

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 19 January 2021 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Mark Coxshall, Shane Hebb, Fraser Massey, Bukky Okunade and Tony Fish (Substitute) (substitute for John Kent)

Apologies: Councillors Gary Byrne and John Kent

In attendance: Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Andrew Millard, Director of Place
Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Mykela Pratt, Strategic Lead HR, Resourcing and Improvement
Jonathon Wilson, Assistant Director, Finance
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's online webcast channel.

71. Minutes

The minutes of the General Services Committees held on the 17 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

72. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

73. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

74. Recruitment for Interim Director of Public Health

The Committee interviewed the candidates and agreed the following.

RESOLVED:

To recommend to Full Council the appointment of Jo Broadbent as the Interim Director of Public Health.

75. Thurrock Regeneration Limited

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Planning, Councillor Coxshall addressed Members updating them that the report was similar to the one presented previously, however had taken on board the comments raised by the Committee at the December meeting, with a change in the decision items. He continued by stating he hoped all concerns raised had been covered so that the report could be given approval.

The Director of Place advised that the report had followed a previous report which was submitted at the December meeting and had picked up the concerns raised by Members. Notably in relation to the need to limit the scope of the decision-making of a single Director to purely administrative tasks and those required in the usual function of the company until a future structure of the board of Directors was agreed and the operational functions were also agreed and implemented. This was reflected in the additional recommendations 1.2.3 and 1.3.3, which ensured any Director would refrain from taking any action other than to comply with the Companies Act 2006.

He continued to advise Members that future work was already underway to look at a new composition of a board of Directors with a range of skills to ensure effective and proper governance in the future.

Councillor Fish queried as he did not have the full background, due to not being present at the previous meeting, asked how long it would be before the new Directors were appointed. The Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects explained an operating model and revised company board structure had been brought forward. She continued by mentioning she felt there was going to be a need to recruit from specialised markets for Directors including a Chair and there were funds identified previously within the TRL budget.

It was commented by the Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects that she thought it would be the intention to recruit in the same way, however at present it would be difficult to attract Directors for the board, until a revised model was in place.

She continued by advising Members that Officers were working on a revised model and had been given a deadline of mid-March to get back to General Services Committee for their agreement. It would be after this that the recruitment process could start to form the board of Directors and with two or more Directors in place, it may be that Members sought to relax the restrictions placed on a single Director so that the responsibility could be a gradual phased introduction of a new board.

Councillor Coxshall echoed the comments made by the Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects, in that the discussion held at the last meeting to refresh the report and to bring it back in March. He continued by stating that the report was based on a Cabinet report

and that he wished for it to have Overview and Scrutiny input, as it was an important element to deliver housing numbers including at least some HRA.

Councillor Massey observed and commented he was more comfortable with the report represented and was pleased to move forwards and creating much needed housing for Thurrock residents.

Councillor Gledhill echoed Councillor Massey's comments in moving forwards and producing affordable housing for residents.

Upon taking the recommendations to the vote, Councillor Fish abstained.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee appoints the Director of Place to attend the Shareholders meeting of TRL as the Council's nominated proxy;**
- 2. That the Committee directs the Director of Place to vote on behalf of the shareholder to:**
 - 1.2.1 approved the change to the TRL Articles of Association;**
 - and**
 - 1.2.2 appointed Roger Harris as a Director to TRL; and**
 - 1.2.3 in appointing a single director that such director shall refrain from taking any action other than action required to comply with the Companies Act 2006 for example, filing accounts, until a new company structure and Board is agreed by members and implemented.**
- 3. That the Committee authorised the Director of Place to write to TRL on behalf of the Shareholder and request that it uses its shareholder powers to ensure that:**
 - 1.3.1 a change is made to the TRHL Articles of Association; and**
 - 1.3.2 Roger Harris be appointed as a Director of TRHL; and**
 - 1.3.3 in appointing a single director that such director shall refrain from taking any action other than action required to comply with the Companies Act 2006 for example, filing accounts, until a new company structure and Board is agreed by members and implemented.**
- 4. That the Committee noted a further report on the future governance structure of TRL will be brought back to this Committee at the earliest opportunity.**

The meeting finished at 6.02 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**