

Format of Business Board Meetings

To: Business Board

Meeting Date: 12 May 2021

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Chair of the Business Board, Austen Adams

From: Deputy Monitoring Officer, Rochelle Tapping

Key decision: No

Recommendations:

The Business Board is invited to:

- (a) Consider and comment on the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee, 'that there should be a presumption that meetings of the Business Board are carried out in public (unless otherwise determined by the Chair)'; and
- (b) Recommend the preferred format of Business Board meetings to the Combined Authority.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 On 5th March 2021, the Audit and Governance Committee considered the draft revised Local Assurance Framework. During that meeting, the Committee expressed concern that meetings of the Business Board were held in private and requested that the Business Board made recommendations to address this concern.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee considered the revised Assurance Framework on 5th March 2021. The minutes of that meeting record the following:

Committee members raised concerns around the open and transparent nature of the Business Board. Members felt there was a conflict between the Nolan Principles outlined within the Assurance Framework and the statement that all meetings of the Business Board would be private, except for the Annual General Meeting and other

meetings as the Chair deemed necessary.

The Committee were advised that there was no requirement within the National Assurance Framework to have the Business Board meetings held in public. The degree of openness was thus a decision for the CA Board, as the accountable body. The Committee were strongly of the opinion that the Combined Authority's policy of openness, in line with the Nolan Principles, should apply equally to the Business Board. The presumption should be that the Business Board would hold meetings in public, except where the Chair deemed there were reasons of confidentiality not to do so.

2.2 The committee resolved to:

- (a) Recommended to the CA Board that the word 'not' be removed at point 4.1.7 of the Assurance Framework to read: 4.1.7: All other meetings of the Business Board shall be open to the public unless determined otherwise by the Chair.

2.3 On 24th March 2021, the Combined Authority considered the revised draft Local Assurance Framework, as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee. In order to facilitate the decision of the committee detailed at 2.2 above, the Business Board would first need to consider and agree to the proposed change, prior to implementation by the Combined Authority. In consequence, the Combined Authority resolved to:

- (f) Refer the recommendation of the Audit and Governance Committee, 'that there should be a presumption that meetings of the Business Board are carried out in public (unless otherwise determined by the Chair)', to the Business Board for comment and consideration.

2.4 The complete reference from the Assurance Framework, including the proposed amendment associated with the recommendation at 2.2 above is outlined in the Appendix. The Business Board is asked to consider and comment upon the presumption expressed by the Audit and Governance Committee and recommend the preferred format for future meetings of the Business Board to the Combined Authority.

Significant Implications

3 Financial Implications

3.1 None

4 Legal Implications

4.1 The National Assurance Framework sets out requirements for all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). In relation to meetings, the only requirement is for the Annual General Meeting of the Business Board to be in public. There is no requirement for all meetings of the Business Board to be held in public.

4.2 Any further revision to the Assurance Framework would need to be sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for approval. The revised draft of the

Assurance Framework, presented to the Business Board at its extraordinary meeting on 3rd March 2021, is yet to signed off.

5 Other Significant Implications

5.1 None

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Amendment to the Assurance Framework

7 Background Papers

7.1 [Audit and Governance Meeting paper 5th March 2021](#)

7.2 [Audit and Governance Committee Meeting Minutes 5th March 2021](#)

7.3 [CA Board Minutes March 2021](#)