

**Approved Minutes
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

14 February 2019

(10.00 am - 12.00 pm)

Meeting held: North Tyneside Council, Cobalt Business Park, The Quadrant, 16 The Silverlink N, Newcastle upon Tyne NE27 0BY

Minutes

Present:

Chair: Cllr G Roughead

Councillors M Hall, S Graham, G Stewart, G Stone, S Cox and S Dungworth

7 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies were received from Councillors Fairlie, Wright, Lower, Bell, Davey and Cox.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

9 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10 REPORT TO CABINET ON INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE

Submitted: Report of the Interim Director of Inclusive Economy (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

Members considered the report presented by Lee Cranston which set out a progress update on projects that had been agreed by Cabinet and which

summarises other activity under way to progress the objectives set out in the NTCA Vision and Devolution Deal prior to the Mayoral Elections in May 2019.

Committee also considered the report to Cabinet on 5 February 2019, agenda item 5a, NTCA Investment Fund Update: Supplemental Brexit Update.

Comments, questions and points raised by members included:

- Investment Fund/Business Case Development Funding – in response to a query as to who was responsible for the development of the list of initial applications, L Cranston advised that the list was put together by members and officers; however, as grants are further developed other interested parties will participate in discussions.

L Cranston confirmed that the purpose of the grant funding is to promote and provide the creation of employment opportunities/inward investment

- In response to a query regarding 'Leaders of Tomorrow' and a future report to Cabinet, L Cranston informed Committee that a report was scheduled for the March Cabinet meeting. The purpose of the commissioning call is to identify those agencies already involved in STEM subjects such as chemistry, computing and mathematics with the aim of inspiring more young people to become involved.

In response to a query regarding 'Leaders of Tomorrow' and a future report to Cabinet, L Cranston informed Committee that a report was scheduled for the March Cabinet meeting. The purpose of the commissioning call is to identify those agencies already involved in STEM subjects such as chemistry, computing and mathematics with the aim of inspiring more young people to become involved.

- The proposal that the NTCA Cabinet would have sight of the proposed High Street Fund applications was welcomed although it was noted that each constituent authority was progressing its own application.
- Committee requested an update on the work of the Housing and Land Board at the next meeting
- A member queried whether central government would provide additional resources to address the impact arising from Brexit, particularly in the business sector and ports or would the Investment Fund be used to provide help, and furthermore, whether Government would match and guarantee any lost European Regional Development Funding. Committee were advised that the Shared Prosperity Fund should replace European Regional Development Funding but there was no guarantee and the Local Enterprise Partnership, the CBI and other partners were in the process of developing a response to Government in respect of impacts arising from Brexit.
- A brief discussion took place regarding the lack of advanced apprenticeships, the development of high level skills, the skills gap and the loss of many young

people living in the area who graduate, find suitable employment and leave home to live elsewhere.

- The creation of a new centre for training in relation to offshore and wind energy technologies was raised.
- Committee were informed that a communication strategy has been developed so that businesses may be able to understand the implications of Brexit and take mitigating action.
- Committee requested that they be kept abreast of developments in respect of Brexit.

It was agreed: that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and that a report regarding the Housing and Land Board be brought to the next meeting.

(a) **Investment Fund - Brexit Update**

Submitted: Report of the Interim Director of Inclusive Economy (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes)

11 **HOME OF AMBITION - NORTH OF TYNE COMBINED AUTHORITY**

Committee received a presentation from Maria Antoniou in respect of the Devolution Deal and the six Pillars of Ambition; Champion of Enterprise, Leaders of Tomorrow, Hotbed of Talent, Spark of Innovation, Network of Connections and Pride of Place.

Comments, questions and points raised by members included:

- A member queried whether the Vision is realistic and could the Combined Authority be more ambitious. In response M Antoniou stated that the Vision is ambitious but realistic. Tests and checks are in place to deliver the Investment Fund (£600 million of extra money over 30 years to invest).
- The development of a scrutiny programme aimed at assisting the delivery of the Vision.
- It was noted that the Vision is an interim statement subject to the approval of the Elected Mayor.
- Post-16 skills and training providers, including through the use of the Adult Education Budget – whilst it was felt that this was a key element of the deal, there were concerns as to whether there was sufficient parliamentary time to endorse the proposals. M Antoniou replied that officers have received assurances from Government that the order will be considered in the Spring and the order confirmed in the Autumn.
- A member queried the arrangements in place in respect of transport, as this would be a key issue for the Combined Authority. Committee were informed of the establishment of the Joint Transport Committee and its composition

and the combined authority's membership of Transport for the North, England's first Sub National Transport Body.

Officers were asked to confirm the position as to political representation on the Local Enterprise Partnership's Board.

- Regarding network of connections the Chair welcomed the investment in digital infrastructure including superfast broadband, improving mobile coverage in some of the rural areas and the tourism review. Committee were reminded of the business case and commitment for the Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle rail line.

In closing the discussion, the Chair commended officers for the work undertaken so far and commented that the presence of a Cabinet Member would have been useful.

It was agreed: that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

12 **NORTH OF TYNE COMBINED AUTHORITY BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019-2020**

Submitted: Report of the Chief Finance Officer (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

Consideration was given to the report on the Combined Authority's draft budget proposals for 2019/20 and the medium-term financial plan for the period 2019/2020 to 2021/22 which were set out in a report to Cabinet on 5 February 2019. Cabinet had agreed the recommendations in the budget report and final approval would be requested at the Cabinet meeting on 12 March.

Comments, questions and points raised by members included:

- Concerns were raised regarding current transport provision, particularly in Northumberland. It was felt that the rural areas and to some degree the south east area of the county are disadvantaged due to the lack of transport links, especially to main employment areas such as Newcastle.
- At this point reference was made to the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee which comprises members from the 5 Tyne and Wear local authorities. It was suggested that Durham and Northumberland County Council's should be given observer status on the Sub Committee.
- Some members felt that the proposed level of remuneration for the Elected Mayor was disproportionate given the limited powers available to the Mayor.
- Members welcomed the proposal by Nexus to open a new learning centre at South Shields, providing among other things, training for apprentices.
- J Gillespie confirmed that Cabinet Members will have regular sight of the budget as part of the Treasury Management Report and Audit and Standards Committee will receive updates on the budget through the Statement of Accounts.

- Officers were requested to organise a training session in respect of treasury management for Cabinet Members, Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Standards.

It was agreed: that the report be noted, and views be reported back to Cabinet.

13 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

21 March 2019 at 2.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank