

# Policy Council member recruitment pack

Co-opted members (voluntary roles)  
September 2025





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Front cover image of Newtown, Wales  
Credit: Philip Curnow

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# 1 Welcome from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in joining the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA)'s Policy Council. This pack provides further information about the organisation, the role and details of how to express your interest.

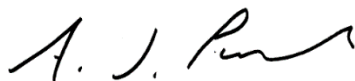
The TCPA's vision is for homes, places and communities where everyone can thrive. This is because we know that the built and natural environment have profound impacts on people's health, wellbeing and life chances. Substandard housing, for example, increases the likelihood of respiratory, cardiovascular and communicable diseases. We know that there is an urgent need for places to be resilient to environmental, economic and social challenges. And we also know that the climate, housing and health crises will not affect everyone to the same extent – disadvantaged communities will generally bear the brunt. The work of the TCPA is, therefore, more important than ever.

To support and inform the Association and its Board of Trustees, we have a Policy Council. The role of the Policy Council is set out in section three of this pack. But we are particularly keen in this process to broaden the diversity of perspectives on our governance, for example in terms of age, background, ethnicity and experience. We work with a wide range of people and sectors across the UK and, as set out in our *Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Strategy*, our governance needs to reflect this.

Candidates do not have to be experts in town planning – it is more important that they have an interest in what we do. Following a skills and expertise survey of the Council's current members, we are seeking specific skills, knowledge and experience to strengthen Policy Council. We are particularly interested, therefore, in people with relevant experience in, or policy knowledge of, one or more of the following areas:

- Healthy place-making
- Planning law and parliamentary processes
- Affordable housing
- Economic development, investment and/or viability
- Heritage
- Energy efficiency, building design and retrofit

The TCPA is on an exciting journey and these positions presents a great opportunity to shape and support our work. We look forward to hearing from you.



Andrew Pritchard  
Chair

## 2 What the TCPA stands for and our priorities

The **TCPA's vision** is for homes, places and communities where everyone can thrive.

**Our mission** is to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone.

To achieve our vision and mission the TCPA need to operate in a certain way. We are guided by **our values**, which are that we are:

- inclusive;
- collaborative;
- practical;
- creative; and
- bold.

### **Our strategic priorities and what success looks like**

Our priorities draw on our heritage. As set out in 'our history', the TCPA was founded by the originators of the Garden City movement, who sought to transform the way places are created for the common good. This approach enabled the practical achievement of beautifully designed and sustainable places for everyone, by reinvesting the wealth generated by development for the benefit of the whole community. Achieving social justice was, and remains, the driving ambition of the Garden City movement. The Garden City Principles are the practical articulation of this philosophy of place.

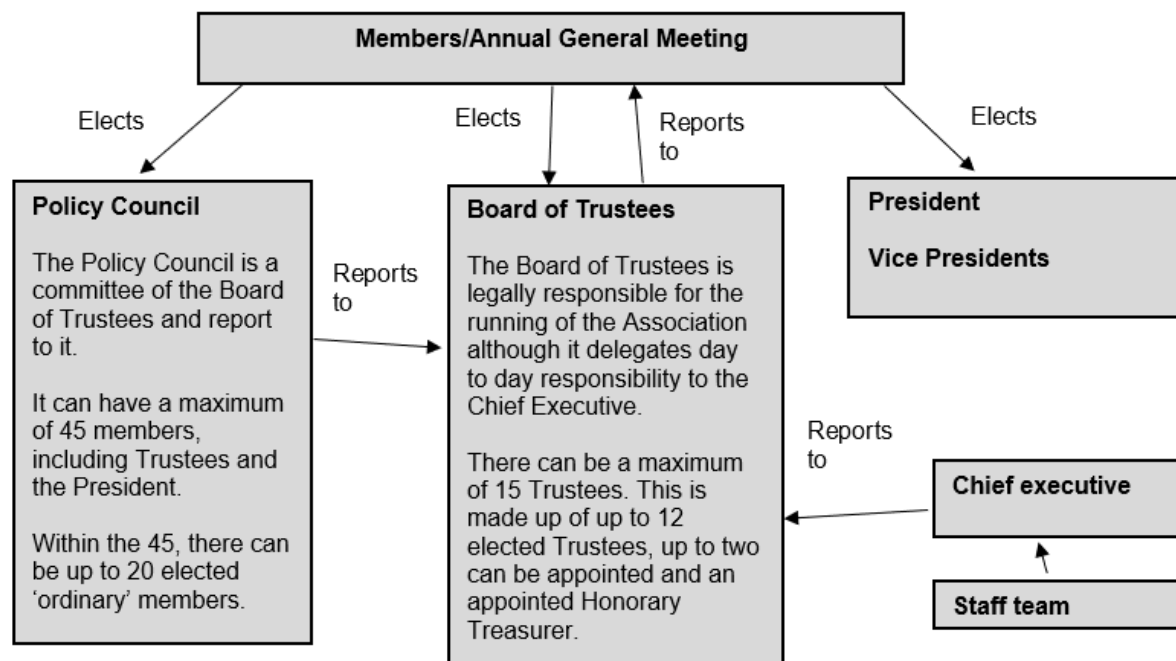
Informed by those Principles, the TCPA's strategic priorities are to:

- Work to secure a good home for everyone in inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities, which support people to live healthier lives;
- Empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities; and
- Support new and transform existing places to be adaptable to current and future challenges including the climate crisis.

In addition to our outward facing strategic priorities, we also have a number of internal priorities so that that TCPA is able to achieve its desired impact. These are set out in the [TCPA's strategy 2021-2025](#) and the [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Strategy 2022 – 2026](#).

Further information about the TCPA can be found at [www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk), including [information about our history](#) since we were established back in 1899, and our most recent annual reports and financial statements (scroll down [this page](#)).

### 3 An overview of our governing structures



Our Trustee Board comprises of up to 15 members, including the Honorary Treasurer, who is ex-officio member, and two who are appointed by Trustees. The other 12 members are elected by the TCPA membership. All Trustees must be members, or be willing to become members if appointed, of the TCPA. Currently, the TCPA has 13 Trustees and vacancies for up to two appointed Trustees. A separate process is being undertaken to appoint those Trustees.

The **Policy Council** is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees and is, therefore, responsible to the Board. The Council is an advisory committee rather than a decision-making body. Its role is to provide advice and guidance to the Board of Trustees in relation to the policy and project work undertaken by the Association. It currently meets four times a year and generally this is on the same day as the Trustee Board meetings.

The TCPA has a wide-ranging remit and therefore needs Policy Council to comprise of individuals who, between them, have a mix of policy experience and skills. The Policy Council mostly consists of 'ordinary' members who are elected from within the Association's membership but Trustees are also members. **A small number of members can also be co-opted to Policy Council.**

The Chair of the Board is Andrew Pritchard, the Vice Chair is Catriona Riddell and the Honorary Treasurer is Riva Kapoor. There are short biographies for all existing Trustees and a list of current members of Policy Council available at <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/about/governance/>

The TCPA also has a President, Nick Raynsford, who attends Board meetings but is not formally a Trustee.

The Trustee Board delegates the day to day running of the Association to the chief executive, Fiona Howie, and she is supported by a management team made up of three directors.

Biographies for the chief executive and all staff members are available at:

<https://tcpa.org.uk/about/our-team/>

## 4 Policy Council member role profile

Policy Council is responsible to the Board of Trustees and must support the overall governance and strategic direction of the TCPA and the probity of all its activities. It is constituted as a sub-committee of the Trustee Board, as set out in the TCPA's Articles of Association, and it is therefore part of the Association's governance structure.

The formal duties of Policy Council members include:

### **Safeguarding and promoting the charitable objectives of the TCPA and support delivery of the TCPA Business Plan**

- Ensure that they are clear about why the organisation exists, what it stands for, and that they promote the organisation and the delivery of its charitable objects.
- Ensure that the work of Policy Council, under delegated authority, furthers the best interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries.
- Ensure that the organisation is not unduly influenced by external organisations or individuals.
- Support Trustees in delivering the annual business plan approved by Trustees, that reflects its strategic objectives.
- Contribute to a programme of policy-related activities which continually builds upon, and makes good use of, the organisation's resources.

### **To ensure the TCPA operates in an effective, responsible and accountable manner**

- Support Trustees in ensuring that the organisation promotes diversity and equality as positive values in its policies and practice.
- Understand the framework of delegation to Policy Council and the TCPA's systems of control.
- Be aware of the reputational risks to which the organisation is subject and support appropriate actions to mitigate those risks.
- Identify opportunities and areas of improvement that may benefit the organisation and its beneficiaries, and report to Trustees as required.

### **To ensure the effective functioning of Policy Council**

- In undertaking their duties, Policy Council members should:
  - Act personally and collectively, and with due respect to the duty of care
  - Act in the best interests of the charity

- Avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of the charity.
- Ensure the Policy Council has a range of skills and experience on which to draw in order to help the organisation progress and fulfill its objects. Consider the use of co-option to ensure the composition of Policy Council reflects the membership it serves, and the structure is in accordance with the organisation's Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- Ensure the conduct of individual Policy Council members, the Policy Council and its meetings are in accordance with the law, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and generally accepted standards of behaviour.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest including matters relating to any benefits for Policy Council members are recognised, declared and handled in accordance with the law.



## 5 Person specification

The majority of our Policy Council is elected by the membership either as Trustees or ordinary members. But we currently have the opportunity to co-opt two new Policy Council members to strengthen it.

The TCPA needs to have a Policy Council that comprises individuals who, between them, have the right level and mix of skills and experience necessary to support our work. We also want a diversity of perspectives, for example in terms of age, background, ethnicity and experience.

As noted in the welcome letter from our Chair, candidates do not need to be experts in town planning or have a background working in the built environment sector. Following a skills audit of our current Policy Council members, we are looking to add to the skills and expertise of the Board through these appointments. We are particularly interested, therefore, in candidates with experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Healthy place-making
- Planning law and parliamentary processes
- Affordable housing
- Economic development, investment and/or viability
- Heritage
- Energy efficiency, building design and retrofit

### Diversity

As set out on page three of this pack, being inclusive is a core value of our organisation and we are passionate about promoting diversity and representation in our Association. We positively encourage applications regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identification, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

### Wider qualities, skills and experience

In addition to the particular areas of experience we have set out above, there are a list of qualities and competencies everyone involved in our governance, whether as a Trustee or member of Policy Council, is expected to demonstrate or develop over time. It is not an exhaustive list but a guide to what is expected.

#### a. Personal qualities

- Upholds the vision, mission and values of the TCPA and recognises the importance of supporting its work and reputation.
- Acts as an ambassador of TCPA, disseminates a good image of the organisation.
- Sets a personal example to others by demonstrating the highest standards of integrity, probity, ethics and conduct.
- Understands and applies the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Brings challenge and support.

**b. Knowledge and experience**

- Is able to explain concepts and issues relating to specialist knowledge and experience to others.
- Has an awareness of the political, social and economic operating environment of the TCPA.

**c. Self-management and development**

- Governs and advises – does not manage (avoids acting operationally).
- Shows passion and commitment to the work of TCPA.
- Respects confidences.
- Is open to learning and keen to use new learning.
- Is in touch and up to date with relevant issues.
- Has the time commitment to effectively discharge the duties of the role, including preparing for and attending meetings.

**d. Team working and group decision making**

- Respects the role of others and gains their trust and respect – inside and outside the Board and Policy Council.
- Challenges freely and debates constructively.
- Does not let personal relationships interfere with fulfilling the purpose of the role.
- Listens – allows others to contribute and sees others' views.
- Gives a reasoned thought through contribution and reaches conclusions based on a rational interpretation of the information available.

**e. Analysing and scrutinising**

- Thinks strategically.
- Analyses data to determine key issues.
- Examines various facets of an issue and explores the implications of a proposal.
- Spots any omissions from the presented information.
- Offers appropriate comparisons and parallels.

## 6 Practicalities

### **Location and time commitment**

Through the year there are a mixture of in person and virtual Policy Council meetings.

There are currently four Policy Council meetings a year, three of these are held virtually via Zoom (January, March and July), and one, usually in November, is held in person. In person meetings are normally held at the TCPA office, which is currently located at 17 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AS [although discussions are underway about a change in premises so the location of physical meetings may change]. The meetings start at 11am and last for two hours.

### **Payment and expenses**

These are voluntary roles. Policy Council members are not paid but reasonable travel expenses are covered.

### **Terms of office**

We ask Policy Council members to commit to an initial term of three years.

## 7 Further information and selection process

Thank you for taking the time to read this pack and for your interest in the TCPA. If you want to learn more about the TCPA's current work please visit our website, <https://tcpa.org.uk/>.

If you have any questions or would like an informal chat about the role, please contact the Chief Executive via [Fiona.howie@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:Fiona.howie@tcpa.org.uk) and she will arrange a mutually convenient time. She can also arrange a discussion with an existing Policy Council member if that would be helpful.

### How to apply and selection process

If you would like to express your interest in the roles we ask you to please submit answers to the following two questions:

- Why are you interested in being a member of the Policy Council?
- What experience and skills will you bring to the organisation?

Please also complete and submit the TCPA Diversity Questionnaire. This will not be seen by the people involved in shortlisting or interviewing.

Please send your answers and the questionnaire by email to [recruitment@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@tcpa.org.uk).

**Expressions of interest should be received by midday on Friday 3 October.**

We will acknowledge receipt of your email as promptly as possible.

Following the deadline, shortlisting will be undertaken by a small number of our current Trustees and Policy Council members and is expected to take place during week commencing 6 October.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a meeting with a small panel of current Trustees and Policy Council members. **While we are keen to explore your skills and interest in the role our aim is that the meeting will be very much a two-way conversation. So, it will be an opportunity for you to learn more about the TCPA as well.**

We expect meetings to be arranged via Microsoft Teams or Zoom during the second half of October.