

Reference	NRP23/13JUNE/03
Date	13 June 2023



NATIONS & REGIONS PANEL

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES of the Nations & Regions Panel Meeting on 28 March 2023

PRESENT: Lindsey Richards (Vice Chair), Joe Warren-McCoy (Yorkshire), Andrew Dorrian (North East), Stephen Kemp (East Midlands), Nicole Norman (London), Wendy Hague (East of England), Rachel Brown (Ireland), Diane O’Neil (deputising for NI); Thomas Simnett (London); Harry Quartermain (South West); Laura Robertson (Scotland); Robert Chichester (Wales)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Woodford (Head of English Regions), Craig McLaren (Director of Scotland, Ireland and English Regions), Roisin Willmott (Director of Wales and Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England), Fiona Fowell (East of England Regional Coordinator); Holly McLaren, Planning Aid Manager (Item 07);

Item		Action
01.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence.</p> <p>The Vice Chair welcomed members of the Panel to the meeting for the year 2023. Representatives all introduced themselves and their region/nation.</p> <p>The Vice Chair advised the Panel that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes and would then be deleted.</p> <p>Apologies for Absence – Apologies received from Bryan Smith, Simon Taylor (Southeast), Stephen Kemp (East Midlands); Catharine McWhirter (NI) Stefano Smith (Chair); Joanne Harding; Benjamin Vickers (English Nations)</p>	
02.	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <p>The Vice Chair declared that she worked for a government agency. There were no further conflicts of interest to declare.</p>	

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	The Vice Chair reminded all members of the Panel to complete the electronic declaration of interest form.	
03.	<p>Minutes from Meeting of 31 January 2023</p> <p>AGREED: The Panel approved the minutes from the last meeting without any revisions.</p>	
04.	<p>Action Log</p> <p>The Panel noted there were no outstanding actions to be discussed.</p> <p>It was raised whether the formatting of the log could be changed as it was difficult to read. It was agreed that the opening page should only hold actions that are open to make the document easier to read.</p> <p>The Panel noted the action log and were satisfied with the current state of progress.</p> <p>ACTION: Action 8 - Big Conversation to be brought forward to next meeting.</p>	
05.	<p>BOT/GA Update</p> <p>The Vice Chair updated the Panel on the Board of Trustees and GA meetings and the issues that were addressed.</p> <p>BOT – 22 February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy on the audit and risk and finance committee – an email had been sent out to GA members trying to encourage people and diversity. • Health and Safety update – Issue around Health & Safety at the offices following the closure of the Scotland office where there had been issues with the firearms fully working and relevant paperwork. • Risk and Issues register was discussed with several high risk ratings – the audit and risk committee had been asked to arrange an additional meeting to discuss those high risk areas. 	

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- Annual membership cycle update – an update on the membership year end and it was reported that there were currently 27,243 members which was a 6% growth in 2022, with an increased number of members moving to retired status and an increase in licentiate.
- Corporate Strategy update – it was reported that targets had been hit 2 years ahead of time. Five projects were seeking additional funding which will go to the Finance committee in due course.
- The welfare campaign will be a priority going forward which the President made clear in her Inauguration speech.
- Project One Institute – Events Strategy which was on the agenda at today’s meeting was discussed.
- Anthony Hall Bequest – the Institute had been left some money and half of money would be used for the Anthony Hall lecture and the other half was going to Wales to trial a lecture series in Wales.
- Retrofit update – it was reported that offices were completed on time and within budget and there was encouragement at GA to encourage people to use the Member Lounge and the process involved due to it’s limitation in size, so there was encouragement to ring and book your space ahead .
- Update on EXPLORE placements from the EDI Manager – it was reported that the EXPLORE placements were doing very well and in its second year.

GA held in Birmingham – 22 March

- Agenda was changed to reflect some of the discussions that had previously taken place and no feedback had been given on those items. At this meeting feedback was given on previous discussions on the Member Value Proposition and the ongoing consultation and an update on the survey for members.
- Reference to the launch of the Welfare helpline
- Mis-information on social media around planning
- Chair’s report – implementation of changes coming out of government and the undertaking of a governance review.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA debate – strategic planning – guest speaker David Bainbridge from Savills gave an overview of the value of strategic planning and the challenges and barriers in planning. <p>The Vice Chair reported that there was a Board meeting taking place tomorrow and it would be relevant and useful to feedback to the Panel the outcome from that meeting and also anything from this meeting that could feedback to the Board on any future subjects.</p>	
06.	<p>Nations & Regions Update</p> <p>The Chair invited each Representative to present an update for their Region or Nation for this item.</p> <p>South-West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPD Day : 6-day seminars organised for 2023, 5 of which hybrid. Bookings have significantly picked up as the early bird closed on 28 February. 1 of the 6 events have now sold out. A great take-up of virtual attendance. From bookings to date 600 places have been booked for in person plus 250 virtually. Webinars: 4 renewables seminars with the University West of England have been very popular with 250 – 450 booked on to these seminars. RMB RAC – A vacancy for Junior Vice Chair, large committee and active management no interest as yet, not much of a problem in the short term but will create a problem in the long term for succession planning. The Mentoring Programme has re-opened running for a second year. This is a pilot programme with a view that this merges into NUTURE programme. Looking for assistance through APC. 2 new Young Planners steering groups have been formed for Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers and Education, working with Ambassadors to recruit more and seek out school engagement opportunities. Reaching out to all Apprentices in the region and connecting them to Young Planner events. • Annual Dinner taking place on the 8 June in Bristol and to be attended by Sue Bridge, RTPI President. 260 attendees. • Fellowships for local planners – The RMB and RAC are looking at ways to raise the profile of planners locally by seeking nominations who would then be assessed to see if they would be encouraged to apply for fellowship, RTPI outstanding service, RTPI Awards or raise their profile. • RTPI Presidents Visit – Working on a programme for Sue Bridge to visit the region on the 7 and 8 June. <p>Yorkshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMB / RAC have not met since the last NRP meeting, working on events programme with the upcoming RMB/RAC meeting scheduled for 25/04 in-person in Leeds, the Awards for Planning Excellence and the busy events calendar across the region in May. • In line with the annual theme of Health and Wellbeing, the region hosted a webinar on 14/03 on <i>RTPI ethics and code of conduct</i>, which was sold out. • <i>Planner Live North</i> is due to be held at Royal Armouries, Leeds, on 24/03 – feedback on the event will be provided in conjunction with other northern regions during the NRP meeting on 28/03. Quite an appetite from volunteers to run this event again next year. • <i>UKREiiF</i> which is an externally coordinated event is due to be held in Leeds, again at Royal Armouries, between 16/05 – 18/05, with thousands expected to attend to highlight investment and development opportunities, whilst connecting and facilitating new relationships to drive economic growth through development and regeneration between public and private sectors. <p>North-East</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members reception held on 16 February with over 90 guests attending. Also, a good opportunity to socialise with other built government environment chairs who were also invited along. • Pleased to receive nearly 200 early bird ticket bookings from Local Authorities – lower than pre-covid but a great deal higher than last year. Positive start. Spring Law breakfast seminar 20 March with nearly 40 delegates which is where they normally are for this one. • Successful NPPF consultation roundtable on 30 January – good attendance and feedback from all • LA Direct provision of housing research proposed round 4 – round table on 25 April. • YP continue to work on their events programme – planned walking tour, socials, joint talks with other associations, Ask the Chair webinar and more to come. YP are also trying to organise a Webinar to fit in with the Nations and Regions week commencing 3 July on Coastal related activity. • Five ceremony sponsors confirmed for Awards Dinner, plus a category sponsor for YP of the Year Award. Bookings are going well, but additional marketing needed to see numbers we normally have. • Excited to see what entries come in this year for Awards for Planning Excellence with deadline on 21 March. Currently running at 16 entries • We are having success in reinvigorating our Planning Aid subgroup and have devised a mini business plan of projects they can deliver through the Planning Aid England Support programme. This includes Healthy Happy Places with the AHSN and guides on hot food takeaways, the production of a new game for engagement and we are looking forward to the 50th anniversary of Planning Aid with an event at the new Farrell Centre in July 2023. • The region undertaking a review of the public sector project which is designed to increase participation in RTPI from public sector organisations. We have been learning from the experience of the NW. • We were delighted to be involved in organising Planner Live North event on the 23rd March and will update at the meeting. <p>East of England</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMB/RAC meeting on 7 March, SW joined this meeting. • Repeat event session on mental health, successful session in 2022. Recirculating seminar that was held with MIND as an introduction. • Focusing on the menopause for 2023 and will be running a session on the 18 May, Sue Manns and Jennifer Jackson from the Royal Borough of Windsor will be speakers. • Also holding a bite-size breakfast – has been orchestrated by Jonathan Dickens from Savills and will be held at the Bank of England focusing on Economics and how the profession can help the economy. • Awards ceremony taking place in June with Lord Salisbury hosting and the keynote speaker. • Special session in July – the four-day week. How local authorities will cope with this. • Women in Planning session in August. • YP – repeating the planning power sessions online. Thinking of ways how to support young planners with stress management. <p>London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock planning enquiry in January which was well attended. Looking at scope whether another one could be run. • YP – two upcoming events. • Breakfast talk – sold out. • Local plans event with ARUP in April • CPD event – speaker from the American Planning Association trying to build some partnerships with APA. • Next summit currently being planned in September/October which will be in General Re-generation in Docklands. <p>North-West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPA Training event – Communication in Planning on 1 March 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD Planning Law Update event on 6 March. • Planner Live North on 23 March • School & University visits (eg Liverpool Uni – Planning Aid talk, and GM schools careers chats) • Awards opened and closed. <p>Next 3 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Housing Round 4 roundtable on 18 April • Spa Day on 19 April • YP Rounders Social on 4 May • CPD Delivering Strategic Sites event on 10 May • YP Co-op Arena site visit on 17 May • 5-a-side tournament on 19 May • LPA Training event – Politics in Planning on 23 May • YP Town Centre Regeneration event on 26 May • Awards judging and site visits • School & University visits • Annual Dinner <p>Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland are currently going through changes in legislation RTPI engaged with the Government in Ireland last year with various planning papers regarding the legislative provisions and following the close of that consultation a new Planning Bill was released. The Chair and Director of Scotland attended a select committee to answer questions. • Held a members’ open forum with Brendan Flatley, senior partner in a planning law firm in Dublin gave an opinion piece on the Act. • Announcement of annual lecture in May • Annual dinner on 1st June • Awards entries in Ireland <p>Northern Ireland:</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Executive Committee meetings so far this year. One was held online whilst the second was held in Belfast which allowed new and existing members to meet in person. • Towards the end of February 2023, the Policy and Research Forum met in person. They looked at a number of topics which were identified as being pertinent for Northern Ireland and they requested the inclusion of Northern Ireland as a study area in national research. The topics of interest identified by the Forum included Strategic Planning Across Borders and Planning for Energy Security and Net Zero. Other topics supported by the Forum included Planning Practice Post-Covid and Planning for Nature. The group are planning to host an event in the next few months focusing on the issue of biodiversity and the potential impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland. • On 10th March 2023 we had our first webinar of the year on the issue of Community Engagement. A variety of speakers from organisations such as Community Places and Grasshopper Communications provided useful insights into their experiences of carrying out community engagement and the benefits that can accrue from such exercises. • We attended our annual dinner which was great fun and an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. <p>Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to work with Scottish Government to develop a number of skills and development tools to support planners in Scotland to embed digital planning and these included Skills Development programme, an online Good Practice portal, a skills diagnostic tool, introductory tools on digital planning and a disruptors and champion’s network. • The Sir Patrick Gendes commemorative lecture is to be given on the 25 May by M.D. Cower who is the Director of Civic Square which will be held on line which will be given a wider attendance. • Scottish Young Planners Conference is taking place on the 26 April and will be in person. • Scottish Parliamentary reception in September. 	
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- Working with Scottish Government to develop a workforce and skills strategy for planning which builds on research on future planning.
- Second RTPI Awards for Scottish Excellence will be held on 2 June.
- 7 local chapters good attendees and good involvement, good mix of public and private. In-person is fundamental for meeting people face to face.

Wales

- First executive meeting on the 15 March with a new Chair coming in.
- Holding events with the National Infrastructure for Wales considering how to take forward the implementation of the Wales Planning Policy and the Future Generations Act and the progress made regarding devolution.
- First event was held last week and a second event in South Wales in April.
- Spring conference on the 30 March, theme of the conference is delivering vibrant high streets.
- Working with Techniequest to engage with young people and promote planning.
- Annual St David’s Day planning law update which was facilitated by Francis Taylor Buildings the main themes were data protection and renewables. Popular event which is held every year.
- Wales Planning Conference will be held in June and theme is Climate Action.
- Big Conversation waiting for response on Welsh Government.

West Midlands

- YP ‘ask the experts’ series webinars on ‘fire statements. Annual quiz taking place in a few weeks’ time. Planning a joint event in May with RICS which involves darts.
- Other webinars that have taken place the regions held a ‘politics in planning’
- West Midlands regions region usually hold annually hold a ‘history of holding’ a great debate which took place.
- West Midlands is also working on the Planners National Conference which will be taking place in October.
- Northwest region have a SPA day every year to bring people together.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Midlands – have been to rural events – coming up in the next two months are three fact to face events Tissington Tour as part of rural planning, legal update and Nottingham walking tour. <p>East Midlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD webinar Events delivered so far in 2023: Determining Planning Applications Part 1 and Part 2 56 bookers; 96 bookers respectively. • The Path to Sustainable Farming 76 bookers. • Coming up in the next 2 months are three face to face events Tissington Tour part of rural planning; Legal Update; and Nottingham walking tour • Presidential visit panned 2 June a tour of Chesterfield and surrounding conurbations. • Biodiversity Net Gain day long training is in planning and will take place in Nottingham either 5 or 6 July tbc later today. • Judges in place for this year's RTPI East Midlands Awards for Planning Excellence 2023. • First CPD YP webinar coming up soon ilke Homes Revolutionising Housing Supply <p>South East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working on the President's Visit which will take place in mid-June. The visit will cover topics relating to water and coastal planning and will be held down in the South Coast area of the region (Southampton/Portsmouth/Winchester). The visit will also consider with the SE Annual Dinner and Regional Awards Ceremony, which are due to be held at the same time. • We continue to develop and strengthen our ties for the three Planning Schools in the region and support their annual lectures. Off the back of the Young Planners Conference, I am keen for encouraging the region's 4 Young Planners groups (Kent, South Coast, Surrey and Thames Valley) to collaborate more on events/webinars. This will help spread resources and increase engagement, which is important for smaller YP groups who are trying to recruit members. I will be asking my Regional Secretary, Jeffrey Ng, 	
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	<p>to convene a conversation between the four groups. Can I ask that other Nation & Regional Chairs consider opportunities for Young Planner groups to collaborate more across regional boundaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive response to the South East Awards with 27 entries across the categories. 	
07.	<p>Planning Aid England at 50</p> <p>The Planning Aid England Manager gave the committee an update of Planning Aid's services and how they work with volunteers. The following points were highlighted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Aid England helps people take an active role in the planning system by providing free, independent and professional general planning advice to the public via a planning guidance website and volunteer-led email advice service. • Bespoke advice for individuals and groups who meet the casework criteria. • Also organise support and training for local communities so they can influence and contribute to planning strategy and decision-making locally. • Volunteers are key to Planning Aid England service delivery with currently 350 volunteers across the English regions and half of those are chartered planners. • There are several volunteer panels which deliver key services such as email advice and providing website content. • Planning Aid England staff put out requests for casework or supporting workshops to the volunteer pool. • There is a volunteer steering group which is made up of a selection of volunteers who are heavily involved in the service delivery and this meets every three months. • There is a planning guidance organised under several themes and offers clear, simple explanations of how the planning system works. Information is regularly reviewed by staff and volunteers. • An average of 10,000 unique page views per month and our most visited pages. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email advice service is a unique service offering 15 minutes of free professional general planning advice to the public by email. It is volunteer led – 11 volunteers on the panel working on a rota basis across the week. Approximate 1800 requests per year. • Bespoke advice: casework which are enquiries from clients who wouldn't be able to afford planning advice perhaps live in areas of high deprivation or have needs. • Core part of activity is help underrepresented groups and individuals in more deprived parts of the country and engage with local planning issues that affect them. • Currently working with Middlesborough Council to assist an inner urban Neighbourhood Forum (Gresham) produce a Neighbourhood Priorities Statement. • Work undertaken last year with Stockport Council of how Planning Aid England could support the consultation on the key principles in the emerging local plan. Devised series of 3 online workshops each focusing on different district within the inner urban area of the borough. • 2023 marks 50 years of Planning Aid services and activities have been organised under 3 themes; celebrating 50 years of the service; thanking volunteers; bringing together Planning Aid organisations from across the UK; with an event in September 'the future of public participation in planning'. 	
08.	<p>Volunteer Hub Update</p> <p>The Volunteer Project Co-ordinator gave an update on the volunteer hub. Key points highlighted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on website regarding the volunteer hub and takes you to a holding page and how to log in. • Currently being tested with the Northwest and London regions and they are being invited to test the hub until 21st April. • When entering the hub, you will only see tiles for the groups that you are a member of – previous minutes, agendas and papers. 	

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	<p>The committee raised whether the hub was only for volunteers, was it limited to access. It was reported that the hub would only be for members who were on the membership database.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee agreed for the Volunteer Project Co-ordinator to attend a further committee meeting with an update of feedback from the pilot.</p>	
09	<p>Project One Institute – Early Careers Research</p> <p>The Committee were asked to note the research topics agreed by the Policy Practice and Research Committee (PPRC) for 2023-2024 as well as the planned approach to the 2023 round of Early Career Researcher Grants.</p> <p>The Head of Policy reported that this was year 2 of the RTPI Research Strategy. Two things were identified last year the first was Research Matters which was a monthly focus done by planning schools, each month is a new topic and the second was the Early Career Research grant. Last year applications were received at the end of August and grants were given out in December, three grants were given out of £10,000 each.</p> <p>This year’s Early Careers Research grant allows for those English Regions to be included in the process. Once the funding regions have been put forward their list of preferred research topics and the Policy Practice and Research Team will undertake an assessment and then advise the regions of the final topics to be included in the call prior to its opening.</p> <p>Action: It was agreed that topics from Regions should be put forward by mid-May.</p> <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>	
10	<p>Project One Institute – Events Strategy Insights</p> <p>The Head of English Regions gave an update on the Events Strategy with some key points: -</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of January started to develop a new event strategy thinking about what the Institute wants and what our members for the events support programme. • First phase was looking at the kind of events that we have done in the last year and the second phase will be moving into is what the model we are looking for. • Progress to date; CRM analysis, findings to share, Big Marker analysis; Event Booker Interviews, Financial Data; Disability Questionnaire. • Decide on what else additional requirements Member Value Proposition – survey. • 26k delegates registered/attended events. • 9k majority of members do not attend events. • How do we repackage these events to members. <p>It was suggested by the Committee that have an events calendar for regions with different themes. This was an on-going project and the committee were asked if they had any thoughts or suggestions to bring them forward the Head of English Regions.</p>	
11	<p>Forward Look/Panel Workplan</p> <p>The Head of English Regions asked the Committee for agenda items to take forward for the year ahead.</p> <p>The Committee suggested Ambassador/Education, EDI Champions could be added to the Workplan.</p>	
12	<p>Nominations and Elections timetable (for 2024)</p> <p>The Committee noted the Nominations and Elections timetable.</p>	
MEETING CLOSED		