

Transport Planning Society

Meeting Date	11 January 2024
Report Title	Item 5.1 - Chair's Report: Review of 2023
For Decision or for Information?	For Information
Decision Sought	N/A
Report Summary	This report provides the Chair's overview of 2023

Context

2023 was a tumultuous year. There was a high degree of political and policy “churn” in Westminster and Whitehall and several important policy developments, including the publication of the *Plan for Drivers* and the revival of rhetoric around the need to avoid “anti-car” policies. Meanwhile, 2023 was the hottest year ever recorded, greenhouse gas emissions continued to rise and COP28 took place in Dubai. The historic agreement on the need to transition “away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner” was described by many observers as being a “litany of loopholes”. Opinions also differ as to whether the COP28 agreement covers the transport sector. But 2023 was also a year that confirmed the TPS’ ability to punch far above its modest, largely voluntary weight and the huge value of the work done by the TPS Board and its wider membership.

Events

The TPS organised or was involved in/represented at a broad range of events. This included:

- The Annual International Quiz in March, featuring no fewer than 99 teams from across the UK and New Zealand;
- The 2022 Transport Planner of the Year lecture in March, featuring Jillian Anable;
- A lecture on “The next chapter in British Rail” in May, by former TPS Chair and GBRTT Director of Strategic Planning Elaine Seagriff;
- TPS sponsorship of the Sub-National Transport Bodies conference in Birmingham; participation in the ICE Summer Lecture on “Roads and Decarbonisation”; and sponsorship of the Transport Practitioners’ Meeting in June (including announcement of Transport Planner of the Year at the first-ever Young Transport Planner of the Year);
- The Annual Dinner and summer party and after-dinner speech by former TPS Chair and CEO of the RTPi Victoria Hills;
- A debate on “Meeting the challenge of Scotland’s Transport Strategy” in Edinburgh in September and a webinar on “the Buchanan Report at 60” with the CIHT and AoU in September;

- Sponsorship of the Local Transport Summit and representation at Highways UK in October;
- Participation in the Landor “Walking and Cycling Innovations” conference in Manchester in November;
- A successful Transport Planning Day in November; and
- Attendance on the top table at the CIHT annual lunch in December.

Policy

The TPS also continued to be very active in seeking to influence transport policy, planning and practice. This included engagement with politicians and officials, responses to government policy developments and proactive policy work. The highlights included:

- Continued engagement with DfT and DLUHC officials on developments in transport and land-use planning, including the (emerging) draft Local Transport Plans guidance and the national accessibility planning tool;
- Submission of written and oral evidence (from Keith Buchanan) to the Transport Select Committee enquiry into Strategic Road Investment;
- A joint response with the CIHT, Transport for New Homes, Sustrans, Living Streets and CPRE on the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March;
- A response to the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS) in July;
- A response to National Highways’ consultation on RIS3 in July;
- A letter to the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in August, reaffirming the TPS’ support for local transport investments like LTNs that increase transport choice;
- A productive meeting with Transport Minister Jesse Norman MP in October;
- “Just the Ticket” – the TPS’ parking policy report in December.

Skills

The skills programme continued to evolve and support the professional development of transport planners, both in the UK and overseas. Key highlights included:

- Jointly working with CIHT to deliver TPP;
- Delivering TPS PDS including approximately 50 first reviews and 15 final reviews, awarding IncTP;
- Expanding PDS access to local authorities and their apprentices
- Delivering Apprenticeship End Point Assessments (EPAs) and awarding TPTEch;
- Work to review and support Level 3 and Level 6 (degree) apprenticeships
- Work to publicise transport planning and qualifications in schools
- Work to support internationalisation of TPP and PDS.

TPS Strategy Review and Business Plan

The TPS does not currently have a Business Plan or an agreed annual delivery programme. The Strategy Away Day in October provided a valuable opportunity for the Board to step back from day-to-day delivery and think about how the Society could continue to evolve

over the next 1-5 years. The resulting proposals for the 2024 Action Plan (see Agenda Item 5..2a) clearly demonstrate the commitment and creativity of the Board and provide a great platform on which the TPS can build on its existing achievements

Supporting activities

All the outputs summarised above were supported by a range of enabling activities, including;

- Continuing development of the extent and capacity of our network of regional representatives;
- Further development of our membership proposition, informed by the 2023 Membership Survey;
- Proactive communications, including social media posts and news releases around key initiatives;
- Refinement of our financial reporting, including development of a year-end forecast; and
- The imitation of a governance review by the Chair and Company Secretary, including a review of the Chair's term and the size and role of the TPS Board.

Conclusion and look ahead

This is a very impressive programme of activities by any standard, but particularly considering it is largely the product of voluntary effort, with critical in-kind and financial support from our generous sponsors and continued partnership working with JFG and the ICE.

2024 will be another busy and challenging year, with the prospect of Mayoral elections in London and other regions and a hotly contested General Election. The evolving 2024 Action Plan and Business Plan and engagement with other organisations such as Women in Transport will allow the Board to agree whether and in what form we want the TPS to develop over the next 1-5 years. Meanwhile, we can feel very proud of everything we achieved in 2023 to support the transition to a fair, accessible, integrated and decarbonised transport system.