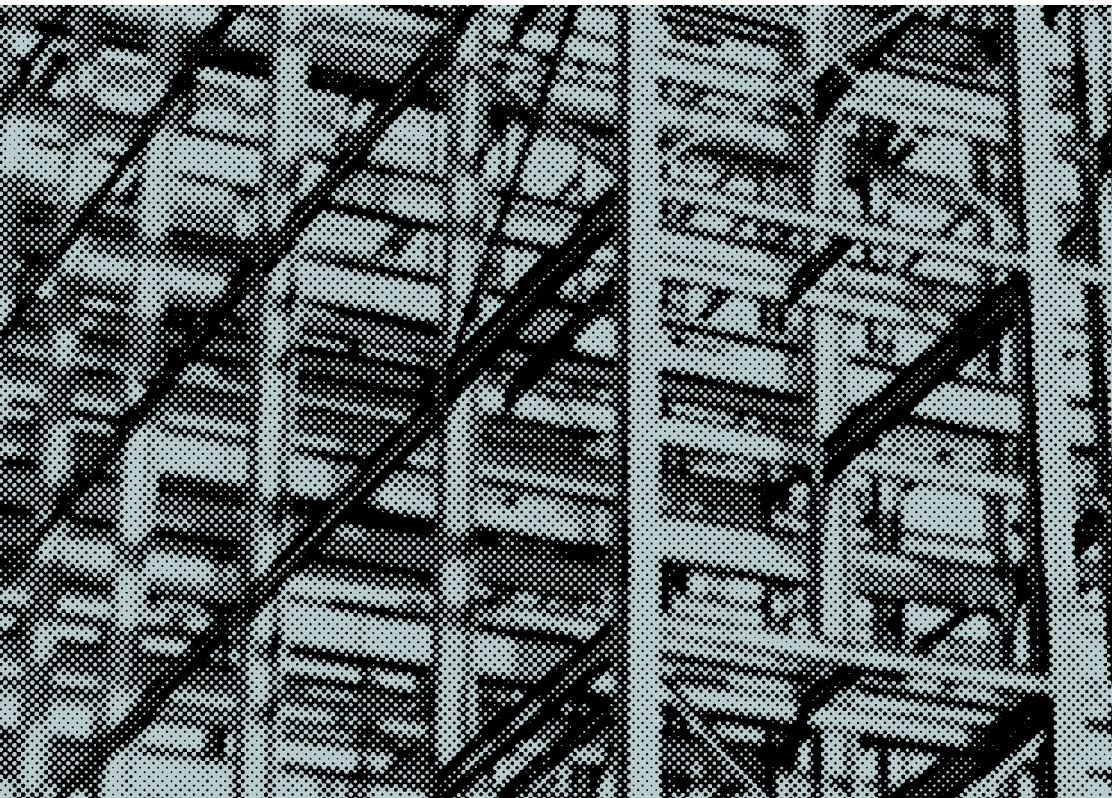


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BUILDING
CAPACITY FOR
PUBLIC
PLANNING



PUBLIC
PRACTICE

A PROSPECTUS FOR AUTHORITIES

Public Practice is placing a new generation of planners within local government to shape places for the public good. It will build the public sector's capacity to deliver homes and growth, make better places, and share skills and knowledge across authorities.

WHY WE NEED PUBLIC PRACTICE

Up and down the country planning teams in Local Authorities are working hard to deliver high quality public planning.

Putting the public interest first, planners are putting the long term plans in place to help guide good growth that will contribute to solving the biggest challenges of our time. They are proactively guiding applicants through the development management process to ensure that we get the best possible developments for our communities. They are planning for and finding funding for the infrastructure that we need for our towns, cities and rural communities to thrive. They are working to preserve and enhance some of our most cherished landscapes. Day in day out they are standing up for and helping enable affordable housing, design quality, opportunities for new jobs, sustainable transport and the mitigation of climate change, amongst many other extraordinarily important things.

However, our public planners do all of this against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, years of painful austerity and a deep housing crisis. They do so whilst often being blamed for the problems they are in fact working for the public to solve. They do so with severe pressures on resources and capacity.

And that's where Public Practice comes in.

Public Practice acknowledges and celebrates the valuable work that public planners and planning do and offers a bold and creative new way for Local Authorities to increase their capacity and encourage fresh talent into the practice of public planning for their communities.

Vincent Lacovara
Placemaking Team Leader, Croydon Council,
and Board Member of Public Practice

HOW WE WORK

Public Practice acts as a broker, selecting outstanding Associates and matching them to Authorities in need of additional planning and placemaking expertise. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, it offers Authorities a cost-effective model to build the public sector's capacity over the longer-term. As a placement programme, it gives Associates unique place-based roles to deliver change on the ground, alongside industry-leading training and development. And as a network of leading planning practitioners, it seeks to build a body of collective knowledge and research to be shared across the sector.

OUR OFFER

AUTHORITIES

Public Practice offers access to a new pool of talent at a significantly lower cost than recruitment agencies, as well as opportunities for learning, networking, and sharing collective knowledge. Authorities interested in hosting a placement are supported by Public Practice to define the role and select an Associate from shortlisted candidates. Authorities employ Associates on one year fixed-term contracts, or secondments from their existing employers, for salaries of between £30,000 – £50,000. Authorities may be local or city government, combined authorities, development corporations, or publicly-led delivery vehicles.

ASSOCIATES

Public Practice offers a unique and prestigious public sector placement, and the opportunity to be part of a multidisciplinary cohort producing collective research, developing new digital technologies, and receiving high quality training. Associates will be selected through an annual recruitment round. Successful Associates will work in place-based roles within Authorities for 90% of their time, and spend the remaining 10% carrying out collective research and development as a cohort, supported by Public Practice. Associates may be planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, regeneration or historic environment experts – or practitioners with backgrounds in other fields, from data science to social sciences. They will typically be expected to have a minimum of three years' experience in practice.

SUPPORTERS

Public Practice offers a platform to invest strategically in improving the speed, certainty and quality of public planning. Supporters' sponsorship and grant funding will cover the running costs of Public Practice at a programme level, preventing any conflicts of interest. In return, Supporters will be given the opportunity to collaborate on collective research, participate in events, and receive public acknowledgement of their support. Supporters may be government bodies, grant makers, developers or built environment consultants who recognise that good expertise in Local Authorities is essential to bring about good development.

OUR PURPOSE

Good planning creates the conditions for good growth. It engages communities, builds public support, coordinates investment, shapes development, and strengthens the character of a place. However a longstanding and widening skills gap between the public and private sectors is limiting the planning capacity of Local Authorities, and in turn constraining the delivery of homes and growth.

In the last 5 years, net Local Authority spending on planning and development in London has fallen from £259m to £148m, a reduction of nearly 60%.¹ At the same time, we now need to be building more than double the number of homes we were delivering five years ago. Numerous studies and reports have identified a lack of public sector planning capacity as a barrier to delivering the quantity and quality of homes London needs. A survey of London's placeshaping capacity carried out by the GLA revealed an uneven distribution of resources across boroughs, and a mismatch between current capacity and areas of planned growth. As a result 96% of London boroughs say they require more placeshaping skills in their planning departments.²

These concerns are shared by private sector developers. A recent survey of housebuilders identifies providing additional resources to Local Authority planning departments as the single most important policy measure to boost housing supply.³ There is strong evidence that developers are willing to subsidise additional Local Authority capacity if it helps to de-risk the planning process and accelerate timescales.

There are many examples of excellent practice within planning departments, but in the context of economic constraints, Local Authorities are finding it more difficult to attract the most talented planning professionals, and harder to keep those with the ambition

¹ Centre for London (2015). *Running on Fumes: London Council Services in Austerity*. Retrieved from: www.centreforlondon.org/publication/council-services-in-austerity

² Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

³ Knight Frank (2016), *Housebuilding Report 2016* (<http://content.knightfrank.com/research/297/documents/en/2016-3851.pdf>)

and capabilities to find jobs elsewhere. 100% of London boroughs have difficulty attracting appropriately qualified or skilled planning and placeshaping practitioners.⁴

As a result, Authorities are increasingly turning to external consultants and private agencies as a short-term measure to fill the gap. All London boroughs cover their capacity needs by procuring external consultants, and 91% by recruiting agency staff.⁵ While this approach offers more flexibility, over the longer term it can erode local knowledge and capacity, and cost more than twice as much as traditional recruitment.

These issues are not confined to London. A recent study by the East of England LGA found that Local Authorities are significantly lacking the capacity and skills to deliver the region's growth agenda. Issues identified include a lack of resources, an ageing workforce, high staff turnover, difficulties with retention, and a lack of flexibility in local government recruitment processes and job design.⁶

There is a range of programmes offered by organisations such as Urban Design London and Future of London to support existing staff which continue to nurture skills successfully within Local Authorities. However, it is clear from feedback that training is not sufficient on its own. Alternative, cost-effective models are needed to bring new talent into the public sector, and to share skills and develop technologies to support growth in a more targeted and strategic way.

At the same time, there is a new generation of planners, architects and urbanists – and practitioners from emerging fields who don't fit comfortably into any of these categories – with an appetite for doing more socially engaged work for the public good, and an interest in rediscovering the civic purpose of planning. Public Practice is one way of harnessing their talent, not by resurrecting old models, but by helping to build a new form of proactive planning that crosses departments, disciplines and sectors.

It has the potential to transform perceptions of the profession, and help to create a more equal and diverse industry by improving

⁴ Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

⁵ Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

⁶ East of England Chief Executives Forum. *Recruitment & Retention of planners in the East of England*. Retrieved from: www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/publications/east_of_england_chief_executives_forum_final.pdf

access for women, ethnic minorities, and people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. It will build the public sector's capacity to deliver homes and growth, make better places, and share skills and knowledge across authorities.

The development industry is united about the need to improve public sector planning capacity and capability. Public Practice is one practical way of starting to make an immediate difference.

Jules Pipe
Deputy Mayor of London for Planning,
Regeneration & Skills, and Chair of Public Practice

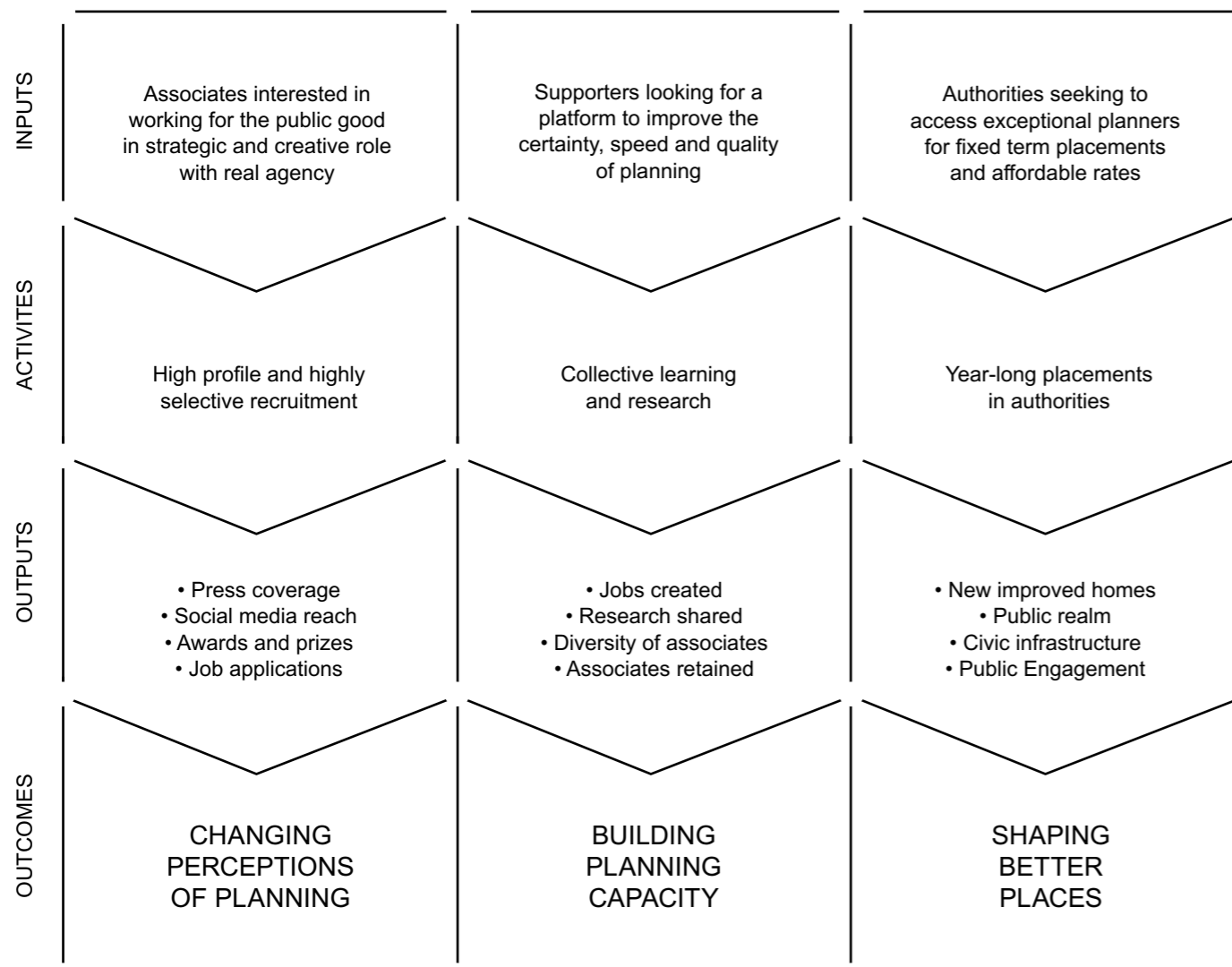
OUR IMPACT

Public Practice's mission is to shape better places by building public planning capacity and changing perceptions of the profession.

Good public planning shapes the built environment for the public good. However the status of the planning profession along with the idea of public service has reached its lowest ebb at a time when it is needed the most. Public Practice aims to address the situation by rebuilding the agency of the profession and by finding a new purpose in public planning.

We will start by building public planning capacity; placing talented and diverse Associates within Authorities, and sharing collective research and knowledge. The Associates will represent a new approach to planning, which we will publicise to help change perceptions of the profession. Their work will shape better places through tangible improvements that make a higher quality built environment that is more socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically successful.

THE OFFER FOR AUTHORITIES



What does Public Practice offer AUTHORITIES?

A SIMPLER AND CHEAPER WAY TO RECRUIT – Simpler and more effective than traditional recruitment, and up to half the cost of recruitment through private agencies.

HIGH QUALITY TALENT – Access to a pool of talented and committed planning and placeshaping practitioners with a range of skills and experience across the built environment.

COLLECTIVE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE – Access to research undertaken by the cohort, such as best practice, guidance and analysis.

SKILLS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING STAFF – Participation in a programme of events organised by Associates at host Authorities.

HIGH PROFILE NETWORK – Membership of a network of leading public planning and placeshaping practitioners.

WHO YOU ARE Public Practice offers placements to public authorities and organisations in England, including local or city government, combined authorities, development corporations, or publicly-led delivery vehicles. The first cohort in 2018/19 will be focused on London, the East and the South East of England. Following cohorts will look to expand to a wider geography, based on the level of interest. Expressions of interest are welcomed from individual Authorities, or groups of more than one Authority.

WHAT WE OFFER Public Practice offers outstanding Associates for 12 month placements, aligned with financial years. We work with Authorities to define your job description, person specification and selection criteria; we run a high profile recruitment campaign and rigorous pre-selection process; and we present you with a shortlist of high quality candidates for interview. Selected Associates will benefit from initial training and ongoing personal development and support provided by Public Practice. They will spend 90% of their time placed within your Authority, and the remaining 10% working as a cohort on collective research and development. Your Authority will have access to all research produced by the Associates, and your staff will be able to participate in a programme of Public Practice events.

WHAT WE ASK FOR Public Practice invites expressions of interest from Authorities with a progressive approach to the role of planning in shaping the future of their places. We are looking for Authorities who share the ambitions of Public Practice, and can demonstrate senior commitment to the programme at Chief Executive or Executive Director level. We want early adopters who are open to co-designing Public Practice with us. You should be able to offer a place-based role, for example centred on a particular town centre or growth area, with opportunities for cross-cutting work across teams or departments. Preference will be given to new roles that offer genuine additionality over existing vacancies. Authorities will need to offer a salary of between £30,000-£50,000 plus on-costs, either as a fixed-term contract or secondment, and pay an annual membership fee to Public Practice at an initial rate of £4,000.

WHAT WE DO

Public Practice works with Authorities to create a tailored job description for each placement. This is based on an open-ended menu of potential tasks for Associates, summarised below.

POLICY & STRATEGY

- Asset mapping
- Capacity studies
- Cultural & economic strategies
- Design policy & guidance
- Masterplans
- Socio-economic research
- Local plan evidence

ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- Community engagement
- Digital participation & inclusion
- External events
- Inward investment
- Public consultation
- Quantitative & qualitative evaluation
- Visual communication e.g. presentations, publications

ENABLING & FACILITATION

- Cross-departmental working
- Cultural programming
- Design review
- Design workshops
- Funding bids
- Place-based coordination
- Training sessions

DESIGN & DELIVERY

- Brief-writing
- Feasibility studies
- In-house design
e.g. architecture, public realm
- Intelligent clienting
- Meanwhile projects
- Procurement
- Project management

DIGITAL INNOVATION

- Data collection, mining and analysis
- Digital visualisation
- Software prototyping
- Automating processes
- Urban analytics

PLACE MANAGEMENT

- Conservation area appraisals & management plans
- Design & conservation advice
- Local list review
- Place-based development management
- S106 negotiations
- Strategic planning applications
- Town centre management

WHO WE ARE

TEAM (Further team members to be appointed)

Finn Williams Chief Executive Officer, Public Practice

BOARD (Further board members to be appointed)

- Jules Pipe Deputy Mayor of London for Planning, Regeneration & Skills (Chair)
- Danna Walker Founding Director, Built by Us
- Lucy Musgrave Founding Director, Publica
- Sarah Cary Head of Sustainable Places, British Land
- Vincent Lacovara Placemaking Team Leader, Croydon Council
- Debbie Jackson Assistant Director, Regeneration, Greater London Authority (Observer)
- Pooja Agrawal Senior Project Officer, Regeneration, Greater London Authority (Observer)

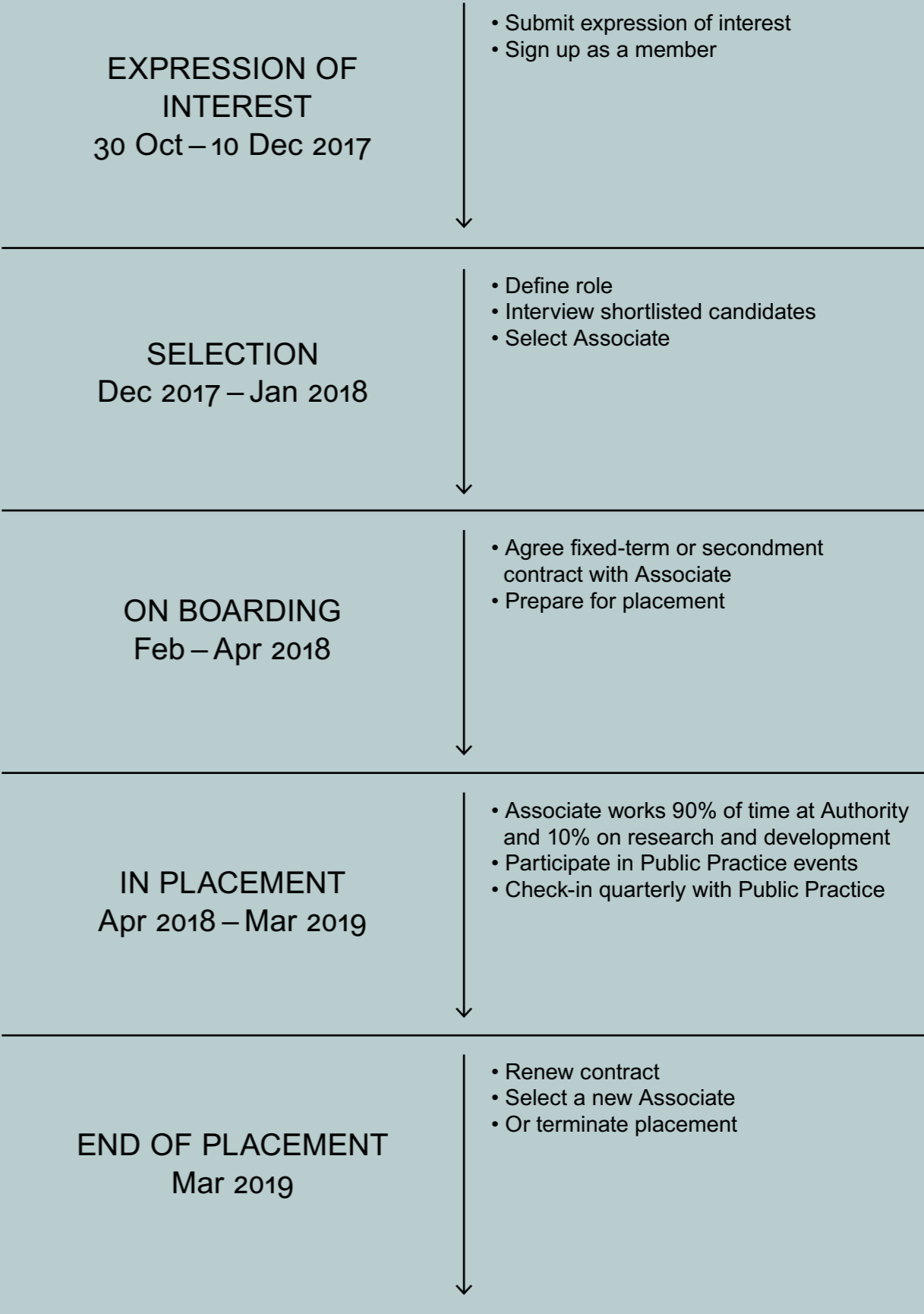
PATRONS (Further patrons to be appointed)

Lord Kerslake Chair, Peabody

FOUNDING PARTNERS



TIMELINE



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A PROSPECTUS FOR AUTHORITIES



HOST A PLACEMENT

Express your interest in hosting a placement at www.publicpractice.org.uk

Follow us @PRACTICEPUBLIC

Or for more information, contact info@publicpractice.org.uk