

Transport Planning Society

February 3rd 2017

WHAT TRANSPORT PLANNERS REALLY THINK

Latest TPS member survey shows a lack of enthusiasm for airport expansion and strong support for demand management in general and walking and cycling in particular. In tune with this there is far more support for local rail improvements than high speed rail or trunk roads. There is rising concern over air quality and health impacts generally. Members overwhelmingly favour greater transport powers for England's city regions but are concerned whether sufficient funds will be available and comment on the inconsistent performance of LEPs.

The Transport Planning Society annual survey of its members reveals what has changed and what hasn't in the past year. Results confirm that the private sector is now recruiting and reviving professional development programmes. The responses, from about 20% of the membership, will help to guide our events programme, and inform the policy work planned for 2016, including the TPS Agenda for Change.

Some key results are set out below, figures for last year are shown thus: (%)

Respondents and attitudes to qualifications

- Similar sectoral split to previous years for the survey respondents: consultancies 62% (64%), local authorities 25% (23%).
- This year for the first time we asked about length of time working in transport planning – 61% of respondents had 10 years or more experience.
- The higher level of participation in the PDS shown last year was maintained at 25% (25%), it was 18% in 2014 but only 6% in 2013.
- Interesting and sometimes trenchant responses to the open ended question on differences between local authorities and the private sector in developing skills – there is serious concern from both sides
- High awareness of the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification at 97% (98%) but still a significant number with no plans to apply 44% (46%).

Policy priorities

- In relation to policy priorities, walking and cycling continue as members' first choice at 58% (60%) it also achieved top spot in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015!
- There was also confirmation of members' priority for non-high speed rail capacity increases at 45% (49%) - second place to walk/cycle. By contrast, support for high speed rail and major trunk road schemes remains low at 16% and 14% respectively (17% and 15%).

- Air quality rose up the agenda to joint second place, perhaps reflecting “dieselgate”, the new understanding of the threat to health, and continued breaches of guidelines in many places in the UK.
- Top 5 policy priorities in 2016 and 2015 were:

| | 2016 | 2015 |
|--|------|------|
| Walking/cycling | 58% | 60% |
| Non-High Speed railway capacity improvements | 45% | 49% |
| Tackling poor air quality | 45% | 33% |
| Travel behaviour change (Smarter Choices) | 43% | 43% |
| Urban Rapid Transit schemes | 33% | |
| <i>Road maintenance</i> | | 32% |

Revenue for transport

In terms of raising funds for transport nationally, members still favour road user charging, the top 5 were:

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| Introduce national road user pricing |
| Increasing VED for the most polluting vehicles |
| Introduce national Lorry Road User Charging |
| Increase the scope and raise the level of tax on aviation |
| Introduce a national parking space levy |

Policy drivers and governance

- In relation to policy drivers, using planning to reduce the need to travel was the priority, but last year’s increased priority for linking transport and health was consolidated: 91% thought it important or very important (89%).
- Move towards demand management to solve airport congestion: only 26% supporting more runway capacity in the SE (31%), 31% more regional capacity (37%), and implementing tax reform first rising to 43% (33%).
- Continuing support for reform of appraisal and for the proposal to use land use values (revealed preference) rather than time savings.
- Some support for LEPs in relation to jobs (65% positive), but seen as much more negative in relation to health outcomes and sustainability, but with many comments stressing the high variability of their performance
- Strong preference at 79% (77%) for granting new powers to city regions and combined authorities, but serious concerns that these would fail without sufficient funding (28%).