



RTPI Scotland

mediation of space · making of place

Places, People and Planning Developing Skills, Behaviours and Knowledge to Deliver Outcomes

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SUMMARY

This paper was commissioned by Scottish Government as part of work towards reviewing the planning system. It aims to establish:

- the skills, knowledge and behaviours it is thought are required for the 'new planning system' and identify where there are development needs
- how skills, knowledge and behaviours can be mainstreamed
- what mechanisms will be most effective in promoting and supporting professionals to attain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they require and how best to coordinate and resource this work

It says that

- There a range of skills – both technical and generic – that planners need to have
- There are opportunities to mainstream learning and development for professionals through Planning Performance Frameworks and 'kite marking' schemes
- There is a need to establish and resource a single coordination point to gather information, intelligence and good practice; share good practice; signpost to events & training; match make and supporting collaboration between organisations; and deliver a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary transformational development programme aimed at changing behaviours

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
PRINCIPLES	6
CONTEXT	7
Initial Planning Education.....	7
Assessment of Professional Competence.....	9
Lifelong Learning	10
ESTABLISHING THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOURS	12
Skills and Competency Frameworks	12
Skills Needs.....	15
Conclusions	22
MAINSTREAMING SKILLS APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT	23
Planning Performance Frameworks	23
Kite marks.....	24
Conclusions	24
SUPPORTING PLANNERS TO ATTAIN THE RIGHTS SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS AND KNOWLEDGE	25
Skills Development	25
Behaviour Change	27
Knowledge and Practice	27
A WAY FORWARD	30
Principles	30
Resources	31

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper has been commissioned by Scottish Government as part of its work towards reviewing the planning system¹. RTPI Scotland has led the development of this paper, however the process has been informed by the working group established by Scottish Government on Leadership, Skills and Resources, and, the Scottish Planning Skills Forum.
2. The Scottish Planning Skills Forum² is chaired by Professor Kevin Murray and includes representatives from education and training providers (Glasgow, Dundee and Heriot Watt Universities; the Improvement Service; PAS); employers (Heads of Planning Scotland and Scottish Planning Consultants Forum); Scottish Government; RTPI; and Scottish Young Planners' Network. The Forum's broad membership and objective to support lifelong learning puts it in a prime position to inform on the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to deliver the new planning system.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3. Skills development is a theme that runs through each stage of the work towards reviewing the planning system. This paper examines the scope for developing the skills, knowledge and behaviour required to deliver a planning system that realises its full potential.
4. The planning review reported on 31 May 2016. The Review panel's report *Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places*³ covered a wide range of issues, including those on leadership, resourcing and skills. Key comments on these issues in the review include:

“There is also an ongoing debate about the role and skills of the planning profession. Much of the discussion relates to resources available within local authorities. There is also a recognition that there is a wider need for skills development, including on the part of developers, communities and local elected members. There are some positive examples of shared services but this appears to be limited at present. It is clear to us that supporting a wide range of technical specialisms within a single authority is no longer a realistic option.

Planners cannot all specialise in all aspects of the process, and we therefore call on the profession to lead the way in public service reform through further innovation and collaboration. Sharing of skills needs to move beyond good practice dissemination to provide firm and practical solutions to funding constraints. Local authority planners would benefit from greater access to

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Review-of-Planning>

² <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-scotland/networks-and-forums/scottish-planning-skills-forum/>

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00500946.pdf>

wider professional expertise. The private sector and communities also have a role to play in this.

There has been a decline in planning schools in Scotland and there are difficulties reported in recruiting and training a cohort of Scottish Planners. Many believe that there is a need to improve the image of the profession to help address this, and in particular to ensure that the public sector is viewed as an attractive career option for graduates. The work of the RTPI to provide bursaries is clearly a welcome move towards this, but we would suggest that more could be done to invest in the future of the profession.”

5. A specific recommendation was:

“40. Skills development is required in a number of priority areas.

Project management, development finance, mediation and information technology are of critical importance. This applies to all those involved in planning, including the key agencies, developers and their agents as well as local authority planners. Training of elected members should be mandatory, monitored and enforced. A programme of training in community engagement for the development sector should also be rolled out.”

6. The Scottish Government response⁴ to the review in July 2016 said that it would “*work with the RTPI, universities and the Improvement Service to address priority areas for further skills development.*”
7. The recommendation was discussed at both the Leadership, Skills and Resources working group established to inform the consultation paper and the Scottish Planning Skills Forum. In particular, the following questions were discussed:
- What are the skills and knowledge that will be required for the new planning system?
 - How can we support planners to ensure that they have or attain these skills?
 - Who should be responsible for doing what?
 - How can any activity be resourced?
8. The subsequent consultation document published by Scottish Government *Places, People and Planning*⁵ recognised that planning can be recognised as a positive force for change and that there was a need for it to be measured by what it delivers. It said that outcomes must be the focus for all those involved in planning. The consultation paper also said

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Review-of-Planning/documents>

⁵ <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/planning-architecture/a-consultation-on-the-future-of-planning/>

“The capacity and resilience of the planning profession in Scotland as a whole needs to be considered in view of the recommendations set out here. The independent panel recommended further work on skills development and shared services.”

“We have asked the RTPI Scotland to undertake an audit of skills, and Heads of Planning Scotland to explore options for shared services. Given the many long established relationships between planners in and across the public and private sectors, we believe we can greatly improve the way we exchange knowledge, skills and experience. However, we recognise that there may be a significant need for further training. The immediate priorities include: leadership; project management; mediation and brokerage; development finance and economics; viability; costing and funding solutions; working with communities; and creativity and innovation. The emphasis is on efficiency. Not every authority can be expected to have skills in every area. However, there is a need to ensure that they have access to specialist skills when necessary.”

9. Scottish Government recognised there would be challenges in terms of resources but said that

“much can be done to help authorities to help one another. This willingness to work together needs to be carefully balanced with the pressures on planners. Time away from desks to either assist others or improve personal skills is not always possible in the current climate. This needs to be addressed, and we look forward to seeing the results of the RTPI and Heads of Planning Scotland's work on skills and shared services.”

10. RTPI Scotland has said in its submission⁶ on *Places, People and Planning* that there is a need to embed a new way of working in the planning system and that this means that planning should be repositioned, enabling the more effective collaboration that is needed between sectors and professions to deliver better development outcomes for Scotland. This will involve the perception of planning transformed, from being seen as:

- A drain on resources
- Creating uncertainty
- Working in silos
- A manager of conflict between different interests
- Unnecessary red tape and regulation
- An overly complex process

11. To

⁶ http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/2305955/places_people_and_planning_-_rtpi_scotland_response_31_march_2017.pdf

- A way of working that invests in and adds value to Scotland's assets
- A source of certainty and predictability for all stakeholders
- An instigator of collaboration and integration
- A facilitator for all those who want to make best use of Scotland's land and buildings
- Enabling the right development in the right places
- Proportionate and flexible

PRINCIPLES

12. In discussing this with the Scottish Planning Skills Forum, a number of principles have been agreed:

- Any new programme need to **support all professionals** involved in the statutory planning system. This means that it needs to involve multiple professions and sectors.
- Any new proposals have to be a **simple** as possible and **not overcomplicate** or **overburden** planning authorities
- The work should recognise the **differing needs** of planners and other professionals in **different roles** and at **different stages** of their career
- Any new action taken to addresses identified issues would need to be **cost effective**
- Although some organisations would have to lead, specific approaches future work would be best delivered through the **partnership** of organisations and sectors involved and the Scottish Planning Skills Forum had an important role in coordinating this.
- Although much of the debate is on **public sector** planners, it would be desirable for new initiatives to include **all sectors**, where appropriate
- Initiatives should look to support **individuals as they worked in organisations** to ensure that any new learning would be suitable for that organisation
- Key to the new approach would be **sharing good practice** and experiences among people and organisations

13. Our work has been focussed around 3 key tasks:

- Establish the skills, knowledge and behaviours it is thought are required for the 'new planning system' and identify where there are development needs
- Establish how the skills, knowledge and behaviours can be mainstreamed
- Establish what mechanisms will be most effective in promoting and supporting professionals to attain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they require and how best to coordinate and resource this work

CONTEXT

Initial Planning Education

14. The paper concentrates on post qualification skills, behaviours and knowledge; however, the importance of initial training for planners (and other professions) should not be forgotten. The RTPI accredits planning schools at universities within the UK, Ireland and internationally. The required education standards for learning and teaching of planning are set out in the RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education⁷. four basic elements:
- **Critical thinking:** planning is both an art and a science, but also more than the sum of those; it is about achieving outcomes, not just operating a set of procedures; and achieving those outcomes involves processes that are qualitative as well as quantitative, and informal as well as formal.
 - **Space:** planning deals with spatial relationships, and competing claims to spaces; and it deals with how sectoral and spatial relationships affect each other. In so doing, it has real effects on how economies and their infrastructures function; on how communities achieve cohesion and social inclusion; on environmental capacity and ecological impact; and on cultural identity.
 - **Place:** planning focuses on the outcomes that determine the quality, form and identity of places that people experience, whether they stay there or are just passing through.
 - **Action or intervention:** so planning is a process of deliberation that focuses on what could and should be done, and thus a process concerned with ethics and values as well as facts. It is an active process (although it recognises that sometimes the best course is no action), which requires management skills appropriate to securing results. And it requires sensitivity to the time dimension of decisions – how time affects decision-making, how it affects differentially the interests of the parties involved, and how decisions inevitably trade off present and future. Planners themselves need to be able to make good quality decisions, often based on imperfect information, and to help shape decision-making processes in contexts where others will make the ultimate decision.
15. Last year, as part of its *Routes to Education*⁸ initiative, the Institute sought views on the RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education and whether it remains up-to-date. Following discussion with accredited Planning Schools, graduates and RTPI Young Planners, RTPI Nations and

⁷ http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/8479/microsoft_word_-_policy_statement_on_initial_planning_education_2012.pdf

⁸ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/rtpi-response-to-education-policy-review-consultation/>

English Regions, RTPI Learning Partners and other employers and the RTPI General Assembly, the Institute has said that it does not recommend fundamental change to the statement.

16. Each planning school should display qualities an effective planning school should as set out by RTPI. These are:
 - Clear planning focus
 - Institutional support
 - Achievements
 - Stakeholder involvement
 - Professional involvement
 - External Examiners
 - Resources
 - Equality and diversity

17. It is also seen as good practice to develop ‘applied planning skills’ which are often achieved through study field trips and practical teaching modules. Experiential learning is an increasing requirement for RTPI accreditation standards.

18. Accreditation is a rigorous assessment by which the Institute approves undergraduate and postgraduate degree level courses that meet the Licentiate stage of requirements for Chartered Membership of the RTPI. It assesses the ability and effectiveness of the Planning School to deliver a planning programme that includes spatial and specialist teaching. The process operates according to the *RTPI Guide to Accreditation*⁹.

19. All accredited planning courses must demonstrate how a student of the course, on exiting with the qualification, is able to demonstrate a set of specific learning outcomes. The current learning outcomes (13 spatial and 6 specialist) that a fully accredited – Combined – planning degree must meet are listed below. For a spatial course all of the spatial learning outcomes must be met and for a Specialist course all of the specialist learning outcomes must be met as well as up to 4 ‘bespoke’ learning outcomes reflecting the nature of the specialism.

Spatial Learning Outcomes
SPA 1. Explain and demonstrate how spatial planning operates within the context of institutional and legal frameworks.
SPA 2. Generate integrated and well substantiated responses to spatial planning challenges.
SPA 3. Reflect on the arguments for and against spatial planning and particular theoretical approaches, and assess what can be learnt from experience of spatial planning in different contexts and spatial scales.
SPA 4. Demonstrate how efficient resource management helps to deliver effective spatial planning.
SPA 5. Explain the political and ethical nature of spatial planning and reflect on how planners work effectively within democratic decision-making structures.

⁹ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/find-a-course/accreditation/#KeyDocs>

SPA 6. Explain the contribution that planning can make to the built and natural environment and in particular recognise the implications of climate change.
SPA 7. Debate the concept of rights and the legal and practical implications of representing these rights in planning decision-making process.
SPA 8. Evaluate different development strategies and the practical application of development finance; assess the implications for generating added value for the community.
SPA 9. Explain the principles of equality and equality of opportunity in relation to spatial planning in order to positively promote the involvement of different communities, and evaluate the importance and effectiveness of community engagement in the planning process.
SPA 10. Evaluate the principles and processes of design for creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society.
SPA 11. Demonstrate effective research, analytical, evaluative and appraisal skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions.
SPA 12. Recognise the role of communication skills in the planning process and the importance of working in an inter-disciplinary context, and be able to demonstrate negotiation, mediation, advocacy and leadership skills.
SPA 13. Distinguish the characteristics of a professional, including the importance of upholding the highest standards of ethical behaviour and a commitment to lifelong learning and critical reflection so as to maintain and develop professional competence.

Specialist Learning Outcomes
SPE 1. Engage in theoretical, practical and ethical debate at the forefront of the area of the specialism in the context of spatial planning
SPE 2. Evaluate the social, economic, environmental and political context for the area of specialism
SPE 3. Evaluate the distinctive contribution of the specialism to the making of place and the mediation of space
SPE 4. Demonstrate the relationship within a spatial planning context of the particular area of specialism to other specialist areas of expertise
SPE 5. Demonstrate the type and quality of skills that would be expected of a graduate from this specialism undertaking the practice experience period of the APC
SPE 6. Assess the contribution of the specialism to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change

Assessment of Professional Competence

20. Assessments of Professional Competence¹⁰ are competency-based routes to Chartered membership of the RTPI. They assess candidates' experience and competence and enable them to show that they meet the high standards required for Chartered membership. There are three Assessments of Professional Competence:
- Licentiate Assessment of Professional Competence (L-APC)
 - Associate Assessment of Professional Competence (A-APC)
 - Experienced Practitioner Assessment of Professional Competence (EP-APC)
21. As part of the APC process applicants will be judged against the following competences:
- Professionalism and the *RTPI Code of Conduct*¹¹
 - The spatial planning context

¹⁰ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/>

¹¹ http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1736907/rtpi_code_of_professional_conduct_-_feb_2016.pdf

- Identifying and analysing issues
- Gathering appropriate information
- Identifying and evaluating a course of action
- Initiating and implementing a course of action or, for academic applications, dissemination and application of knowledge
- The legal framework
- Ethical challenges
- The political framework
- The economic context
- Reflection and review

Lifelong Learning

22. On reaching Chartership RTPI Members are also obliged to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct and its five core principles, namely:

- Competence, honesty and integrity
- Independent professional judgement
- Due care and diligence
- Equality and respect
- Professional behaviour

23. Members must annually prepare a professional development plan for the next two years identifying his or her personal professional development needs and in any two-year period undertake a minimum of 50 hours CPD activity related to the undertaking or managing of planning.

24. Developing skills, behaviours and knowledge in planning is not new. A key element of taking forward the 2006 Act was training and capacity building. The then Scottish Executive made commitments in *Modernising the Planning System: Unlocking Planning's Potential*¹², published in March 2007 saying

“We have provided resources for learning and development in planning authorities through the Planning Development Programme. We will continue to liaise with the Programme Manager at the Improvement Service to ensure that appropriate learning opportunities are delivered and encourage authorities to make best use of this valuable resource.”

25. This document saw a number of stakeholders sign up to support culture change including RTPI, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scottish Society of Directors of Planning, now Heads of Planning Scotland. RTPI said

¹² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2007/03/26102050/0>

“In practical terms, this means real change in behaviours and attitudes, and the planning profession willingly accepts its key role in helping to bring that change about, in leading by example and in taking individual responsibility.”

26. The Planning Development Programme¹³ was set up in 2006 to support the modernisation of planning through learning and development. Managed by the Improvement Service, the programme was initially funded by Scottish Government to support skills development stemming from the modernisation agenda. Later funded by an annual subscription from planning authorities and re-named the Planning Skills Series it continued to address learning and development for local authority planning staff. It works closely with local authorities, Heads of Planning Scotland, Scottish Government, key agencies and the RTPPI to identify the priority development needs for planners, and work with stakeholders to provide opportunities and resources to meet those needs.
27. The programme focusses on:
 - working with authorities to identify and implement a sustainable approach to skills development
 - promoting a joined-up approach to learning and development and working closely with key agencies and other organisations to maximise available opportunities and avoid duplication
 - working with stakeholders to identify priority development needs and agreeing how best to meet those needs
28. The approach taken seeks to:
 - utilise existing opportunities and resources, avoiding duplication of action being taken by others
 - make learning and development opportunities accessible to all authorities
 - encourage sharing of learning through organisations
 - provide different types of learning opportunities
29. More recently the programme has broadened its scope to deliver a more collaborative approach to skills development:
 - member authorities are now sending attendees from across Council services rather than the previous restriction to purely planning staff
 - the current subscription opportunity has been expanded to key agencies in both attending and initiating skills development opportunities
 - several events have actively promoted joint attendance with Community Planning managers

¹³ <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/planning-skills.html>

- events are opening up to include the private sector in recognition of the benefits to local authorities to address the capacity of the planning profession as a whole.

ESTABLISHING THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOURS

30. A key aspect of this work is to identify the skills, behaviours and knowledge sets required to deliver the best possible planning system for Scotland. In doing this we have looked to a number of sources including the range of skills and competency frameworks relevant to planners and creating places; research on the impacts of culture and skills development programmes; under work that has been undertaken looking to identify the skills required by professionals working to improve places.

Skills and Competency Frameworks

31. We have explored a number of skills and competency frameworks that are relevant to planners.

RTPI Continuing Professional Development priorities

32. RTPI has carried out a review of members' learning and practice needs¹⁴. This collated and examined information from a wide range of sources; including a member survey, RTPI event feedback forms, a survey of Learning Partners and priorities identified from our policy papers. RTPI then identified learning and practice priorities for members and the profession, on which the Institute will aim to deliver a full range of CPD and learning opportunities. The priorities identified for 2015-17 are:

- Understanding and practicing in a market economy
- Health and inclusive planning
- Delivering housing to meet national needs
- Understanding land as a resource (demand for energy)
- Communication, mediation and negotiation skills
- Effective decision making
- Management and business skills
- Ethics

33. These will be kept under review to check that they reflect the needs of RTPI members in the future.

RTPI Assessment of Professional Competence

34. RTPI sets out competencies required as part of its Assessment of Professional Conduct process¹⁵. These are:

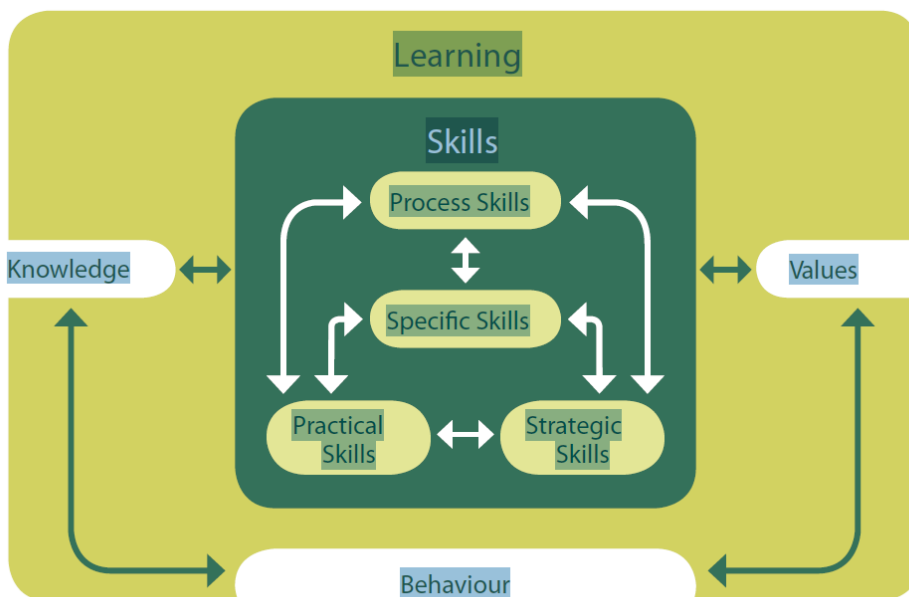
¹⁴ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/cpd-for-rtpi-members/cpd-priorities/>

¹⁵ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/membership/assessment-of-professional-competence/>

- Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct
- The spatial planning context
- Identifying and analysing issues
- Gathering appropriate information
- Identifying and evaluating a course of action
- Initiating and implementing a course of action/ dissemination and application of knowledge
- The legal framework
- Ethical challenges
- The political framework
- The economic context
- Reflection and review

The Learning for Regeneration Skills Framework

35. The *Learning in Regeneration Skills Framework*¹⁶ was published in 2004 by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration in Communities Scotland. It was aimed at the range of professions, disciplines and communities engaged in regeneration. It comprises four sets of skills as set out in diagram 1 below.



36. Process skills help to enable change. They enable you to communicate effectively with a diverse range of people. They cover:
- Adaptability and flexibility
 - Understanding other roles
 - Negotiation and conflict management
 - Partnership working
 - Working in and with communities

¹⁶ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/pir/SkillsPack/SkillsFrameworkpdf>

- Working in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner
 - Listening and communicating
 - Ability to learn.
37. Practical skills help to deliver change. They enable you to contribute to the day-to-day running of an initiative and cover:
- Managing staff and volunteers
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Project planning and management
 - Organisational development and planning
 - Financial management
 - Fundraising and funding applications
 - Time management.
38. Strategic skills help to initiate and promote change. They tend to focus on the future and are required by those who have any responsibility for the overall approach taken by an initiative. They cover:
- Strategy formation
 - Leadership
 - Risk-taking and enterprise
 - Creative thinking
 - Understanding policies and resources
 - Political awareness and judgement
 - Understanding local needs and contexts.
39. Specific skills are not covered in detail within the framework, as technical skills required will depend upon your role, perspective and existing experience.

The Egan Review Competency Framework (2004)

40. The *Egan Review*¹⁷ was published in 2004 and set out the skills for sustainable communities that were to be promoted in England. These are:
- Inclusive visioning
 - Project management
 - Leadership
 - Breakthrough thinking/ brokerage
 - Team/partnership working within and between teams, based on shared sense of purpose
 - Making it happen given constraints
 - Process management/ change management

¹⁷http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070402223805/http://communities.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1502264

- Financial management and appraisal
 - Stakeholder management – including ability to work with local residents and residents/community groups
 - Analysis, decision making, evaluation, learning from mistakes
 - Communication – including intelligent listening to the community, and promotion of development solutions
 - Conflict resolution
 - Customer awareness and how to secure feedback
41. It recognised the planning profession as one of the core occupation involved in sustainable communities and promoted the need for better inter-professional, inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral working. It said

“We firmly believe that attempting to upskill professionals in isolation will not produce the outcomes we are seeking. Instead success will lie in changing the behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of everyone involved, many of whom may not have realised in the past that they had anything to do with each other, or with sustainable communities.”

Skills Needs

42. The Independent Review Panel have already identified in their report a number of what they call ‘critically important’ skills including project management, development finance, mediation and information technology. The Review Panel did not publish any specific evidence to back this up so we have looked to a number of sources to give us an indication of what developmental needs could be.

Scottish Planning Authorities Skills Assessment by the Improvement Service and Heriot Watt University (2007)

43. The Improvement Service commissioned Heriot-Watt University, in association with Oxford Brookes University, to undertake a skills assessment of Scottish planning authorities in 2007.
44. The research said that a wide variety of skills and competences were required of individuals delivering planning services. Central to the majority of jobs were generic skills such as team working, written communication, time management, problem solving and customer focus. Those questioned during this research felt their skills in these areas were generally well honed, although ongoing development is required.
45. Development management skills were considered the most important technical skills required in planning services, and were considered to be generally well developed. Smaller numbers of those involved in delivering planning services believe they require specialist technical planning and management skills. This in part reflects the inclusion of administrative and other support staff in the survey.

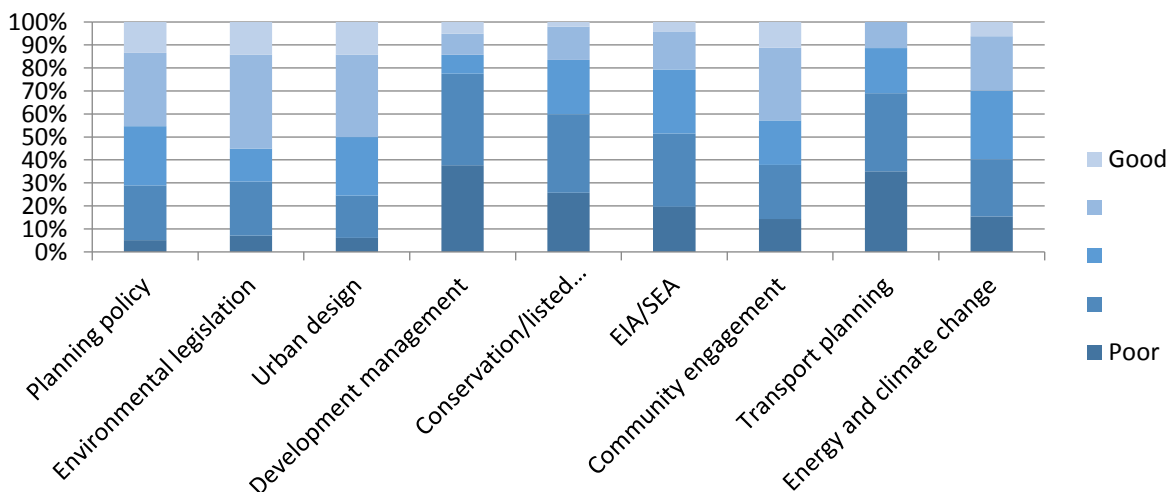
46. The research said that there were a wide range of topics that planning staff and managers identified as priorities for training and development including:
- **Core planning skills:** design, planning law/legislation, the 2006 Planning Act/changes to the system, development finance, sustainability, development management including planning agreements and appeals, strategic planning, policy making and rural planning.
 - **Procedural skills:** IT, verbal and graphic presentation, e-planning, GIS, and public inquiries. These skills are required across professional and support staff.
 - **Generic professional and management skills:** project management, negotiation/conflict resolution, staff/team management, community engagement, time management, customer service, leadership, stress management, financial/business management, data analysis and monitoring/appraisal.
 - **Specialist planning skills:** Strategic Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA/EIA), built environment conservation, water management (flooding, SUDS), retail planning, enforcement, construction/building, energy/renewable energy, regeneration, housing including affordability, biodiversity/nature conservation, economic development and minerals planning.
47. Senior and middle managers highlighted project management in particular as a priority development need, administrative and technical staff highlighted IT, planning law/policy and customer service, and most planning grades identified design skills as a priority development need. External stakeholders and some managers emphasised the importance of the attitudes and personal qualities that were needed to underpin the above skills and competences. The overall view of external stakeholders was that the modernisation of planning depends on positive attitudes, creative thinking, confidence, sensitivity to different perspectives, critical reflection, collaborative working and a focus on outcomes.
48. The external stakeholders who were interviewed were generally critical of skills levels within authorities and the effect on the delivery of efficient, responsive, high quality and inclusive services.
49. The key barrier to training and development identified was the lack of time due to heavy workloads, followed by limited budgets, the location/availability of opportunities and family or outside commitments. External stakeholders identified similar barriers to those in authorities, but consistently remarked on the consequences of low morale. It was generally recognised by stakeholders that attitudes and ethos are the hardest things to change and require more than just training courses.

- 50. There was an acknowledged need to develop skills in e-planning and other IT requirements, community engagement, development finance, negotiation/mediation, project management, SEA, workload/time management, design, development management, planning policy and implementation.
- 51. The majority of authorities operated staff appraisal systems, most of which were considered effective at identifying training and development needs. However, not all systems are working as well as they could, with staff commenting on the differing impact of supportive and unsupportive managers in identifying and addressing their training and development needs. Middle and senior managers were most positive about their training opportunities. A relatively high number of enforcement officers, technicians and senior planners reported their training opportunities as poor.
- 52. It was considered that creative thinking was required about a range of learning methods. Techniques encouraging longer-term capacity building and continuous reflection were seen to be particularly valued including structured on-the-job training and sharing experience across authorities. Tailored, externally delivered, interactive training was preferred to conferences and distance learning.

Scottish Young Planners’ Network Graduate Progression Survey (2016)

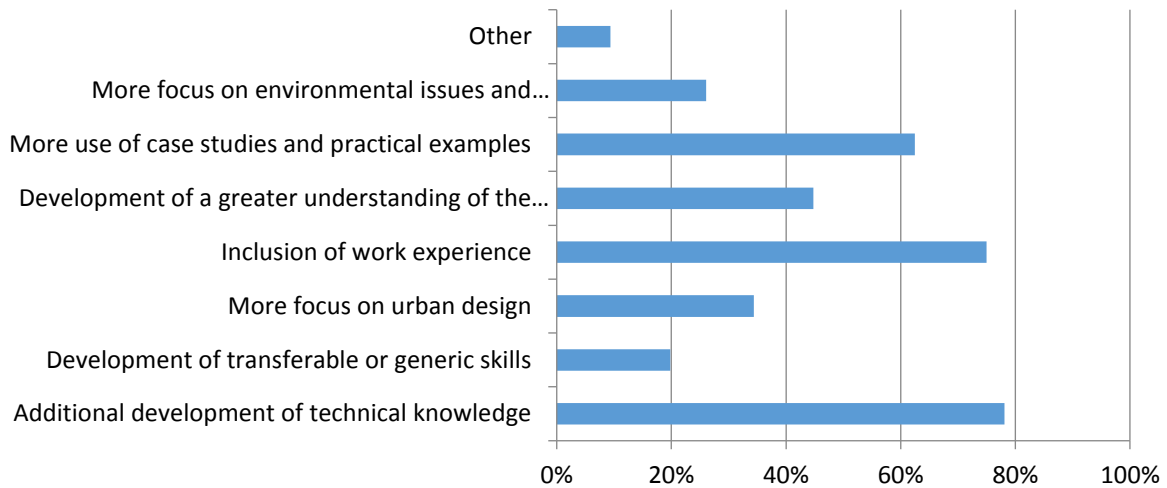
- 53. In 2016, the Scottish Young Planners’ Network and Heads of Planning Scotland undertook a survey of young planners to explore their career ambitions, development needs and support they required. Diagram 2 below shows that post graduation young planners felt well prepared in terms of planning policy, legislation, community engagement and urban design but less so in terms of development management, transport planning, EIA/SEA, conservation and energy and climate change.

Diagram 2: Usefulness of Qualification



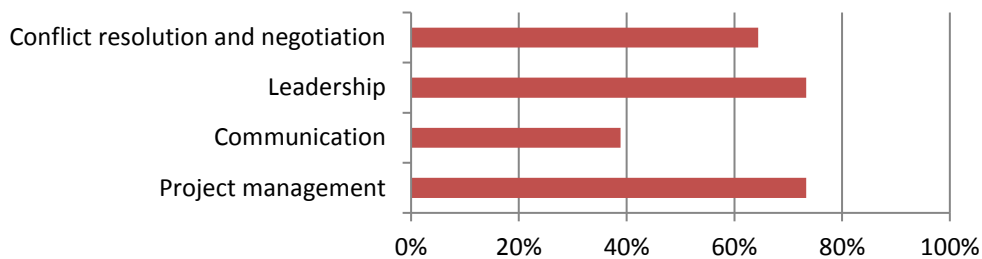
54. Diagram 3 below sets out the areas where young planners felt there could be improvement, with more practical elements highlighted such as work experience and more use of case studies and practical examples.

Diagram 3: Areas where Qualification could be improved



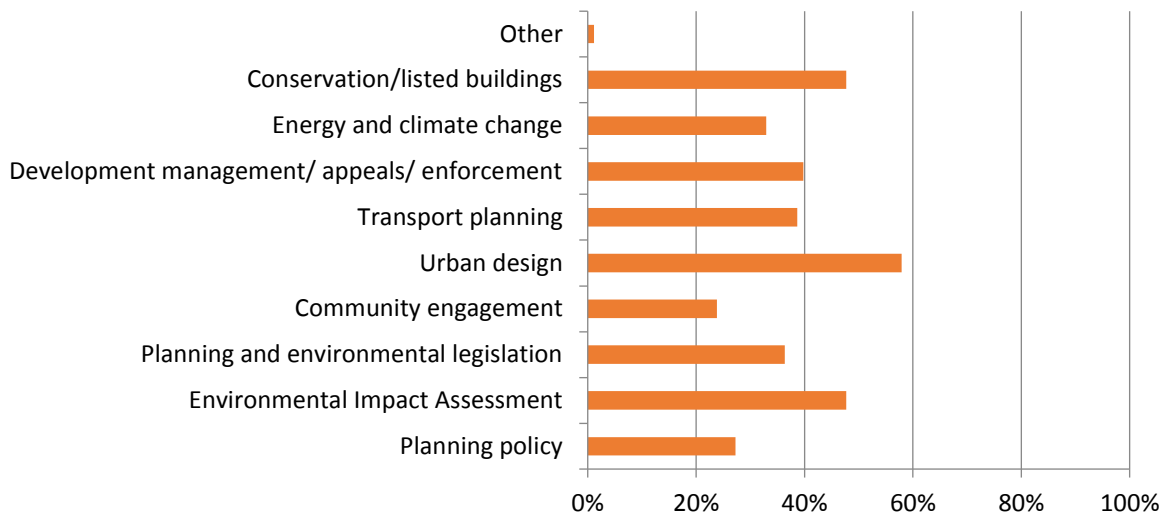
55. Other suggestions not noted in the diagram included handling planning applications; development viability; and less high-end theory.
56. The survey also provided detail on the skills young planners thought they required conflict resolution/ negotiation, leadership and project management all scoring above 60%. See diagram 4 below.

Diagram 4: Training - major skills sets wanted



57. Young planners also set out what technical skills they felt that they required. Diagram 5 below shows that conservation, urban design and Environmental Impact Assessment were seen as most important.

Diagram 5: Training major technical skills wanted



Improvement Service and Heads of Planning Scotland Survey 2017

58. We have accessed the recent survey undertaken by Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) and the Improvement Service asking managers the learning priorities were for their staff in the forthcoming year. Table 1 summarises the findings below.

Table 1: Manager Learning Priorities

What are your learning priorities for your staff for the upcoming year? Please select from 1 to 5 (1 = Low Priority, 5 = High Priority) Figures in %					
	1	2	3	4	5
Elected member training	3.1	6.3	9.4	37.5	43.8
Outcomes from the planning review	0.0	3.0	12.1	36.4	48.5
Project management	3.0	15.2	30.3	27.3	24.2
Benchmarking/performance management	0.0	21.9	28.1	40.6	9.4
Data monitoring	12.5	46.9	25.0	6.3	9.4
Information Technology	6.5	25.8	32.3	25.8	9.7
Leadership & Co-ordination of Work streams	3.0	18.2	39.4	24.2	15.2
Communication, Mediation & Facilitation	9.4	25.0	34.4	25.0	6.3
Stakeholder management & conflict resolution	6.3	31.3	34.4	21.9	6.3

What are your learning priorities for your staff for the upcoming year? Please select from 1 to 5 (1 = Low Priority, 5 = High Priority) Figures in %					
	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery techniques	3.0	18.2	39.4	27.3	12.1
Joint working with community planning	3.0	9.1	21.2	42.4	24.2
Joint working with transport planning	9.1	33.3	12.1	27.3	18.2
Updates from statutory consultees	6.3	43.8	25.0	18.8	6.3
Technical knowledge in development management issues	10.3	10.3	31.0	34.5	13.8
Technical knowledge in development planning issues	6.5	22.6	35.5	25.8	9.7

59. It shows that, based upon those needs identified as being priority or high priority have scores of 50% or over, managers were of the view the following were most important:

- Outcomes from the planning review (84.9%)
- Elected member training (81.3%)
- Joint working with community planning (66%)
- Project management (51.5%)
- Benchmarking/performance management (50%)

Changing the Culture of Scottish Planning: interpreting new regulations, shaping new practices, relationships and identities (2013)

60. This report¹⁸ was undertaken by Andy Inch at Sheffield University and published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). It notes that both the planning reform and culture change agendas introduced in Scotland to support the 2006 Act were welcomed by a broad range of stakeholders, including the planning profession, development industry and community and environmental NGOs who have all seen modernisation as a means of shaping a better planning system.

61. The research, which was conducted between September 2011 and October 2012, involved asking a number of key players engaged with planning about culture change including representatives of the Scottish Government and its key agencies, planning professional representative bodies, development industry representatives, environmental and community organisations.

62. The report says that at the national level reform has aspirations for planning to become:

¹⁸ <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/research/projects/changing-the-culture-of-scottish-planning>

- more efficient and responsive to market demands
 - better able to integrate and spatially organise the strategic priorities of different public services
 - more inclusive, better able to respond to the needs and interests of affected communities.
63. The report suggests that there is now a generally shared understanding amongst different stakeholders on the direction of change in Scotland's planning culture, due in part to the open collaborative approach through which the agenda was developed by the Scottish Government. This was commended by many and seen to have created a relatively clear consensus within the planning professional community about the nature of the change required. It was reflected at the local level where there was considerable evidence of commitment to a new culture.
64. It was therefore generally felt that there had been some progress towards culture change, and all involved recognised that the direction of change was generally positive – with many sharing a clear sense of what is required.
65. Findings from the report showed however that the public sector had been more enthusiastic adopting culture change and that other parts of the planning community were less convinced. There remains a problem of trust in relations between the public sector, development interests and communities. The development industry in particular appeared less committed to culture change and continued to argue for a more market sensitive approach to planning in the public sector, claiming their own practices were legitimised by the logic and 'bottom line' of the market.
66. The report raises a range of issues for all involved in planning in Scotland, suggesting that whilst progress has been made towards achieving some aspects of culture change, this has been uneven and remains very much a work in progress. Its key recommendations include:
- A key challenge for the government and local authorities is how they can to sustain commitment to change and improvement beyond the 'buzz of reform'.
 - The move towards new collaborative, relationship building practices has been broadly welcomed as a key change, symbolic of a new culture. However it needs to be recognised that there are limits to collaboration and its capacity to shape consensus and build sustainable relationships of trust
 - There is a need to consider how to pursue culture change beyond the 'easy targets' of performance improvement that have so far been most widely addressed.
 - The more challenging issues raised by 'inclusion' and 'integration' require explicit targeting as there has been less progress on these.

- Thought needs to be given to how far change should focus on efficiency. This is considered to be particularly important given fears that there is limited time to prove the value of planning services to politicians.
- A further key issue is how to ensure that resources are in place to deal with the fact that more efficient development regulation is often more resource intensive for local planning authorities as it involves lots of negotiation. Proposed changes to the planning fee regime in Scotland should be considered in this light.
- There is a need to examine how the wider public perception and 'culture' of planning in Scotland can be challenged. Work done to date has been primarily focused on change within public sector organisations and, to some extent, amongst private sector professionals. However, it is also clear that there remains a problem of public and political legitimacy for planning decisions. The report agrees that this is not just an issue for the culture of planning but is related to the wider sense that public services are a problem, and that political leaders and the democratic process are not widely trusted.

Conclusions

67. We have concluded that professionals involved in planning and placemaking have development needs that cover both generic and technical issues. We believe that the technical issues may change more quickly over time given ongoing developments in technology as tools to tackle challenges. There is also a continuing need to be clear on the implications that new technology will have for the built environment and planning our places.
68. There is a need to ensure that any approach to create culture change has to tackle deficits in skills, behaviours and knowledge sets.
69. Any future approach needs to learn from previous approaches that have concentrated almost exclusively on planners in local authorities. Any new programme must work across professionals in local authorities who have a role to play in place development. It must also involve people outside of local authorities including the private sector, Scottish Government and its agencies and third sector organisations working in communities. It should, wherever possible, look to bring these different players together.
70. New approaches should look to establishing learning in the workplace to ensure that they combine work aimed at promoting both individual and organisational behaviour change.

MAINSTREAMING SKILLS APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT

71. We have also explored how we can embed and mainstream processes with the skills and competencies we have identified as important. As part of this, we have looked at how to better connect work based Performance Development Plans and appraisal processes with these skills and behaviours.

Planning Performance Frameworks

72. The Planning Performance Framework¹⁹ (PPF) was developed by Heads of Planning Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Government. The framework involves a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures to provide a toolkit of indicators. All planning authorities and Strategic Development Plan Authorities prepare PPF reports annually.
73. We have explored if there could be reporting on planning authorities' commitment to supporting staff skills development through PPFs. This is something that would need to be tied into any review of the PPFs, which may be taken forward as part of the planning review.
74. Currently PPFs are made up of 6 parts:
- Part 1: Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service including Quality of outcomes; Quality of service and engagement; Governance; and Culture of continuous improvement
 - Part 2: Supporting evidence
 - Part 3: Service Improvements for the next year
 - Part 4: National Headline Indicators covering development planning; effective land supply and delivery of outputs, development management; enforcement
 - Part 5: Official Statistics on decision-making timescales; decision-making; local reviews and appeals; enforcement activity
 - Part 6: Workforce Information
75. In discussions with stakeholders, there was a feeling that there could be considerable merit including a new category in Planning Performance Frameworks that asks planning authorities to set out how they have helped staff to develop their skills, behaviours and knowledge sets. This would fit with the aims of developing a culture of continuous improvement in planning authorities. This would need to be explored in detail but it would rely on specifying a measures on, for example:
- personal development plans in place for staff
 - engagement in learning activities aimed at developing skills, behaviours and knowledge
 - customer feedback on performance

¹⁹ <https://hopscotland.org.uk/publications/planning-performance-framework-reports/>

Kite marks

76. We have also examined if there is scope to ‘kite mark’ good practice in supporting staff in a cost effective way. The most relevant approach we found is the RTPI Learning Partners initiative²⁰. RTPI Learning Partner status is a mark in excellence of learning and development practices. Since 2006, employers of planners have been measured against a set of key indicators of best practice to show their commitment to developing their staff.
77. RTPI Learning Partner status aims to allow organisations to demonstrate how they:
- Value professional staff
 - Support planners at all levels in achieving their potential
 - Are committed to high professional standards through ongoing training and development
78. Learning Partners also receive a number of ‘benefits’ including:
- Inclusion in the online list of RTPI Learning Partners.
 - Use of the RTPI Learning Partner logo as a symbol of the organisation's commitment to professional excellence. The logo can be used at careers fairs or on recruitment literature to attract new staff, graduates or on other publications to demonstrate your organisation's commitment to excellence through investment in professional development
 - Eligibility for the RTPI Employer Award (for Excellence in Learning and Development) is only open to current RTPI Learning Partner organisations.
 - Assessment of Professional Competence talks for Licentiate members.
 - a regular e-bulletin covering a range of topics
 - discount on training events with RTPI conferences
 - information on new education-related developments
79. We believe that there may be merit in Scottish Government and others promoting this in the future to highlight the importance of investing in planning staff.

Conclusions

80. There are opportunities to embed skills, behavioural and knowledge development in public sector organisations through the PPF. This would require new criteria to provide an indication of commitment and activity. Thought needs to be given to how this can be used within the context of joint working between different part of local authorities and community planning partnerships.

²⁰ <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/rtpi-learning-partners/>

81. However, there is not a current mechanism that could play this role for private sector organisations.
82. There could be a role for 'kite marking' to show employers' commitment to staff development. This could be an indicator to be included in PPFs. Kitemarking can work for all sectors.

SUPPORTING PLANNERS TO ATTAIN THE RIGHTS SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS AND KNOWLEDGE

Skills Development


83. We have found from surveys of Heads of Planning in 2016 that there are a number of issues that need to be considered in looking to supporting skills development. Table x below sets out preferences for training with multi-authority and in-house events.

Please rank the following methods of training delivery in order of preference:		
Item	Total Score	Overall Rank
Multi authority event	141	1
In-house event	139	2
Webinars - Short 1 hour online only presentations	80	3
Video streaming from live events	71	4
Self learning (online course)	64	5

84. We have not been able to identify information for other sectors.
85. A number barriers are also identified by HOPS/ IS survey with cost, distance and relevance being key factors:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Distance to events	68.97%	20
Time away from work	58.62%	17
Cost of events	75.86%	22
Relevance of the subjects covered	68.97%	20
Lack of knowledge about events	10.34%	3
Other (please specify):	6.90%	2

86. Again, we have not been source information on this from private sector or third sector organisations.

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87. There already a number of sources of learning and training for professionals involved in place making including from the Improvement Service, RTPI Scotland; RTPI Scotland Chapters, Architecture + Design Scotland, JH Planning, Trevor Roberts Associates, RICS Scotland, Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and PAS. Quite often these are attended exclusively by specific groups or disciplines. A number of planning consultants and legal firms also hold events each year whilst a number of organisations such as Holyrood, Mackay Hannah, The White Paper Company organise annual events on planning.
88. Though many of these focus on technical skills and knowledge, there are opportunities to embed softer, generic skills into events and training programmes.
89. The experiences of the planning development/ planning skills programme over the past 11 years should be considered. This went through several different forms that influenced the activities undertaken within the programme. The programme was well funded by Scottish Government during the implementation of the modernisation agenda, and then it adapted delivery to reflect a reduced budget covering administrative costs alone. More recently, administrative costs are funded by planning authority subscription and it provides cost effective learning opportunities at no extra cost or on a cost recovery basis.
90. We have not been able to undertake comprehensive critical evaluation of the programme. This may be required. In the meantime some key issues have been observed in assessing how it can contribute to delivering the outcomes desired from the current review of the planning system :
- The focus on training individuals rather than the need to impact on the culture and behaviours promoted by organisations
 - The 'stop-start' and short term funding for the programme meaning that it was difficult to put in place long term programmes with medium to longer term impacts
 - Taking skills development seriously requires an ongoing priority to invest in it
 - The funding model focus on local authority planners ignored the important relationships with other staff and councillors in local authorities
 - The funding model focus on the public sector ignored the development needs in other sectors and the important relationships between sectors
 - The focus on skills development to deliver change missed the contribution that assimilating and promoting best practice can make to deliver outcomes.

Behaviour Change


91. Key to an enhanced approach to planning is behaviour change. This needs to be embedded across the different organisations, sectors and disciplines involved in placemaking and cannot be seen as only being for public sector planners.
92. Many of the existing events and knowledge sharing focus on filling knowledge gaps or developing specific skills and so do not attempt to tackle behaviours. Behavioural change also relies upon the individual and organisation they work for developing practical approaches within a supportive culture.
93. This points to the need for a new programme that actively brings together the range of players and that works within and between organisations to ensure that the culture, context and environment identifies the behavioural changes required and how best to attain them. It should also support and promote opportunities to gain experiential learning across these sectors through secondments and shadowing to build understanding and capacity.

Knowledge and Practice

94. Discussions with stakeholders have shown that there are a number of sources of good and best practice for professionals involved place development. The preparation and dissemination of good practice is under some preparation due to reducing resources in planning authorities. The development and promotion of good practice enhances skills and working practices, encourages consistency and aids delivery of outcomes.
95. The Knowledge Hub²¹ is used by the Improvement Service and is seen as a handy resource for exchanging information, good practice and for asking for advice on planning issues. It currently includes a private forum for members of Heads of Planning Scotland to enable discussion and sharing of information.
96. The Knowledge Hub is available for free to anyone, however there is a perception that it is only for the public sector. Some of the content in the HOPS pages is generated by users however the majority is posted by IS staff.
97. RTPI Learn²² is the RTPI's virtual learning site, developed to support planners increase their knowledge of planning, online. It currently offers four learning modules (all free) of around 15 hours' worth of learning per module. The modules are a mixture of text, web links, video clips, diagrams etc. as well as interactive quizzes with instant feedback. RTPI Learn modules are CPD activity and used for CPD monitoring purposes.

²¹ <https://khub.net/>

²² <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/rtpi-learn/>

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98. The four available modules are:
- Viability: Understanding Development Economics
 - Planning for Climate Change
 - Public Engagement in Planning
 - Infrastructure Delivery Planning
99. Modules are currently being developed on ethics and planning for dementia. RTPI Learn also hosts other useful, interesting planning-related material, including information in the Career Development section, and Active Member Guides in the Other Information section. It has the potential to host more learning modules.
100. Planning Advisory Service in England²³ was set up in 2004 to provide help, advice and training to councils. It aims to help local government officers and councillors stay effective and up-to-date. The UK Government provides it with a grant to offer some services without charge for some councils, including those at risk of intervention or designation by the Secretary of State. PAS will also hold free events to help the government publicise their changes to the planning system.
101. Everybody else can choose to use its services on a commercial basis. Organisations can take out a subscription. This allows PAS to predict how much work it needs to provide. In practical terms, the one subscription of £1800 allows subscribers to buy £2200 worth of events, support and consultancy. Councils who do not subscribe can buy support as and when they need it.
102. PAS's work includes:
- Leadership and Committees including onsite work such as peer challenge; planning committee peer review; planning committee training; and support and mentoring
 - Plan delivery where they will make and share checklists and toolkits to help people and provide help and support to understand the options
 - Development Management Improvement using their development management toolkit
 - Best Practice Updates
 - Events and training
103. There are also other sources of good practice from a range of organisations including Scottish Government; Architecture + Design Scotland; SNH; PAS; Built Environment Forum Scotland; RICS etc. However, the good practice on these sites is often hard to find or it can be subscription or member only content. There is also very little signposting from website to website which means that there is no single place to go to find good practice examples.

²³ <http://local.gov.uk/pas>

104. There is need to connect and at times assimilate the work on good practice that is currently in place. This explore how to ensure that approaches to identifying, sharing and applying good practice complement one another. There is a need for a hub that is seen as the 'go to' place to find good practice examples. This could be a new website that signposts to the various other sources. It should link with other platforms such as the Knowledge Hub and RTPi Learn, or even use these as a. This should promote an open data approach where partners share their tools and information.

Conclusions

105. Discussion with partners in the Scottish Planning Skills Forum has resulted in a number of key points being identified. These include:

- There is a lot of information in the public domain highlighting good practice in planning, however, it is not always easy to access and can be held on a number of unconnected websites. It is not always easy to keep up-to-date with events and training being offered by a range of organisations
- There are some valuable training and learning opportunities available for planners in Scotland though these tend to focus on skills development and knowledge exchange.
- There is a need for a specific programme of activities If we are to maximise behaviour change
- Training and learning needs to be affordable and accessible, especially for those out of the Central Belt
- There should be better opportunities to share expertise and specialist knowledge
- Although progress is being made, we are still not making best use of technology available
- We should look to providing a mix of learning opportunities to suit individual needs

106. It is clear from our discussions that key to the success will be providing a single coordination point which becomes the 'go to' place for information and advice on planning skills. This should comprise an online portal 'one stop shop' along with a coordinator(s) to link this with skills development activities working as a focal point for information such as:

- sources of training, expertise and good practice
- opportunities to share learning
- training providers
- toolkits and other learning platforms
- good practice
- opportunities for joint working and benchmarking

107. The Improvement Service may have a role in taking this forward.

A WAY FORWARD

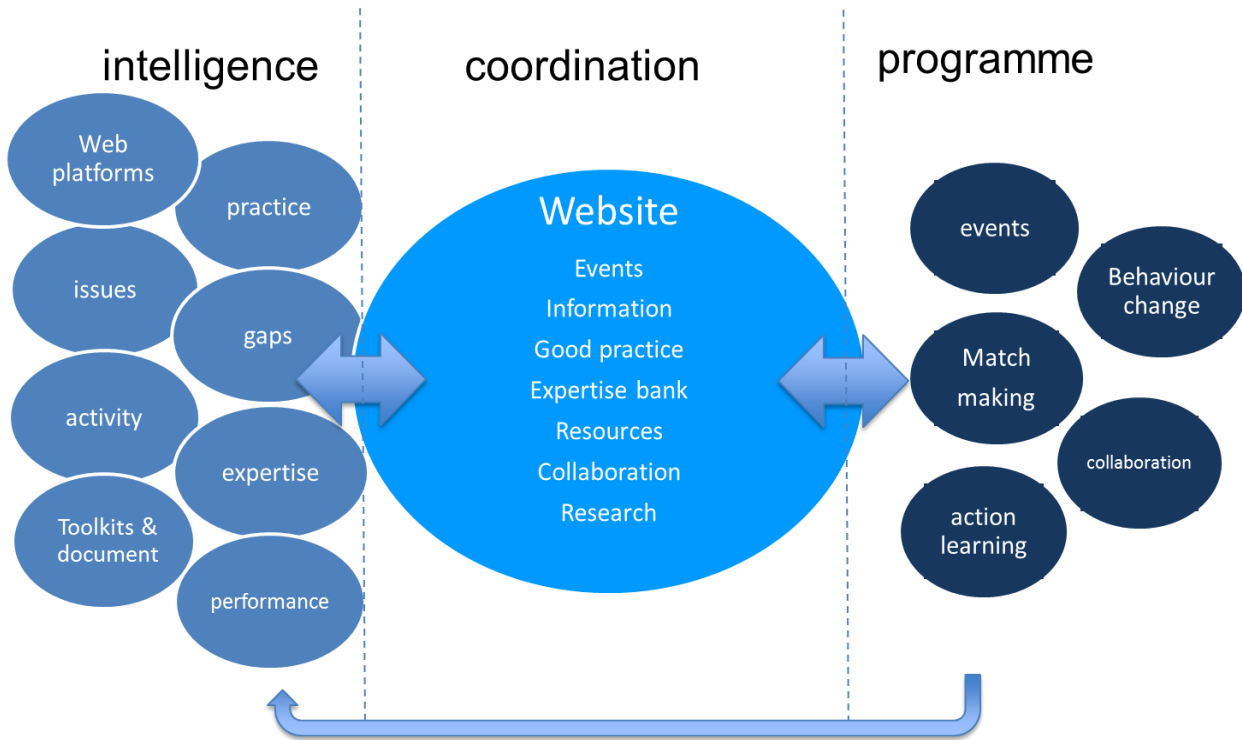
Principles

108. We believe that taking forward any Planning Skills Programme should be based upon a number of key principles. Firstly, the **roles of the coordinating organisation** should focus on:
- Coordinating the gathering of information, intelligence and good practice
 - Sharing good practice, learning resources and platforms
 - Signposting to events & training
 - Matchmaking and supporting collaboration between organisations
 - Developing and delivering a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary transformational development programme aimed at changing behaviours
109. The activities of the programme should be supported and guided by a **partnership of key organisations** who have an interest in ensuring planners are highly skilled. These are generally members of the Scottish Planning Skills Forum and so it would be sensible to use this (with new members if required) as this overseeing body.
110. However, it is also important to acknowledge that this forum will not be responsible for the delivery of the programme. There is a need a single coordination point to operationalise this, working closely with partners. We anticipate that there will be a continued role for the Improvement Service in delivering this programme. RTPI Scotland has an important role in facilitating and supporting this as the lead body on setting professional standards and as the 'go-to' body for professional support.
111. We also feel that it should, wherever possible, **work with key partners** to:
- Share their activities and vice versa
 - Share intelligence on skills needs
 - Share other activities, publications and toolkits they have become aware of that could be of use in developing planners' skills
112. We believe that the programme should look to **work across sectors** (public, private, voluntary) and where possible proactively work to bring the together.
113. We are of the view that it should look to work **across disciplines in local authorities** who have an interest in and who it would be valuable to engage in place based policy and approaches.
114. We also think that, in the first instance, **it should concentrate on officers and officials rather than councillors**. That does not mean that there is

not a need to support councillors' skills development. Rather it is a prioritisation.

115. The model is shown below in Diagram 6 below.

Diagram 6: Proposed Skills Programme Model



Resources

116. A key issue we have identified is how such as skills programme could be resourced. There is a need to prioritise specific resources towards this. Too often skills development is the first to take a hit when resources are tight.
117. Any resources should look to make best use of, and where appropriate support, partners' online platforms, activities, resources, emerging training and events. These could provide a 'quick win' way of meeting some skills requirements. Some training modules developed from a Scottish perspective could be adapted for wider UK/ Ireland and vice versa. The RTPi Learn online platform could be a useful medium for this given its intention to service all RTPi members where possible.
118. There will be technical costs to cover the establishment, running, hosting and management of the portal website and to ensure that it is future-proofed, to make best use of technology available.

119. There will also be a need for specific staff to manage the service and to proactively engage with partners to ensure that content is up-to-date. We envisage tasks to comprise:

- Overall management customer engagement
- Information gathering
- Management of website and communications channels
- Event management
- Administrative support
- Supporting the development of toolkits and resources by partners

120. We anticipate that to undertake this that a proportionate resourcing level to be in the region of £250,000 per annum. There will also be a need to factor in set up costs.

121. Key to the success of the programme will it being adequately resourced. That said we are acutely aware of a tight fiscal context and so have explore a number of options for funding, these being:

Funded entirely from Scottish Government

122. We appreciate that full funding is unlikely, however we feel that it is important that Scottish Government contributes given its desire to improve planning skills. Resource contributions could comprise money seconded staff, in kind assistance. The key issue with this is whether Scottish Government have the resources required.

Subscription

123. A subscription charge from users is a possibility. This is the part of the approach taken to PAS in England. Currently planning authorities currently pay £750 per annum to help fund Improvement Service Planning Skills programme. Would it be possible to expand this beyond local authorities to others including Scottish Government, Key Agencies and planning consultancies? Issues this raises includes how to showing value for money to justify subscription level; would it impact on other paid for events; can the programme be relevant to all sectors? Opportunities to expand this to Key Agencies and include the private sector are already being progressed..

Commercialisation

124. This could explore advertising, sponsorship and in kind support for the website and events. We do not anticipate this generate major levels of income.

Top slice

125. Top slicing planning fees and putting them in a pot which is administered by the core organisation is another option. For example, income from planning fees for applications and deemed applications for 2014-15 was £25,564,000. A 1% topslice of this would generate around £250,000. This

does not factor in anticipated fee increases to meet full costs recovery. Issues include if would be complicated to administer; is there an issue in being seen to 'take money away' from local authorities; could it be linked to PPFs in support continuous improvement; could this be phased in when planning fees are increased to reduce any issue and, if so would it need a transition phase?

126. It may well be that any approach to funding will be a mix of the above.

SUMMARY

127. This paper has aimed to establish:

- the skills, knowledge and behaviours it is thought are required for the 'new planning system' and identify where there are development needs
- how skills, knowledge and behaviours can be mainstreamed
- what mechanisms will be most effective in promoting and supporting professionals to attain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they require and how best to coordinate and resource this work

128. In doing this it has outlined that:

- There a range of skills – both technical and generic – that planners need to have
- There are opportunities to mainstream learning and development for professionals through Planning Performance Frameworks and 'kite marking' schemes
- There is a need to establish and resource a single coordination point to gather information, intelligence and good practice; share good practice; signpost to events & training; match make and supporting collaboration between organisations; and deliver a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary transformational development programme aimed at changing behaviours

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