

Member Bulletin - November 2025

Dear \$[UD:FIRST_NAME]]\$,

Welcome to the November edition of the IPM Bulletin

The past few weeks have highlighted the breadth of IPM's work - from shaping national policy to strengthening international partnerships and advancing innovative research.

We were pleased to work closely with IPM members to submit evidence to the UK Parliament's Devolution Bill, ensuring the voice of place professionals is firmly represented in national debates on governance and local empowerment. Building on this, members of the team also contributed to discussions on devolution at the Regional Studies Association Conference - more on this below.

Across Manchester Metropolitan University, the end-of-year showcase for the Circular Society Innovation - Place-Based projects demonstrated how research and practice are helping shape more sustainable local economies. We were proud to help host the International Place Branding Association Conference at Manchester Met, welcoming global experts for four days of talks, workshops and walks that deepened international connections and enriched our teaching and engagement.

Our international work continued in Norway, where we supported Telemark Research Institute through our Vital and Viable programme, while Dr Jenny Kanellopoulou spent the week in Edinburgh on a visiting professorship - congratulations, Jenny. IPM Senior Fellow Dr Viriya Taecharunroj also presented his new book, *Strategic City Branding* to Dr Chloe Steadman during a recent Manchester visit.

With IPM's 20th anniversary on the horizon, we have begun refreshing our research priorities to reflect the needs and aspirations of our membership. We want this next phase to be shaped *with you* and *for you*.

If you have ideas, questions or themes you believe deserve attention, we would be delighted to hear from you and welcome your involvement in the months ahead.

Ian Harvey SFIPM
Head of Institute of Place Management

Up and coming events



RSA X IPM Webinar - Devolution

- **Date:** Thursday 4th December 2026
- **Time:** 13:00 - 14:00
- **Online**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

If you need assistance, please email nicola.pilling@regionalstudies.org.

[Register here](#)



Northern Tourism Academics Network at Manchester Met

- **Date:** Thursday 15th January 2026
- **Time:** 9:30 - 16:30pm
- **In-person**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

[Register here](#)

[Read more details about our events](#)

IPM Senior Fellow Dr Viriya Taecharunroj presents *Strategic City Branding* to Dr Chloe Steadman during Manchester visit



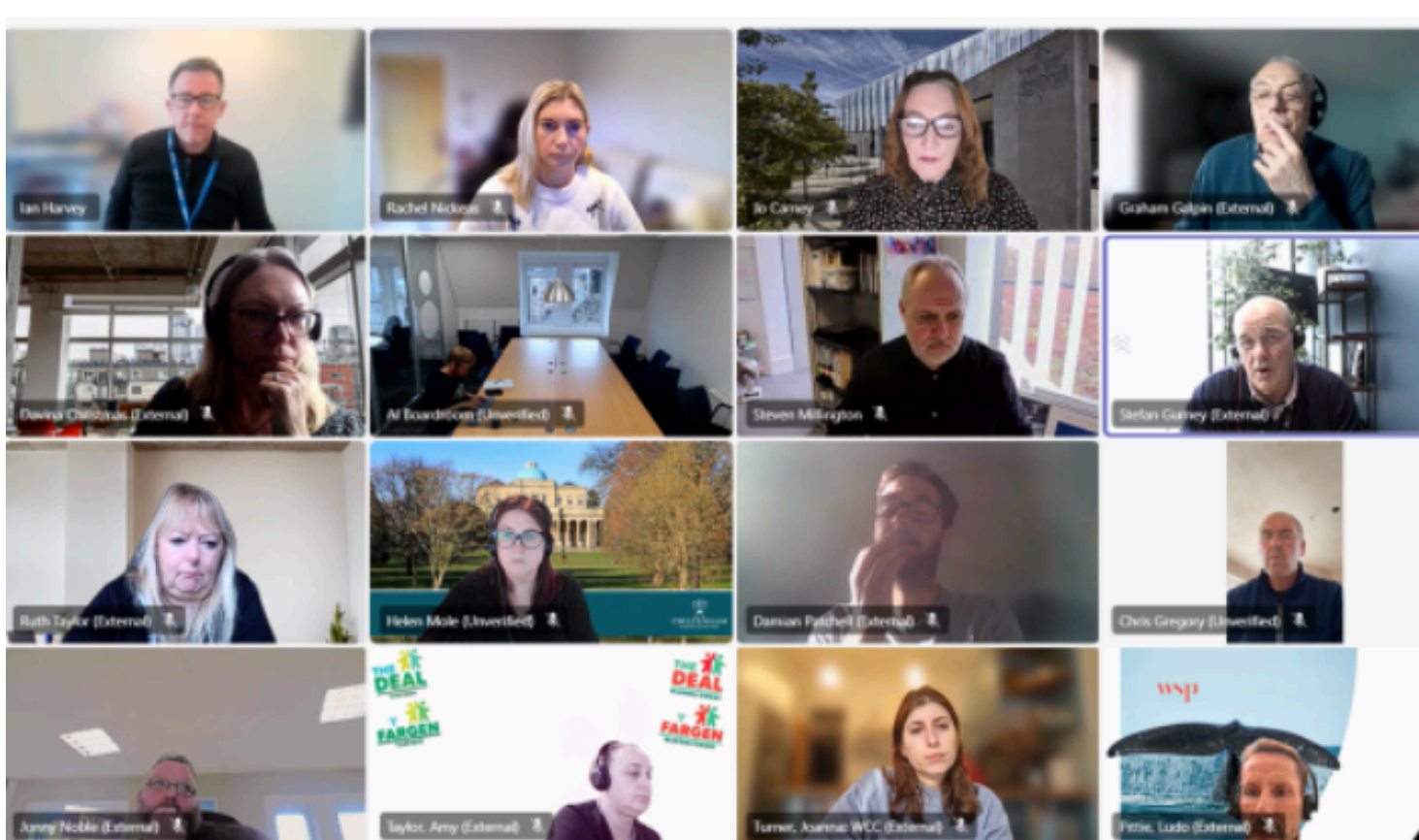
The Institute of Place Management was delighted to welcome [Dr Viriya Taecharunroj](#), IPM Senior Fellow and Associate Professor at Mahidol University, Thailand, to Manchester Metropolitan University during his recent visit to the UK for the International Place Branding Association conference.

During his visit, Dr Taecharunroj presented his new book, *Strategic City Branding: Insights from Asian Cities*, to Dr Chloe Steadman, Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University. The book is to be added to the IPM library.

The book brings together key concepts, case studies, and strategic management tools for effective city branding. Drawing on 24 concise case studies from across Asia, it demonstrates how cities can leverage their unique characteristics to build compelling brands that attract investment, residents, and visitors. Each chapter provides conceptual and practical tools for understanding city brand identity, positioning, and evaluation.

As a Senior Fellow of the IPM, we will be inviting Viriya to speak about his book as part of our *IPM@20: In Conversation* series in 2026.

Sector Leaders Help Shape New Place Management Apprenticeship



The Institute of Place Management and Manchester Metropolitan University held our second Apprenticeship Roundtable on 12 November, bringing together representatives from local authorities, Business Improvement Districts, national bodies, cultural organisations and international partners to progress the co-design of a new Degree Apprenticeship for the Place Management sector.

Building on September's initial discussions, the group explored the skills and structures needed to create a professional pathway for emerging place leaders. There was strong consensus that a Level 6 programme would fill a significant skills gap, supporting early-career practitioners and strengthening succession planning across the sector.

Key questions included how to support smaller organisations hosting apprentices, how best to balance specialist place-based skills with broader leadership capabilities, and how the programme can reflect diverse policy contexts across the UK.

Manchester Met will now map feedback against existing apprenticeship standards and develop a draft programme for review in early 2026, with a target launch of September 2026.

To express interest in your organisation hosting an apprenticeship or to discuss other involvement, contact ipm@mmu.ac.uk

Exploring the “Feel” of Place Through Sensory Methods



Place managers often talk about the importance of a place’s “feel” – the emotional quality that makes one high street feel vibrant while another feels flat. To explore how this can be captured, the Institute of Place Management recently supported a smellwalk workshop in Manchester led by Dr Kate McLean, internationally recognised Smellwalk Leader and creator of Smell Maps. The session formed part of the International Place Branding Association Conference at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Participants were invited to experience the city through scent, noticing how smells shift street by street, and later visualised their findings through creative exercises. The results will be showcased at the next IPBA Conference in Lisbon in 2026.

This work connects with ongoing research by Dr Chloe Steadman, who is developing creative and sensory methods to understand high street atmospheres. These approaches help place managers capture the lived, sensory experience of place and strengthen community engagement. For further information, please contact us at ipm@mmu.ac.uk or visit our [website here](#) for the research guides.

IPM in Norway to deliver the Vital and Viable Programme



The Institute of Place Management team have been in Norway this month delivering the Vital and Viable Town Centre programme in Ulefoss and Lunde for our partners at Telemarkforskning (Telemark Research Institute).

This visit forms part of IPM’s expanding international work on place-based regeneration and sustainability. During the programme, the team completed an assessment of place vitality using IPM’s 25 Priorities for Vital and Viable Centres and facilitated a series of interactive workshops with local authorities, businesses, and community organisations.

These sessions explored local challenges and opportunities for revitalising high streets and town centres, supporting participants to identify practical actions, shared priorities, and pathways for future improvement.

The partnership showcases IPM’s growing international reach and demonstrates how the Vital and Viable framework continues to provide a robust, evidence-based foundation for place improvement - wherever a place might be.

If you are interested in commissioning IPM or working with our expert network, please get in touch at ipm@mmu.ac.uk



IPM Hosts International Place Branding Association Conference at Manchester Metropolitan University



In October, Manchester Metropolitan University welcomed over 150 delegates from around the world for the International Place Branding Association Annual Conference, hosted by the Institute of Place Management.

Over four days, academics, practitioners, and policymakers from across Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas came together to explore the theme of “Place, Policy and Practice: Creating Impact through Place Branding.” The event featured keynote presentations, research papers, practical workshops, and walking tours showcasing Manchester’s dynamic approach to place development and identity.

The IPM team were proud to co-host and contribute to the event, reflecting on how research and practice can come together to support inclusive, resilient, and distinctive places. Delegates also had the opportunity to explore the city through walking tours led by IPM members, offering on-the-ground perspectives of Manchester’s regeneration and cultural identity.

The conference further strengthened IPM’s international partnerships, and we hope in 2026 to deepen our collaboration with the IPBA community as we mark our 20th anniversary and IPBA celebrates its 10th.



Celebrating a year of Place-based Circular Society Innovations



On 23-24 October, we were delighted to join colleagues for the End-of-Year 1 Meeting with our partners, Advisory Board, and members of our Knowledge Action Network. It was a joy to come together with colleagues from the UK, Netherlands, Finland and America, share our progress so far, and collectively reflect on how people are already living and working within circular societies - and what more we can do to create better, fairer futures.

We began by getting to know each other’s experiences and relationships to circularity, setting the tone for open, thoughtful discussions. The Heston in the Loop team (Amy Casey, Jo Lima and Taz Virdee) delivered an inspiring panel exploring what a circular neighbourhood looks like in practice - its practicalities, challenges, and lessons learned.

In the afternoon, our “Futuring circular society: Co-designing a society where place-based circular society innovations flourish” session brought creativity (and cake!) to the table, as we imagined the key ingredients for a thriving, transformational circular society.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, shared insights, and helped make this gathering such a memorable and motivating milestone. Here’s to more collaboration, creativity, and circular thinking in Year 2!

Institute of Place Management at the Regional Studies Association Conference



The Institute of Place Management continued to build its relationship with the Regional Studies Association (RSA) at this year’s conference, where Professor Steve Millington, Dr Nikos Ntounis and Professor Cathy Parker MBE led a session exploring whether Regional Studies could become a natural academic home for place management.

With England’s emerging devolution framework moving into hyperlocal territory - town centres, district centres and neighbourhoods - the discussion highlighted the growing overlap between regional research and the practice of place management. Delegates recognised that the mechanisms shaping local change, including partnership working, behaviours, and place leadership, are increasingly central to wider regional development narratives.

The positive response from RSA colleagues indicates strong potential for future collaboration. IPM will continue to position place management within regional studies as the English Devolution Bill progresses and new multi-level governance arrangements take shape. For those unable to join the physical event, we will be hosting an online discussion with the RSA on 4th December on the same subject.



Your thoughts on current place management and leadership issues as an IPM member

We love showcasing the expertise and insights of our valued members. If you have a story, research, or a project that might interest the wider IPM network, we’d love to hear from you! Whether it’s a discussion topic, a LinkedIn feature to highlight your profile, or an update that deserves attention, we’re keen to share your contributions.

Additionally, as an IPM member, you gain exclusive access to our members’ area - a hub filled with valuable resources, networking opportunities, and industry insights. If you’re not yet a member and would like to explore the benefits, feel free to get in touch to discuss membership options.

Let’s continue to build connections and celebrate the fantastic work happening across the sector!



We’re always keen to know your thoughts on current issues directly via [email](#) and in comments on our LinkedIn social media posts. Thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin, our next issue will be issued in December.

The IPM Team



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