

Transport for the North General Purposes Committee Consultation Call – Minutes

Meeting: Transport for the North General Purposes Committee

Date: Wednesday 23 February 2022

Venue: MS Teams remote meeting

Attendees:

Cllr Laura Crane	Cheshire East
Mayor Andy Burnham	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Cllr Martin Gannon	North East Combined Authority
Cllr Carl Les	North Yorkshire
Peter Kennan	South Yorkshire MCA LEP
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Officers:

Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive
Iain Craven	Finance Director
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Manjit Dhillon	Senior Lawyer
James Lyon	Legal Assistant

Apologies:

Cllr Liam Robinson	Liverpool City Region
Cllr Heather Scott	Tees Valley

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

Action

- 1.1 Martin Tugwell welcomed Members to the inaugural Consultation Call of the General Purposes Committee.
- 1.2 He advised that the meetings were expected to be held on an ad-hoc basis and called Members' attention to the Terms of Reference.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

Action

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Appointment of a Chair

- 3.1 Martin Tugwell asked for any nominations for the position of Chair. In the absence of nominations for Chair, Peter Kennan recognised that the Chair should be an elected Member but, as a LEP Member,

he offered his services as the Vice-Chair of the Committee. This was unanimously supported by Members present. Peter Kennan chaired the remainder of the meeting.

- 3.2 As there were no nominations for the position of Chair, it was agreed to carry this forward to the first in-person meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: To support Peter Kennan's nomination as the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

To carry forward the nomination and appointment of a Chair to the next meeting.

4.0 Committee Meeting Arrangement and Relationship with TfN Board and Terms of Reference

- 4.1 Martin Tugwell noted the background behind the formation of the General Purposes Committee and the recommendations from the Members' Working Group which had been involved in setting up the Committee.
- 4.2 He invited the Committee to consider any matters currently dealt with by the Board that could be managed by this Committee as well as issues such as staff appointments and disciplinary proceedings for statutory officers. High level appointments in the past had been managed by the formation of ad hoc Appointment Panels.
- 4.3 It was advised that sub-committees of the General Purposes Committee could be set up if deemed necessary and Members noted this.
- 4.4 The Committee briefly debated the processes in place around disciplinary proceedings for Statutory Officers as another matter that could be devolved to the Committee; currently this would be required to be considered by TfN Board. Although it was noted that TfN Board had never had to consider any disciplinaries, the governance was suggested as requiring alignment with local authority processes.
- 4.5 The Committee had also been identified as a means for considering amendments to the Constitution. Cllr Carl Les enquired as to the line between the existing work of the Audit & Governance Committee and the potential role of the General Purposes Committee in dealing with the Constitution. Iain Craven advised that the current remit of the Audit & Governance Committee was clearly defined in the Constitution but the delineation between the two Committees could form part of the Terms of Reference.
- 4.6 Julie Openshaw added that the current broad Terms of Reference for the General Purposes Committee would need to be streamlined in order to align with both TfN Board and with other Committees and that ultimately, the Terms of Reference would have to be approved by the Board.

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- 4.7 Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe noted the importance of a review of the governance functions during the current period of restructure that TfN was undergoing.
- 4.8 Peter Kennan noted the good practice of the Member Working Groups convened to consider specific matters especially the ability to recruit to a Working Group based on expertise and he did not wish to see this option curtailed.
- 4.9 The Committee considered the potential venues for in-person meetings noting that Leeds and Manchester remained the preferred options. Peter Kennan commented that the proposal to hold meetings ad-hoc was not helpful in terms of Members' diary management and he would prefer to have scheduled meetings which could be cancelled if not required. Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe noted however that staffing committees only met on an ad-hoc basis and that there were pros and cons to both approaches.
- 4.10 The issue of in-person meetings compared to Consultation Calls was also raised with Members commenting on the ease of meeting virtually, especially for short agenda matters. Hybrid working was discussed with Julie Openshaw advising the TfN continued to investigate the options for hybrid but there remained significant challenges around quoracy since only the Members present in person could be counted for quorum purposes. Consultation Calls could be held virtually but would not be an option where there was a need for decision making.
- 4.11 The option for holding a General Purposes Committee meeting on the same day as Board for logistics reasons was briefly considered although this raised issues around the Committee formally feeding back decisions and discussions to the Board.

RESOLVED: To check on the role of Audit & Governance Committee in terms of managing the governance arrangements and to identify the areas that GPC could support without duplicating work.

To consider the options for meeting schedules.

To report back to TfN Board on 30 March on the inaugural meeting of the General Purposes Committee with an in-person meeting of the GPC to be convened at a later date and with agenda items delegated by the Board.

The meeting concluded at 14:05