**David Lacey TPP**


# David, has been with what is now CH2M (formerly Halcrow) since he graduated 16 years ago. Although an Associate based in Warrington, David spends much of his working week in London modelling the potential impacts of HS2 on the TfL network. When in Warrington he’s providing traffic inputs for the M62 and M6 Smart Motorway Project, advising Highways England. He is also advising Trafford Borough Council on the Trafford Waters development and is providing oversight to an update of the West Yorkshire Mesoscopic Model and Infrastructure Study for Highways England.

# David was awarded the TPP in 2011.

# Why do you think having the TPP is important?

# It is far more than few letters after your name. For me, the process of working towards the TPP was invaluable, as it provided me with an opportunity to look back over what I had achieved in my career to date. I realised that my experience to that point had actually been wider than I had appreciated. It also highlighted areas where I had not had much experience, and some areas that I would have liked to explore further. This ‘taking stock’ is something that in our busy working lives we transport planners often do not have time to prioritise, due to day to day constraints and deadlines. As such, it provided me with an opportunity to gain a clearer perspective on what it was I had done so far in my career, and what I wanted to do next.

# Are there any particular occasions on which it has proved particularly beneficial to have the TPP?

# I was presented with a secondment opportunity to work for a period on the transport planning for the Qatar 2022 World Cup. The fact I had a professional qualification assisted in the client approving my CV for this secondment, and propelled me into a higher charge rate band than would have otherwise been the case, which was of benefit to both me and CH2M.

# Do CH2M recognise award of the TPP in career development?

# CH2M encourages and supports transport planners to gain TPP. With TPP being relatively new and a limited number of individuals applying, it is not really recognised in a formal way, but is considered along with other aspects of performance. For engineers, chartership, or rather lack of it, is often a bar to development. This is not yet the case with the TPP, but I would not be surprised to see developments on this front as the qualification becomes more established, and more widely held.

# For me, it was a more a personally rewarding process that I am certainly glad to have undertaken and would recommend to others, rather than something which has been recognised in any particular way by my employer in terms of career development.

# What advice would you give to transport planners wondering whether to apply?

Go for it – when you examine it, you’ll discover that your evidence base of achievement and experience is greater than you, or you employer, probably realise! It provides a useful point to look back over achievements and accomplishments, and build on that base to look ahead to what you want to do next. Also, pursue the qualification with the right attitude – don’t enter in the process thinking that having the TPP is about getting a fast track promotion or pay rise. That really isn’t what the TPP is about.

# CH2M uses the Society’s PDS for its graduate staff; what do you see the main benefits of the PDS to your graduates to be?

# The PDS gives a structured approach to the development of graduates and the accumulation of knowledge and experience. By setting out a framework requiring a wide range of technical and professional experience, it encourages the development of well-rounded transport planners and helps to reduce the risk of early ‘pigeon-holing’.

# It also allows graduates to monitor their early career progress and is a tool that they can use in conjunction with line managers and mentors to influence what they would like to do, depending on what kind of projects and roles are available, in order to fulfil the PDS criteria. Certainly for me, who applied ‘cold’ into the TPP process, it would have made the personal statement and preparation easier, had I documentation relating to what I had done previously, that I could have drawn on as an evidence base for the TPP.

# And, what do you see as the main benefits of the PDS to CH2M?

# Many of the benefits for the employers mirror those for employees. All gain through the development of well-rounded transport planners. It also puts employees on the path to gain their professional qualification, something that is featuring more frequently in bid assessment criteria.

# What advice would you give to someone just starting in transport planning on developing their career?

# Avoid being pigeon-holed into a narrow area of work too early. A scheme such as the PDS, which requires evidence of the accumulation of a range of experience across the diverse transport planning, will undoubtedly assist in this regard. Also, it is important to take a collaborative and collegiate approach to your work and with fellow transport planners. Over the course of your career, you will undoubtedly have interactions with the same professional colleagues under differing circumstances, as people move roles and/or employers: as colleagues; as your clients; as their clients; them managing you; as peers; you managing them.