

The Transport Planning Society's General Election Manifesto

The Transport Planning Society (TPS) is the only professional body focusing exclusively on transport planning in the UK. It represents the views of almost 1500 individual members and 40 stakeholder members. The aim of the Society is to raise the profile of transport planning, be the voice of transport planners, influence policy and chart a course for the profession at a time of unprecedented change and challenge.

We asked our members for their priorities for an incoming Government following the forthcoming General Election. They have told us they would like all political parties to pledge to the following commitments to move the transport sector forward in delivering a sustainable, equitable and prosperous society.

- 1. Introduce a National Transport Strategy for England that aligns with the devolved nations' transport strategies.** Instead of the current piecemeal approach to transport policy, the next Government needs to introduce a National Transport Strategy to:
 - Integrate transport policy with land-use planning at national, regional and local levels to improve sustainable access to goods, services and opportunities;
 - Realise the full benefits of a connected and integrated network which encourages multi-modal travel;
 - Establish a guiding framework for decision-makers to prioritise sustainable forms of travel;
 - Allow efficient and effective decision making to happen at pace, across all levels of Government;
 - Maintain the UK's global leadership position on the transition to net zero;
 - Ensure all transport investment improves public health, encourages economic development and reduces social exclusion;
 - Follow the recommendation of the Transport Select Committee to set up an independent Commission to investigate the practicalities of introducing a national road user charging scheme.

- 2. Deliver an integrated and attractive public transport system across the UK.** For public transport to play a central role in a decarbonised transport network it must be seamless across modes, more reliable and cheaper. To achieve this the next Government needs to:
 - Devolve further power and funding to Local Government:
 - Implement five-year settlements for all Local Transport Authorities or Local Highway Authorities and review further transfer of powers.
 - Introduce in-principle approval for projects that deliver against agreed national outcomes to speed up delivery, such as tackling safety, air quality and decarbonisation.
 - Make fares simpler and more affordable via sensible ticketing reform that encourages multi-modal travel.
 - Establish Great British Railways to unify the rail network, fully committing to major rail and public transport infrastructure schemes.
 - Deliver an accessible public transport network.

- 3. Invest in safe, secure active travel routes.** Active travel is the healthiest, cheapest and most sustainable way to travel, yet it remains the “poor relation” of transport investment and priority. To ensure active travel is prioritised the next Government needs to:

 - Ensure substantial, long-term funding for active travel to give Local Transport Authorities the certainty to invest in local schemes.
 - Support Local Authorities’ delivery of safe and secure active travel infrastructure and better public spaces (particularly in urban settings) to encourage an uptake in walking, wheeling and cycling to reduce car dependence and improve air quality, road safety and public health.
 - Deliver a public awareness campaign to educate and inform the public on the range of health, environmental and economic benefits of active travel.

- 4. Reduce reliance on the car and introduce traffic reduction targets for England.** In order to decarbonise at a meaningful pace and reduce congestion, we need to be honest about the need to reduce the overall volume of car travel. To achieve this the next Government needs to:

 - Review all current and planned road-building schemes.
 - Consider implementing road user charging schemes in major UK cities.
 - Review our current approach to parking controls.
 - Consider the introduction of 20mph zones as the default speed limit on residential roads in all cities in England.
 - Improve digital connectivity to reduce some of the need to travel.
 - Consider the benefits of locally implementing demand management strategies like Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods, Workplace Parking Levies and “15-minute cities” across England.
 - Introduce clear long-term traffic reduction targets for England.
 - Introduce a new ‘transport policy check’ on all national policy making to ensure all decisions made across the Government support reductions in transport emissions and reduce travel demand.

- 5. Encourage a sustainable switch to low-emission vehicles.** Low-emission vehicles have an important part to play in a decarbonised transport and freight network. They are one part of the solution but are not the whole solution. To support the transition to low-emission vehicles the next Government needs to:

 - Ensure funding is available for Local Transport Authorities and operators to transform their fleets.
 - Provide financial incentives to ensure individuals can switch to low-emission vehicles.
 - Avoid over-reliance on technology by continuing to pursue policies that widen travel choice and enable people to meet their daily needs without needing to drive.
 - Address the implications of reduced revenue from fuel duty and road tax as electrification occurs.
 - Consider increasing first year Vehicle Excise Duty on high carbon emitters (e.g. SUVs) to support local areas to deliver CO2 reductions and speed up the EV transition.
 - Consider implementing measures such as national lorry charging to ensure activity by HGVs is as efficient as possible.