

Transport Planning Society

Meeting Date	7 November 2024
Report Title	Item 10 - Chair's Report
For Decision or for Information?	For Information
Decision Sought	N/A
Report Summary	This report summarises the activity of the Chair since the last board meeting.

TPS Business Strategy

The Business Strategy steering group has continued to meet to review progress in delivering against the agreed priorities for taking forward the strategy. These are to:

- Increase individual membership via improved retention;
- Improve relationship with/income from corporate supporters;
- Increase revenue from alternative sources;
- Increase influence on policy agenda.

There is significant activity underway in relation to delivering these priorities, including:

- A set of proposals around how to restructure our relationship with our corporate supporters, based on an analysis of the recent Stakeholder Members survey (see Agenda item 7);
- Establishment of a new TPS Policy Panel, to support development and delivery of TPS policy work (see Agenda item 11);
- A meeting between the TPS Chair, Company Secretary and Skills Director with a senior Partner at a leading law firm to discuss the pros and cons of potential changes to the TPS's constitutional status (see below).

The Board is invited to comment on the activities underway to support delivery of the Business Strategy and identify whether/how they would like to contribute to these.

TPS Charitable Status

On 8 October, the Company Secretary, Skills Director and I met Lawrie Simanowitz, a senior partner and head of the Charity Practice at the law firm Bates Wells. Lawrie had very generously offered to meet to give us some high-level pro bono advice on whether the TPS should apply for Charitable status.

In summary, his view was that on balance, there wouldn't currently be significant benefit to the TPS in applying to become a registered charity.

Becoming a registered charity requires quite a lot of work. It could take 6-8 months and would cost £7k+. The main benefit of becoming a charity would be that the TPS would no longer be liable to pay Corporation Tax. There might be some benefit in terms of our ability to apply for grant funding from trusts or other funders who only fund charities. But there would be several potential disadvantages to becoming a charity, including:

- The time, effort and cost of registration;
- Additional reporting requirements (annual report and accounts to the Charity Commission as well as to Companies House, based on the SORP standards);
- All our activities would need to be (and be seen to be) consistent with our stated charitable objectives;
- It can be more difficult to achieve charitable status if any of the trustees/directors are paid by the organisation (and would intend to continue being so).

Lawrie's advice was to keep the issue under review, e.g. it might become an issue if the scale of the TPS's activities liable for Corporation Tax were to increase significantly.

We also briefly discussed the issues around the TPS and Chartered status. I will update on this at the meeting.

TPS Programme Planner

The Board agreed at the October 2023 Strategy Away Day that it would be useful to have a "plan on a page" of the TPS's planned activities for the forthcoming year.

The Programme Planner should include information on significant activities/events likely to be of interest to several/most/all members of the TPS Board. This should include key external events and activities (e.g. local/regional/national elections, the Budget/Autumn Statement, likely publication date of key Government consultations) and key internal events and activities (e.g. major TPS events, Board meetings, AGM, publication of key reports/responses). This should allow the links/synergies between different TPS programmes to be identified in advance and increase our ability to leverage those links/synergies (e.g. events, comms, skills, membership, regions and nations).

JFG have developed a pilot programme planner to capture the relevant information across the main programme areas. The intention was that Board members would update the planner as part of their update to the Board meeting. It is not clear whether the planner is proving useful and if not, what changes might be needed to how it is designed to increase its value.

The Board is invited to comment on the pilot programme planner and what changes could be made to its design/functionality to increase its value to the organisation.

Policy Developments

TPS view on the Labour Government's First 100 Days

The new Government has continued to make the headlines, not always in ways it would like. Despite some turbulence, the Government's first 100 days have on balance been positive as

far as sustainable transport is concerned. Secretary of State Louise Haigh MP has set out some clear priorities for creating a sustainable transport system that enables delivery of broader societal goals. There has been a string of positive ministerial appointments, including ATE CEO Danny Williams as Director for the National Integrated Transport Strategy. And commitments such as re-nationalisation of the rail system, roll-out of bus franchising and “unprecedented” investment in active travel give grounds for cautious optimism.

October Budget

The Budget on 30 October was a critical sign of the new Government’s intent. I wrote to the Chancellor ahead of the Budget to give the TPS’s views on how the government should fund transport (including through uprating and supplementing Fuel Duty) and what their investment priorities should be.

The Budget on 30 October was a “mixed bag” as far as sustainable transport is concerned. There was welcome funding to support bus services, although the increase in the fare cap to £3 could have a significant impact on low-income households. There was additional funding for City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS), a significant increase in funding to local authorities for local road maintenance and a reinstatement of £100m active travel funding. Meanwhile, the Chancellor missed the opportunity to remove the freeze on fuel duty and regulated rail fares will rise above inflation in 2025.

The TPS now needs to turn its attention to the Comprehensive Spending Review, which will define the government’s long-term ambitions for transport and the wider economy.

Transport Planning Day 2024 – 11 November 2024

The arrangements for TPD are now fully in place. We have a star-studded line up of speakers, including Lillian Greenwood MP, Minister for the Future of Roads; Steve Gooding, former DfT Roads DG and now Director of the RAC Foundation; Sharon Payne - regional rural mobility manager, Transport East; and Ed Downer - transport and mobility associate, Buro Happold. We also have a fantastic panel to explore the issues raised in more depth, featuring Fiona Brown – interim director of transport strategy and analysis, Transport Scotland; Izzy Romilly – sustainable transport research and campaign manager, Possible; Tim Steiner – divisional director, Jacobs; David Connolly - director of low carbon mobility, Systra; and Hannah Donovan – transport planner, Transport for London. There will be ample opportunity for networking and discussion with friends and colleagues. Board members are encouraged to promote and attend TPD.