

# Annual Report

2024

## Introduction

In 2024, planning took centre stage amid a busy political year – and we're proud to say that RTPI members and colleagues rose to meet the challenges of the moment.

Ahead of and after the UK General Election, the RTPI was poised to provide a strong collective voice for planners, building on the strong foundations of our Planifesto campaign launched last September. Thanks to that work, and the input of our members, we were well-positioned to undertake ambitious campaigning, communications and advocacy for well-resourced, effective planning functions throughout the course of the year.

Just as Minister of State Matthew Pennycook noted in his August letter to RTPI President Lindsey Richards, planners are vital to the growth of the country – and this year, RTPI members made it clear why that is. The expertise, talent and perseverance of planners was on display as volunteers organised to improve planning resources in the Regions and Nations; as our networks drafted new guidance for their specialty; and as members joined roundtables to respond to planning policy. Together with your help, we are raising the profile of the profession and promoting the role of planning as a solution, not a problem.

Alongside this advocacy, we're also glad to report the many ways RTPI members made use of the resources offered by the Institute to advance their planning careers and pursue their professional development, demonstrating the high standard of professionalism and achievement among our members. 2024 saw soaring numbers of first-time APC applications to Chartered membership status, a sold-out Young Planners Conference, and high attendance at our networking events and Continuing Professional Development offerings online and in-person.

As we head into 2025, we know that our members are ready to rise to the challenge of unlocking growth and leveraging the power of planning to build sustainable, vibrant communities.

Dr Victoria Hills  
RTPI Chief Executive

Meeta Kaur  
RTPI Board Chair

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## Promoting the value of membership and professionalism

*In 2024, the RTPI undertook significant projects to improve services, benefits, CPD offerings, digital security, and much more for our members. We saw record-high first-time applications to Chartered membership and were proud to support our members throughout their professional journey as planners.*

### Member Value Project

The third phase of our Member Value Project wrapped in 2024, including an analysis of the findings from the RTPI's Member Survey by a research agency, a presentation of findings to the Project Board and Board of Trustees, and updates for staff and members highlighting key takeaways from the results. Survey findings were incorporated in our 2024-2025 roadmap.

The results of this work will inform future projects that the RTPI undertakes, including the Strategic Plan, which we have been consulting on throughout 2024 and is due for publication in 2025.

### Assessment of Professional Competence (APC)

This year, we maintained last year's exceptional growth in the number of first-time applications to Chartered status submitted. 713 first-time submissions were made in total across the year, up from last year's total of 699.

In July, RTPI announced an important change for Licentiate APC (L-APC) and Associate APC (A-APC) candidates in response to the APC Review survey. From February 2025 onwards, the requirement for L-APC and A-APC candidates to include a Reflective Journal as part of their APC submission will be [temporarily suspended](#).

### Celebrating membership milestones

In 2024, 179 members reached the milestone of their 50<sup>th</sup> year with the RTPI. We recognised these members with a letter of thanks from our CEO, inviting them to their local welcome event to be celebrated, and presenting them with a certificate to mark 50 years of membership.

### Apprenticeships

This year 127 Chartered Town Planner apprentices successfully completed their End-Point Assessment (EPA), resulting in them achieving Chartered status.

### NURTURE

After a successful second cohort for our pilot mentoring programme came to an end in January, we scoped third-party platforms to widen the mentoring opportunities. The next phase of NURTURE has started with a selection process underway for a supplier to deliver an Institute-wide formal mentoring offering for implementation early in 2025. This will be delivered through an online platform that will be available to all members, UK and international.

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In order to better support members in completing their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement, RTPI Education officers worked with colleagues in RTPI Communications on an awareness-raising campaign to update CPD webpages and guidance documents and remind members to use the online CPD log to capture their CPD and reflect upon it. Following these enhancements, staff saw an increase in the number of events and training logged online.

To strengthen our online CPD offerings, the National Training Team developed five additional online CPD masterclasses with five newly hired trainers with subject matter expertise, rolling them out alongside the existing training portfolio. The team received positive feedback from learners, with “Planning for strategic development sites” being exceptionally well received. This class was developed especially for experienced Chartered planners, in collaboration with trainer Dr Darren Bell.

## Chief Planners of Tomorrow

Our [Chief Planners of Tomorrow](#) programme, now in its fifth year, went live in April. The RTPI paired Young Planners with chief planning officers across the UK for an opportunity to shadow them for the day and learn from those in senior leadership roles in local authorities. RTPI staff received a great number of fantastic feedback posts, notes and emails from participants following the experience.

## Young Planners’ Conference

Nearly 200 delegates joined this year’s sold-out flagship event, which took place in Cambridge. The theme ‘Connecting Town and Country: Planning for Urban and Rural Areas’ aimed to explore the complex dynamic and intersection of balancing growth versus resources.

## Student Career Talks

Throughout September and October, Young Planners and RTPI staff visited Planning Schools to speak to new students embarking on RTPI accredited courses. This is an opportunity for Young Planners to share their tips and career journeys so far with future members of the profession, and included visits to University College London, University of Liverpool, Anglia Ruskin University, and more.

## Networks review

The RTPI continued a review of its four policy/practice-focused networks, which are the National Association of Planning Enforcement (NAPE), Transport Planning Network (TPN), Urban Design Network (UDN) and Independent Consultants’ Network (ICN). The review team has benchmarked our networks against other similar institutions, analysed membership body research, interviewed current members, conducted workshops with an EDI focus, and this summer, launched a membership-wide survey on the topic.

## Technological improvements to enhance member experience

The RTPI rolled out a number of technological improvements to enhance member experience this year, including:

- A new [Volunteer Hub](#) designed to provide committee members with a dedicated space on SharePoint where they can access resources, information and joint working in a secure way. Committee members can now access the Volunteer Hub via their member profile on the RTPI website.
- Enhancements to the CPD logging page of the member section of the website to allow members to log increments of hours of learning and edit entries after submission, making the process more user friendly
- A new preference centre for RTPI emails, which enables members to opt-in to bulletins from neighbouring English Regions or Nations
- A change to how members sign-in to the RTPI website, The Planner and RTPI Learn, allowing members to use their email address rather than membership number. This change is an essential step prior to online membership applications, because non-members will need to be able to create an account to sign in to the website to start their application and an email address is the first step in this process. It also opens up options to bring in multi-factor authentication in future, which will enhance security for our members.

Other digital transformation projects are underway, including an innovative Redaction project to enable colleagues to redact, in-house, sensitive information from RTPI documents to prevent data breaches. The Online membership applications project continues with build now in progress. Future projects include updates to the website content management system (CMS) to improve security and the introduction of a new learning management system for members.

## Cybersecurity audit

The RTPI achieved outstanding results in our 2024 cybersecurity audit when compared to industry standards. This reflects our commitment to robust security practices, as evidenced by:

- Effective security measures: our strategies are successfully mitigating risks.
- Regulatory compliance: we have surpassed the required standards, reinforcing our focus on cybersecurity.
- Opportunities for minor improvement: the audit has identified a few areas for enhancement which were on the roadmap of planned improvements.

The successful audit validates RTPI practices and underscores the Institute's dedication to safeguarding the Institute and its stakeholders from cyber threats.

## Membership renewals

An intervention to boost outbound calling to engage members who have not renewed was rolled out in 2024. This enabled a comprehensive and structured approach to maximise retention and mitigate the risk of the increased attrition of paying members seen in 2023. The campaign was well received by members and has shown positive results.

For 2025, in response to member feedback through the Member Value Project, we will no longer print physical membership cards. This cost-saving measure will not only allow us to invest further in member services, but more importantly supports our climate action plan commitment to reduce

printing. Additionally, we will send half of the membership renewal segments digitally for 2025, with ongoing work to enable us to move to sending all renewals digitally for 2026.

### **RTPI Membership Elections**

In September, results of elections for RTPI Vice President confirmed that [Jan Bessell will be the Institute's next Vice President](#). Nominations for positions on Regional Management Boards, Regional Activity Committees and National Executive Committees closed on 27 September, with elections in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

### **Engaging volunteers**

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the RTPI, and the results from this year's volunteer survey confirm how meaningful their contributions are in helping us support members and the planning profession. Through the course of the year, members helped us deliver in excess of 350 events, respond to our Planning Aid England enquiries, secured sponsors, judged our Awards for Planning Excellence (nearly 150 in total), sat on committees and steering groups, and helped us respond to government consultations. An overwhelming 98% of our volunteers would recommend the experience to others, highlighting the enriching nature of giving back to the profession.

## Supporting planning services

*A busy political year demanded a robust response from the RTPI. We championed planning throughout the year with our Planifesto campaign, briefed both parties ahead of the General Election, and were in to see the Minister of Housing within the first working week.*

### Championing planning during the General Election

The RTPI launched its '[General Election 2024 Hub](#)' to explain the RTPI's role as the collective voice of planning during the election campaign and to interpret and explain how each party manifesto might impact the planning profession. This included detailed manifesto analysis covering [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and NI and public-facing '[explainers](#)' that explore the political debates around key planning issues to appeal to non-planners.

We were able to draw upon the messaging of our [Planifesto campaign](#), having launched the September prior and hit the ground running after the election, meeting with new government leaders within the first working week. Our impact was reflected in [a letter](#) the Minister of State Matthew Pennycook addressed to RTPI President Lindsey Richards in August, calling planners 'vital' for the growth of the country.

Additionally, the RTPI adopted new campaigning and political activity guidance to ensure that the institute's independence is protected and respected. The policy outlines staff, trustee and volunteers' responsibilities, provides advice and offers public affairs support to ensure our advocacy follows current Charities Commission and Electoral Commission guidance.

### RTPI-commissioned research on strategic planning launches report

[Research](#) commissioned by the RTPI revealed overwhelming support for effective strategic planning in England. The Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments at the University of the West of England (UWE), together with Catriona Riddell Associates and Richard Wood Associates, carried out the research.

### RTPI response to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation and announcement

On 24 September, the RTPI submitted a [consultation response](#) to the government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. The response expressed support for many of the changes but cautioned of the need for a clear plan for how local authorities will be able to manage high housing targets. Members shaped the response through a series of roundtables held across our Regions, sharing their input on the NPPF changes.

On 12 December, the RTPI [responded to Government's announcements](#) outlining their planning overhaul. The Institute backed the government's decision to allocate additional resources to enhance the planning system, acknowledging the critical investment needed to meet the UK's ambition housing and climate targets, while warning of possible transitional hurdles.



Following the NPPF announcement, [Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, wrote again to RTPI President Lindsey Richards](#) to reiterate his respect for the planning profession and outline commitments, including grant funding, to help enhance the capacity of local planning authorities.

### RTPI supporting Planning Skills Fund delivery

The RTPI was [selected as a preferred delivery partner for the Planning Skills Fund](#), a new five-year industry programme aimed at increasing skills and capacity in Local Planning Authorities across the UK. The programme fund is being led and managed by the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), with the training bursary process delivered by the RTPI. The scheme will launch in 2025.

### Chief Planning Officer guidance published in Scotland

In Scotland, the requirement for every planning authority to appoint a Chief Planning Officer became a statutory duty this April, following many years of successful advocacy by the RTPI, particularly our Scotland office.

### Updated Planning Enforcement Handbook

In April, the RTPI launched an updated Planning Enforcement Handbook for England, written by members of our National Association of Planning Enforcement (NAPE) network, and funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The updates came as new enforcement regulations went into force as part of the changes to the planning system introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA).

### Budget responses

At the end of February, the Scottish Budget for 2024-2025 was passed, confirming a 43% cut. Dr. Caroline Brown, Director of RTPI Scotland, [noted the cuts would worsen an already challenging situation](#) in terms of meeting housebuilding goals, and would put “additional pressure on Scotland’s already overworked and overstretched local planning authorities.”

Upon release of the Chancellor’s budget in early March, Chief Executive Victoria Hills [expressed hope](#) that the £3 million match funding for an industry-backed scheme to train planning officers could indicate that the government recognises the seriousness of recruitment challenges faced by the profession. The RTPI recommended caution in the pilot use of AI solutions and in proposals to accelerate planning service, seeking a balance between efficiency and quality outcomes for communities.

### Policy consultation responses

Throughout the year, the RTPI responded to policy consultations, announcements and other developments affecting planning and communities across the UK:

- Response to [street vote development orders](#) (2 February)
- Response to [changes to developments on brownfield sites](#) (13 February)
- [RTPI Scotland response](#) to the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill (14 February)

- [RTPI Northern Ireland consultation response](#) to the Department of Infrastructure's Review of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (29 February)
- RTPI Cymru response to the Welsh Government's [Sustainable Farming Scheme consultation](#) (7 March)
- [Response](#) to a consultation on the siting of new nuclear power stations beyond 2025 (11 March)
- RTPI Cymru response to 'Environmental principles, governance and biodiversity targets' White Paper (April)
- RTPI Cymru response to Social Housing Supply Inquiry (April)
- [Response](#) to 'An Accelerated Planning System' consultation (1 May)
- [RTPI Ireland response](#) to draft first revision of the National Planning Framework (July)
- RTPI Cymru response to the [Senedd inquiry](#) on halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030 (3 July)
- [RTPI Scotland response](#) to Inventory of Historic Battlefields (16 July)
- [RTPI Northern Ireland response](#) to Marine Protected Areas Strategy and [Blue Carbon Action Plan](#) (13 August)
- [RTPI Scotland response](#) to Flood Resilience Strategy consultation (16 August)
- [Response](#) to 'Proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system' (24 September)
- [RTPI Scotland response](#) to an Infrastructure Levy for Scotland (1 October)

### **'Route map' for strategic planning proposed**

In October, the RTPI proposed a clear '[route map](#)' to government to help Local Authorities take full advantage of strategic plans as soon as possible and to keep making local plans while they are introduced. Our route map proposals suggest a clear outline of where each local authority fits into the government's direction of travel on strategic planning and national policy reforms, providing clarity and certainty through the transition.

### **The Location of Development 4 report released**

A [joint research report](#) by the RTPI and LandTech, released on 6 November, highlighted a decade of missed opportunities in achieving sustainable housing. The report, Location of Development 4, revealed that new housing developments have remained car-dependent, with minimal improvement in access to essential services by walking, cycling, or public transport.

### **Spatial Approaches to Local Energy Planning**

[New research](#) commissioned by the RTPI will explore how to integrate local area energy plans and spatial planning. Energy experts Regen will investigate the links between energy planning and local spatial planning, and explore how Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) have been developed across the UK.

### **Early Career Research Grants awarded**

Three projects of £10,000 submitted to the RTPI Early Career Research grant scheme were awarded funding by an assessment panel composed of representatives of RTPI English regions funding the projects. These included projects on the digital skills expectations of planning educators,

students and employers, the mobility of planning policies within areas of England with a focus on fast food outlet regulation, and a project on planning for an ageing society.

### **Response to English Devolution White Paper**

The RTPI welcomed the government's announcements in the English Devolution White Paper released on 16 December, and [responded](#) swiftly in support of implementing strategic planning quickly and calls for greater collaboration across local authorities.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

RTPI promoted new Biodiversity Net Gain draft regulations in [November](#) and [January](#), advised DEFRA/DLUHC on improvements and resourcing and advised members at regional events. This will remain a focus for RTPI as we progress into 2025.

### **Briefing Competition and Markets Authority**

England, Scotland and Wales policy leads briefed Competition and Markets Authority privately to clarify misunderstandings of the UK's planning systems and [responded publicly](#) to articulate RTPI's response to their 'Working Paper on Planning.'

### **Future Planner bursary recipients attend RTPI Scotland Annual Conference**

Ten £5,000 RTPI Future Planners bursaries have been allocated to a selection of students enrolled in an RTPI fully accredited Planning Masters in Scotland. The students were invited to the RTPI Scotland Annual Conference, where they met Minister for Public Finance Ivan McKee as well as RTPI President Lindsey Richards, RTPI Scotland Convener Pamela Clifford and Chief Planner for Scotland Fiona Simpson.

### **Scoping the potential for digital planning to increase capacity**

RTPI Cymru is pleased to be working with Dr Ruth Potts and Dr Brian Webb from Cardiff University on a project that will explore the current capacity of Local Planning Authorities to engage in digital planning in Wales. The work examines digital planning tools currently in use across Wales, digital skills gaps, and good practice. This work flows from the Big Conversation member survey in 2022 and subsequent research in 2023 on Building Capacity through Collaboration and Change, looking at how the public sector can best use its existing resources in addition to campaigning for extra resources.

## Raising the profile of planning

*From coverage in the Guardian to the Financial Times, the RTPI's media and public affairs work kept planning in the spotlight, leveraging RTPI-commissioned research to draw attention to the power of planning. The RTPI was represented at events around the UK and the world, including political party conferences, UK REiiF, and the World Urban Forum.*

### A broad public affairs reach during the General Election

The RTPI responded quickly to the [election announcement on 23 May](#) and to the publication of the [Labour](#), [Liberal Democrat](#) and [Conservative](#) party manifestos. Many of these reflected the calls made in our Planifesto and in subsequent engagement with the parties and their manifesto authors led by the public affairs team. In the 44 days following the announcement of the General Election, our reach in the press had over 320 million potential reach, almost half of our entire year previous. The RTPI's commentary, research and Planifesto appeared in pieces in the Telegraph, Times, Financial Times, and more, as well as an exclusive article covering our research with Public First in the i, and an op-ed in City AM.

Our Planifesto campaign and new video assets were promoted on social media throughout the election campaign to promote the role of planning as a solution, not just as a problem. This resulted in positive engagement across our channels including 4,500 impressions on LinkedIn for an animation on housing in our Planifesto, while on Twitter our Planifesto campaign video had nearly 2,500 views, the highest of the year so far. Our General Election Hub on the RTPI website saw 1,558 views, with an uptick in the run-up to the campaign. Our housing explainer and manifesto reflections were the most viewed.

RTPI Head of Policy and Research Richard Blyth, appeared on the ['50 Shades of Planning' podcast](#) to discuss the Planifesto and present our asks alongside the LPDF, BPF, RICS and NHF.

### Research outlines the economic value of planning

RTPI-commissioned research by Public First was [published on 24 June](#) to demonstrate the economic value of planning during the election campaign. It found that 300,000 homes delivered each year could generate £70bn more value if planned well and investigated opportunities to scale up housing delivery using development corporations and other models that have proven successful in the past. It received prominent coverage in the [Independent](#) and an accompanying op-ed from Victoria Hills in [City AM](#). The report is the latest addition to the [RTPI's Value of Planning research series](#) and was produced as part of our research strategy.

### 'Great Debate' report released

In mid-May, the RTPI released its ['Great Debate' report](#), a summary of the debates held by the Institute throughout 2023 on the most pressing issues facing planning today. The report includes discussion of topics like strategic planning, the future of the green belt, and more.

Many of the issues discussed by the General Assembly have since been woven into the various programmes across the RTPI.

### **Politicians in Planning Network (PiPN) engagement**

As part of PiPN's objectives, we launched a series of webinars in collaboration with RTPI regions to foster dialogue between politicians and planning professionals. These webinars are highlighted in our newsletters, which serve as a platform to share insights, best practices, and updates on planning and policymaking.

On 26 September, the Southeast region hosted a webinar titled "Politics in Planning," focusing on strategic planning challenges and opportunities in England. The discussion explored the evolving role of local councils in planning, the impact of leadership on planning outcomes, and how collaboration between policymakers and planners can address housing and infrastructure demands. On 5 December, the Yorkshire region held a webinar titled "Strategic Planning in England: A Case for Reform." The session delved into strategic planning and planning reforms, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to address spatial planning challenges, the role of research in shaping policy, and the future of regional collaboration.

### **RTPI representation at party conferences**

Planning was a key topic at this year's political party conferences. The RTPI Presidential team, Chief Executive and other RTPI colleagues represented the Institute at the three major parties' conferences to ensure that the voice of planners was heard loud and clear.

### **'Joint Institutes' approach to new Metro Mayors**

RTPI Chief Executive Victoria Hills cosigned welcome letters to newly appointed Metro Mayors alongside CIOB, RIBA, RICS and ICE. These letters represent a joint approach to engaging the newly elected local leaders and aim to secure joint meetings to promote priorities for the built and natural environment in the West Midlands, East Midlands, North East, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

### **Minister for Infrastructure speaks at RTPI Northern Ireland Conference**

The reappointed Minister for Infrastructure John O'Dowd MLA gave the keynote address at this year's RTPI Northern Ireland Conference. The theme of the conference was "Positivity about Planning" and the programme focused on sharing best practice, collaboration with other built environment professions, and personal resilience and wellbeing.

### **Planning is Global**

The RTPI launched [Planning is Global 3](#), a publication highlights the crucial role of planning in addressing global water challenges. It was the latest in a series that promotes the role of members and the profession worldwide.

### **UKREiiF 2024**

RTPI had a significant presence at UKREiiF 2024 with the RTPI President, Vice President, and Chief Executive representing the Institute and speaking at various panels about planning reforms

and the need to properly resource the planning system which was widely supported by speakers and participants throughout UKREiiF 2024. The RTPI Planifesto 2024 has been supported by central and local government figures as well as relevant organisations at UKREiiF.

### **MIPIM 2024**

RTPI Chief Executive Victoria Hills and RTPI President Lindsey Richards attended this year's MIPIM in early March, where they met leaders across the sector and attended events discussing the capacity and capabilities of planning and advocating on our members' behalf.

RTPI jointly hosted a women's networking session on Day 2 of MIPIM, with Landmark Chambers, Town Legal and Kanda Consulting providing the opportunity to make new connections and discuss how far the built environment sector has come in terms of gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

### **Engagement with the American Planning Association and U.S.-based members**

In April, RTPI Chief Executive Victoria Hills, RTPI President Lindsey Richards and Young Planner of the Year Josh Singh attended the American Planning Association National Conference in Minneapolis. The conference was attended by planners across the United States as well as representatives of other institutes around the globe. The CEO and President met with APA and other Global Planners Network counterparts also in attendance, including Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The RTPI President had a number of speaking engagements at the conference and was able to share a UK perspective and highlight some of the Institute's work in connections with Housing and Health and Planning to a largely American based audience. The RTPI also engaged with members based in the United States at a special RTPI members event in Minneapolis. For more details, please read the [President's blog](#) and the [Young Planner of the Year blog](#).

### **Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) visit to London**

RTPI Vice-President Helen Fadipe MBE and Board of Trustee and Chair of the International Committee Samer Bagaeeen, supported by RTPI staff, hosted a delegation from the Hong Kong Institute of Planners. The RTPI and HKIP have a MoU promoting professional practice and standards between the two organisations. Around 60% of RTPI international members are based in Hong Kong and two of the Institute's planning schools are also in Hong Kong.

### **UN-Habitat update**

As part of its increased engagement with UN-Habitat, the RTPI President recorded a message for the UN-Habitat First 2024 Executive Board Meeting that took place in Nairobi on 6-8 May. The message was an opportunity to highlight the contribution of the planning profession to and the support for the 2030 agenda, sustainable development and climate action.

### **RTPI President contributes to UN-Habitat Urban Thinkers Campus**

On 18 September RTPI President Lindsey Richard took part in an Urban Thinker Campus (UTC) event that brought together professionals from around the world to reflect on the pressing issue of the global housing crisis. UTC is an initiative by UN-Habitat that aims to foster collaboration and learning among partners for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. The [event](#) was hosted by the RTPI and is a collaboration between Planners 4



Climate Action (P4CA), The Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) and other global planning organisations.

### **Collaboration with ISOCARP on climate resilience planning**

RTPI and ISOCARP launched an online programme of CPD webinars focussing on climate resilient planning on 26 September. The aim of this collaboration is to provide a platform for learning and exchange of ideas to support and encourage planners to lead on climate action and influence better outcomes.

### **Attendance at World Urban Forum 12**

RTPI President Lindsey Richards and Chief Executive Victoria Hills represented the RTPI at this year's World Urban Forum in Cairo (WUF12). The RTPI hosted an evening reception on behalf of the Global Planners Network, which was attended by organisations from around the world. Lindsey sat on three panels covering Academia and the New Urban Agenda, scaling up Affordable and Sustainable Housing, and SDGs in Action, and undertook a joint press conference on the launch of the Charter for Participatory Planning, which promotes the right to take part in decision making and shaping urban environments and territories and co-creating solutions to address common challenges.

### **World Town Planning Day**

This year marked the 75th anniversary of World Town Planning Day. The theme, "Homes Start With Planning" focused on the role of planning and planners in delivering housing that meets the needs of our communities, and in helping to create equitable, inclusive, and sustainable solutions for all. The RTPI developed a special [WTPD online programme](#) which took place 8 November.

RTPI Director for Wales, Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England, Mark Hand, was invited to speak at the British Irish Council on World Town Planning Day on the topic of "Tackling the Climate and Nature Emergencies." The BIC comprises the meeting of the administrations from England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales together with the Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

### **Digital access to historical archive of The Planner (1914-1993)**

The RTPI released scans of the first 79 years of its journal's history for easy online access by members, students and researchers. You can browse and search the journal at our [Historical Archives page](#). The Planner promoted this new resource with [an article](#) looking at the history of the different iterations of the Institute's journal.

### **RTPI Awards for Research Excellence**

This September, the tenth RTPI Awards for Research Excellence recognised the leading spatial planning research from RTPI accredited planning schools and RTPI members. [The winners](#) were announced at a ceremony during the UK-Ireland Planning Research Conference at the University of Reading.



**RTPI**

Royal Town Planning Institute

## RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence

The 47<sup>th</sup> [RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence](#) took place in London on 26 November, with finalists announced on 16 October. A list of all winners, commended and finalists can be found [here](#).



## Promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity

*In order to create a planning profession that is as diverse as the communities it represents, the RTPI has spearheaded initiatives that attract new entrants into the profession and create clear pathways for young people, including our BALANCE project and Education for Everyone initiative. We also sought to build a more inclusive Institute through celebrating milestones and examining our approach to events to ensure every event we host is as inclusive as possible.*

### Education for Everyone initiative

In December 2023 the Board of Trustees agreed to fund the [second stage of the Education for Everyone](#), a flagship project that aims to broaden access to pathways into chartered membership and reach out to attract diverse talent. This year, the Education for Everyone project continued in its engagement and consultation phase. The Chair of the project Oversight Group, Sue Bridge, has been [interviewed about the project for The Planner](#), and the [all-Member survey](#) launched with a strong response rate. Workshops have taken place with the Planning Schools Forum, and engagement and consultation with other stakeholders continued through the autumn.

### BALANCE Project

The second phase of the BALANCE (Building A Legacy and A New Community Equity) Project commenced at the end of 2023. RTPI President Lindsey Richards formally launched the initiative as part of [her inauguration in January](#). Causeway Education helped the Institute produce a new outreach strategy and implementation plan for engagement with young people, reviewed the Institute's careers promotional activity and recommended and tested effective options to engage pupils from underrepresented backgrounds.

RTPI President Lindsey Richards shared updates on the BALANCE (Build a Legacy and New Community Equality) programme this October, calling on all members to dedicate two CPD hours in 2025 to visiting schools and speaking to young people about planning. To support members in this outreach, the RTPI launched updated materials and a toolkit for RTPI members to use in schools during volunteer Ambassador visits.

### 50th anniversary of Sylvia Law's inauguration as first female President

This July, the RTPI celebrated the [50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sylvia Law's inauguration](#) as its first female president with a special event in London, highlighting the significant changes the Institute has undergone in the last half century. The event brought together RTPI members, Past Presidents and staff to commemorate inspirational women within the Institute, past and present.

### Marching in London Pride with partners

RTPI members and staff [participated for the first time in the London PRIDE parade](#) alongside our Built Environment partners, gathering with partners at RIBA for a pre-parade reception and wearing specially issued RTPI rainbow t-shirts.

## Inclusive Event Strategy

The RTPI is implementing a comprehensive Events and Training Strategy to ensure that all RTPI events put members at the heart of what we do and are consistent with our climate and EDI action plans. The strategy takes its steer from the Corporate Strategy and aims to deliver a seamless and attractive CPD journey for members, provide content to support different learning styles, and more. This work includes updating our inclusive events guidance, and the introduction of a suite of measures that will help ensure guests to RTPI events have the best possible experience.

## Displaced Planners Fund

This year the RTPI granted its first award from a [new fund to support displaced planners](#) to enter the profession in the UK.

## Helping individuals and communities navigate the planning system

This year, Planning Aid England's volunteer-led email advice service responded to hundreds of requests from individuals and community groups seeking planning advice.

Work is underway to improve the design and user experience of Planning Aid England's dedicated [planning guidance website](#) which helps the general public navigate the planning system in England. This well-used resource (over 20,000 unique page views per month) provides clear, accurate, and regularly updated information on all aspects of the planning system and is a useful tool for the public and Members alike.

## Planning Aid England collaboration with Friends, Families and Travellers

PAE is working with a specialist MRTPI planning consultant and in liaison with [Friends, Families and Travellers](#) to produce new online content to help Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities engage with the planning system in England. This material will be available later in the year.

## Supporting 'Just Neighbourhoods'

A PAE staff member is supporting an advisory group for a national '[Just Neighbourhoods](#)' research project. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation until early 2026, this project is investigating the take up of community planning initiatives (in particular, neighbourhood planning) and why some communities are under-represented.