

Transport Planning Society

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 5 March 2026

Chair's Report

Context

After stepping into the TPS Chair role halfway through 2025, this AGM provides a great opportunity to reflect on the environment transport planners operate in and how the Society can best support our members.

Transport planners are working amid growing political, social and environmental complexity and uncertainty, making collaboration and clear communication more important than ever. Technical expertise is crucial but not sufficient: we also need to be effective storytellers, negotiators and systems thinkers.

Whilst a focus on transport's role in delivering economic growth continues to dominate national and local agendas, we must also maintain focus on transport's essential role in tackling the climate emergency and enabling a more inclusive society.

Whilst there is never enough funding to deliver all our aspirations, 2025 has seen increased commitment to funding local and national transport enhancements, with the Local Transport Grant (LTG) announcements for areas outside of CRSTS/TCR settlements providing £2.2bn of capital and £100m+ of revenue funding; and TfL also secured a longer-term funding settlement. DfT's road and rail investment pipeline was announced as part of the Spending Review 2025, alongside a renewed commitment to develop nationally significant projects, such as Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Transport authorities and agencies now face increasing pressure to deliver effectively, requiring teams with strong technical expertise and the ability to operate confidently in complex political environments. In this context, the TPS plays a vital role: providing a forum for sharing best practice and delivery experience and supporting transport planners to develop the skills needed to deliver high quality infrastructure and services.

Our skills programme will continue to support our public and private sector partners through targeted development pathways for professionals at all career stages, while expanding our activity across the UK and internationally to ensure transport planners are equipped to deliver excellent work wherever they are based.

Supported by the following Institutions:
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK), Institution of Civil Engineers,
Institution of Highways and Transportation and Royal Town Planning Institute.

This backdrop has shaped our theme for the year: **Transport Planning for Thriving People and Places** — to focus on people’s lived experiences and the role transport plays in enabling good lives and healthy places. This theme will allow us to explore:

- the social and community impacts of our decisions;
- the importance of early and meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders;
- how we can design places which improve wellbeing and not just economic outcomes; and
- the need to prioritise modes that support broader outcomes such as: cleaner air, better health, and safer, inclusive streets.

You will see this theme woven throughout our events, policy work, skills development, and regional programmes this year.

TPS in 2025–26

I’m proud to say that the TPS continues to punch well above its weight. The majority of our work is delivered by volunteers supported by a small but committed team of outsourced support — yet our influence, visibility and credibility has continued to grow.

Over the last year, the Board and wider membership delivered a hugely ambitious programme of activity encompassing policy, skills, growing our membership, insightful local and national events, and organisational change. I want to say a huge thank you to every Board member, regional rep, partner organisation and volunteer who has contributed to this effort.

The Board has been working hard on our business plan for 2026, and I’ve set out below a summary of our priorities and achievements for the year, aligned with our TPS strategic objectives.

1. Influence & Improve Transport Planning

Lead: Mark Frost, supported by Karishma Kumar and Malcolm Smith

Our Policy Panel is now a well established and dynamic part of TPS, with over 50 members contributing expertise across five subgroups. In 2025, the Panel delivered a range of thoughtful activities and outputs — including consultation responses, roundtables and webinars — which have helped to strengthen our relationships with key partners, such as DfT, ATE and partner professional bodies. You can see the work of the Policy Panel here: [TPS Policy panel](#), including its response to the [Green Book Review](#), and thinkpieces on [Influencing Travel Behaviour](#) and [Implicit Bias in Transport Decision-making](#).

For 2026 our priorities include:

- continuing a more flexible, “panel-led” work programme, aligned to this year’s theme where appropriate;
- widening the types of outputs (short statements, events, online content) to broaden the reach of the panel;
- creating more opportunities for early-career professionals to contribute; and
- supporting sub-panels with small budgets for travel and in-person collaboration.

We have recruited two new Policy Panel Coordinators and are exploring ways to provide targeted communications support to amplify the panel’s impact. If you’d like to get involved in the work of our policy panel, email: policy@tps.org.uk.

2. Structured Training, Assessment & Qualifications

Lead: Keith Buchan, supported by Rob Goodall

Our skills programme remains a cornerstone of TPS’s contribution to the profession. In 2025 we made strong progress on:

- development of the TPS e-library;
- expansion of Skills Partners (see here for a current list of skills partners: [Our Skills Partners](#));
- continued growth of IncTP and the introduction of [TPTech](#) qualifications;
- closer collaboration with higher-education partners, including a new degree level apprenticeship at NE University; and
- support for apprentices, trainees and student engagement (see our recent [webinar on apprenticeships](#) for more information).

In 2026, we will be:

- undertaking Skills Partnership engagement with larger and new transport authorities, aligned to their ambitious transport delivery programmes;
- undertaking new research into barriers to PDS and TPP to shape improved outreach;
- supporting the first cohort of TPTech completions;
- increasing visibility of technical and non-apprentice routes;
- holding more with skills-focused regional events to encourage more participation from students and apprentices; and
- expanding support for the fast-growing New Zealand TPS group, with developing programmes in India and Australia.

This is an ambitious and hugely important portfolio of work – thanks to Keith, Rob and the skills team for their leadership on this agenda. If you would like to know more about our skills programmes, email: skills@tps.org.uk.

3. Building Strong and Sustainable Membership

Leads: Tim Cuthbert, Lisa Martin, Darren Kirkman, Jonathan Flowers, Joely Hills.

2025 saw the launch of our Public Sector and Corporate Partners initiative, a new membership survey, and exploratory work on revitalising our mentoring programme.

Key priorities for 2026 include:

- deepening engagement with public sector partners, especially outside London;
- growing our corporate partners, especially smaller organisations. to represent all parts of our industry;
- re-launching our mentoring offer;
- improved engagement with existing members to ensure TPS activities meet their needs;
- supporting regional reps to grow engagement and membership in all our regions and nations; and
- strengthening our offer to young professionals through regional and partner-led events.

If you want to get more involved in TPS activities, either as an individual or corporate partner, please contact our Operations Director, Lisa Martin: opsdirector@tps.org.uk.

4. Running an Effective TPS Organisation

Lead: Nicola Kane, supported by Lisa Martin, Kieran Seale, Jim Morey and the wider Board

2025 marked a period of transition for the TPS Board, with Ben Plowden stepping down as Chair, a detailed internal review of all our activities, and the recruitment of Lisa Martin as our Operations Director (one day/week) to help build greater organisational capacity and to support the smooth running of the organisation. We have also been undertaking some intensive succession planning to prepare for several of our long-serving Board Directors stepping down from the Board at this AGM.

Priorities for 2026 include:

- welcoming nine new Board Directors and helping them to “hit the ground running” with clear areas of responsibility and focus;
- strengthening regional and public sector engagement;
- better promoting our skills offer;
- refreshing partnerships with WiT, RTPI, CIHT, ICE, CILT, Modeshift and other important partner organisations; and
- reviewing sponsorship and event models to maximise the impact of our work.

This is often hidden but crucial work, and I’d like to thank Ben Plowden for his brilliant leadership of the TPS over the past few years, and Kath Coldwell at the ICE for all her hard work in supporting the Board.

5. Raising the Profile of TPS and Transport Planning

2025/6 Leads: Georgia Corr, James Gleave, Bruce McVean, Liani Baglietto-Castellares, Tom Van Vuren.

We delivered some brilliant events and activities in 2025, including a hugely successful TPS bursary programme for early career professionals; our best attended Transport Planning Day event ever at the ICE supported by a number of regional events; and some extremely high profile webinars and in person events, including lectures by Jarratt Walker in Leeds and Belfast, and a very compelling event at TfL's offices on inclusive transport. You can watch recordings of many of our events on our TPS [YouTube Channel](#). We also announced our Transport Planner of the Year (David Wilson) and Young Transport Planner of the Year (Josef Whitfield). You can hear more about David's work at our annual lecture, after this year's AGM.

For 2026, we are focused on:

- designing and launching a completely new website and refreshed brand to make it easier for our Members and Partners to engage with our activity;
- supporting regional reps to deliver more local events;
- Revamping our Summer Reception and planning even more extensive Transport Planning Day celebrations in the Autumn;
- Our 2026 bursary programme; and
- Much more besides!

TPS events continue to be one of our most important areas of activity and we'd love to hear from you if you have suggestions for events or want to get more involved. Thanks to our outgoing TPS Board members (James, Tom and Georgia) for all their work to raise the profile of the profession, and to Jo Field and her team at JFG Communications for all their support in promoting the great work of TPS.

Conclusions & Looking Ahead

As we move through 2026, the transport planning profession faces no shortage of challenge, but we also have a fantastic opportunity to shape places and systems that support people to live good lives, wherever they are.

Despite the shifting context we are working in, transport planners have continued to show remarkable adaptability, professionalism and creativity. It's a privilege to lead a Society that responds so constructively to the times —by offering clarity, community and creative solutions.

I'm hugely grateful to the energy, ideas and commitment of our Board, members, and partners. A particularly big thank you goes to our outgoing Board members (Susan Cross, Tim Cuthbert, Georgia Corr, Mark Frost, Roger Evans, James Gleave, Isabelle Milford, Jim Morey and Tom Van Vuren) for all their hard work across a wide range of activities over recent years. I'm delighted that we've had so many nominations for new Board members, from a wide range of backgrounds, and I'm really looking forward to what we can achieve together in 2026.