

# Transport Planning Society

Meeting Date	9 January 2025
Report Title	Item 11 - Chair's Report
For Decision or for Information?	For Information
Decision Sought	N/A
Report Summary	This report provides an overview of 2024 and looks ahead to 2025

## Introduction

2024 was a significant year for the TPS. It was a highly turbulent year politically, both in the UK and internationally. July's UK general election saw Labour winning a landslide, but its political support is looking "wide and shallow". The period since the election has been challenging for the new government, with a series of "events" making the task of funding, reforming and improving public services very difficult. The re-election of Donald Trump as US President will have a significant, if unpredictable, global political and economic impact.

The new UK government's approach to transport is, at first glance, broadly positive. The new Secretary of State Louise Haigh set out several clear priorities on taking office, including rail reform, improvements to local buses, "unprecedented" investment in active travel and the first Integrated National Transport Strategy for over 25 years. Louise Haigh's successor as Secretary of State impressed many when she was Sadiq Khan's Deputy Mayor for Transport and we can hope that she will pick up where Louise Haigh left off.

The government are likely to come under significant political pressure on the sustainable transport agenda and wider commitments like decarbonisation from the opposition parties, particularly from Reform and – in due course – from a resurgent Conservative Party. The TPS will need to take this wider political landscape into account in its policy work and public statements.

## TPS Business Strategy

The Board has done a significant amount of work to develop the TPS following the Strategy Away Day in October 2023. 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 has been 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;
- Establishment of a new TPS Policy Panel, to support development and delivery of TPS policy work;
- Development of proposals for how to improve the TPS membership offer (see item 7);
- 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;
- Development of a proposal to commission a project to develop a new operating model for the TPS (see item 6).

### **Events/Transport Planning Day**

The TPS ran a programme of well-attended and well-received events throughout 2024. This included a series of webinars and a very successful Transport Planning Day in November. Transport Planning Day featured a range of high-profile speakers and panellists, including Future of Roads Minister Lillian Greenwood MP. The TPD sponsors were very pleased with the event and have all indicated that they would like to repeat their support for TPD 2025.

The ICE have written to the TPS to inform us that our package of facilities will no longer include the main ICE Lecture Theatre for TPD in 2025 and that we will only be able to use the Smeaton Room. We will have to pay for the Telford Lecture Theatre if we want to use it for TPD. A meeting is being arranged with the ICE to discuss this proposal.

### **Looking ahead to 2025**

2025 is likely to be at least as turbulent as 2024, with significant political change intersecting with challenging economic conditions and the growing social and economic impact of the Climate Emergency, both in the UK and globally.

The UK's new missions-led approach provides a big opportunity for the TPS, as a sustainable transport system will be a key component of delivering all five of the government's missions. Other opportunities will arise in relation to rail reform, bus service improvements and investment in active travel. The significant changes proposed to local government and the planning system are challenges as much as opportunities and we will need to work with a wide range of other organisations to maximise the opportunities and minimise the challenges from these changes.

We can continue the great progress we have made during 2024 on developing the TPS and increasing its impact, including potentially through commissioning a project to develop and deliver a new operating model.