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Definitions of Planning and Planners

A spatial planner is a professional involved in the creation of places and management of space. Sound spatial planning develops good urban and rural environments, with a focus on the interests of society as a whole, of settlements and of regions as entities, and on longer term processes.

The spatial planner is the specialist in the interpretation of concepts into spatial form and in the preparation, design and co-ordination of processes and plans on the local, regional and wider territorial scales.

The overriding objective of spatial planning for sustainable development is to integrate social, economic, environmental and cultural factors.

The spatial planner works in the public interest to transform places, taking a long-term perspective.

Skills Required for Planners

Spatial planners work in a range of roles across the public, private and academic spheres: as designers and visionaries, as political advisors and mediators, as urban managers, and as researcher/scientists.

In undertaking these roles, spatial planners will undertake the following tasks, in whole or in part:

1. Identifying the present and future needs of the community and drawing attention to opportunities, effects, constraints and implications of actions;
2. Proposing policies and plans for initiating, regulating, adapting, enabling and implementing change, having regard to guidance from research;
3. Designing spatial concepts of policies and plans for development;
4. Negotiating towards the realisation of these policies and plans, continuously guiding, controlling and implementing these policies and plans in accordance with changing needs and opportunities;
5. Evaluating and monitoring the effects and implications of actual changes;
6. Inspiring and leading research, training and education in the field as appropriate.

It is clear from the foregoing that planners work to a common set of values, and that spatial planning merits recognition as a distinctive profession in its own right.