the RTPI family. We have a solid and consistent base of volunteer support that continues to embrace the work of the RTPI and extoll the virtues of the profession whilst providing a high quality service to the members of the Region. The cornerstone of the group's delivery is the North East conference programme, providing an opportunity for its members to discover a range of topics and provide discussion on the latest matters affecting everyday working practices. This CPD programme attended in large numbers relative to the member base by colleagues in both private and local authority backgrounds, allowing frank discussion in a relaxed forum.

The President's Tour

The passion for the region was none more evident than in the tour provided for the RTPI President Phil Williams. The investment of the Region with both time and resource shone through when

displaying the breadth of the Region, the offering each part of it has to offer; from Newcastle to Sunderland, Tees and Northumberland alike. The range of schemes, both in their type and scale keenly demonstrated the influence the planning profession is having on continuing the regeneration of the North East as a vibrant and exciting place to work and live.

Social Aspect

The RTPI North East has also been keen to engage its members on a more social level, with the continued success of the Fabian Grey memorial football tournament, the [annual bike ride](#); this year taking a new rather 'hilly' route and not to forget the various activities of the [Young Planners Group](#).

Overall it has been an excellent year and one that has hopefully been rewarding for all members in seeing the positive benefits of membership to the RTPI, with this hopefully long continuing .

"The RTPI North East has sought to interact with members of all disciplines within the profession, with activities that allowed an open platform to engage with each other. It has personally been a thoroughly enjoyable year for myself and a real pleasure to see the passion that members of the institute have for both their profession and the region"

Martyn Earle, Chair

Regional Management Board

- Chair: Martyn Earle
- Vice Chair: Vikki Drummond
- Immediate Past Chair: Richard Newsome (+RAPC)
- Hon Sec: Andy Edwards
- Hon Treasure: Vacant
- General Assembly Rep: Jan Bessell
- Regional Policy Chair: Richard Arkell (+ RAPC)
- M&PR Chair: Joe Ridgeon (+RAPC)
- CPD Chair: Stephen Litherland
- YP Chair: Dom Holding
- PAE Chair: Jonathon Nicholson
- Junior Vice Chair: Vacant, Prof Mark Tewdwr Jones resigned April 2016

Regional Activities Committee

- Ian Cansfield
- David Cross (Resigned)
- N McLellan
- Jenny Ludman
- Deputy Gen Ass Rep: David Stovell
- Prof Colin Haylock
- John Anderson
- David Webb
- Jenny Nye (YP Chair to Sept 2016)
- Dom Holding
- Shaun Cuggy
- Stephen Litherland
- R Trow / A Ali / G Snape
- Adrian Clark (Landscape Inst)
- Tim Speed (CIHT)



M D Earle

Championing the Planning profession

The CPD Group and what it does

The CPD group is responsible for setting up the regional learning programme and delivering the [CPD events](#), which take place throughout the year within the North East region. The CPD group's activities are normally the most visible element of the regional activities. The annual conference programme is important as not only a means of helping the region's members achieve their annual CPD requirement, but also because it has to be successful in order to help fund other Regional activities which it is not possible to fund from the grant provided by RTPI HQ.

What have we achieved in 2016

In 2016 the CPD steering group organised eleven conference days (eleven in 2015) attracting a total number of 428 delegates (485 in 2015) which equates to an average of 39 delegates (44 in 2015) attending each conference. The topics that proved particularly popular in 2016 included the Planning Law updates and the Technicalities of Planning Conference. The Technicalities of Planning Conference was different to the normal CPD conferences in that there was no set theme for the day. Instead, speakers were invited to give bitesize and focused talks on a specific discipline. Judging by the number of

attendees, we will more than likely look to run this event in a similar format next year.

Feedback from delegates

The feedback received in relation to the conference programme and the specific events has been generally good. We have used the feedback sheets collected from the delegates to inform next year's programme, which will again see eleven events hosted along with a free to attend breakfast seminar dedicated to Ethics.

Group Membership

The CPD group has been operating successfully with seven active members throughout the year however, more members are needed to ease the burden on those that are involved.

Sponsors

Finally, I have to say thank you to all of the sponsors who have assisted with the CPD programme for 2016 in terms of their financial assistance, provision of rooms to hold the events and in providing reputable speakers which keep all of the conference days professional. In alphabetical order the sponsors have been; Barton Willmore, Bellway Homes, Bond Dickinson, GVA, George F White, Kings Chambers, Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, Ward Hadaway and Watson Burton.

“The CPD steering group organised eleven conference days (eleven in 2015) attracting a total number of 428 delegates (485 in 2015) which equates to an average of 39 delegates (44 in 2015) attending each conference”.

Steve Litherland, Chair of CPD Group



The Technicalities of Planning Seminar; one of the speakers Neil Beamsley, Principal Ecologist, BSG Ecology.



Over 100 guests attended the Member's Reception 2016; Martyn Earle, new Chair of RTPI gives welcomes guests.

Supporting and Growing Membership

Young Planners Regional Network

Another successful year of events from the [Young Planners Group](#) which are also open to non RTPI members too. The group continue to work with a number of other networks, which offer a great opportunity to mix with likeminded people. Some of the events have included; Stephenson Quarter Presentation, Northern Powerhouse lunchtime event, Joint BBQ with G4C and the Curry and Quiz evening. The continued partnership with the Landscape Institute offered talks this year from the WEA as well as the Northumberland and Newcastle Society.

During Newcastle University Fresher's week, the Chair and YP Chair spoke to fresher students as well as current students taking the planning course. Great to have two Newcastle University students on the RAPC.

Future Planners

Earlier in the year, RTPI NE attending the Future Ready conference for the first time organised by Schools North East to promote [Future Planners](#), over 120 people from local schools attended, great opportunity to receive new contacts for continued work with schools.

6 school visits have taken place and an increase of Ambassadors mean we now have 19 signed up.

Social Events

The RTPI NE try to offer a wide mix of [events](#) so that we can hopefully meet everyone's interests. The member's reception took place at Pitcher and Piano this year with over 100 members attending, which was a great networking event with lots of new faces there.

The new route for the Cycle challenge took in the countryside of Durham and proved a popular and challenging event.

On a sunny evening in Durham a good turnout at the Football of mainly private sector consultants and housebuilders saw Fairhurst beat newcomers Fore in the final to take the title from long time holders Durham County

Members Survey

Our members' survey mainly covering our CPD events confirmed that 85% said attending the Regions CPD Events contributed to their continued professional development.

“The event was fantastic and well organised. An opportunity for colleagues to collaborate and support each other through an enduring event”.

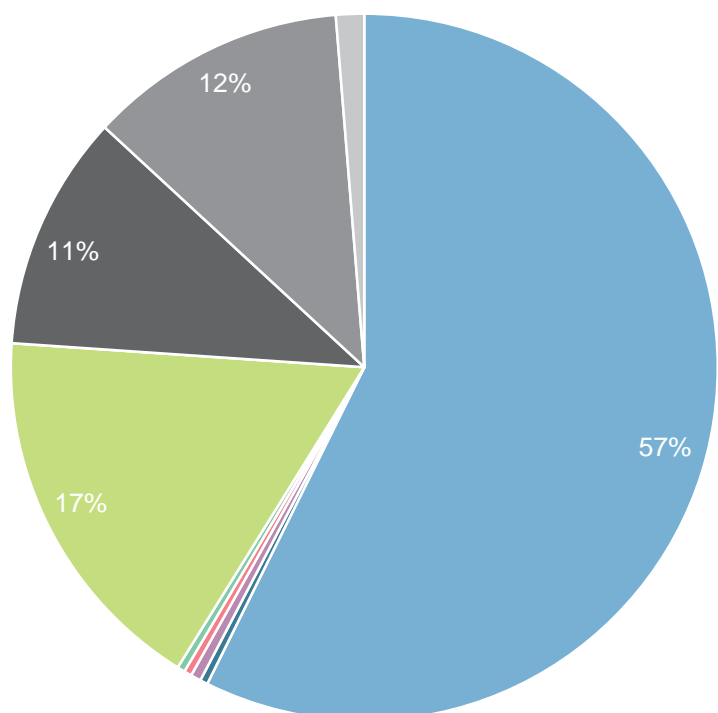
A rider's comment from this year's cycle event.

Regional Membership Figures 2016

Membership Class

- Chartered Town Planner
- Fellow
- Associate
- Legal Associate
- Technical
- Retired
- Honorary
- Licentiate
- Student
- Affiliate

*This class includes Legal Members



Shaping and Informing Policy and Practice. The Regional Policy Group.

The Regional Policy Group

The Regional Policy Group operates largely by email and during 2016 had 15 members.

2016 has seen significant progress in developing the concept of a Great North Plan, undertaken in collaboration with RTPI Yorkshire, RTPI North West and IPPR North.

Northern Summit and the Great North Plan

During 2016, the successful collaboration between the three Northern RTPI regions (Yorkshire, North East & North West), the northern university planning schools and RTPI HQ has progressed further. The initiative has been taken forward under a partnership arrangement between the RTPI and IPPR North. Building on the 2015 regional roundtables and call for evidence, a successful Northern Summit conference took place in Leeds in January 2016, at which Lord Heseltine was the keynote speaker. The outcomes from this have enabled the formulation of a 'Blueprint for a Great North Plan', which was launched in Leeds on 17 June. The Blueprint, jointly authored by IPPR North and the RTPI, represents the best of the

ideas of more than 350 people who have fed into the thinking so far via the regional roundtables, Call for Evidence and the Northern Summit conference. It is not the Great North Plan itself, but rather sets out the principles to guide how the Plan should be developed and proposes the next steps in moving from blueprint to strategy. The Great North Plan Blueprint can be accessed electronically via the website www.greatnorthplan.com.

Response to the LPEG Report

The Policy Group responded on behalf of the region to the final Report of the Local Plans Expert Group (LPEG) in April 2016.

North East Housing Roundtable

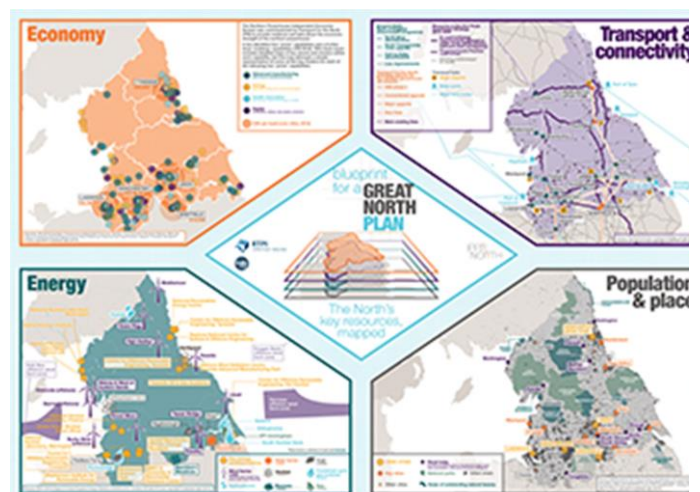
At the invitation of the Institute's Policy Practice and Research Committee, RTPI North East convened a regional roundtable in July 2016 on one of the most important issues confronting spatial planning – *where to house the nations?* The event attracted planners from local government and the consultancy sector across the region and generated a lively debate focused on key issues highlighted in the RTPI's Location of Development study published in March 2016.

“2016 has seen significant progress in developing the concept of a Great North Plan, undertaken in collaboration with RTPI Yorkshire, RTPI North West and IPPR North”.

Richard Arkell, Chair of Regional Policy Committee



Very successful visit in October by Phil Williams RTPI President. One of the visits with Chair Martyn Earle and The Banks Group.



Great North Plan Blueprint published in June 2016.

Empowering Communities - Planning Aid

Planning Aid in evolution

It's a year or two since Planning Aid lost its key, government supported, role to help neighbourhood planning groups across the country. As a result, the RTPI in London has been having a rethink about what Planning Aid should be doing. The Institute continues to regard Planning Aid England (PAE) as a key ingredient of what the profession can deliver to the people of this country, as they come into contact (whether they like it or not) with the planning system.

The purpose of PAE nationally continues to be providing planning advice and support to communities in England in order to empower them to take an active role within the planning system. The service relies, of course, on volunteers; and this is more than ever the case, given that the plug has been pulled on regional, paid planning aid workers.

Rebooting the NE Planning Aid Task Group

Our own Planning Aid regional activity ground to a temporary halt early this year, as our

previous Chair, David Cross, had to resign due to a career move. We wish him well.

It is also the case that very few of our volunteers have been called upon during 2016 to help with planning aid casework, recently. Cases come to the RTPI via the London-based advice line, (currently limited to email and a web-based system) and, sad to say, the North-East has only generated 3% of the enquiries across England meaning that volunteers in the region have only occasionally been asked to help.

While there is no imminent chance of advice lines being regionalised again, the RTPI does want the Regional PAE Task Groups to play a much more active role in generating projects that are of genuine help and assistance to communities in the regions and which get our volunteers active again within our communities.

“We’re hopefully beginning a process of reactivating north-east Planning Aid volunteers by finding new ways to help the region’s less well-off communities to participate in the planning system and deal with planning problems that may affect them”.

Jonathan Nicholson, Chair of PAE



Cycle Challenge 2016; New challenging route which took in the countryside of County Durham.



Winners of the 2016 Planning Excellence Awards; Wynyard Gardens and Visitor Centre, Stem Centre and The Curve.

Achieving Good Governance for the North East Region

Governance structure (see outline below of the regional relationships)

The Region is operated through two main committees. The **Regional Management Board (RMB)** and the **Regional Activities and Policy committee (RAPC)**. There are five sub committees that operate in the region (Chairs in October 2016 shown in brackets): **Members and Public Relations** (Chair Joe Ridgeon); **Regional Policy** (Chair Richard Arkell); **CPD** (Chair Stephen Litherland); **Young Planners** (Chair Dominic Holdings) and **Planning Aid England** (Interim Chair Jonathan Nicholson). It is a requirement that all members of RAPC should support the work of one subcommittee and many members of RMB do as well.

Four meetings of RMB and RAPC respectively are held each year. It has been the policy this year to have guest speakers from the region's universities to improve relations between the institute and the universities

In terms of relating to the RTPI nationally we have one regional rep on the General chamber of the RTPI nationally and meets three times a

year. In Sept 2016 our rep Jan Bessel was elected onto the General Assembly in her own right. This has created a vacancy for a Regional rep and it is hoped to fill this position as part of the 2016 AGM process. In addition, the region is invited to meetings of the Nations and English regions panel that meets three or four times a year. The panel gives the opportunity to review all operational issues between the centre and the regions. The panel is supported by the Head of English regions based at the RTPI.

Despite numerous attempts the region was unable to find a volunteer in 2016 to fill Hon Treasurer position. All recently retired members contacted with a full description of role without success. In addition, the newsletter; [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) postings did not get any response. In April 2016, the Junior Vice Chair resigned and no replacement has been located. There have also been vacancies for several; corporate members during the year. To get involved please contact [Kim Walker](#) for more information.

“We really appreciate the assistance of reps from the Landscape Institute and Highways and Transport (CIEH) who have helped broaden our perspective”.

Andy Edwards
Hon Sec

