

APPOINTMENT OF PENINSULA RAIL TASK FORCE CHAIR

15 July 2024

I. 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 notes the process for appointment of the Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF) Chair as set out within the Terms of Reference, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A.
- b) The Board approves the appointment of a new Chair for PRTF taking into account the responsibilities and workload set out in this report.

1. Background

Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF) was originally set up in 2013 following severe storms that caused significant disruption to rail lines through the region. The task force has representation from all peninsula local authorities, rail infrastructure provider and train operating companies. The aim of the PRTF, as set out in the Terms of Reference, is to ensure an enhanced rail network is delivered, that will achieve an increased rate of passenger growth across the South West peninsula, realising economic benefits and increasing competitiveness with other parts of the country through improved connectivity.

The PRTF meets on a quarterly basis with membership consisting of senior officers from the constituent local authorities, the Chair (elected Member of Peninsula Transport Board) and the Chair or Vice Chair of the Peninsula Transport STB Stakeholder Group. Representatives from Network Rail and the three main Train Operating Companies are also invited to attend meetings.

Due to the General Election on July 4th, the appointment of a new Chair of PRTF was delayed until the end of the pre-election period to allow for the Chair and Vice Chair of the STB to also be appointed.

At the previous Board, the Peninsula Transport team presented a paper setting out changes to the management of PRTF. This reflects the challenging time as we move towards Great British Rail and associated Rail Reform in coming months. These changes will also encompass updates to the Terms of Reference for the PRTF that do not suit the environment we find ourselves in.

2. Chair Responsibilities

The role of PRTF Chair is to provide leadership to the Task Force, engage with authorities and relevant stakeholders on rail issues, be an effective advocate and representative for rail schemes and proposals across the peninsula. There are a number of responsibilities of the role, as set out below:

- Manage and lead PRTF meetings on a quarterly basis, as well as attend any additional meetings when required;
- Provide regular updates to the Peninsula Transport Board on the work of the PRTF in delivering the Peninsula Rail Strategy.
- Signing off and endorsing letters and consultation responses on all rail-related matters, in consultation with Officers;

- Represent PRTF at regional and national events as required and agreed with Peninsula Transport Lead Officer;
- Attend regular briefings from the PRTF team and relevant authority officers on specific rail issues as they arise;
- Regular liaison with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies in relation to new schemes, service enhancements and the implications of rail reform for the peninsula area
- Lead advocacy sessions with MPs and attend meetings with Rail Ministers in London or elsewhere across the country.

The PRTF, facilitated and supported by Peninsula Transport, will be responsible for preparing relevant papers and reports with recommendations referred to the STB Board with agreement through consensus of PRTF members.

3. New Role Appointments

The Terms of Reference state that the Chair of the PRTF will rotate biennially between the elected membership of the Peninsula Transport Board and that the rotation will be defined alphabetically by Local Authority. However, based on previous experience, the Chair has been appointed based on the time elected members have available to fulfil the role, taking into account the requirement to continue to be the lead member for transport within their respective local authorities. Over the 12-months, it is expected that key decisions will be taken on how the railways are run, the level of regional input to the setting of service standards and prioritisation of investment. It is therefore important that the Member taking on the role can commit the time required to fulfil the responsibilities and tasks as set out in the paper and ensure that the key decisions taken reflect the needs of the peninsula.

At a practical level, the Terms of Reference for PRTF are in the process of being updated to reflect that the management and secretariat support for the group is now fulfilled by the Peninsula Transport team.

4. Financial Considerations

The transfer of Board Chair does not have any financial implications for the STB and the accountable body.

5. Environmental Impact Considerations

There are no environmental considerations associated with this paper.

6. Equality Considerations

There are no equality considerations associated with this paper.

7. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations associated with this paper.

8. Risk Management Considerations

The Programme Director maintains and manages a Risk Register covering all aspects of the operation of the STB and PRTF. The transfer of Chair and the potential impacts is reflected within the risk register.

9. Public Health Impact

There are no public health impacts associated with this paper.

10. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

This paper sets out the process for appointing and responsibilities of the Chair of the PRTF.

APPENDIX A – PRTF TERMS OF REFERENCE