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CREATING  
A NEW  
GENERATION OF  
PLANNERS



PUBLIC  
PRACTICE

# A PROSPECTUS FOR SUPPORTERS

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.

# OUR VISION

Planning is the golden thread that runs through our communities. It shapes our world and touches every one of us in our daily lives.

Every walk through a park, every building, every place where you socialise with friends or enjoy sport, even the journeys you make, are all the work of planners.

Something so important demands the best, most talented people to be brought together and work for the common good. That is our vision for Public Practice.

It is time to champion the art of planning. We must harness the best of the public and private sectors, matching individuals with Local Authorities that want and need their help. This relationship will be organic and tangible, working in everyone's interest.

Our goal is to strengthen the capacity and enhance the skills within Local Government and, in the end, give people everyday places which are extraordinary to live in.

For this golden thread to shine it must be woven with the utmost care. And when it is, a richness will be added to our society which we can all be rightly proud of.

**Tony Pidgley**

Chairman of the Berkeley Group  
and Founding Partner 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%.<sup>1</sup> 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 place-shaping 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 place-shaping skills in their planning departments.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Centre for London (2015), *Running on Fumes: London Council Services in Austerity*.

Retrieved from: [www.centreforlondon.org/publication/council-services-in-austerity](http://www.centreforlondon.org/publication/council-services-in-austerity)

<sup>2</sup> Greater London Authority (2016), *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

<sup>3</sup> 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 placemaking practitioners.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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

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

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](http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/publications/east_of_england_chief_executives_forum_final.pdf)

# OUR IMPACT

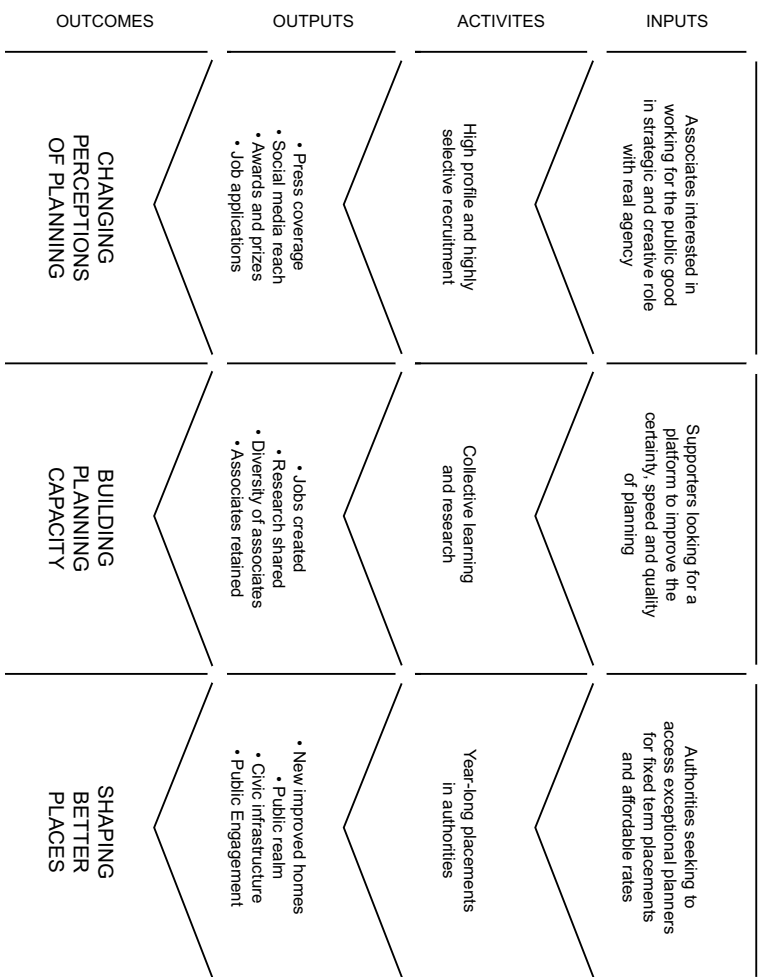
Public Practice's mission is to shape better places by building public planning capacity and changing perceptions of the profession.

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 SUPPORTERS



What does Public Practice offer SUPPORTERS?

**INVEST IN LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING CAPACITY –**

A strategic and sustainable way of improving the certainty, speed and quality of planning.

**DEVELOP THE DIRECTION AND SCOPE OF PUBLIC PRACTICE**

– The opportunity to sit on the Advisory Board and help shape the programme, including its pedagogy and curriculum.

**ACCESS SECONDMENT OPPORTUNITIES –** Offer your staff

valuable secondment opportunities in the public sector, and potentially receive secondments from the public sector in return.

**COLLABORATE ON COLLECTIVE RESEARCH –** Work with the

cohort of Associates to produce and publish cutting-edge research addressing challenges that are relevant for your organisation.

**BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS A SUPPORTER OF GOOD PUBLIC**

PLANNING – Receive recognition through high profile events, press and publications, and our network of leading industry figures.

**WHO YOU ARE** Public Practice welcomes the support of organisations that recognise the importance of good public planning and share our understanding of the value of investing in it. Supporters may be government bodies, grant makers, industry bodies, professional associations, developers or consultants. All support is made on the basis of guidelines that prevent conflicts of interest and maintain our independence as a social enterprise.

**WHAT WE OFFER** Public Practice currently accepts three levels of support; Partners, Members, and Contributors. Partners are a limited number of organisations that shape and collaborate on Public Practice's research & development programme through annual financial contributions of over £15,000. Members are a wider group of organisations that support Public Practice through an annual membership fee at an initial rate of £4,000, which gives access to our research, events and networks. Contributors are the organisations and individuals that provide in kind support or collaborate with us to deliver our programme. We are open to discussing other forms of support as appropriate to your organisation.

**WHAT WE ASK FOR** Public Practice offers Supporters a platform for targeted and high impact capacity building within the public sector. We grow in house expertise for the long-term – this is not just a temporary fix. As a major recruiter of new talent we can play a strategic role in driving diversity or developing specific skills. And as a network of some of the brightest minds within the public sector we offer a test track for new policy or innovative practice. The benefits associated with different levels of support are outlined below, and we would be happy to discuss a specific package to suit your organisation.

	Partners	Members	Contributors
Sit on the Public Practice advisory board	×		
Collaborate on the production & publication of reports	×		
Receive bespoke consultancy from Associates	×		
Host or Sponsor Public Practice events	×		
Access collective research and knowledge sharing	×	×	
Participate in Public Practice events	×	×	
Offer secondment opportunities to staff	×	×	
Access the Public Practice talent pool for placements*	×	×	
Access and additional recruitment support service*	×	×	
Receive a bespoke communication package	×	×	×

\*Public Sector organisations only

# 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
- DESIGN & DELIVERY**
  - Brief-writing
  - Feasibility studies
  - In-house design
  - e.g. architecture, public realm
  - Intelligent clienting
  - Meanwhile projects
  - Procurement
  - Project management
- ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY**
  - Community engagement
  - Digital participation & inclusion
  - External events
  - Inward investment
  - Public consultation
  - Quantitative & qualitative evaluation
  - Visual communication e.g. presentations, publications
- 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
- ENABLING & FACILITATION**
  - Cross-departmental working
  - Cultural programming
  - Design review
  - Design workshops
  - Funding bids
  - Place-based coordination
  - Training sessions

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