

MAGAZINE FOR THE RTPI WEST MIDLANDS

# TRIPWIRE





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**Cover Photo:**  
 View of turbine near  
 Brick Barn Farm,  
 Worcestershire  
 Parkway new  
 settlement site  
 (Credit: Wychavon  
 District Council)

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**Inside cover image:**  
 The Malvern Hills  
 seen from Woodall  
 Farm, Worcestershire  
 Parkway new  
 settlement site,  
 (Credit: Wychavon  
 District Council)

# Tripwire Editorial

**Welcome to this Spring-Summer edition of Tripwire magazine, a little later in your inboxes in the second quarter of the year, owing to a new format we will be following for 2024 which sees us shift to a two-edition model, with more content in each edition as a result.**

This time around we have an excellent mix of contributors from at home and abroad. We have also added a new regular feature in ‘Tripwire Time Capsule’ to reflect on the planning challenges earlier in the century and what reflections we might make against these for today. We would love it if as a reader you could let us know how you like the new format and if any particular piece of content chimes with you and your work and study, we are always endeavouring to improve content for our readers, to ensure Tripwire continues to remain relevant, and readable!

It’s been a challenging time for the statutory plan making authorities in the past year, with nearly 1 in 5 councils in England declaring a Section 114 notice, and a raft of many others also warning that financial deficits and budgetary constraints are on the horizon. Certainly a conversation on future funding models for local planning authorities is needed, a lasting settlement that can help save the key and critical services that communities, normally the most vulnerable, rely on.

This occurs amidst a cross-partisan understanding that further planning reform is likely, in whatever guise that may take by whoever takes the legislative helm, but needed to better deliver on the ever-burgeoning need for new homes, services, amenities and job opportunities for people across the country. I’ve heard this message myself in my work consistently and increasingly across many events ranging from annual regional economic reviews, to minerals conferences, or waste management expositions, in liveable design workshops, at transport and infrastructure round-tables

and most importantly of all, from residents during in-person consultations for emerging planning policy and guidance. As planners we always feel the pressure of balancing public need, something that two of our article contributors in this edition articulate to us through their experiences as planners in England and Australia, where we see that antipodean experiences are revealed to be familiar across the continents, to ours at home.

Where there is challenge there is also opportunity however, and so we should remind ourselves that some indicators at least signal a regional resilience that is holding fast. This year’s Deloitte Crane Survey for Birmingham showed that development in the city, counted by the number of cranes at least, is booming: a record number of homes delivered or under construction, a quadrupling in office space compared to last year, a fifteen fold increase in student beds and more floorspace for healthcare, education, hotels and other commercial uses.

Meanwhile, the three South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils) have an ambitious plan across four new key strategic sites as part of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.

This includes Worcestershire Parkway, which will be a brand new settlement made up of 10,000 new homes and 50 hectares of employment land, alongside a new town centre, schools and leisure facilities, and a minimum of 40% of green infrastructure in the form of community parks, allotments and orchards.

Worcester Parkway – Credit: Wychavon District Council



Developments underway at Three Chamberlain Square and The Octagon, Birmingham

The settlement also aims to be carbon neutral, a significant sustainable element in this vast and comprehensive scheme.

Both in our existing cities and out in settlements-yet-established then there is a pipeline of development and plans coming forward.

Redevelopment and regeneration both rely on public and private approaches to succeed, an approach described in this issue by Charles Goode in his report for the RTPi’s West Midlands’ recent conference on the role of regeneration in cities and town centres.

So enjoy this edition and please feedback to us with your thoughts, or what you’d like to see in future editions.

You may even consider writing an article on planning from your perspective through your work, study or volunteering. Either way, get in touch with us at [tripwirewm@gmail.com](mailto:tripwirewm@gmail.com) to start the conversation.



—  
**James Hoskinson**  
MRTPI

*Tripwire Editor and  
RTPi West Midlands  
Regional Activities  
Committee Member*

## CHAIR'S COMMENT

# Chair's Introduction

**What do you think of when you think of Town Planning? Maybe it's the challenges we face as a profession in securing the level of development we need to service our communities, or the level of resource needed to run a successful planning department? Maybe it's the opportunities we can incorporate into new development? Or hopefully, it's a careful combination and balance of the two.**

For me it's definitely a combination of the two. I see first hand the struggles that resourcing is having on planning departments and the stress levels that we as planners now face, but on the other I see wonderful things happening across our region that show that we are bucking the trend and development is ongoing with pace.

The pandemic of 2020 hit us hard and 4 years on it's clear that we live and work in a different way. Flexible working is now commonplace for most of us, but how does this work in practice with difficulties in resourcing new planners and still achieving the levels of development required to meet national targets? Admittedly, it's great having this flexibility but I for one certainly prefer the atmosphere of being in the buzz of the office, learning by association and just generally having some human interaction - something which the pandemic took away from many of us.

Stress and mental illness is no longer a taboo topic – as the old adage goes “It's good to talk”. Planners are undoubtedly under huge amounts of pressure of meeting deadlines within tight budgets and so it's not uncommon that we are likely to suffer from either stress or mental illness at some point in our lives, but there are people out there to help and talk to, ensuring that it doesn't become too much and will impact ultimately on our mental state of wellbeing.

I am not shy or one to hide the fact that I suffer from Bipolar Affective Disorder and Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder. I've struggled a lot in the past when the stress of day-to-day life gets to me which has impacted on my work and resulted in periods of sick leave, but with the right support and changes to my medication, I'm able to function on a high level where it doesn't impact me or my professional life. I know the trigger signs to look out for and when these occur I take active positive steps to ensure that I remain grounded and don't let my mental health slip out of control. I take time out to meditate, go for a long walk and appreciate those things around me that I'm lucky to have in my life.

This is why, for this year, I wanted to focus on the impact the pandemic has had on our spaces and places and how we can really incorporate successful green and blue spaces into our developments to have a positive impact on not only our physical wellbeing - by being able to get out, about and active - but also on our mental wellbeing, by simply being in the great outdoors. I've chosen to dedicate this year's Chair's award to successful places and spaces that have achieved this aim or are looking to improve the quality of life for our residents and communities in the West Midlands.



We have many things to celebrate in the West Midlands and I'm sure you'll all agree with me on that point. We aren't perfect (who is?) but we have passion, dedication and a great community of planners who are there to support each and mentor each other, both personally and professionally. It's ok to not be ok and it's perfectly fine to reach out for support if you need it.

We are doing a sterling job and we shouldn't let the negativity or the political unknowns at present prevent us from seeing this. We need to remind ourselves every day that we are doing a profession we love, otherwise we wouldn't be doing it in the first place. So go grab yourself a cup of coffee or tea or whatever it is you fancy and enjoy our first edition of Tripwire for 2024.



—  
Victoria Lane MRTPI  
RTPi West Midlands Chair

# It takes Planners & ... Joshua Singh

Following the RTPI's new national campaign It Takes Planners & You, we're launching a parallel regional feature for Tripwire that shines a spotlight on the personalities that make-up the planning profession in our region, ranging from the well-known to the normally anonymous practitioners who dedicate their working lives to the sector.

This issue we kick off with perhaps the best known local personality in planning in the past year, Joshua Singh, winner of national Young Planner of The Year award in 2023. We hear of his background, his passion for planning, and his ambitious, extraterrestrial vision for the future of the profession. Over to you Josh...

## How many years have you worked and studied in planning?

I have been working in Planning for over fourteen years now. Having undertaken my undergraduate Geography with Planning degree at University of Birmingham (UOB), studying under regional legends such as Mike Beazley, Austin Barber and Gill Bentley. Initially I moved back home to North Devon and starting working in a pharmaceutical factory, working nights packing boxes of paracetamol... of course, that didn't last long.

**Although it paid well, I came back to Birmingham like Dick Whittington to chance my arm in the big wide world. I approached a friend's auntie at Warwickshire County Council and did a 3-month unpaid work placement in the Planning Policy Team.**

I then got a job on Sandwell Council's main reception and had an amazing opportunity to understand local government from the ground up by being the front face of the council. I later approached the then Director of Regeneration, seizing the initiative myself to send my CV and a covering email to his secretary. I had one meeting with him and found myself seconded into the Planning Enforcement Team via a temping agency, working on growing their 'Grot Spots' programme, using Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act to engage with owners to improve buildings and sites, as well as reverse the 'Broken Window Syndrome' we see across so many towns.

I was asked by Historic England to speak at a number of regional events about the use of Section 215 powers in historic settings – I also worked on Sandwell's 2012 Olympic programme and interventions along the Torch route. All this within my first three years working in the public sector, culminating at the point that my work became a key part of our submission to the inaugural RTPI LPA of the Year Award, which we won in 2014.



## What does your current work involve?

Currently I am Regeneration Team Leader at Sandwell. I lead a team of eight focused on the acceleration of £500m+ of regeneration investment into our £3bn Regeneration Pipeline, which predominantly is focused on five core Regeneration Zones across Sandwell. We're in the process of developing plans to deliver our award winning (Planning Awards 2023 – Award for Plan-Making) West Bromwich Masterplan, which would see massive transformation of the town Centre, creating an amazing town connected via the Metro to the city centre, realising its potential just fifteen minutes away from Grand Central Station. I'll also be leading the team that will develop Sandwell's Design Code and assisting with our innovation Strategy aligned to having business growth within our combined Regeneration and Growth Team.

I then moved to the Regeneration Team who sponsored me to complete my accredited masters qualification back at UOB in 2016 and became an MRTPI Chartered Planner in 2020.

More recently, I had the opportunity to speak at the National Planning Conference about 'Planning in 2070', where I shared my bold national vision of mission planning our place within the solar system, aligning the RTPI, UK Space Agency (UKSA) and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), to mission plan a future UK vision for growth together.

## What has been the wider social, economic and environmental impact of your work?

The work I have done over the years has given back to the community in many different and positive ways. Through tackling ‘Grot Spot Hotspots’ across Sandwell and working with community groups to transform derelict land / properties back into use. I set up a programme with a local rehabilitation group, where we helped recovering drug / alcohol addicts by providing council owned green space for use in projects. I’ve also had the opportunity to visit many schools within Sandwell, showcasing the role of planning and planning as a career pathway. More recently I’ve been working with Sandwell College to integrate students into the heart of delivering the Urban Greening programme in West Bromwich through the ‘GreenRoots’ cultural programme.

We have secured significant Levelling Up funding for Sandwell over the past few years. I was part of the senior team that secured £67.5m Towns Fund investment, and the Lead Regeneration officer securing £25m for West Bromwich. This is funding which is bringing forward regeneration in the heart of communities across Sandwell. The West Bromwich Urban Greening Scheme embodies the most recent example already making a positive impact. This scheme has successfully created high quality public realm and social spaces, attracting people into West Bromwich High Street by encouraging local users to walk, dwell, socialise, play and relax within the town centre. Bespoke, designed parklets with high impact, low maintenance planting has replaced redundant, over imposing and dilapidated market stalls.

A planting scheme was designed in consultation with Sandwell Visually Impaired Group to maximise sensory planting, stimulating the visual, auditory and olfactory senses. Lavender, Rosemary, Verbena and other blossoming varieties have been introduced to encourage well-being and provide a peaceful, relaxing environment for people to socialise all year round.

All planting was designed in mind to attract pollinators, providing opportunities for food sources for insects, promoting biodiversity with the aim of bringing butterflies and bees into the urban high street. A children’s play space has also been introduced alongside planting areas, to encourage families to use the high street and to encourage children to play and be active within an intergenerational setting. Within this, I am most proud of leading on the restoration and reimagining of two Grade II listed assets on the high street – The 138 year old Farley Fountain and 111 year old Dartmouth Clock. These two iconic pieces of architecture are synonymous with the historic identity of the town and having the opportunity to attach my name to the legacy of the town was a massive privilege.

## What misconceptions or accusations about planning have you had to face in your career so far?

I haven’t faced many as we tend to be at the forefront of bringing positive change through Regeneration Planning and finding solutions to complex development opportunities. One thing I have found though, is that perception is the hardest thing to change as a planner. No matter what you do, even if it is glaringly obvious as to the benefits of delivering something – you can’t please everyone, so the hardest challenge is how we can influence positive perceptions through the places we create and take a longer term view towards why and how we plan for change.

*You can submit responses to this article or other contributions to future Tripwire editions at [tripwirewm@gmail.com](mailto:tripwirewm@gmail.com)*





## As a planner, what piece of advice or philosophy can you offer other planners?

Becoming the RTPI's regional (West Midlands) and national Young Planner of the Year has been an amazing catalyst to my personal confidence, it's an amazing achievement, representing an acknowledgement of my career to date and how I have been shaping regional regeneration through my work. I now have the honour to represent young planners and be a voice for the profession on the national and international stage – this gives me the opportunity and the confidence to share my vision of the future of the planning profession and will no doubt help me develop and shape my career moving forward. From this emerges a philosophical concept for me centred around legacy planning. I want planners to start thinking big again and to start planning with legacy in mind. I want those shaping reality all around us to think deeper and bolder for the answers to make a real difference. I want thinkers, shapers, enablers to look past the horizon in front of them, realise there is no horizon, understand that we

should be planning within timeframes which span over centuries and stretch our imaginations as far as we can. I think we need to embrace this concept as 'Legacy Planners', so framing this in the context of planning over timeless periods; rooted in the now and from a position of fearlessness. Once we start to re-calibrate our vision to this and all aligning our wider individual passions, the easier it will get to re-align our mindsets to make a difference in the 'now' and create a legacy we can all be proud of.



Read more about Joshua's concept of legacy planning on [LinkedIn](#)

## What about the West Midlands now or in the future excites or inspires your work?

I love all that the West Midlands has to offer, and, having seen how the region and Sandwell has changed over time, I am really excited for the future. Sandwell has an amazing story to tell and we're finally shaping the narrative which is making people stand up and take notice. This is part of the reason we've secured over £0.35bn of Levelling Up Funding and are seeing schemes within our £3bn Regeneration Pipeline starting to accelerate through all stages. For me though, I want to start aligning people to accelerate towards a shared vision of the future that will see the region grow exponentially in terms of opportunity. Personally, I'm seeing a much more longer term plan starting to come to fruition about pivoting our wider manufacturing base in Sandwell towards the industrial space sector and how this can contribute to reversing long term deprivation in the area. I would love to see this embraced by the region and the future leaders of Birmingham bringing forward a vision of 'Birmingham Space City' – if they don't, then we definitely will in Sandwell... 'Sandwell Space City' has a nice ring to it!

## What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

As a Father of three and husband to an amazing wife (who I met at Sandwell Council), life is never boring outside of work! Although it sometimes feels like the two are merging together in a positive way as my children see first-hand what we as planners do, what we shape and the reality we create around us. They even helped me choose some of the colour schemes for the urban greening project so they are already morphing into the generation of Planning Rangers! I am a big rugby fan so I enjoy watching Exeter Chiefs and England play – although my boots were hung up many moons ago – so shouting from the sofa, or bar, is where you'll find me now! I also enjoy going back to Devon and spending time helping my mum out in her garden – that's where my passion for urban greening comes from I think!



“Once you start thinking about legacy planning, you can't stop thinking about planning a legacy.”

*You can read more about Joshua's concept of legacy planning online.*



—  
**Joshua Singh MRTPI**  
*Regeneration Team Leader, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council*  
*Regional and National Young Planner of the Year 2023*

# Global Voices

## Victoria, Australia

In 'Global Voices' we reach across the continents to hear from planners working in overseas contexts very different to our own, ones which offer similarities and differences to our own system in England and Wales. This time we sat down with Sheridan Harley, Senior Planner in State Planning Services at the Department of Transport and Planning for the state of Victoria, Australia, to tell us how planning for the city Melbourne and the surrounding local council areas offers its own unique challenges, utilising industry-leading technology to do so.



## Planning History and Context of Victoria

Here in Victoria the planning system started as we know it today with the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme in 1954, since then, there have been twenty-one such policies and plans. The long term now up until 2050 is Plan Melbourne 2017-50, planning for future land uses, growth, infrastructure, employment and housing needs. It was refreshed in 2017, with the addition of climate change and transport priorities, alongside a more recent addendum for 'twenty minute' neighbourhoods and new projections.

In Victoria we are the fastest growing state in Australia. In September 2023, the state government released a Housing Statement for the next decade, identifying major reforms to central policy, quicker decisions, clearer timeframes and a review of Plan Melbourne, expanding beyond metro boundary, for which a statewide consultation is now underway.

In Australia, there is no national planning policy, planning is entirely delegated to the six states and two territories, with plans led by state government.

The Planning and Environment Act (1987) underpins all development in Victoria. There are lots of roles and divisions within the state of Victoria's departments, feeding through to the Minister for Planning. Strategic plans containing policies here are known as 'Planning schemes'.

## State Planning Organisation and Structure

The Department of Transport and Planning is part of the state government. We work together with local government (councils) to draw-up planning schemes and amendments, control land use, consider development approvals and instigate reforms.

The Minister for Planning is the elected member responsible for approving all planning scheme amendments as well as large development.



**Figure 2** Melbourne 2050 Plan – Central City (Plan Melbourne 2017)

Central Business District	Key precinct	Metro Tunnel (all)	Road network
National employment and innovation cluster (NEIC)	Part of Melbourne	New station	Waterway
Major urban renewal precinct (2015-2050+)	Arts precinct	State-significant road corridor	Waterbody
Priority precinct	Sports precinct	Western Distributor (potential alignment)	
Other precinct	St Kilda Road precinct	Rail network	
Health facility	Landmark	Train station	
Education facility	Public open space	Train network	

**Figure 1:** Plan Melbourne  
(Credit: DTP, Victoria State Government)



## Within Victoria there are seventy-nine local councils, thirty-one in metropolitan Melbourne alone.

Councils are structure differently, but each have a dedicated planning team within them and have their own local schemes. There are also teams that focus on processing planning applications. There is a statewide structured provided however, through the standardised [Victoria Planning Provisions](#).

### Routes into Planning in Australia

A typical route into planning in Victoria is: a bachelors degree, a masters degree, then a student experience placement. These are offered to those near the end of their studies, they offer early experience in the workplace, usually in a local council. In my case, I have seventeen years in the sector working for several private and public organisations.

I obtained a bachelors degree in *Applied Science Planning* from the [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology](#) (RMIT), then took a semester exchange to Utrecht University in the Netherlands, to undertake studies related to international planning, finishing with a six-month industry placement in a local council in Melbourne.

### Public Perceptions and Consultation Approaches

Public perception towards planner and planning in Victoria is mixed. Due to misinformation and a lack of understanding of what we do, and to the complex issues that make development long and drawn out. Recent planning reforms have been welcomed, especially fast-tracked planning approvals.

Planners face more criticism at the local rather than state level, as they typically work more closely with residents.

Another important part of our planning is the protection and management of aboriginal cultural heritage. The [Aboriginal Heritage Act](#) (2006) shapes planning approaches in Victoria, and our planning scheme sets out policies for protecting and preserving places of aboriginal cultural significance. Any development with the potential to cause harm is required to provide a Cultural Heritage Management Plan involving registered aboriginal representatives, before a planning permit is issued.

## Early engagement and good communication is the key measure of success in this area.

### The Role of Technology

Technology plays a big role in planning at both the state and council levels, especially mapping and visualisation. The Department of Transport and Planning uses advanced 3D modelling process using '[Vic3D](#)' - a planning-focussed web-based viewer. It allows planners to manage and monitor development activity, including heights, set-backs, overshadowing, sightline analysis, streetscapes and aerial views of development. It allows us to explore different design options and identify problems early. Vic3D is in the beginning stages of forming a digital twin of the city of Melbourne and the Central Business District (CBD) and is likely to be expanded statewide in the future.

Housing is a leading issue in our planning schemes. In the 2023 Housing Statement, reforms aimed at delivering 800,000 homes in the next ten years at 80,000 a year have been implemented.



Vic3D (Credit: DTP, Victoria State Government)

### Key Approaches: Housing Reform and Major Regeneration

These include an accelerated decision pathway, higher densities, fast-tracked permits for sites offering 10% affordable housing (and a dedicated permitting team to process them), and new permitted development allowing second homes to be built in an existing residential plot without permission.

Alongside this, a new [Future Homes](#) programme makes it easier to build better apartments, offering four sets of pre-approved architectural designs of three-story apartments that exceed current sustainability standards and offer adaptability for developers. We are awaiting the first such schemes to come forward. We leave decisions over modular or Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to the industry, our designs allow for flexibility with regards

to detailing, finishes, materials, the provision of open space, internal amenity and construction methods.

Plan Melbourne identifies several urban renewal districts involving many statewide agencies. [Fisherman's Bend](#) is Australia's largest urban renewal project, a 480 hectare site in the heart of Melbourne near to the CBD, sitting in five precincts across two council areas, straddling Port Philip Bay.

It currently houses industrial uses, but with plans for 80,000 residents and jobs to match, all set in a vibrant, mixed use medium and high density development of parks, roads, transport routes and community facilities. Consultation is currently underway on an approach to fund critical infrastructure.

Future Homes Design B (Credit: DTP, Victoria State Government & LIAN Architects)



## Sustainability and Climate Change

One of the key purposes of our Planning Scheme is to support climate change. Lots of councils here have declared a ‘climate change emergency’ whilst Victoria has a long-term emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050. Victorian planning provisions have recently been updated to require all new development to submit a statement outlining waste management, transport choices, cooling and greening of the urban area, biodiversity enhancement, as well as noise and air pollution mitigation.

A new permitted development right for ‘**Neighbourhood Batteries**’ is also currently being piloted. This allows greenfield development to have a single source of electricity for a given neighbourhood, improving local energy resilience. New development also cannot connect to the gas network.



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**Melbourne 2050 Plan**  
(Credit: DTP, Victoria State Government)

## The Future of Planning in Victoria

A key future priority in Victorian planning for me is to speed up consistent decision making in government, reduce politicisation and better emulate exemplary planning approaches, such as in New South Wales. At present, the system does not differentiate between minor and major development, which can add significant delays to permits and creates a lot of stress and heavy work for planners. This would provide better statewide outcomes, reducing frustrations for landowners, developers and planners alike.



—  
**Sheridan Harley**  
Senior Planner

State Planning Services,  
Department of  
Transport and Planning,  
State of Victoria, Australia

# TRIPWIRE TIME CAPSULE



In a new feature for 2024 we go digging into the archive of Tripwire to search for parallels and poignant issues pertaining to the contemporary planning context of today. This archive spans printed editions from spring 2001 all the way up to winter 2016, when the magazine moved to digital-only format.

In early April, news broke that Birmingham City Football Club had brought forward a landmark deal to purchase the 19.4 hectare 'Wheels' site in Bordesley, Birmingham, as the chosen location for the new home of 'The Blues', in a bigger stadium and sports complex to replace the nearby St Andrew's Stadium. This follows investment and advisorship by ex-NFL star Tom Brady, with big ambitions to take the club into the top leagues of the sport.

An article all the way back in one of the earliest issues (Issue 05, September/October 2001) caught our eye and offers parallels for the present day. The article excitedly detailed the then fresh plans to unveil a new 'saddle shaped' National Football Stadium arena adjacent to the NEC in Birmingham.

The central government sponsored scheme was also expected to form a major transport hub alongside the M6, M42 and a newly envisioned Midlands Metro 'light railway system'. The article also refers to a rival scheme in Coventry that had secured outline permission some months before on a former gas works site. Other contemporaneous reports noted that Birmingham's proposed 85,000 capacity stadium was to be the new national stadium following the planned demolition of old Wembley Stadium, London. Such a nationally significant proposal surely would have been an economic and reputational boon to the West Midlands region, whether built in Birmingham or Coventry.



—  
Tripwire  
September  
2001

Alas, it was not meant to be, and by 2006 the plans in Birmingham had been shelved after meeting with mixed support locally, and being supplanted by construction of the new Wembley Stadium nationally. The rival Coventry proposal would be built out and become the Coventry Building Society Stadium, albeit at a much smaller match day capacity than the 90,000 originally planned. The Metro 'light railway system' in fact would take many more years to expand beyond its Snow Hill to Wolverhampton corridor (opened in May 1999), which started with the city centre expansion in 2015, and is now under eastward expansion to finally link the NEC, Airport and HS2 (at Solihull Interchange), so finally realising a route envisioned in 2001, and before the completion of HS2 in 2030.

# Reader Letter

Following our article "A Story of a Regional RTPI Magazine" (Issue 109, Autumn 2023) we received correspondence from a previous contributor of Tripwire and long time West Midlands RAC member, Peter Lindsell.

Peter recalled fondly working out of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, alongside Cliff Middleton and Alastair Banks, in Tripwires' first editorial trio. Peter suggested the origins of the magazine stretched back to the 1980s, originally as a regional newsletter. At that time, a handwritten copy of the draft magazine had to be typed onto a stencil for duplication, later typed-up by an officer working in the office typing pool. Peter's contribution not only adds an interesting insight into the origins of this magazine, but reveals the long thread of volunteers giving their time to the RTPI through time, and the changing technology of the last few decades.

*Thank you Peter, for your window into Tripwire's past, your work on the early magazine and your follow-up contribution to our article.*



Issue 109, Autumn 2023



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Spread from article "A Story of a Regional RTPI Magazine" (Issue 109, Autumn 2023) (Credit: RTPI West Midlands)

# Events and CPD Programme

## Heritage and Design in Coventry – Walking Tour

**Date:** Tuesday 11th June 2024, 9.30am-2pm

**Price:** £42.50 (Refreshments and lunch are included)

**Venue:** Coventry City Centre

Come to Coventry and learn about the unique opportunities and challenges faced in a compact and constantly evolving city, where a more traditional understanding of heritage sits alongside a growing understanding and appreciation of modern post-war architecture. There will be presentations and discussion and a walkabout to view some of these heritage assets in context.

### Learning Outcomes

- Living case study of the modern day developments in a historic city

### Core CPD Framework

- Placemaking and Design
- Development and Infrastructure Planning

[\*\*BOOK NOW\*\*](#)

## Planning for Health

**Date:** Thursday 4th July 2024, 9.30am-2pm

**Price:** £42.50 (Refreshments and lunch are included)

**Venue:** Birmingham City University (BCU) Campus

Planning for health needs to ensure that developments are designed well and are multi-functional to enable people to live healthy and active lifestyles, in terms of their physical and mental health. Strategic planning, planning alongside communities and delivery of health infrastructure is also essential. Come and hear more and join the debate.

### Learning Outcomes

- How to plan for healthy built environment

### Core CPD Framework

- Health and Wellbeing

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[Click here to see all future RTPI West Midlands events on the regional events calendar.](#)



## RTPI West Midlands Summer Ball and Awards 2024

**Date:** Tuesday 21st June 2024 at 6-11.30pm

**Price:** From £70.00 for an individual ticket, £350.00 half table (5 people), £700.00 full table (10 people)

**Venue:** Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7XG

Join us for our Annual Summer Ball and Awards for a fantastic evening celebrating the very best in planning excellence in the West Midlands.

### Programme

We start with the drinks reception at 6.00 am, followed by our Regional Awards for Planning Excellence ceremony. This is followed by a 3 course meal, with table wine, then fabulous entertainment. More information to follow soon. Black tie dress code.

### Sponsors



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## RTPI West Midlands Young Planners Events and CPD Programme

### Birmingham Canal Walking Tour and Glasswater Locks Visit

**Date:** Thursday 30th May 2024, 5.30pm

**Price:** Free for RTPI Members (only)

**Venue:** Glasswater Locks Sales and Marketing Suite, Belmont Row, Birmingham, West Midlands, United Kingdom, B4 7RQ

Join the RTPI West Midlands Young Planners Committee for a walking tour showcasing how Birmingham's canal network is being used as an asset for mobilising large-scale regeneration projects, new leisure opportunities and habitats in the city centre. The tour will include an exclusive visit to St Joseph's (Berkeley Group) Glasswater Locks development, providing a new gateway between Birmingham's Eastside and the city's vibrant Learning Quarter. The development offers a selection of contemporary canal-side apartments and duplexes, aiming to create a thriving new community with extensive on-site facilities.

### Learning Outcomes

- Insight into Brownfield re-development
- Background on Inner city regeneration
- Knowledge on Historic canal network
- Information on Blue and green infrastructure

### Programme

- **3:00pm** – Arrival and registration at Glasswater Locks Sales and Marketing Suite
- **3:15pm** – Introduction, inc. talk on Glasswater Locks
- **4:00pm – 5:30pm** – Walking Tour of Birmingham Canals led by Nicki Schiessel Harvey (Senior Lecturer in Built Environment at Birmingham City University) finishing at the ICC where delegates are invited to join the committee for a post-event drink nearby.

[\*\*BOOK NOW\*\*](#)



## Special Promotion

# Report Writing Workshop for LPA Planners

This workshop is designed to support Local Authority planners to develop key skills and build on their existing knowledge of report writing. Join us to learn how to perform under pressure and develop coping mechanisms for areas of the jobs which are most difficult. The course follows on from the 'It Takes Planners...' campaign that is currently running, which shines a spotlight on the day-to-day stresses and challenges of planning as a profession.

Report Writing Workshop for Local Authorities will run 9am to 4pm on Tuesday 16th July 2024 in-person at the West Midlands Employers, Vyse Street, Birmingham and costs from £30 [\*\*BOOK NOW\*\*](#).

RTPI West Midlands

# City and Town Centres – The Role of Regeneration

—  
Fasley Fountain  
The restored Elizabeth Farley  
Memorial Fountain, West  
Bromwich Town Centre



**There have been enduring debates on the future of our urban centres with the long-term structural challenges of business rates, e-commerce, retail parks/out-of-town retail and changing societal trends. However, in many ways, these trends have been exacerbated in recent years with the pandemic and cost of living crisis which have particularly affected town and city centres.**

There was therefore a very timely Conference on 22nd April in Birmingham on retail, regeneration, and the future of our urban centres. With my teaching and research interests strongly related to urban greening, regeneration and post-Covid repurposing, I found this conference very timely with many topics covered which are of wider interest to the profession.

The trends noted above were sketched out by the Chair of the event Maria Dunn (Head of Development Policy at Birmingham City Council).

First up was Dr Steve Norris (Executive Director and National Head of Planning at Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH)) who gave a timely overview of the 'perfect storm' facing High Streets, especially in the context of serious challenges with local government financing. Steve then highlighted research by LSH on the key interventions needed to address retail decline which centred on Business Rate reform, urban greening (such as in Stockton-on-Tess) and local authority leadership in partnerships.

Next up was Joshua Singh (Regeneration Team Leader at Sandwell Council) who focused on the regeneration of West Bromwich. The town has experienced long-term industrial and retail decline. The council are pursuing a regeneration strategy focused on showcasing the towns history (such as the Farley Fountain), restoring civic pride and creating multi-generational spaces as seen in the 'Urban Greening Project' (for which I have also been conducting a research project in partnership with Sandwell Council).

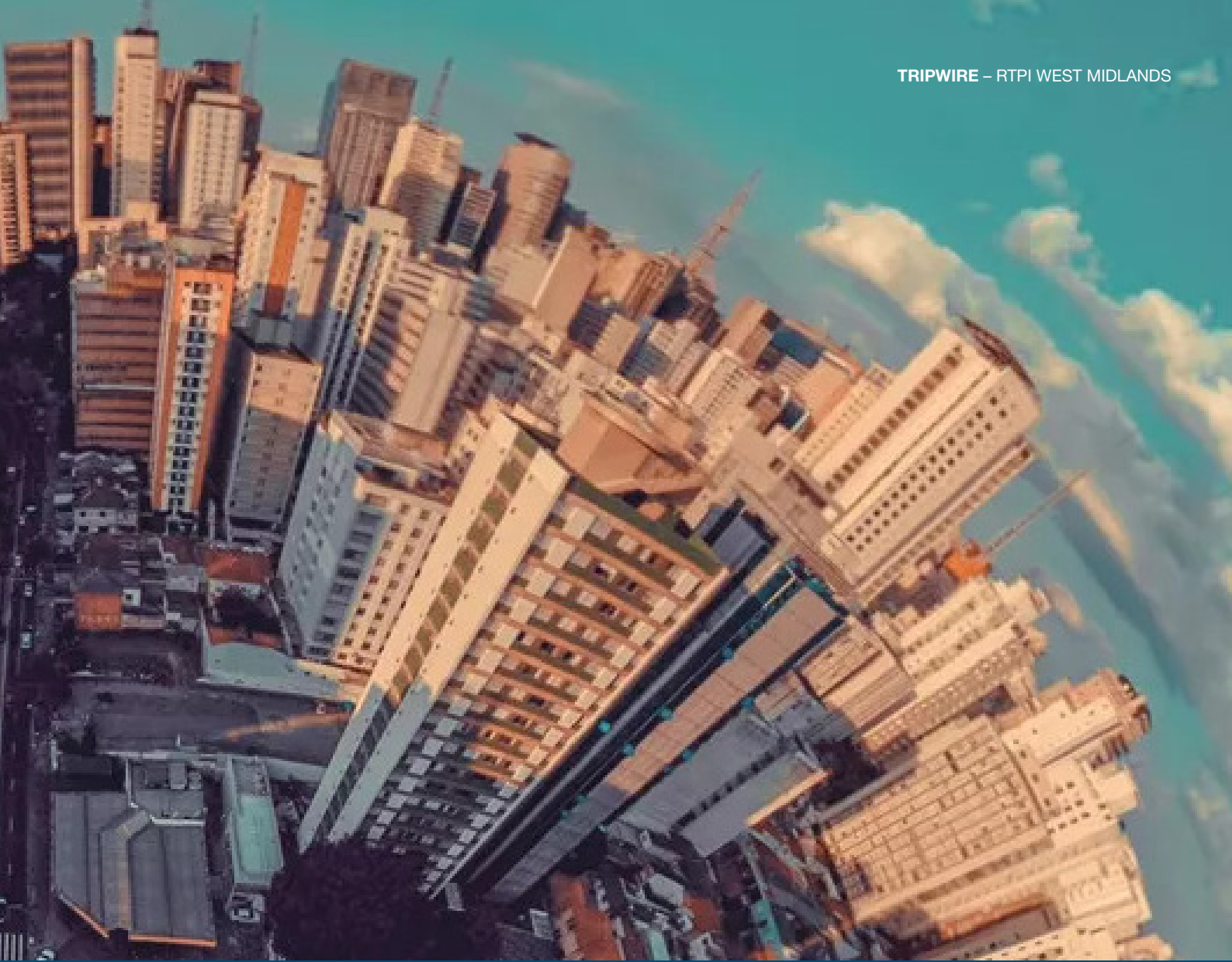
Finally, Nicola Fleet-Milne (Co-Chair of the Jewellery Quarter Neighbourhood Planning Forum) focused on the challenges of heritage-led regeneration. Nicola drew out the particular issues facing the quarter including the balancing of conversation with urban greening, diversifying the housing and protection of the jewellery businesses and the broader creative sector in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Questions then focused on sports-led regeneration, securing medium density development, partnership working, the importance of planning policy and creating a clear vision for place.

Overall, this conference was useful in bringing RTPI members up-to-speed with the latest trends and developments in the important retail and regeneration space. It also showcased work and projects being led by both the private and public sector and both strategic and neighbourhood perspectives.



—  
**Dr Charles Goode**  
RTPI West Midlands Young Planners Committee  
and Regional Activities Committee Member



## Get in touch

Tripwire is the magazine of RTPi West Midlands, produced by our members for our members. The opinions expressed are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the RTPi. You can read all of our digital editions published from 2017 to the present on [our website](#).

If you would like to contribute a photo, illustration or article, suggest a theme for future editions or have any ideas for content please email the Editor at [tripwirewm@gmail.com](mailto:tripwirewm@gmail.com). We especially love to showcase the work of regional photographers, especially in-region contributions for the front cover image.

Contact RTPi West Midlands via email [westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk).

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