

Developing Professional Skills in Transport Planning A Consortium Approach for Local Authorities

The Transport Planning Society is committed to identifying and promoting good practice in transport planning. A key part of that commitment is the development and recognition of professional transport planners. And we believe that these objectives apply equally within both the public and private sectors. However, we recognise that, for many Local Authorities, the provision of appropriate learning opportunities and personal development paths represents a real challenge. It needs skilled resources first to establish an in-house scheme and then to manage and mentor those following it.

However, the Transport Planning Society can help. Not only does the TPS offer a fully documented “off the shelf” development scheme – the TPS Professional Development Scheme (PDS) - but it now offers a discount, and support, for groups of Local Authorities who wish to share responsibilities and opportunities for the development of their staff.

The TPS Professional Development Scheme

The TPS PDS has been designed to help employers ensure that their transport planners develop the broad range and depth of competences they need to be able to work effectively as true professionals.

It provides a step-by-step structure, covering both knowledge and experience, guiding transport planners, whether a recent graduate or a career changer, through the key process of acquiring the skills they need.


It has been developed by TPS working closely with employers and is based on the National Occupational Standards for Transport Planning.

Completion of the TPS PDS meets all the Knowledge requirements and most of the Experience requirements of the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification. It also meets the experience requirements for Chartered membership of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, CILT and, for those with an accredited degree, it can satisfy many of the experience requirements for CEng.

Current Users of the TPS Professional Development Scheme

Since it was launched in 2008, most of the major transport planning consultants have adopted the TPS PDS; some using it to replace their own in-house schemes. Hampshire and Leicestershire County Councils and Transport for London are also among the users.

Nearly all those using the TPS PDS, whether employers or trainees, see it as providing a well defined path towards award of the Transport Planning professional, TPP, qualification.



The TPS Professional Development Scheme Consortium Licence

Although the TPS PDS is a comprehensive package, to be effective it needs to match the particular circumstances of each user and, once implemented, it needs the support of experienced transport planners to mentor staff as they progress through the Scheme, as well as resource management to help the trainees gain the breadth of experience required.

The Society recognises that both PDS implementation and its on-going management is not easy for some Local Authorities; in particular for smaller Unitaries that have only a few transport planners, can only offer a limited range of experience and have limited budgets for staff development.

To help them adopt the TPS PDS, the Society provides a Consortium Licence, under which a group of Authorities work together in implementing and managing the PDS, sharing mentoring and management resources, as well as seconding staff between members to help them gain the breadth of experience required for Scheme completion – and the TPP qualification.

The key characteristics of the Consortium Licence are:

- the members of the consortium should form a contiguous group. This is in the interests of being able to share responsibilities efficiently, as well as, possibly, staff secondment.
- in principle, consortia should have no more than six members, although the Society is willing to consider proposals for larger groupings.
- there must be a lead member, providing the link with the TPS on behalf of the Consortium.
- the lead member pays an annual TPS PDS licence and TPS membership fee on behalf of all the Consortium members. That fee entitles each member of the Consortium to the benefits of TPS Corporate membership.
- for non-metropolitan (including London) authorities, the annual fee is based on a total charge of £400 for two Consortium members plus £150 for each additional member, For metropolitan authorities outside London led by an ITA, the annual fee is £1,000. The fees for other metropolitan (including London) Consortia are determined by TPS on the basis of their membership.
- each member is a signatory to the Consortium's PDS licence.
- all staff on the TPS PDS under a Consortium arrangement must be registered with TPS. They will be granted Student membership of TPS for their first two years and will then be expected to become standard individual members of the Society.

Individual Local Authorities that are Corporate Members of TPS, for which the annual subscription is £250, can also obtain a TPS PDS licence.

Making Progress

The TPS is very pleased to meet with any Authority interested in forming a PDS Consortium. They should contact the Society's Director for Skills, Martin Richards, at martinrichards1@aol.com, or call him on 01306 711885.

Transport Planning Society