

Transport Planning Society

Meeting Date	6 th September 2018
Report Title	Chair's Report
For Decision or for Information?	For Information
Decision Sought	N/A
Report Summary	This report summarises my main activities since the last Board meeting and other key issues.

Introduction

I have drafted this report with the hope that it will save time at the Board meeting and provide the Board with an understanding of my principle TPS activities since the last Board.

Following a number of discussions at the Board, for the first time we have an observer at the Board, Isabelle Clement, who is Director of Wheels for Wellbeing. She is attending with a potential view of being co-opted on to the Board subject to the Board's view and hers following the meeting.

Principles of Board operation

Board members will be aware of the email I wrote following the last meeting setting out some suggested principles for Board operation. To provide an opportunity for members to express a view I have reiterated them below. The email responses I received following the email supported the principles and the need for action.

Since becoming chair I have made a number of changes to the operation of the Board but still do not believe that the Board's time is being used optimally. I have therefore suggested the following operating principles/practices which hopefully we can follow from this meeting:

- Board members advise Kath and I in advance of the meeting of any conflicts of interest financial or otherwise and actual or potential.
- Every effort is made to ensure reports are available at least 5 days before the meeting based on the draft agenda Kath circulates not long after the previous meeting, based on the

minutes and action plan - this is the responsibility of the authors. Kath and I should be informed if for any reason this is not practical. Kath and I will try to make sure the lead author is clear in the minutes if more than 1 person is involved. This does not prevent any author requesting other Board members to be party to a report.

- All Board members are expected to read reports before the meeting, and they are then taken as read on the day by both the author and the Board. If members have queries on the report, unless they are fundamental to the Board's discussion and decision, these should be taken up with the author in advance of the meeting.
- During the meeting it is not possible for everyone to speak on all items so can I ask that if a point has been made by someone else it is not repeated, members consider if a point is substantive and whether it needs to be made, points are made as briefly and clearly as possible.
- Matters are not debated if they have already been discussed and agreed at a previous meeting, and as Chair I will bring a stop to discussions of previously agreed matters.
- With Kath's help we will be inserting a timeframe into the agenda for the next meeting to try and ensure all matters for discussion get a fair hearing which hopefully will help.

Transport Practitioners' Meeting

The meeting this year went very well and was well organised by TPS, especially Tim, so many thanks to him and all those who contributed. The views we received in respect of the presentations and workshop we ran were very positive and hopefully the Society will gain more support through these activities. There is a report on the agenda on this year's event and we need to be thinking about next year and who will take over from Tim as the lead.

For reference I attach the paper Jo Ward and I put together for the session we led.

RAC "Motoring policy picnic" meeting

I was fortunate to be invited to the above meeting in July which was led by the Director of the RAC Foundation and led by him and Tricia Hayes, DG at the DfT. The meeting was attended by key people from the DfT, MHCLG, HMT and other key organisations and focused on the relationship of planning and transport in respect of the delivery of large-scale housing development. It was a very informative and interesting occasion. I was tasked with summarising the day. Following the day I have emailed both the DfT and MHCLG highlighting the following.

"As is often the case the discussion focused more on the problems than the solutions so I am focusing on the latter as far as I can. As I think you know, CIHT have set up a working group to draft new "advice" on the integration of planning and transport, which I am chairing, the aim of which is to work within the current Government and legal framework but secure better implementation to deliver what Thursday's meeting was about. The group includes local authority representatives, private sector both developers and consultants, the TPS and RTPI, academics and the public transport sector. We hope to have a good draft out by October as we already have a draft of sections which I am currently working on. The focus is on a practical "how to" guide and hopefully once drafted this can be used to inform any new NPPF Government Guidance to be drafted. We want the advice to be accessible to all sectors i.e. the community as well as the professionals.

One of the themes of Thursday's meeting was the Government's signals and the impact they have had with officers and Members in LAs as well as developers and PINs. The future signals from Government are critical if there is to be any change from the current approach and if the above advice is to have any practical impact. The new Guidance to be drafted has to ensure that it is not

“housing development at any cost” but the Government wants quality housing in the right place which means not just good design, which is a focus for the MHCLG at the moment, but also development which is accessible to services and other essential needs of everyday life by modes other than the car.

We believe that the starting point to achieve this has to be the local plan with:

- Local authorities taking responsibility for defining a spatial strategy which locates development sites which has been “informed” from the beginning by a transport assessment and that there is an iterative process from the beginning of plan development to the final submission to an EiP. At the moment sites are driven by the private sector and then transport is retrofitted.*
- A requirement as part of the “soundness of the plan” process (e.g. a plan is not “valid” for submission without it rather like a planning application) that there is an effective transport assessment which is fit for purpose in terms of geographic coverage, data both qualitative and quantitative, looking forward in terms of changing patterns of travel and behaviour and not based on past trends without strong justification.*
- The integration of a local plan and transport strategy so both are subject to the EiP together, as well as the viability and deliverability tests, in an integrated way – Inspectors will need to be able to cover this which they can’t at the moment as few have any transport expertise. This was done with Structure Plans and is perfectly possible notwithstanding 2 tier authorities today as joint working and collaboration is fundamental to an effective local plan as is cross-boundary work.*
- Local plans should have clear strategies for all forms of transport included in the plan with more detailed proposals for improving all modes during the life of the plan linked to their vision and to their Infrastructure Delivery Plan, CIL and section 106 requirements. As a principle easy access to day to day needs and services, whether a bottle of milk or the doctor’s, should be part of the accessibility assessment for current and new development so new development improves “the lot” for the existing communities.*
- Clear strategic policies on sustainable transport as a requirement in the same way land for housing is a requirement.*

If the above was to happen then applications for new development should in theory be easier and possibly less expensive to deliver as there should be greater clarity of requirements, less need for major road infrastructure, less problem with local communities... ..all too good to be true? Transport assessments for planning applications should be able to amplify the local plan transport delivery plan rather than starting with little more than the current situation and any highway’s authority road schemes which is often the pattern.

However there are some key barriers to address:

- In 2 tier authorities most county councils believe they are “highway authorities” not “transport authorities” and their teams dealing with local plans and developments tend to be highway engineers. Officers have advised me that legally they are not transport authorities only highways and therefore only look from this perspective. With many county council politicians as well as the officers believing this they are not in a position to do an effective transport strategy.*
- Transport planning skills are in very short supply in local authorities and tend to be at a more junior level. Most planners do not have these skills either.*
- Both authorities and consultancies are road and car focused because of the complexity of dealing with public transport in particular, whether rail or bus – and the latter businesses are not good at engaging at local level.*

- *Current assessment methodologies are car dominated as well as past trend dominated and getting professionals to change is likely only to happen with very clear messages from the Government as highlighted above.*

I am sure there are many other things that could help but this is probably more than enough for the moment. Subject to the views of the working party I would like to engage with you on an informal basis when we have a reasonable draft of the advice to “test” it with you or colleagues. We are also more than willing to help with any Government Guidance as it is prepared.”

NPPF

As I am sure you are all aware, the Government has published a new NPPF. Although this still does not respond to all the issues we have raised it does begin to move in the right direction. They are currently considering what new/further guidance is required and I hope we can inform this. For reference I attached the joint response sent in with the CIHT and other bodies together with the letter to the Minister for Housing and planning.

Meetings with Government

Following a Design Symposium held by the Government in October last year I raised the possibility that a similar event should be held on accessibility and transport in respect of new development. As a result I met Steve Quartermain, Chief Planner at the MHCLG, on the 1st August and there is a possibility that the subject will be covered in a further event they are organising in February next year. I will continue to pursue this with him. In addition we spoke about the “advice” being prepared and the potential for our involvement in any new NPPG. I think that there is a shift occurring in both MHCLG and DfT on these issues in our favour.

At the lunch I also persuaded him to be a judge on the TPD awards so that will further strengthen the relationship.

I have also had a successful meeting with Isobel Pastor who leads the policy team on housing and transport within the DfT. We are going to continue to meet to pursue the agenda on better Government guidance. The Director General of the DfT, Tricia Hayes, is also going to be a judge for our TPD campaign.

I am currently also trying to arrange a meeting with Sarah Richards, Chief Executive of PINs, and will advise at the next meeting of any progress on this.

Transport Planning Day

Again there is a report on this on the agenda but I just want to record thanks to all those who have supported the campaign and particularly the submissions for the award which notwithstanding a slow start has delivered submissions. Thanks particularly to Steve and Martin.

Lynda Addison
22nd August 2018