

Transport Planning Society

April 2019

TPS Annual Members Survey 2018/19: what transport planners really think

Every year TPS undertakes an annual survey of its members. This gives an opportunity for them to tell us what they think outside the confines of their everyday work. It reveals what has changed and what hasn't in the past year and where their priorities for the future really are.

Overall the picture is one where sustainable transport is seen to be at the centre of everything we do, where demand management is seen as the key tool, and that local infrastructure and regional development is more important than national "grand projects". Thus environmental taxation and regional airport development is favoured instead of airport expansion in the South East, and the use of national road user pricing for cars and for HGVs to manage demand is strongly supported.

Walking and cycling has been their number 1 priority every year since the survey began in 2012. On the other hand HS2 and strategic level roadbuilding are consistently very low in their priority list.

In addition, there are special questions every year, which directly influence TPS activities for the year ahead, this time on Transport Planning Day. Further details are set out below.

Special questions this year: Transport Planning Day

In order to get direct member feedback on Transport Planning Day a number of special questions were included this year. The results were very supportive but critical in certain areas and will be extremely useful in developing TP Day as a regular event.

First of all there was very strong support for continuing with TP Day – 68% agreed or strongly agreed (only 5% disagreed). This was balanced by a need for significant changes going forward, key suggestions and comments were:

- Need for many more regional events (largest single category of response), and associated difficulty in participating across the UK
- need to engage a wider audience and the public - profession still talking too much to itself?
- awards need to include more transport planning content – what exactly did they say about the profession?
- do we need other awards to create a bigger picture with more emphasis on transport planning – e.g. an excellent and a execrable?

Comparisons with previous years' results

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

Policy priorities

- In relation to policy priorities, walking and cycling continue as members' first choice at 61% (53%) it also achieved top spot each year from 2012 to 2017!
- There was also confirmation of members' priority for non-high speed rail capacity increases at 45% (47%) - second highest score. By contrast, support for high speed rail and major trunk road schemes remain very low at 12% and 9% respectively (10% and 8% in 2017/18).

- Top 5 policy priorities in 2018/19 and 2017 were the same but slightly reordered:

	2018	2017
Walking/cycling	61%	53%
Travel behaviour change (Smarter Choices)	49%	41%
Tackling poor air quality	45%	47%
Non-High Speed railway capacity improvements	42%	53%
Urban Rapid Transit schemes	35%	43%

Revenue for transport

In terms of raising funds for transport nationally, the top 5 priorities were:

	2018/19	2017
Increasing VED for the most polluting vehicles	1	2
Introduce national road user pricing	2	1
Introduce national Lorry Road User Charging	3	3
Increase the scope and raise the level of tax on aviation	4	4
Introduce a national parking levy	5	-

For raising local revenue the results were:

Introduce local workplace parking levies	1	3
Charge developers a new transport levy which is spent locally	1	1
Charge for all local public parking, including retail	3	2
Introduce a Business Rate Supplement for transport	4	5
Introduce local area based road user charging	5	4

Policy drivers and governance

- In relation to policy drivers, decarbonising transport has risen back up the agenda, followed by using land use planning to reduce the need to travel.
- Last year's move towards demand management to solve airport congestion was continued this year: only 17% supporting more runway capacity in the SE (16% in 2017), 43% more regional capacity (37%), and implementing tax reform first at 43% (47%).
- Continuing support for reform of appraisal with 33% choosing "Fails to reflect key policy drivers and requires major reform" and 17% saying "decisions are always political and appraisal is not required". 66% wanted the negative health impacts of car use counted in appraisal, and 44% wanted an appraisal against carbon reduction targets rather than using theoretical carbon costs.
- Strong preference at 80% (79%) for granting new powers to city regions and combined authorities, but serious concerns that these would fail without sufficient funding at 34% (28%).

Respondents and attitudes to qualifications

- Similar sectoral split to previous years for the survey respondents: consultancies 63% (56% in 2017), public sector 20% (25%).

- In 2016 for the first time we asked about length of time working in transport planning – 62% of respondents had 10 years or more experience and 22% less than 5.
- Place of work was showed London and SE (36%) highest but encouraging regional representation: W Mid (11%); SW (9%); NW (9%); Yorks/Humber (8%); and East of England (7%). This is less London based than previous surveys.
- Continuing concern and sometimes trenchant responses to the open ended question on differences between local authorities and the private sector in developing skills – there is serious and continuing concern from both sides
- High awareness of the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification at 98% (98%) but still a significant number with no plans to apply 47% (54%).

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