
Further information about the governance roles within the TCPA

April 2026

Welcome from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

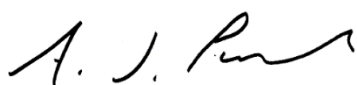
Thank you for your interest in submitting a nomination to get more involved in the governance of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). This document provides further information about the Trustee and Policy Council member roles which we are seeking to fill in 2026.

As a member of the Association, you will be aware that our 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.

Our current strategic priorities, which draw on our heritage and are informed by the Garden City Principles, are set out in [the TCPA's strategy, which covers 2026 - 2030](#).

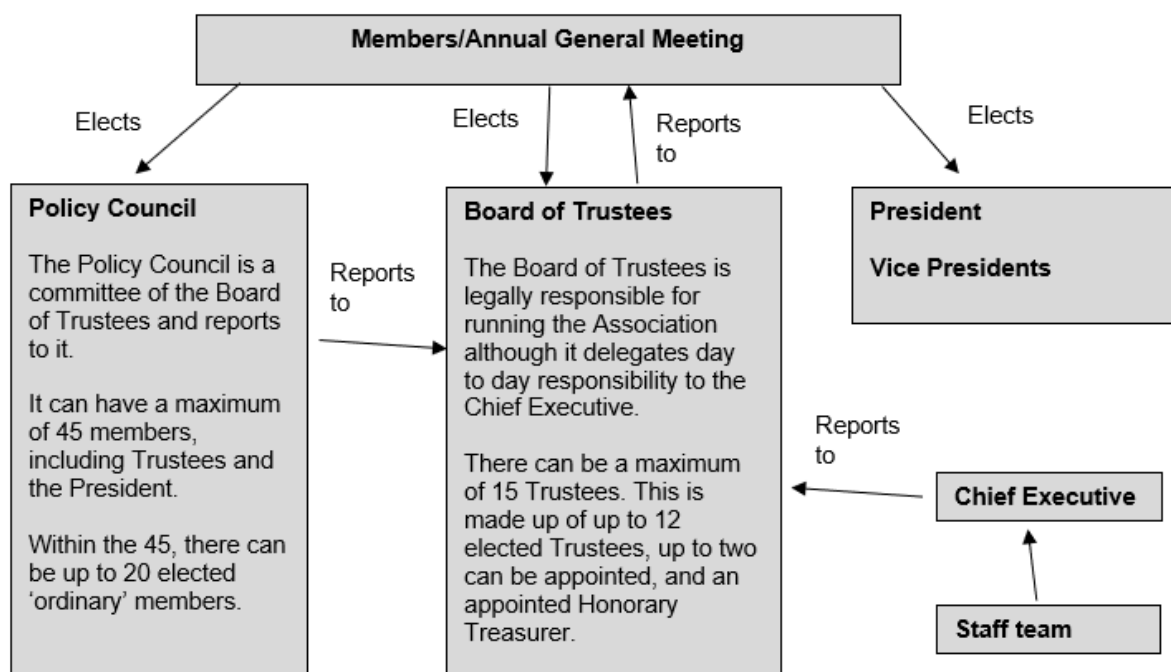
To support the achievement of these priorities, the Association needs a skilled, knowledgeable, experienced and diverse Board of Trustees and Policy Council. We are particularly keen to broaden the diversity of perspectives in our governance structure, for example in terms of age, background, ethnicity, 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 better reflect this.

The TCPA is on an exciting journey and getting involved in the Association through these roles is a great opportunity to shape and support this journey.



Andrew Pritchard
Chair of the Board of Trustees

1 An overview of our governing structures



The Association is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. This means that Trustees are also company directors. **Trustees** are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the TCPA; its financial health and the probity of all of its activities. This includes being responsible for the proper administration of the charity and being ultimately responsible for everything the charity does.

The **Policy Council** is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees and is, therefore, responsible to the Board. Trustees are members of Policy Council but up to 20 'ordinary' members can also be elected. 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.

2 The Board of Trustees and the role of Trustee

Our Board of Trustees comprises of up to 15 members, including the Honorary Treasurer, who is an ex-officio member, and two members who are appointed by the existing Trustees. The other 12 members are elected by the TCPA membership. All Trustees must be members of the TCPA.

The TCPA needs to have a Board that comprises individuals who, between them, have the right level and mix of skills, knowledge and experience necessary to fulfil their role on the Board. We also want a diversity of perspectives on our Board, for example in terms of age, background, ethnicity and experience.

A formal role profile for Trustees is set out in section eight of the Governance Handbook which is available alongside this paper. Broadly however, the role purpose is:

- a. Together with the other Trustees, to ensure that the charity acts within its objects; functions within the legal, charitable and financial requirements of a charitable organisation and strives to achieve best practice.
- b. To agree the Association's strategy, to monitor progress towards achieving strategic goals and to ensure that it pursues its objectives in keeping with that strategy.
- c. To monitor performance against agreed targets in line with the Association's annual business plan.
- d. To act in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries at all times.
- e. To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the TCPA, ensuring the financial stability of the organisation and the proper investment of any funds managed on its behalf.
- f. To use any specific skills, knowledge and experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions (this will include the scrutiny of proposals, leading and initiating discussions, providing advice or guidance on new initiatives and utilising any specialist expertise and experience).
- g. To chair and/or attend bodies given delegated authority by the Board.

3 The Policy Council and the purpose of the role of Policy Council member

Our Policy Council can have a maximum of 45 members. This includes up to 20 'ordinary' members who are elected by the TCPA membership. Trustees are also members of the Policy Council, as is the President. A further nine Policy Council members can be co-opted. All Policy Council members must be members of the TCPA.

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. As with the Board, we also want a diversity of perspectives on our Policy Council, for example in terms of age, background, ethnicity and experience.

A formal role profile for Policy Council members is set out in section 8.6 of the Governance Handbook which is available alongside this paper. But as noted in section one above, the purpose of Policy Council is to advise the Association and the staff team. It is not a decision-making body.

4 Qualities and competencies

While the role of Trustee and Policy Council member are different, there are qualities and competencies people within the governance structure of the Association are expected to demonstrate or develop over time. It is not an exhaustive list but a guide to what is expected.

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.
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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.

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.

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.

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.
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5 Practicalities

5.1 Location and time commitment

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

There are currently six Board meetings a year, three of these are held virtually via Zoom, and three are held in person. In person meetings are normally held in central London. Five of these meetings start at 2pm and usually finish around 4.30pm. One meeting a year, usually held in September, is a strategy/business planning day, which usually starts earlier and lasts for most of the day.

There are currently four Policy Council meetings a year which start at 11am on a Wednesday and finish at 1pm. Three of these are held virtually via Zoom and one, usually the November meeting, is held in person. Again, it is expected that this will be held in London.

5.2 Payment and expenses

Trustees and Policy Council members are not remunerated but reasonable travel expenses are covered.

5.3 Terms of office

We ask Policy Council members and Trustees to commit to an initial term of three years. Having served a three-year term, Trustees and Policy Council members are required to stand for re-election if they wished to continue in their role.
