

Transforming Planning in Practice – 2 December meeting
Leadership, Skills and Resources Working Group – Summary of discussion

Chief Planning Officer role

- The Chief Planning Officer need not necessarily sit at Executive Board Level. The role is to ensure planning has a voice and is engaged in cross authority issues, including community planning.
- It was suggested that the CPO should be a promoter of the Place Principle or even the owner of the authority's delivery of the Place Principle. Discussion also included that they should seek to future proof plans.
- The group discussed the qualifications required for the Chief Planning Officer and there were varying views about whether they should be registered member of the RTPI, although many considered this would be essential. It was mentioned that there are alternative routes to RTPI membership and a degree is not the only route.
- Although the Chief Planning Officer will be a designated person it was expected that they will be supported by a team.
- It was suggested that something similar to a Scheme of Delegation should be established setting out the circumstances where a Chief Planning Officer should be involved or engaged with.

National Planning Improvement Co-ordinator

- The group discussed a number of key principles which should underpin the role of the co-ordinator. Independence, transparency and providing a safe space to discuss issues were key considerations.
- The group were concerned about the resources available to the co-ordinator, for example how the workload would be managed, and whether they would have a support team.
- Engagement was also discussed. How the co-ordinator would engage with customers and link with other planning services such as the Key Agency Group, Improvement Service, RTPI and Partners in Planning.

Careers in planning / future supply of planning practitioners

- Promoting planning in schools: The group discussed how planning could be better promoted as a career choice to school pupils. Work has already been undertaken by the RTPI with regards to speaking to Skills Development Scotland. However, it was suggested that it would be useful to try and get planning within the school curriculum.
- Explaining planning: There will be value in demonstrating to young people how effective planning can help mitigate the effects of climate change. It was also suggested that planning is a creative profession and not just a regulatory function.
- Future capacity: The group agreed that it would be useful to try to understand the future resource requirements for Planning, in particular the number of planners required to maintain and enhance current staffing levels in the future.
- Supply of graduates: University courses were discussed and how the number of international students outnumbers local students. Solutions to this were looking at bursaries with a requirement to work in the public sector for a set period post completion.

Consultation on planning performance monitoring and fees

- SG Planning and Architecture Division will shortly consult on proposals for substantial changes to the fees structure and performance reporting with a view to having the new fee arrangements in place in Q2 of 2020, and to define how performance should be measured in future, with a view to making regulations on annual reporting of performance by Q4 2020.
- It was agreed that the working group would meet again in January to engage on the consultation.

Key actions

- The group agreed to meet again in January to discuss the consultation and begin discussions on Elected Member training. This will also allow further consideration of future planner resource required to deliver the Act.
- SG PAD will draft up an outline of the CPO and PIC roles in light of the comments and will share this with the group.