

General Purposes Committee Minutes

Wednesday 19 July 2023

Virtual

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Peter Kennan (Chair)	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority LEP
Cllr Rupert Swarbrick	Lancashire;
Cllr Steve Foulkes	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Cllr Stewart Swinburn	North East Lincolnshire;
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Julie Openshaw	Head of Legal
Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive

**Item
No:**

Item

1 Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and apologies were noted.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held 7 February 2023 were considered and there were no matters arising.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023 be noted.

4 Constitutional Changes under Delegated Authority

4.1 Members received the report from the Head of Legal Services who outlined the key points within the report.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

5 Future Constitution developments

5.1 Members received the report from the Chief Executive who highlighted the key points within the report.

5.2 Cllr Hinchcliffe was supportive of the proposed themes but requested clarity on how the arrangements associated with Northern Powerhouse Rail fitted in with the constitution.

The Chief Executive explained that the discussions that the main Board has been having about co-sponsorship arrangements was picking up this issue, noting that the Board was considering how TfN will work with the Department for Transport in providing oversight, along with appropriate checks and balances. Additionally, he explained that the Rail North Partnership is covered within the Constitution and stated that the work proposed would enable officers to examine whether TfN's relationship with the DfT in terms of the processes relating to NPR needed to be incorporated into the constitution.

5.3 The Chair asked for a commitment to ensure stronger relationships with other areas including the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland, as well as with the Midlands. He emphasised the importance of recognising the need for dialogue with local authorities outside the North where they are responsible for roads that connect cities across the North.

In respect of the devolved administrations the Chief Executive questioned whether this was something for the Constitution but reassured the meeting that he saw linkages with them as important moving forward. With regard to working with local authorities outside the North, he drew the Committee's attention as to how Members having raised at Board an issue relating to the road links between Manchester and Sheffield which run through Derbyshire, officers had worked with those authorities to support an approach to Government.

5.4 Cllr Hinchcliffe referred to proposals for Great British Railways (GBR) and emphasised the need for dialogue with the Combined Authorities.

In response the Chief Executive explained that there is already ability through the Rail North Agreement to set up Regional Business Units which provides even stronger linkage between local partners and what happens with the rail network. He explained that this allows for more local integration between local rail services and other transport within their areas.

On GBR he noted that the sector was waiting to hear if there was to be legislation in the King's Speech.

5.5 On the issue of TfN engagement with other rail operators the Chair explained that for those areas on the edge of the region then more transport will come from outside of the region leading him to emphasise the importance of it being 'Transport for the North' and not 'Transport in the North'. He further suggested that the review should consider what can be done to increase the linkage with all operators that have an impact on the North economically.

Additionally, he expressed the need for urgency on Board representation in view of the fact that LEPs will start to disappear shortly. He suggested that a focus on a quick fix on business representation should be examined.

Resolved:

That the Committee endorsed, subject to taking on board the points made in the discussion, the scope of the review.

6 Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 7 and 8 on the grounds that:

(1) It is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during such item(s), confidential information as defined in S100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed to them in breach of the obligation of confidence; and/or

(2) it / they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Paragraphs [where necessary listed below] of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Chair moved that the meeting make such a resolution: this was agreed unanimously.

7 Private Minutes of the Previous Meeting

7.1 The private minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held 7 February 2023 were considered and there were no matters arising.

Resolved:

That the private minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023 be noted.

8 Appointment of Independent Members to Audit and Governance Committee

8.1 Members received the report from the Head of Legal Services who highlighted the key points in the report.

8.2 Members were supportive of the appointments and were impressed with the strength of interest in the role of independent member of Audit and Governance Committee. They also expressed their thanks for the robustness of the process leading to the selection of the recommended candidates.

Resolved:

1) That the Committee note the progress made on the recruitment process for Independent Members and following receipt of recommended

candidate details at the meeting, agreed to recommend to the TfN Board that Jo Reed and Richard Thomas be appointed to the two vacancies.

- 2) That the Committee supports the concept of retaining a pool of candidates who may be re-approached in the event of future vacancies within the next 12 months and endorsed the potential candidates as set out.