

PENINSULA TRANSPORT UPDATE

Recruitment and Staffing Update

2 March 2023

Please note that the following recommendation/s is/are subject to consideration and determination by the Board before taking effect.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Board note the STB Business Plan guidance received by Peninsula Transport from the Department for Transport (DfT) which sets out the changes required to the STB structure within the next financial year in order to continue to receive funding support from the DfT.
- (b) The Board approve the proposed core staffing structure required in order to comply with the mandatory roles set out within the DfT guidance and authorise that the posts be recruited within the next financial year and costs included in the Business Plan for FY23/24.
- (c) The Board request that the underspend of the FY22/23 budget be held in reserve to cover redundancy and/or winding up costs and be added to in subsequent years, ensuring that these costs are covered within the STBs existing budget allocations from the DfT.
- (d) The Board approve Plymouth City Council be responsible for the recruitment and ongoing employment of these permanent staff as an extension of their existing Accountable Body role.
- (e) The Board approve that the STB seeks written confirmation from the DfT that the STB member authorities will not be liable for the costs of redundancy and winding up of the STB as well as not being liable for costs that exceed the STB reserves should these events occur.
- (f) The Board approve that, following the appointment of core staff, a review be undertaken of the governance structure of the STB and a report be submitted to the Board setting out the outcome of the review and any changes recommended for consideration.

1. Background

In December 2022 members received a Paper proposing the STB put in place a permanent core staffing structure in line with the DfT mandatory roles set out within the STB Business Plan Guidance.

The DfT has now indicated that it wishes to see all STBs with a permanent core staff structure in place in order to meet the growing role STBs are expected to take in the future. The DfT therefore have requested that Peninsula Transport develop a permanent staff structure and put in place a process to achieve this. This was set out in the letter from Andy Rhind in November 2022 as previously circulated.

Members resolved to delegate authority to the Technical Director to work with the Local Authority Officer Group and DfT to prepare a staff structure and recruitment process.

2. Business Plan Guidance

On the 9th December, the DfT issued Business Plan Guidance to STBs setting out the Department's expectations of STBs and provide a framework for the development of STB Business Plans for 2023/24. The Peninsula Transport Business Plan for 2023/24 is found later on the agenda of this Board meeting.

The guidance makes clear that each STB must have three mandatory roles in place with the following responsibilities:

Lead Officer

Responsible for:

- All actions undertaken by the STB and its employees
- Use of Government funding, ensuring it delivers Value for Money and is not wasted.
- Managing staff conduct and employment.
- Managing the STBs' governance, working with the chair, LTAs and DfT.

Programme Lead

Responsible for:

- Ensuring delivery of outputs by agreed times.
- Working with other STBs to ensure outputs are shared and duplication is avoided
- Working with LTAs to ensure they are bought into work and it is delivering value for them

Technical Lead

Responsible for:

- Ensuring delivery of technical work
- Managing STBs' data and analytics
- Working with other STBs to ensure data and analytics are shared.

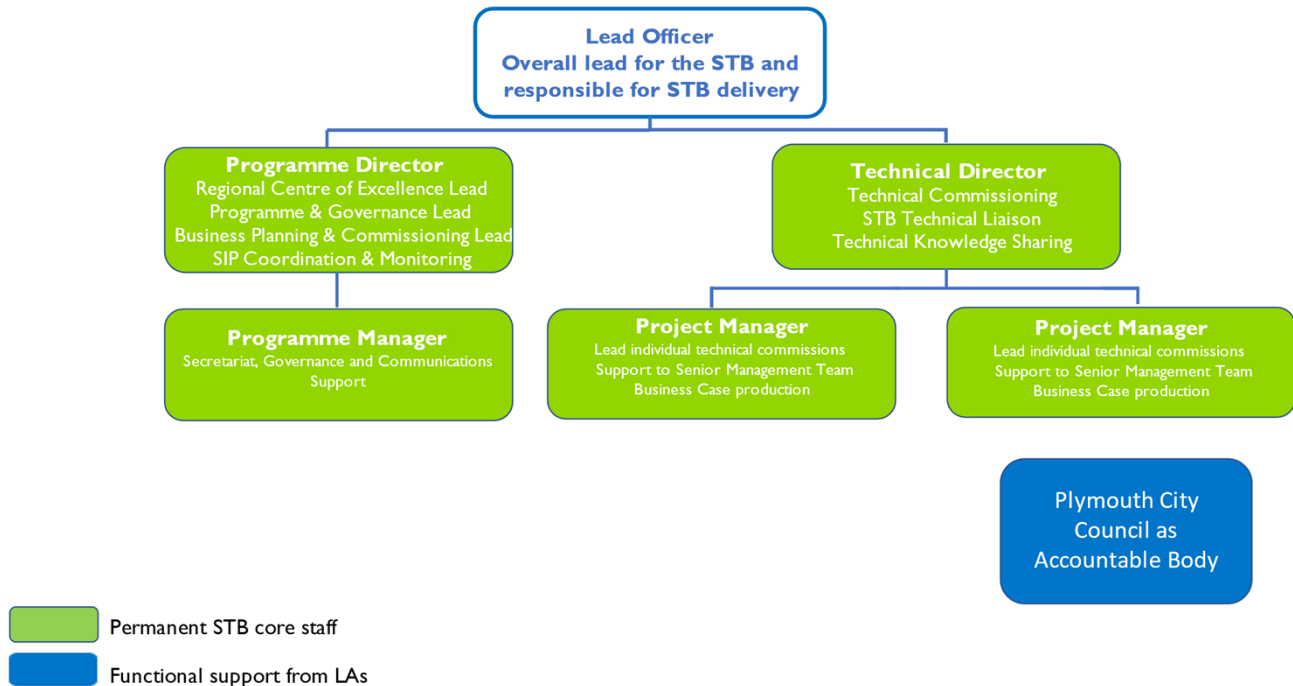
The Programme Lead and Technical Lead roles should be permanent full-time roles.

3. Peninsula Transport Proposed Staffing Structure

In line with the guidance, Peninsula Transport have devised a proposed structure for establishing a core staff as shown below in Figure 1.

Figure I – STB Staffing Structure

OFFICIAL:SENSITIVE



The structure has been developed in consultation with the DfT who have confirmed this structure would be appropriate for the size of the STB and have advised that we liaise with Transport for the South East who have been through a similar process to seek their job descriptions as a basis for recruiting to these posts.

These job descriptions have been received and shared with Plymouth City Council, who are supportive of this process and, as accountable body, are prepared to be the recruiting authority for these positions subject to Board agreement.

In moving to a permanent staff structure, the STB needs to make provision for any costs associated with redundancies or winding up of the STB in the future. It is proposed that reserves are built up over time by the STB to cover this. We have sought guidance from DfT on ensuring the liability of these costs will not fall to the individual authorities. They have provided the following proposed arrangements with the Accountable Body:

In the event of [STB] ceasing to operate, the [Accountable Body's] Managing Reorganisations Policy will be utilised to manage those employees who become at risk of redundancy; this policy includes exploring redeployment and redundancy/severance options.

[STB] will fully indemnify the [AB] in relation to liability for severance payments for any directly employed employees who are successful in obtaining a role in [STB], for example through the provisioning of reserve funds, or other means agreed between [AB] and [STB]. Severance calculations will be in line with the payment calculator detailed in [AB's] Managing Reorganisations Policy in force at the time of redundancy. Severance calculations will be continually updated to ensure that the STB's reserves are sufficient to cover redundancy and/or severance costs.

The [STB] liability changes with additional staff joining and increased years of service by existing staff. This will be reviewed regularly and built into the [STB] business plan submission each year.

We recommend the STB write to the DfT to confirm that the Accountable Body, Plymouth City Council and other member authorities will not be required to cover these costs and the STB will indemnify Plymouth City Council. It is proposed that the underspend within FY22/23 be used as reserve to ensure sufficient provision is in place.

4. STB Governance

At the time the STB was established in 2018, each member Local Transport Authority undertook a lead role on the different management functions of the STB:

- Somerset – Governance and Legal Support
- Devon – Secretariat Support
- Cornwall – Technical Support
- Plymouth – Accountable Body and Communications Support

It is now recognised that as Peninsula Transport develops and matures, there is a need to review the governance arrangements to ensure this is still the most effective way of managing the STB. It is recommended that a full review is undertaken once the recruitment of the core staff has been successfully completed and in consultation with the DfT. This means that the core staff will take on the governance, secretariat, technical and communications support roles. The STB will still be able to rely on the Local Authorities for legal support and Plymouth City Council being the Accountable Body.

5. Financial Considerations

As detailed above, in moving to a permanent staff structure, the STB needs to make provision for any costs associated with redundancies or winding up of the STB in the future. It is proposed that reserves are built up over time by the STB to cover this.

The costs of recruiting permanent staff will be covered by the Peninsula Transport annual budget allocation from the DfT. For FY 23/24 the overall STB funding allocation is £649,000.

The financial risk of employing full-time dedicated staff for Peninsula Transport will be covered within existing PT budgets with assurance provided by DfT that any redundancy or other unforeseen costs will not be borne by either the employing authority or any other STB member authority.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

There are no environmental considerations associated with this paper.

7. Equality Considerations

The recruitment process will follow Plymouth City Council Human Resources procedures, fully compliant with equal opportunities recruitment policies and guidance.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations associated with this paper.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The risk of not following the guidance and moving towards a core permanent staff structure is that the STB could see its funding allocation reduced or withdrawn entirely by the DfT. This would limit its ability to represent the region's strategic transport needs at a national level and provide the increased level of support to local authorities now expected of STBs,

This policy/proposals have been assessed and all necessary safeguards or actions have been taken/included to safeguard the STB position. The financial risk of recruitment of permanent posts will not be borne by an individual member authority.

10. Public Health Impact

There are no public health impacts associated with this paper.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

This Paper has provided further details to the Board on the plans for recruitment of a core team for the STB, reflecting guidance from DfT and the increase in responsibilities and priorities for Peninsula Transport in the future.