

Kate Forbes MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy  
Scottish Government  
St Andrews House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

11 November 2021

Dear Cabinet Secretary

### **SCOTTISH BUDGET 2021/22 – EFFECTIVELY RESOURCING THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

As part of your consideration of the 2021/22 Scottish budget the Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland, with the support of Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS), have [published analysis](#) estimating that the planning system requires at least £86 million over the parliamentary term to undertake its core statutory functions. Whilst much of this essential resource can be met with an increase in fees, over £24 million needs funded from the Scottish Budget over five years. Such funding would represent a very small proportion of budgetary funding - just 0.01% of the total Scottish Budget 20/21. We believe that the money raised through increasing planning fees should be reinvested in the delivery of or support for the development management service.

This estimation includes the provision of resource to support new and unfunded additional duties through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the delivery of community-led Local Place Plans, the establishment of the Office of the National Planning Improvement Coordinator and the creation of a Chartered Town Planner Apprenticeship scheme.

RTPI Scotland and HoPS therefore ask you to readdress years of disinvestment in the planning service. Whilst the monetary ask of the profession is modest, we are in no doubt that such funding is critical, as an absolute minimum, for the planning system to continue to carry out its statutory functions. The planning system has been most severely affected of all local government services in terms of budgets with a reduction of 42% since 2009 with a third of planning department staff cut over the same period. Added to this the planning has demographic and succession challenges with a limited pipeline. Only around 9% of staff in planning authorities are under thirty. An estimated replacement demand of around 500 planners over the next 15 years is required.

Planning has a vital role to play in facilitating a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive post COVID recovery through accelerating progress to a zero-carbon economy, increasing resilience to risk, and through creating fair, healthy and prosperous communities<sup>1</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> RTPI (2020) Plan the World We Need. June. Available here: <http://bit.ly/2OvMyaf>

planning system facilitates economic growth and innovation by bringing together people, activities, and resources<sup>2</sup>.

We are keen to discuss this with you and so would welcome a meeting. If you would like to do this, your officials can contact RTPI Scotland Policy, Practice and Research Officer Robbie Calvert on [robbie.calvert@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:robbie.calvert@rtpi.org.uk).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**Barbara Cummins**

Convenor, RTPI Scotland  
18 Atholl Crescent  
Edinburgh EH3 8HQ

**Pam Ewen**

Chair, Heads of Planning Scotland  
Fife House, North St,  
Glenrothes KY7 5LT



The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2100 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 25,000. RTPI Scotland's members represent both the public and private sector interests and will in large part be responsible for the successful delivery of the planning system.

[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)



Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) is the representative organisation for senior planning officers from Scotland's local authorities, national park authorities and strategic development planning authorities. The purpose of HOPS is to promote the profile of public sector land use planning, support and promote excellence in planning leadership, Ensure the delivery of a culture of continuous improvement in planning authorities, and provide advocacy and coordination to ensure that planning authorities are properly resourced to deliver quality outcomes.

[www.hopscotland.org.uk](http://www.hopscotland.org.uk)

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<sup>2</sup> RTPI (2020) Invest and Prosper – A Business Case for Investing in Planning. October. Available here: <https://bit.ly/2SBksMC>