
GCRE

Global Centre of Rail Excellence

Advisory Panel Terms of Reference

DRAFT FOR COMMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In response to demand from the rail industry and with support from the Welsh and UK Governments GCRE Ltd is developing an internationally recognised Rail Research, Test, Validation and Innovation Centre. The core business being:

- **Infrastructure testing and accreditation,**
- **Rolling Stock testing and accreditation,**
- **Storage and Maintenance and**
- **Training and Education.**

Outside of the core activity, GCRE has identified a substantial list of opportunities which can be developed to augment the core offering. There is also an opportunity to commercially exploit and develop the renewable energy opportunities available at the site in line with GCRE's energy strategy.

GCRE will be the UK's first Net Zero railway. As such energy systems research and validation is an important complementary activity to the railway work that will be carried out at GCRE.

The aim is to build a centre that is innovative and sustainable not just in its operation but also its core design and construction. The centre will seek to incorporate genuine and challenging railway and energy innovation into its construction, in its civil engineering and track and power systems in partnership with supplier/innovator companies.

GCRE has been given a set of objectives to achieve in return for considerable public sector investment. These are set out in Appendix A.

Public funding will need to be joined by private investment to realise the ambition of the GCRE. A major public procurement to secure private investment and strategic investor(s) for the project was commenced in November 2022.

1.2. Purpose

For GCRE to achieve its outcomes and give value to the rail and energy industry, private shareholders and the community it will be necessary to ensure formal, regular and informed dialogue takes place with industry/academia and the local community.

An Advisory Panel will therefore be established to enable this dialogue to take place and be a conduit for non-binding advice to be shared between GCRE and the local and industrial communities which it serves. The GCRE advisory structure and its constituent committees does not seek to impact or undermine any of the statutory, legal or planning processes of the local authority or any other public body.

1.3. Approach

The Advisory Panel will be informed by committees whose Chairs and Vice Chairs will form the membership of the Advisory panel. These committees will themselves be formed of individuals who represent interested parties and whose own expertise, knowledge or position will bring value to GCRE. It will be the committees where the core work of the Advisory Panel will be done. The Advisory Panel itself will be a mechanism for pulling together the work of the committees and helping to translate their outputs to clear business objectives for GCRE.

The objectives of the panel and its committees are to:

- Provide non-binding advice to GCRE, via its executives and ultimately via the Advisory Panel Chair in their role as non-executive director of GCRE.
- Provide a route for GCRE to update and advise stakeholders of progress and plans.
- Ensure stakeholder, customer and community voices are heard at the highest level within GCRE.
- Shape the development of the GCRE Business Plan and Communications Strategy.
- Provide opportunities to stakeholder, customer and community groups to scrutinise GCRE.
- Support GCRE in delivering its work in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

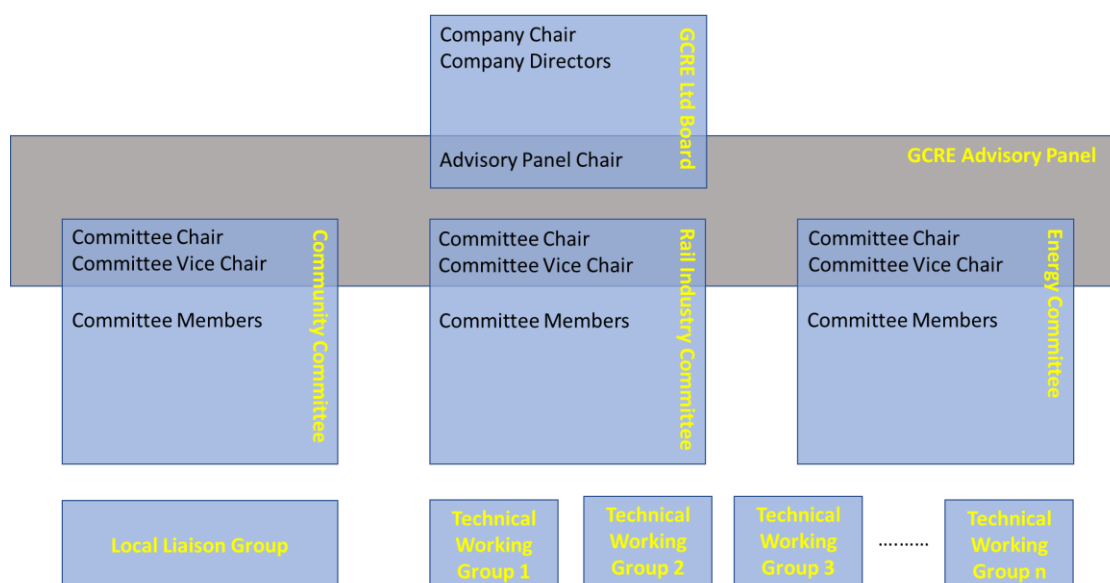
2. STRUCTURE

It is proposed that an Advisory Panel is established which will report to the GCRE Ltd board. The committees will provide reports, escalate issues and provide representation. The GCRE Board, via the Advisory Panel and its Chair (who will be a company board director), will have sight of these committees through a formal reporting structure. This structure will be governed through GCRE.

At the outset three committees are envisaged:

- Community Committee
- Rail Industry Committee
- Energy Committee

The Rail Industry and Energy committees will spawn Technical Working Groups from time to time to focus on particular areas of work. The Community Committee will be informed by a Local Liaison Group with representatives from within the communities impacted by GCRE.



2.1. Remit and Purpose – Community Committee

The Community Committee of the GCRE Advisory Panel will ensure GCRE engages with its stakeholders who represent the interests of the communities which will benefit from and are impacted by the GCRE. The Committee will receive a broad range of input which will influence and direct our work.

The Community Committee is designed to add value to the local relationships that can help to make GCRE a success and does not seek to impact or undermine any of the statutory legal or planning processes of the local authority or any other public body.

The Community Committee will be the formal route for working with elected representatives from local authorities, and the Welsh and UK parliaments. It will allow the concerns and ambitions of the community to be shared with the GCRE company and to facilitate a two way flow of information to allow constructive dialogue to take place.

Attendees will include representatives of local communities and government. Guests representing varying subjects and themes will be invited from time to time.

The Community Committee will:

- receive updates from GCRE Ltd from public consultations and community engagement exercises which it will undertake from time to time, and from the work of the Local Liaison Group.
- provide a formal mechanism for elected representatives to raise concerns with GCRE, and to pursue their resolution
- provide input and support to GCRE Ltd as it prepares and submits bids for wider economic development via Growth Deal, Shared Prosperity Fund, Freeport and other opportunities (noting that there may be some conflicts of interest to be managed)
- provide a ready-made governance function to oversee implementation of any of the bids which may be successful
- receive feedback from GCRE Ltd on progress against plans, and the development of future plans
- support (where conflicts can be managed) development plans and future planning applications to further develop the GCRE site in preparation for formal legal and planning processes
- ensure the views and needs of those with protected characteristics are heard, as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010.
- hold GCRE Ltd to account for delivering Social Value objectives (jobs, training and other measures).
- comment upon and input to the GCRE Communications Strategy
- in the short term support the development of the GCRE brand identity

2.2. Remit and Purpose – Rail Industry Committee

The rail Industry Committee of the GCRE Advisory Panel will allow GCRE to engage directly with representative policy makers, manufacturers, academics, rail operators and customers of the facility. This will allow GCRE's service offering to be shaped to meet the needs of the market and of government policy. The committee will receive a broad range of input which will influence and direct GCRE's work.

The Rail Industry Committee will:

- receive feedback from GCRE Ltd on progress against site development plans, and the development of future plans
- during the design and construction and eventual operational phases provide membership to working groups which will challenge and review the design and construction of specific elements of GCRE

- critique and input to technical elements of GCRE’s annual Business Plan
- help identify services that GCRE should be offering for the benefit of the wider rail industry in the UK
- Highlight innovations and forthcoming changes to the railway industry that members think GCRE needs to be aware of
- comment upon GCRE’s commercial proposition and its effectiveness in promoting railway innovation
- hold GCRE to account for delivering outcomes to benefit the UK railway industry
- support GCRE and our training and academic partners in equipping the local and national railway industry with relevant skills, particularly those associated with testing and validation
- comment upon and input to the GCRE Communications Strategy
- in the short term support the development of the GCRE brand identity
- receive and note GCRE progress and management reports

2.3. Remit and Purpose – Energy Committee

The Energy Committee of the GCRE Advisory Panel will eventually provide support to GCRE’s energy proposition. This position is still being developed, and until that is completed the Energy Committee will not be formed.

3. ROLES AND COMPOSITION

As well as bringing their expertise to help shape GCRE, Committee and Panel Members will be ambassadors for GCRE, working collaboratively and representing GCRE’s long-term vision:

To be a Global Centre for Rail Excellence, achieving a world leading reputation as a ‘one stop shop’ for railway innovation, from research and development, through testing and verification, to applied innovation on mainline passenger and freight railways.

Delivering a wide and integrated commercial service functionality in market focused and managed phases with continuous growth and revenue development potential, primarily attracting UK and European customers.

3.1. Composition of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel will be chaired by a non-executive director of GCRE Ltd.

The Panel will also comprise the Chair and Vice Chair of each Committee.

The Advisory Panel Chair will nominate one of the Committee Chairs to be the Advisory Panel Vice Chair.

The Chief Executive and other executives of GCRE will attend the Advisory Panel at the invitation of the Panel Chair.

The Advisory Panel shall meet at least once every six months, or more frequently at the panel Chair’s discretion. The Chair shall also determine the location of in person meetings, and the proportion of meetings that should take place virtually and face to face.

3.2. Advisory Panel Chair

The Advisory Panel Chair will be independent of the executive team of GCRE Ltd.

The Chair will act as the primary independent conduit between the Panel and the Board of GCRE.

The Chair will be a Non-Executive Director of GCRE Ltd, appointed by the Board of the company, and as such will report directly to the Chair of GCRE Ltd.

3.3. Composition of Committees

Committee membership will initially be via direct invitation from the Chair of GCRE Ltd.

Within 1 year of formation each committee shall identify whether additional members are required, or existing members should step down, and make a recommendation to the Board of GCRE accordingly. Within the same time period, each committee should also confirm the appointment of the permanent Chair and Vice Chair, nominating alternatives to the Chair of GCRE Ltd if required.

Members of the committees shall be chosen for their roles and employers. If either changes the Committee chair will make changes to the membership in line with the agreed terms of reference.

Executives of GCRE Ltd will attend the meetings of the Committees at the sole discretion and invitation of the Committee Chair.

The Committees shall meet at least once every quarter, or more frequently at the Committee Chair's discretion. The Chair shall also determine the location of in person meetings, and the proportion of meetings that should take place virtually and face to face.

3.4. Committee Chairs

The initial Chair and Vice Chair of each committee will be directly appointed by the Chair of GCRE Ltd.

The Chair will be an independent member selected because of their standing and reputation amongst the members of the committee.

The Vice Chair will be one of the senior members of the wider membership of the committee.

Once confirmed by the rest of the members of the committee the Chair and Vice Chair of each Committee shall be appointed for a period of no greater than 5 years. The Chair shall ensure that tenures are staggered to avoid simultaneous changes.

3.5. Community Committee Members

It is proposed that membership of the Community Committee will comprise:

- Independent Chair
- Member of Welsh Parliament for Neath
- Member of UK Parliament for Neath
- Member of Welsh Parliament for Brecon & Radnorshire
- Member of UK Parliament for Brecon & Radnorshire
- Leader of Powys County Council or their nominated deputy
- Leader of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council or their nominated deputy
- GCRE sponsoring official representing the Climate Change and Economy Ministers Welsh Government
- GCRE sponsoring official representing the Secretary of State for Wales
- Nominated lead official of Powys County Council
- Nominated lead official of Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council

Plus representatives of the GCRE executive team as invited by the Chair and committee.

3.6. Rail Industry Committee Members

It is proposed that membership of the Rail Industry Committee will comprise representatives from:

- Independent Chair
- BEIS
- DfT
- Welsh Government Economy/Regeneration team
- Welsh Government transport team
- Nominated officers of both local authorities
- Rail Industry Association
- RSSB
- UKRRIN
- Welsh Universities – via UKRRIN
- Local FE college representation
- Network Rail (and in future Great British Rail)
- Transport for Wales
- Transport Scotland
- Representative local SME
- Representative rolling stock manufacturer - via GCRE membership scheme
- Representative rolling stock leasing company - via GCRE membership scheme
- Rail Delivery Group

Plus representatives of the GCRE executive team as invited by the Chair and committee.

3.7. Local Liaison Group Members

It is proposed that the Local Liaison Group which will feed views from local residents into the Community Committee, will meet quarterly to be given updates on GCRE progress and plans for the following quarter, to address and resolve any complaints and to disburse any community levy required of GCRE.

- Independent Chair
- Two elected members of Powys County Council representing adjacent wards.
- Two elected members of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council representing adjacent wards

- Community Councillors from each of the Powys County Council wards
- Community Councillors from each of the adjacent Neath Port Talbot wards
- Representative of commoners

Plus representatives of the GCRE executive team as invited by the Chair.

3.8. Membership approval

Whilst GCRE is in sole ownership of Welsh Government the Shareholder of GCRE has reserved the right to veto the appointment of committee/panel members. Therefore, all prospective appointments will need to be submitted for consideration before formal appointments can take place.

The membership of the committees and the Advisory Panel will be published on the GCRE website.

4. ADMINISTRATION

Resource for Advisory Panel and Committee meetings will be provided by GCRE, which will provide the secretariat for the panel and its committees. We will ensure locations and venues are fully accessible. There will be options to request simultaneous translation, BSL interpretation, easy read copies of papers along with any requirements that will be deemed necessary for each meeting.

4.1. Remuneration & expenses

The Advisory Panel Chair shall be remunerated in accordance with their Terms & Conditions as a Non Executive of GCRE Ltd.

Committee Chairs shall be remunerated in accordance with the rate for a Welsh Government Sponsored Body Chair, at “Band 2”. At time of writing this rate is £275 per day [tbc by Welsh Government].

Panel members and Committee members will not be remunerated, but will be able to claim travel, expenses and accommodation costs at standard Welsh Government rates.

4.2. Secretariat & reporting

A GCRE provided secretariat for the panel and its committees will oversee governance and logistical arrangements.

Agendas and any supporting papers for each Advisory Panel and Committee meeting will be collated and distributed 5 working days prior to each meeting. These will be sent electronically.

The secretariat will work closely with the Committee and Panel Chairs to decide appropriate agenda items and to develop the long-term work programme of the Committees and Panel.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be agreed between each Committee and the Advisory Panel as part of the formal reporting structure. This will secure the correct information/progress/reports will be provided for the Advisory Panel to discuss and review.

Each Committee Chair shall provide a quarterly written report to be circulated amongst all of the members of the Advisory Panel. The report will update the panel on activities and recommendations that arise from the committee.

GCRE will provide a written response to recommendations made in committee reports within 4 weeks of the report being circulated.

4.3. Operation

A committee is quorate if 50% of its members (excluding GCRE staff) are in attendance, plus at least one of the Chair or Vice Chair.

The Advisory Panel will be quorate if 40% of its members (excluding GCRE staff) are in attendance, and at least one of the Chair or Vice Chair are in attendance.

Committees shall not be responsible for any budget, nor for any spending decisions on behalf of GCRE.

5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

As a wholly owned subsidiary of Welsh Government GCRE is required to work to demonstrate our commitment to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

5.1. Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

At GCRE, we put the customers and communities we serve at the heart of everything we do. We are delivering the objectives set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, which outlines five ways of working. Our advisory panel and its committees will help us to adopt these ways of working;

Long Term – Considering the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs. Good advice will help us to consider the long-term needs of people and communities.

Prevention – Gathering good advice and input from a broad representation of people and communities will help us act to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.

Integration – We will gain advice and input to help understand how our objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on our other objectives, or on the objectives of our partners.

Collaboration - Creating positive spaces and opportunities for collaboration will help us to meet our objectives to the benefit of people and communities impacted by GCRE.

Involvement – Our advisory panel and its committees will reflect the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving our goals and will ensure that those people reflect the diversity of the customers, industries and communities which we serve.

APPENDIX A - PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Welsh Government's Objectives for the project are to create a locally based, but nationally recognised world leading facility that is:

- A trusted railway partner at the heart of the UK/European and global industry, providing:
 - Rail infrastructure, systems and interfaces, innovation and testing
 - Rolling stock testing, storage, maintenance & training services
 - Certification and verification competence/certified body & exemplary H&S operations
 - Realistic, effective and game changing rail research through rapid commercial implementation
 - Shared campus for industry, innovators, researchers and funders to develop next generation solutions
 - Operationally independent of any major economic operator in the rail sector to ensure that the facility operates as “open access”
 - Acceleration of decarbonisation of the railways
- Financially sustainable (no publicly funded operating subsidy)
 - Make judicious use of committed public funding to generate revenues against these objectives
 - Establish rail vehicle storage & maintenance as an early revenue opportunity
 - Attract private sector investment to finance completion of the project
 - Seek to be the pre-eminent test/validation complex in the UK and Europe
- Providing public value
 - Be a considerate neighbour to adjacent and other nearby communities.
 - In all construction and operational activity seek to contribute to achieve Net Zero objectives.
 - Build an energy strategy founded on access to renewables and, if possible, become a net exporter of clean power.
 - Improve the biodiversity of the whole site and its surroundings
 - Creation of jobs in direct employment and promote job creation in, the Welsh supply chain and in Research, Development and Innovation
 - Through partnership with HE and industry bodies facilitate the development and maintenance of a centre of excellence of Rail related R&D.
 - Enable the dynamic growth of the UK and local rail industry SME innovation base
 - Support generation and exploitation of national and supplier Intellectual Property for the rail and other sectors -
- More than a Rail Facility
 - Establish strategic and commercial (renewable) energy and telecoms partnerships and explore links to other sectors such as automotive.

In contrast, the company expects Welsh Ministers will not want GCRE to be:

- Wholly owned by Welsh Ministers in perpetuity
- Suffering from poor cost control through construction and operation

- Controlled by any one dominant industry player
- Loss making and low usage
- Have a poor Health & Safety and environmental record
- Have poor local and community stakeholder relationships
- Create insufficient local employment
- Achieve a poor security and IP and data protection record