

Strategic Communications

Capability Statement
2024

tor
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A people practice

tor&co is a planning, design, and environmental consultancy with a human focus.

People are at the core of every tor&co project. We believe that when we consider what they need, how they think, feel, and behave, we uncover the potential to not just meet, but to exceed expectations. We pride ourselves on building long-term relationships, so that together with clients, communities, and partners, we realise our mission to build a lasting legacy.

Philosophy

For us, collaboration breeds creativity.

We believe that collaboration breeds creativity and that thinking creatively will always result in better solutions. By working alongside our clients and partners, calling on the expertise of our colleagues, and consulting the communities for which we create, we arrive at better outcomes for people, the planet, and all its ecosystems.

Our Clients

Fostering relationships for the long-term.

We are proud to partner with a broad range of clients on commercial and socially significant projects of every scale. Both in the public and private sector, our aim is to forge long-term relationships so that every challenge and complexity is tackled with insight and foresight.

Approach

Putting people and legacy at the core.

Our approach is always to start with people and continue to put them at the centre of every project. By giving every consideration to their physical, emotional, environmental and commercial needs, we exceed expectations and leave a sustainable and lasting legacy.

Culture

An interdisciplinary ecosystem.

We are a small but perfectly formed team with an open, inclusive and supportive culture. There are no siloes or egos, just a group of highly skilled individuals who interconnect in pursuit of better outcomes for people and planet



An integrated team

Diverse specialisms with an interdisciplinary approach.

Our breadth of projects demands a diverse set of specialisms and individual skills, but our seamlessly integrated culture and interdisciplinary approach means we listen, learn, and refine as one. Together we unravel the complex, clear a path with singular focus, and apply life-enhancing creativity.

Planning

For us, planning goes beyond just process and the purely technical. Our planning team has an enviable success rate, working to promote positive land use, devising ingenious strategies and advancing projects that make a positive contribution. We embrace challenges from the large, complex and demanding, to the small, and soon to be, perfectly formed, with equal enthusiasm, commitment and creativity.

Landscape Architecture

While we understand the value of the aesthetic, our landscape team know that how a space makes people feel, emotionally and physically, is the key to unlocking the full potential of a site. This focus ensures that our proposals are creative and sympathetic, so that we promote positive co-existence between people, place and planet.

Environmental Planning

Now more than ever, how we care for the environments in which we live, work, learn, and play, is high on everyone's agenda. Our environmental specialists analyse, advise and coordinate with respect to environmental and sustainability issues and environmental impact assessment so that our solutions are robust, meaningful, mutually beneficial, and future focused.

Strategic Communications

By providing strategic advice to our clients from the outset we can shape, design and deliver targeted communications and engagement strategies to help navigate complex circumstances. Developing opportunities for meaningful dialogue with local communities and building trust with decision makers across national and local government is critical in mitigating risk and maximising opportunities.

Architecture

Taking a holistic approach, working in synergy with clients and the wider tor&co team, we believe, results in buildings and spaces that are not only deliverable but exceed expectations. We create exceptional environments where people, business and communities can thrive.

Urban Design

We have a passion to create sustainable places where strong community bonds can be forged. Our belief that truly successful places, ones that intuitively respond to human needs, have exceptional guiding principles. So our approach to masterplanning is designed to add lasting value for developers, partners, and the communities they serve.

Heritage

Early consultation with local authorities and interest groups ensures our heritage experts bring their considerable experience to bear. We work with the wider team to uncover and resolve potential heritage risk, navigating planning pitfalls to ensure that heritage issues are comprehensively addressed. Our work safeguards historical integrity for generations to come.

Viability

We aim to help design and plan developments that are deliverable throughout dynamic market conditions. We help our clients balance commercial and policy requirements, promoting positive outcomes by demonstrating how development proposals are able to contribute towards planning gain.

Expertise

tor&co is a leading consultancy for achieving success from the planning process. We provide inspired and imaginative design and planning solutions, unlocking opportunities at the forefront of best practice and at the cutting edge of commercial thinking.

With an ever-increasing emphasis on early engagement in planning, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process and improve outcomes for local communities, as highlighted in the NPPF and National Design Guide, this document provides an overview of tor&co's strategic communications services.

At tor&co we plan and deliver bespoke communications, stakeholder engagement and public consultation strategies to help facilitate development for the public and private sectors. We apply our expertise in planning, communications, stakeholder engagement and the political process to maximise opportunities for meaningful dialogue with local stakeholders and communities, manage reputations and minimise risk. In doing so we seek to demonstrate social value as a benefit of proposals.

Our team of built environment experts, working on projects across the UK from our offices in London, Birmingham and Bournemouth, has extensive local knowledge and trusted networks to navigate complex and sensitive projects.

We are passionate about creating places in which strong communities can establish and be truly sustainable in the long term. With wide ranging experience across a broad range of sectors including mixed-use and residential developments, energy and waste, aviation, tourism, entertainment, sports, education and workspace, we understand that projects in the built environment really can change lives for the better and deliver substantial benefits, even though they are often contentious in the developmental stage. It is only through effective communication and engagement that such issues can be overcome.

Alongside traditional consultation methods, our digital tools – including interactive websites, on line polls, visual and animated story telling, video documenting and social media outreach – enable inclusive, far-reaching and meaningful engagement opportunities. We seek to use these methods creatively, tailored to each project, to maximise effective engagement with positive outcomes.



Strategic Communications

Strategic Advice

Shaping and delivering targeted communications and engagement strategies to help our clients navigate complex circumstances.

Political & Stakeholder Engagement

Political and policy counsel, developing trust and relations with decision makers and influencers across national and local government, mitigating risk and maximising opportunities.

Public Consultation & Community Engagement

“Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.”

(NPPF 132)

We design and implement bespoke public consultation and community engagement strategies. Building on a granular local understanding, we work in collaboration with project teams to ensure balanced and inclusive participation.

- Prepare all communications materials including newsletters and content for web and print
- Promote and run events and exhibitions
- Establish and facilitate community steering groups and workshops
- Target balanced participation
- Evidence-based Statements of Community Involvement, providing a record of and findings from all engagement activities
- Community investment plans
- Interactive websites, on line polls, visual and animated story telling, video documenting and social media outreach – ensuring a range of approaches to communicate, widen reach and motivate feedback

Public Relations

Clear and measurable strategies, key message creation, compelling narratives communicated across a range of platforms, and placements in local, regional and national media outlets.

Construction Communications

We deliver communications strategies to ensure good relations with communities and key local stakeholders throughout the construction process, from initial works, through the build process.

Social Value

At TOR we believe that the built environment has the power to improve people’s lives. Understanding and investing in social impact is a growing priority for our clients who are increasingly expected by national government, local authorities and the wider public to deliver positive and sustainable social value. Through developing trusted relationships across the communities in which we work, we help clients identify and unlock opportunities to create social value, as a significant planning benefit.



Case Studies

In the following pages we present a selection of our projects. They showcase the breadth of experience we have throughout the country. This locational range continually develops our experience, expanding our knowledge of different approaches from councils, consultants and clients.

Grand Union

This exemplary mixed use development will deliver up to 2,900 new homes along with flexible commercial retail, industrial, cultural and leisure uses and will generate in the region of 650 new jobs.



**Client**

St George Developments Ltd

Location

London Borough of Brent

Expertise

Architecture

Planning

Strategic communications

Landscape architecture

Graphic design

tor&co was selected by the Berkeley Group to provide an interdisciplinary planning and design team to ensure that the proposals were exciting, challenging, technically excellent and viable in order to bring this long derelict and formerly closed off industrial site back to life.

An open space strategy was developed with the local community action groups to ensure that the needs of a highly multi-cultural and demographically polar community could be met. Our approach to public engagement was praised by the Greater London Council and Brent Borough Council after we were able to conceive an open space strategy, within a particularly dense urban development, that made provision for all sectors of the community.

As a result, four and a half hectares of high quality public realm, half the area of the site, will be delivered in the early phases of the masterplan which will provide meeting spaces along the previously inaccessible Grand Union Canal and River Brent.

A new community centre will help the wider neighbourhood reconnect with traditional local celebrations such as the Alperton Summer Festival which will be held in the new Central Gardens. It is intended to be a place where work and living environments meet.

Keith House

Halcyon Development Partners secured planning approval from the London Borough of Hillingdon for a co-living development on the Keith House Eastern site in Hayes.

Keith House currently comprises a warehouse building occupied by the Yodel distribution centre and presents an opportunity to provide much needed new homes and employment space locally.

Designed by Stirling Prize Winning architects, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, the scheme is the borough's first co-living development and combines a range of vibrant shared amenity spaces with well specified private rooms. The new accommodation will be prioritised for key workers and local people and incorporates a number of sustainable initiatives to promote healthy living.

We were appointed by Halcyon Development Partners in 2021 to design and implement an engagement strategy that would help to understand how the building's spaces could provide socio-economic benefits for the local community alongside future residents.

To integrate the development into the local community and deliver real benefits, tor&co has been leading the development of a Community Investment Programme, engaging a diverse range of local groups and organisations over a period of 15 months.

A wide-range of community-led initiatives have been explored, including:

- Events on-site that celebrate and support Hayes' multi-cultural and young population
- Apprenticeships and jobs for local people
- Accommodation for foster care leavers
- Working, meeting and events spaces for the local community
- Accommodation partnerships
- Skills training and mentoring for local entrepreneurs
- Supporting local health and wellbeing through on-site events for local people
- Cycle workshops and lessons on-site
- Linking residents with local volunteering and charity opportunities

Our work with local groups and organisations will continue post planning through the formation of a Community Steering Group comprising local residents, community groups, civic organisations and businesses.

Client
Halcyon Development Partners Limited

Location
London Borough of Hillingdon

Expertise
Strategic communications



Northstowe

New Town



The ambition for Northstowe is to create Cambridgeshire's 3rd largest market town from the ground up, the first to be entirely master planned around a dedicated public transport system, the Guided Busway.

The team at tor&co was engaged in 2007 to advise and refresh the masterplan and planning strategy, with the aim of kick starting a project that was dependent upon major infrastructure funding. We focused on how to deliver the new town as a series of phased developments, within the framework of an overarching masterplan. Greater emphasis was also given to making Northstowe an exemplar of sustainable development based on the objectives within the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth.

Designated as a Healthy New Town, Northstowe has been designed with a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle in mind. A comprehensive network of safe walking and cycling routes promotes active travel and the Guided Busway and its adjoining cycleway connects the town to Cambridge and beyond.

Comprehensive blue and green infrastructure, community facilities, including a town centre, schools, sports and recreation grounds will create a home for 25,000 people, to live efficiently, comfortably and more sustainably.

Progress has been apace, with much of the early phases now fully occupied and the last major housing parcel approved in 2022.



Client

Gallagher Estates and Homes
England

Location

Cambridgeshire

Expertise

Planning
Strategic communications
Urban design
Environmental planning
Landscape architecture
Heritage
Graphic design
Architecture

Marham Park

Through our original appointment to promote the 70-hectare site through the local plan process we were able to build a strong dialogue with the local planning authority.

This, in part, led to the successful allocation of the site and following an extensive and positive consultation process, outline planning permission was secured for around 1,000 homes.

We prepared a comprehensive masterplan for the mixed-use neighbourhood that includes retail provision, a primary school, a site for a new leisure centre along with around 1,000 new homes. The consultation process contributed largely to the success of the project. Working closely with county and district councils, we were able to engage the local community and build good relationships and positive reactions, ensuring success for our clients.

We have retained an involvement in the project with the landscape and heritage teams now working with the developer with the reserved matters applications for early phases of the project, which is now under construction.



Client
Countryside

Location
Suffolk

Expertise
Urban design
Strategic communications
Masterplanning
Landscape architecture
Architecture
Heritage
Graphic design

Shipley & Keighley Towns Funds



Keighley and Shipley have secured up to £58 million of funding as part of the Government's Towns Fund. This funding will help to increase economic growth with a focus on regeneration, improved transport, skills and culture.

Investment will support the sustainable growth of Keighley as a forward-facing, premier manufacturing, engineering and technology hub, celebrating its rich heritage across industry, culture and sport.

Building on the economic success of Shipley as an IT, digital and manufacturing hub, and the rich, unique cultural offer of Saltaire World Heritage Site, to transform it into a well-connected, sustainable, creative and innovative location, supporting tourism, jobs, skills, training and educational opportunities for all.

tor&co are currently appointed to lead Community Engagement and since 2021, we have developed a granular understanding of each town, delivered a series of public engagement events, developed and managed an interactive consultation website, and are currently engaging Bradford's rich multi-cultural and young population to enable meaningful opportunities for involvement in shaping their future towns

Client

City of Bradford
Metropolitan Council

Location

Yorkshire

Expertise

Strategic communications
Graphic design

Solar Farms

tor&co has considerable experience in the solar farm sector and has helped to gain planning consent for a number of schemes across England at a range of scales.

Our integrated approach and range of in-house expertise are ideally suited to address the key planning and EIA issues associated with these projects with public consultation events and liaison with local members, officers and consultees being paramount to their success. We prepare robust planning applications within demanding timeframes and are successful in demonstrating the acceptability of the schemes.

Our team has helped gain planning permission for the following solar farms, of which 14 have been built and are operational or under construction:

- Cantelupe, Shelswell Estate and Fryingdown Copse for Alectron Investments Ltd
- Langage Energy Park for Langage Solar Farm Ltd
- Bedborough, Newnham, Warren Farm, Ashby (2 no.), Parchfields, Hungerford, Granville Road, Kenniford Farm and Sawmills solar farms for Solstice Renewables Ltd
- Great Glemham, Cowdown and Newbold Quarry for AG Renewables
- Creacombe Farm Solar Farm for Gnaton Farm
- Leigh Delamere Solar Farm for Eden Renewables

Planning permission for a further five solar farms was granted but these have not been constructed. In addition, we have worked for a range of other solar farm developers including Ennoviga, Solar Century and Solar Fields. We are currently working with a number of solar farm developers and landowners on sites across England range from site reviews through to planning applications.

Clients

Solstice Renewables, Carlton Power, Alectron Investments, AG Renewables, Gnaton Farm

Location

Various

Expertise

Planning
Strategic communications
Environmental planning
Landscape architecture
Geographic information systems
Graphic design



Image courtesy Solstice Renewables

Wind Farms

We have acted as heritage advisor for a portfolio of wind farm sites across the U.K.

Three sites from one portfolio were progressed to application stage. North Rhins wind farm, on the west coast of Scotland, was granted planning permission and is now operational. Newfield and Earlishaugh wind farms, located in Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders respectively, were submitted to Scottish Government and failed to gain permission at public inquiries.

We undertook all necessary archaeological and built heritage assessment work for two successful wind farms in the East of England at Lissett Airfield, near Bridlington and Sixpenny Wood, near Goole both of which are now operational. We worked closely and collaboratively with GIS, Landscape and Ecology colleagues to determine the least constrained areas of the Orkney Islands that led to our client selling a portfolio of sites with land option agreements to a prospective developer.

Client
Wind Energy / AES

Location
Various

Expertise
Planning
Strategic communications
Environmental planning
Landscape architecture
Heritage
Geographic information systems



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Bournemouth
Birmingham
Bristol

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