

# DELIVERING Better Development

The role of the urban and rural planner



Protecting green spaces promotes health and reduces urban heat island effect

Providing public transport connects people with jobs and reduces carbon emissions

Building in the right location, minimising impacts on neighbours, ensuring enough utility capacity

Protecting marine life and connecting ports with road and rail

Promoting renewable energy

Most countries in the developed and developing world are facing a range of major challenges:



Being able to respond and quickly adapt to these challenges and commitments will depend on designing and delivering better places and developments. This will require good planning and the help of urban and rural planners.

## How can the global community address these challenges?

There are a number of international legal commitments or agreements that countries are signing up to, for example:

### International Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III

The United Nations (UN) conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) will take place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016. Its aim is to set a new global development agenda for sustainable urban development over the next 20 years. This will include adopting the new Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Both of these outcomes will help guide the urban development efforts of nations, cities, regions and international development funders, UN programmes and civil society.



### International Framework on Climate Change

The UN Framework on Climate Change is also negotiating a new international agreement on tackling greenhouse gas emissions from 2020. The next climate conference (Conference of the Parties (COP 21)), will take place in December 2015 in Paris, France. The aim is for a more updated and legally binding version of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol – the international treaty that commits signed-up countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This new international agreement will aim for low-carbon societies that can adapt to climate change, keeping global warming within a 2 degree Celsius limit and further reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

See: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

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These issues can be addressed with global commitment, good planning and the help of planners. ”



## What is planning?

**Planning describes the process of positively managing the development of our villages, towns, cities and countryside.**

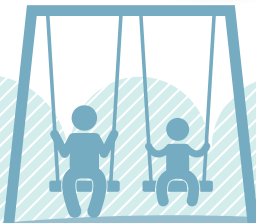
**This involves:**

- creating good policies and practical solutions for managing development
- supporting economic growth and access to jobs
- improving and providing housing, infrastructure and services like schools, shops, health care centres, parks and libraries for growing populations
- protecting the environment and building more sustainably
- being able to adapt to climate change
- recreating places after conflict and natural disasters

### Who are planners and what do they do?

Urban and rural planners are skilled professionals in the built and natural environment. They promote sustainable development.

Planners have a broad overview and understand how places work and what they need in order to function better. They are at the heart of development and work with other professionals (for example project managers, architects, engineers, surveyors, environmentalists). Planners also collaborate with decision makers (politicians and legislators), stakeholders and local communities to create and implement long term visions so that places provide for people's needs, function better, are healthier, economically viable and adaptable to change as well as protecting the environment. Planners help guide development by creating plans and policies for areas.



## The aims of planners:

### This involves:

1. acting in the public interest
2. promoting the best use of land and buildings for better health and economic viability, whilst protecting the environment and adapting to change
3. achieving sustainable development by taking into account local, national and international policies.

### WHERE DO PLANNERS WORK?

- Local and national government
- Planning consultancies
- Engineering, architectural, regeneration and environmental companies
- Retailers and house builders
- Water and electricity providers
- Legal and financial institutions
- Universities
- Aid and development agencies
- International organisations (United Nations)

### WHAT SKILLS DO PLANNERS HAVE?

- Project management and negotiation
- Strategic and spatial planning
- Policy development and implementation
- Legal advice
- Site analysis
- Interpreting maps, plans and policies
- Understanding design, natural environments and heritage
- Development management
- Community engagement
- Research and training

### SPECIALIST PLANNERS INCLUDE:

- Legal planners
- Masterplanners and urban designers
- Environmental and sustainability planners
- Retail and commercial planners
- Water and waste management planners
- Minerals and mining planners
- Transport and regeneration planners
- 'Smart city' planners
- Historic and heritage planners
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) specialists

### PLANNERS ARE KNOWN BY MANY NAMES:

- Town and country planners
- Urban planners
- City planners
- Town and regional planners
- Spatial planners
- Physical planners
- Urbanists
- Land use planners



## How planners can help you

### City and local leaders

You may be facing challenges such as how to provide houses to increasing numbers of people, deliver water and waste services, plan infrastructure for new developments, determine where growth should take place, regenerate run-down areas and ensure the sustainable development of rural areas.

### Planners can help you by:

- identifying the most suitable areas for growth
- determining the number of houses required
- ensuring the proper phasing of development
- assessing the capacity of existing infrastructure and utilities, and anticipating future demand
- liaising with utility departments/companies and advising on developer contributions to pay for better infrastructure
- connecting areas with public transport, jobs and green spaces
- formulating strategies or plans when increased funding is required
- protecting the natural and historical environment

### OUTCOME:

Regenerated neighbourhoods, areas identified for growth (e.g. housing and services), the protection of parks, green spaces and the environment. Reducing the use of carbon and better connecting places.

### TSHWANE INNER CITY MASTERPLAN, SOUTH AFRICA



**Project team:** Arup consultants - planners, urban designers; and environmental, modelling and GIS specialists.

Arup were commissioned by the City of Tshwane and the national government's Department of Public Works to create an integrated inner-city development framework and urban management plan. The aim was to guide regeneration to achieve its vision of being the leading African capital city by providing a safe and healthy environment in order for the community to thrive.

The project dealt with large and small-scale issues. These included developing an overarching plan for a sustainable city in order to attract new private sector investment and regenerate the inner city, down to detailed precinct plans and an implementation plan to guide development and improve local streets, parks and neighbourhoods.

See: [www.tshwane.gov.za](http://www.tshwane.gov.za) and [www.arup.com](http://www.arup.com)



## Commercial and community developers

### JAZZ AT WALTER CIRCLE, ST. LOUIS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



**Project team:** Farr Associates and other consultants including planners, architects and structural engineers

Completed in 2014, this development based around a public transport hub forms part of the regeneration of east St. Louis. The aim was to improve the local area but also enable the existing local community to remain and benefit from this. The Jazz at Walter Circle mixed-use development has landscaping and an easy to navigate public area, homes for senior citizens, offices, and community and health centres. The development has provided residents with a healthier lifestyle and local employment. It has also won local awards and been certified by the US Green Building Council.

See: <http://farrside.com/portfolio-item/2976/>



You might be looking to maximise the best return for your business or your community when developing a property. Alternatively you may be wanting to avoid risk by making sure your development is completed with all the necessary permits.

#### Planners can help you by:

- identifying and minimising risks and costs by checking compliance with plans, property, heritage and environmental laws
- advising on the design upfront which can save time and money
- ensuring community and stakeholder engagement
- extracting long-term economic value from development
- ensuring development is in the right location

#### OUTCOME:

Less risk, lower costs and more certainty that the project will be approved and get built. Land values may increase as a result.



## How planners can help you

### National government leaders

If you are a national government leader, you may be looking at how to ensure national development is in line with international commitments and national economic development goals. You may also want to know how to identify which major national infrastructure projects are most needed; and in turn which projects, strategies or policies need budgets to achieve these aims.

#### Planners can help you by:

- formulating and implementing national spatial development strategies
- identifying and implementing up-to-date planning policy and education, with support and investment from national government
- advising on and helping to implement international obligations
- helping to identify major infrastructure projects which would best help communities

### OUTCOME:

Planning for the future; adapting to current issues and complying with international commitments, for example climate change targets, though sustainable development; and implementing the global Sustainable Development Goals.

### NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 3, SCOTLAND



**Project team:** Scottish Government planners and other professionals

National Planning Framework 3 is Scotland's long-term strategic land use plan which promotes sustainable development. This plan will help deliver the Scottish Government's economic strategy. It was developed over a two year period, with extensive engagement with stakeholders and communities across the country.

It contains fourteen major developments such as water and drainage infrastructure, high speed rail, low-carbon developments and a green space network. There is also an inbuilt monitoring and review process. The result is a clear, robust national planning policy framework for Scotland.

In 2015, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) awarded a Planning Excellence Award for this national plan.

See: <http://bit.ly/1JLKq20>





## Non-profit organisations and charities

### PEACE BRIDGE AND REGENERATION, DERRY/ LONDONDERRY, NORTHERN IRELAND



**Project team:** Planners, engineers, architects and heritage specialists.

This landmark 235 metre pedestrian and cycling bridge, completed in 2011, links formerly divided communities on the east bank of the River Foyle with the city centre and the major regeneration site of the former Ebrington Military Barracks.

Many complex planning issues, heritage and environmental constraints were resolved in this project, including protecting bird and fish species. Planners took a collaborative and engaging role to ensure the successful delivery of the project.

The project won a planning award from the Irish Planning Institute; and has obtained numerous national and international awards.

See: <http://bit.ly/1VvWv00>



You may be an organisation aiming to rebuild communities after conflict or natural disasters; reduce poverty, and address the impacts of climate change.

#### Planners can help you by:

- re-connecting communities and areas
- helping to regenerate rundown areas
- advising on where best to build
- developing and implementing climate change strategies
- reducing carbon emissions from urban areas, for example by increasing public transport, introducing landscaping and mixed-use developments; which improves health
- protecting scarce resources, such as high quality agricultural land to protect local food production.

#### OUTCOME:

Helping local communities to rebuild after conflicts or disaster, connecting communities and areas; and ensuring ethical practices are undertaken.



## Where do planners fit into the policy and development process?

Planners work in two main areas: policy and plan formulation; and managing and delivering building / construction projects.

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Planners make plans for cities, towns and rural areas to guide development.”

### 1. Policy and plan formulation

Countries have different planning systems. In general politicians and leaders create legislation, while planners produce, implement and enforce policies and plans based on this legislation.

These policies and plans aim to guide future developments, address issues and set a vision for the area. Planners do this by researching housing, population and health issues. They assess where the best areas are for different uses of land such as housing, roads, water and waste treatment facilities. They also look at how to protect the natural environment and cultural heritage, and how to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The results are contained in documents such as local plans, town ordinances and zoning rules.

Planners are also involved in making sure that people and developers abide by planning legislation so that development does not negatively affect the public.

### OUTCOME:

Addressing a range of issues strategically including planning for future growth, skills development, integrated transport, social inclusion, economic competitiveness, quality of life and protecting the environment. Will also help to implement the new Sustainable Development Goals and reduce carbon.

**Before commissioning any plans or starting construction speak to the local planning authority and consult a professional planner**

### THE AUCKLAND PLAN, NEW ZEALAND



The Auckland Plan, adopted in 2012, sets a vision for the city and guides future growth for the next 30 years.

Auckland's aim is to become one of the world's most liveable cities. The Plan contains policies that aim to create a sustainable, compact city. This will be through increasing the density of the city centre, integrating the existing rail system to support the growth of the local population and economy and protecting the environment.

There are also plans for the city's waterfront and a low-carbon action plan.

The Auckland Plan is supported by New Zealand's first urban redevelopment company, which is jointly owned by central government and the city council. The council has also worked closely with the local community, business, educational institutions, social organisations, developers and financial institutions to ensure improvements in education, housing, health and social conditions in disadvantaged areas.

Further information: <http://bit.ly/1J1N2Jo>



## 2. Managing and delivering building/construction projects

Planners are also involved in building / construction projects. A new building, structure or a change in the use of land might require permission. If permission is not obtained then fines and legal action can be imposed and the building could be demolished, or be difficult to sell or rent.

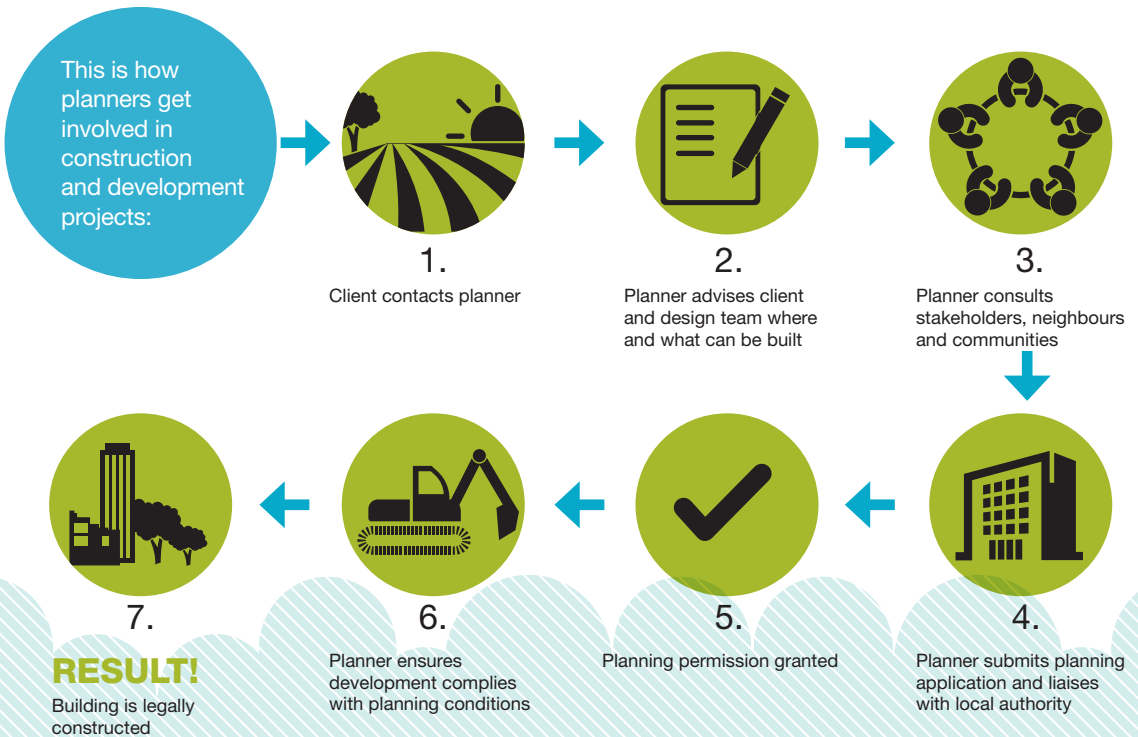
The local community may also be negatively affected - for example the building may be too big and block out daylight to neighbours.

Planners advise and obtain planning permission (consent/approvals). They help to deliver quality developments that meet legislation, zoning rights, plans and/or regulations, take into account local conditions, and contribute to the public good. Getting planning permission is often required before, or in combination with, other development permissions such as building regulations, environmental consents and heritage consents. These are done by architects, engineers and environmental specialists but planners can provide input to these too.

“Planners can tell you what be can be legally built.”

- ### Development Permissions
- planning permissions
  - building regulations permission
  - environmental consents
  - heritage consents

Getting planners involved at the start of a project saves developers time and money, and helps to reduce risk and get other development permissions. They do this by surveying the property, seeing how it fits in with its surrounding area, and what policies, plans or zoning rights govern the site. Planners advise what can be built and where, if planning permission would be granted and what documents and plans are needed. They also ensure stakeholders and the community are consulted where necessary and liaise with the local authority. Finally, they negotiate what community benefits may be required for example utility upgrades, provision of affordable housing or schools and parks.



## What can governments do to enable planning to deliver better development?

- Integrate budgets with development plans and projects to create certainty and attract inward investment
- Take a long-term view beyond political and business timeframes
- Reduce the impacts of climate change, disasters and increased urbanisation by including policies and plans that can cope with change
- Consult with planners and planning organisations; and help set up an institute if one does not exist
- Actively support skills training in planning

### How?

If you are a national government leader, you may be looking at how to ensure national development is in-line with international commitments and national economic development goals. You may also want to know how to identify which major national infrastructure projects are most needed; and in turn which projects, strategies or policies need budgets to achieve these aims.

- 1. Engage with planners and planning organisations on policy, development and regeneration projects**
- 2. Align a number of aims:**
  - For example international, national, regional and local requirements, and the policy requirements and priorities of government departments
  - Create plans which incorporate developments with identified budgets
- 3. Create better places, certainty for communities and developers, and attract inward investment by:**
  - Setting a long-term vision for how you want your country to look like in the future
  - Formulating and implementing policies and legislation to meet the vision
  - Consulting communities to help identify issues and different development options based on budgets
  - Allocating budget resources to projects that meet policies and legislation
  - Monitor your policies and plans to determine if they are working or if changes are needed
- 4. Encourage stronger skills and the sharing of best practice by:**
  - Engaging with planning institutes, universities and employers about the skills graduates need and how to deliver these in order to plan better places
  - Promoting international exchanges between planners
  - Supporting a national planning conference
  - Encouraging your national planning institute to join the Global Planners Network and/or international planning organisations like the Commonwealth Association of Planners or the European Council of Spatial Planners (see page 15)
- 5. Encourage integrity and address perceptions of corruption:**
  - Involve a planning institute and universities to raise and safeguard standards
  - Ensure a code of conduct is in place and enforced in order to assist in addressing corruption (note: many aid agencies require a code of conduct or a demonstration that ethical services have been rendered when providing financial assistance)



## United Nations - International Planning Support

### KOSOVO, MUNICIPAL PLANNING SUPPORT PROGRAMME



**Project team:** Spatial/urban planners, architects, environmental planners, GIS experts, and community mobilisation and gender empowerment officers.

**Client:** 12 municipalities, civil society and local non-governmental organisations; and the ministries of Environment and Spatial Planning & Local Government Administration.

From 2005 to 2015, UN-Habitat's planners worked with Kosovo's national and local authorities and non-governmental organisations in improving their planning system. Costing US\$15m and financed by the Swedish Development Corporation, UN-Habitat assisted in building the capacity of local authorities; and bridging gaps between civil society through facilitation and negotiation. This was to manage growth and development. The project has used various community engagement methods and an integrated planning approach.

See: [www.unhabitat-kosovo.org](http://www.unhabitat-kosovo.org)

### KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (KSA), FUTURE SAUDI CITIES PROGRAMME



**Project team:** Spatial/urban planners, GIS experts, women and youth officers, urban economists.

**Client:** Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, regional governments, municipalities, urban development authorities, universities, and local non-governmental organisations.

UN-Habitat and KSA's Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs are implementing 'The Future Saudi Cities Programme'. This includes creating policies, plans and regulations promoting sustainable development via the urban planning and land use system. The new policies will cover issues such as disaster risk reduction and resilience. There will also be policies geared towards empowering women and youth, and regularising informal settlements. The first phase targets 17 cities over a four-year implementation period. UN-Habitat is also helping to develop an updated spatial information system (GIS) to support the drafting of plans, and a training programme to enhance planning capacity in institutions.

See: <http://unhabitat.org/tag/saudi-arabia>



UN-HABITAT Saudi Arabia Programme



## Other ways planners are helping to create better development

### Helping communities recover from disasters

After the devastation caused by the December 2004 Pacific Ocean tsunami, the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) developed a partnership with the Sri Lankan Government through the Institute of Town Planners of Sri Lanka (ITPSL). This collaborative partnership helped identify planning projects that assisted in re-developing areas. The PIA project took ten years to complete and was supported by AusAID and the Australian Red Cross.



A film on how planning and planners assisted in Sri Lanka's reconstruction can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1EBfmCG>

Blogs on planners' experiences can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1PL56lk>



### Helping local communities understand and participate in planning

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) utilise international planning advisers to support the Zambian Government in developing a more inclusive planning system. In the past, Zambian planning practice had little involvement from local communities. Through the VSO, planners from a range of countries have been successfully developing and demonstrating new approaches to community engagement. As a result, public participation is being recognised as an essential component of good practice.



Further information: [vsointernational.org](http://vsointernational.org)



### Helping local communities understand and participate in planning

Many members of The Royal Town Planning Institute provide a free planning aid service. Volunteers give independent advice on planning issues to individuals and communities in England, Scotland and Wales. The service also promotes opportunities for all to be involved in planning their local area, and provides people with the knowledge and skills to achieve this. Help is provided via the telephone, email or at events.

Further information: <http://bit.ly/1KHjO3E>

### FOR FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES:

- UN-Habitat international planning guidelines: <http://bit.ly/1imota3>
- RTPI *Planning Horizons* papers: <http://bit.ly/1khkclm>
- *International Manual of Planning Practice*: <http://isocarp.Org/publications>
- *African Centre for Cities*: [www.Africancentreforcities.Net](http://www.Africancentreforcities.Net)
- *The Built Environment Professions in Disaster Risk and Reduction Guide*: <http://bit.ly/1pl58zs>



## Professional planning institutes and planning education

Many professional planners are registered with planning institutes that operate in their own countries. Registered planners are required to demonstrate that they have academic qualifications, skills and relevant experience in planning. As planners act on behalf of the public good, planning institutes require they comply with standards, refrain from engaging in corrupt practices and regularly update their planning knowledge.

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Registered planners have qualifications, skills and experience in planning. ”

Many institutes also promote good planning practice and policy to address international issues. They accredit planning education courses, undertake research and grant planning awards for good development. Volunteering and exchanges with planners in other countries is also encouraged.

Some planning institutes belong to international planning associations for example the Global Planners Network (which is free to join), the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU), the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP).

A full list of planning institutes and organisations can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1ihOvkY> and some are included below.



Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)  
[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)



American Planning Association  
[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)



Irish Planning Institute  
[www.irishplanninginstitute.ie](http://www.irishplanninginstitute.ie)



GLOBAL PLANNERS NETWORK  
Sharing new ideas about communities across the world

Global Planners Network  
[www.globalplannersnetwork.org](http://www.globalplannersnetwork.org)



International Society of City and  
Regional Planners  
<http://isocarp.org>

*Creating our futures*

### ECTP-CEU

European Council of Spatial Planners  
Conseil européen des urbanistes

European Council of  
Spatial Planners  
[www.ceu-ectp.eu](http://www.ceu-ectp.eu)



South African Planning Institute  
[www.sapi.org.za](http://www.sapi.org.za)



Planning Institute of Australia  
[www.planning.org.au](http://www.planning.org.au)



Canadian Institute of Planners  
[www.cip-icu.ca](http://www.cip-icu.ca)



New Zealand Planning Institute  
[www.planning.org.nz](http://www.planning.org.nz)



Commonwealth Association of Planners  
[www.commonwealth-planners.org](http://www.commonwealth-planners.org)



International Federation of Housing  
and Planning  
[www.ifhp.org](http://www.ifhp.org)

# DELIVERING Better Development

The role of the urban and rural planner

This briefing explains why good planning is vital for safe, sustainable and successful places and the role of urban and rural planners.

It explains what planners do, their skills and expertise. It also provides advice for national, city and local leaders, developers, non-governmental organisations and charities on what they can do to strengthen planning for their communities and deliver better developments.

## WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY ONLINE CONFERENCE

Held in November every year, this online conference brings together professionals from around the world to discuss the latest planning issues. World Town Planning Day recognises and promotes the role of planning in creating liveable communities, and is celebrated in over 30 countries.

[www.planningtheworld.net/](http://www.planningtheworld.net/)

Parks and landscaping improves public health, increases local biodiversity & reduces carbon and reduces soil erosion

Protecting local food sources increases biodiversity, reduces carbon footprint and creates jobs

Providing footpaths and access to recreation improves people's health

Protecting best agricultural land for food production & rural economy

Providing decent housing and utilities, access to jobs and schools in formal and informal settlements

“  
Planning is the single most important tool that governments have at their disposal for managing rapid urban population growth and expansion  
”

Vanessa Watson and Babatunde Agbola  
*Who Will Plan Africa's Cities?*