

# Transport Planning Society

<b>Meeting Date</b>	9 March 2023
<b>Report Title</b>	Chair's Report
<b>For Decision or for Information?</b>	For Information
<b>Decision Sought</b>	N/A
<b>Report Summary</b>	This report summarises the activity of the chair since the last board meeting.

Much of my time since my last report from our November board meeting has been spent leading the delivery of Transport Planning Day 2022, getting ready for the AGM and arranging a smooth handover to the new incoming chair.

This report also summarises other engagements I've undertaken in the capacity of Chair.

## **TP Day 2022 Update**

The 2022 TP Day event at ICE went well I thought, bringing together a wide range of thought leaders from across the industry coupled with an engaging discussion on representing the views of different generations in transport planning decision-making. I particularly enjoyed the presentation by Rhiannon Hardiman providing a summary of the Welsh Future Generations Act and its impact on transport policy and the lively discussion this then led to across our inter-generational panel.

It was also a joy to be back in person at ICE, and I confess to a genuine warm glow of a job well done as delegates filed into the suitably grand reception room after the last session to enjoy a glass of wine and a nibble, providing mood music of animated chatter about the content of the day, and occurrences in the sector in general. When planning the event, we weren't sure whether we had provided too much time for informal networking, but my feeling is that this side of things is really a key purpose of the Society and is as important as the content in the main session.

JFG have compiled a summary of the results in terms of media exposure here: [coveragebook.com](https://coveragebook.com)

Already looking forward to Nov 2023!

## **22 November – Transport Scotland Meeting (Stephen Cragg)**

It was good to catch up with Stephen about developments north of the border and how TPS can get more involved. It's clear that the 20% traffic reduction target is focussing minds, and leading to some interesting policy discussion - particularly around the role of digital accessibility in facilitating sustainable growth.

## **24 November – Interchange Steering Group**

I represent TPS and ICE at this steering group for the Interchange conference and media platform. I think it's a really interesting initiative which seeks to break down modal silos and transmit learnings across the industry – a key function of TPS and the transport planning profession generally of course! Delighted that TPS is a founding supporter of the initiative – see here for news story [Interchange Live \(tps.org.uk\)](https://www.tps.org.uk/news/interchange-live)

## **30 November – Low Traffic Future Discussion with Roger Geffen**

I had a conversation with Roger Geffen about the new 'Low traffic future' alliance. See more here: [Low Traffic Future](#) The alliance is intended to draw together stakeholders with an interest in sustainable transport to better articulate the benefits of reducing traffic volumes. Clearly, this is a timely initiative given all the recent social media furore around 15 min cities, LTNs and the like. TPS is not a formal supporter of this (as a body representing the profession, we don't typically back individual campaigns) but I have agreed we would offer to disseminate work by the alliance and provide a platform for their research and insight as appropriate.

## **6 December – National Infrastructure commission Round table (ICE)**

I attended a very interesting roundtable exploring the next national infrastructure assessment (NIA) by the National Infrastructure Commission which is just kicking off.

This is a huge and fascinating cross-cutting piece of work across all infrastructure sectors, but it was obviously particularly useful to get more information on the areas of focus with relevance for transport planning.

Looks like there will be some very useful work on how to improve urban transport. The role of mass transit in delivering improved competitiveness and productivity will be explored, and it was good to hear that there will now be consideration around the role active travel can also play in this space - a key recommendation in the Transport Planning Society feedback to the consultation on NIA earlier in the year.

Perhaps most excitingly there is a specific focus on exploring demand management options in cities as a way to counter congestion - what role could schemes like workplace parking levy or congestion charges play in delivering wider objectives (e.g. well being), and, crucially, how best they can be facilitated through existing governance structures.

A second stream considers inter-urban corridors.

The focus here seems to be on ensuring that infrastructure is fit for purpose in delivering growth, including levelling up. Very welcome discussion on taking a multi-modal approach to this, and the idea (I think) of developing a framework that could help allocate funding across modes in the light of wider objectives. I thought that sounded a bit like a national transport strategy...

I made the point that there was no demand management focus within this package - with the response being that congestion on inter-urban corridors was perceived as less of an issue and hence the focus needed to be on connectivity. I'd question that assumption - if we are looking to improve travel times

between economic clusters to support productivity gains and agglomeration benefits (for example) - helping to optimise and ensure the most efficient use of existing infrastructure should be the focus#1, before enhancing or building new infrastructure. And there also needs to be a recognition of induced demand that will inevitably result if capacity is increased without corresponding controls on the use of that new kit.

Also, the key is to think that managing demand doesn't always have to mean road pricing. It could be around measures to increase car occupancy, facilitate digital access to services to reduce the need for travel, explore the potential of social movements like a 4-day week, integrate land use and planning etc...

Finally - very welcome discussion around resilience and news that there will be a deep dive into asset management and maintenance - including for local roads. The question posed - are pothole funds really the best way of managing this vital asset? (Spoiler: No.).

See here: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd\\_national-infrastructure-assessment-activity-7006226588727926784-4l7U?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd_national-infrastructure-assessment-activity-7006226588727926784-4l7U?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

### **8 & 9 December – Local Transport Summit 2022, Cardiff**

I had an excellent time at 2022's Local Transport Summit in Cardiff, which had a particular focus on understanding best practice from the Welsh policy landscape and how this could apply across the border.

It was especially enjoyable to hear Welsh Assembly member Lee Waters talk through the politics of rethinking transport investment, some comments here:

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd\\_constructivechallenge-transportplanning-netzero-activity-7006650739011788800-eEUw?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd_constructivechallenge-transportplanning-netzero-activity-7006650739011788800-eEUw?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

I wrote a piece partly reflecting on discussions at the summit for LTT here: [https://fernconsulting-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/mark\\_frost\\_fernconsulting\\_net/ERdBwiswANBEpYW60t7adMMBuRsOTt9I\\_t5yb\\_HkZyo8QQ?e=jo4ghu](https://fernconsulting-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/mark_frost_fernconsulting_net/ERdBwiswANBEpYW60t7adMMBuRsOTt9I_t5yb_HkZyo8QQ?e=jo4ghu)

### **12 December – ICE Year in Infrastructure Launch**

I enjoyed launching the new ICE 2023: year in infrastructure report, having been interviewed to inform the transport and mobility chapter. Some reflections here:

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd\\_horizonsscanning-globalgoals-civilengineering-activity-7008086284426477568-6wPR?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd_horizonsscanning-globalgoals-civilengineering-activity-7008086284426477568-6wPR?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

### **12 January - Special TPS board meeting (Officer group plus working group lead briefing for incoming chair)**

We kicked off 2023 with this special meeting of TPS officers and working group chairs to talk through plans for 2023 and bring our chair-nominate up to speed on how we all work. I'm really pleased with how we are all working together to push the society forward in different ways, despite the huge

pressure on everyone's time and capacity. I think (hope?!) I'm building on Stephen Bennett's excellent work during his tenure to reorganise the society, and will be handing over a relatively smooth-running machine to our new chair.

### **18 January – ICE Event on a new Transport Strategy**

I attended this roundtable with the new chair of the Transport Select Committee Iain Stewart MP to explore the concept of a national transport strategy.

Further reflections here: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd\\_lighthouse-does-england-need-a-national-activity-7035568389884411904-sCQy?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fernconsultingltd_lighthouse-does-england-need-a-national-activity-7035568389884411904-sCQy?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)

I have been asked to join the steering group to help develop the green paper further. Background reading is included as an additional appendix, which I would welcome further comment on.

### **8 February – Steer Event**

We're also launching a new initiative to provide our stakeholders with a platform to share their thought leadership. We were delighted that Steer were able to kick this off with an excellent event at their new London offices on 8 February exploring priorities for Transport Planning sector over the coming years. Was great to get the perspective of Jessica Matthews in particular from DfT, and her hopes for a new golden era of Local Transport Plans, with the exciting innovation of needing to provide evidence that the plans will deliver 'quantified carbon reduction' in line with decarbonisation targets. Catch up here: [Watch our joint event with Steer on 'Shaping the future of transport planning' \(tps.org.uk\)](#).