

## North East Combined Authority, Leadership Board

3 March 2020

(2.00pm - 2.20pm)

Meeting held at South Shields Town Hall, Westoe Road, South Shields, NE33 2RL

### Present:

**Councillors:** I Malcolm (Chair), M Gannon, M Mordey, C Marshall

**Officers:** Martin Swales (Chief Executive, South Tyneside), Sheena Ramsey (Chief Executive, Gateshead), Terry Collins (Chief Executive, Durham), Nicola Robason (Deputy Monitoring Officer, NECA), John Hewitt (Chief Finance Officer, NECA), Vince Taylor (Economic Lead Officer, NECA), Gavin Armstrong (Policy and Scrutiny Officer, NECA), Jonathan Lunness (Strategy and Democratic Services Assistant, NECA)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (MEMBERS)

Apologies for absence were received from Patrick Melia, Cllr Henig and Cllr Miller.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 04 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 04 February 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair announced that there has been consensus on membership of the NELEP Board. Each Combined Authority (NECA and NTCA) shall nominate three Members to the NELEP Board annually. Each Combined Authority will also nominate a fourth non-voting Member with 'observer' status. The Chair noted that Cllr Miller of Sunderland City Council has agreed to be NECA's first 'observer' Member, after which it will follow an alphabetical rotation (Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside).

## 5. CHAIR THEMATIC PORTFOLIO UPDATE

Submitted: Report of the Chair of the NECA Leadership Board (previously circulated and copy attached to the official minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on activities within the Chair's portfolio. It was noted that since the previous meeting, work has continued to develop NECA's Strategic Economic Plan, which will be an important foundation to build on in the coming months.

It was noted that since the Climate Change Emergency Declaration by NECA in November 2019, work has progressed and a Task and Finish Group has been established. Members noted that the primary activity of the group is to identify key areas of collaboration and to draft a proposition for the Leadership Board which will identify additional resources and legislation required from Government to support the aims of NECA and its Constituent Authorities in their carbon reduction targets.

The Chair noted that with the upcoming Government Budget, work has continued on NECA's pre-budget submission. This offers the opportunity to express NECA's ambitious plans and key investment opportunities to drive growth and productivity in the NECA area.

It was noted that Sir John Armit, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, made contact with NECA seeking support on various proposals which the Commission presented to Government through the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA). Members noted that the Government intends to publish a National Infrastructure Strategy alongside the Budget on 11 March.

Members noted that NECA contributed to the Commission's initial NIA in late 2018, alongside NTCA, NELEP and the Environment Agency. In that response document, key issues included the challenges the region faces in competing for capital investment and the urgent need to digital infrastructure in the North East. It was noted that these issues and priorities remain relevant currently.

It was noted that NECA's ambitions are aligned with other proposals set out in the NIA. These include decarbonising the regional economy and a drive for investment in renewable energy, the NIA's recognition of the importance of strategic investment in transport infrastructure, as well as the recognition of the requirement for a more long-term approach to infrastructure funding to mitigate flood risks.

The Leadership Board was asked to support the Chair in confirming NECA's support for the recommendations set out in the NIA and to support the proposal that contact be made with appropriate Government Ministers and Department Officials to communicate this support.

It was noted that the agenda for this meeting included a motion for NECA to adopt the IHRA anti-Semitism definition. The Chair expressed his support for this motion.

**RESOLVED That:**

- i. the report be noted.
- ii. that a letter of support be sent to the appropriate Ministers and Department Officials to confirm NECA's support for the recommendations in the National Infrastructure Assessment.

**6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL THEMATIC PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of the Thematic Lead of Economic Development and Digital (previously circulated and copy attached to the official minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on activities within the Economic Development and Digital theme. The report was presented by Cllr Mordey in the absence of Thematic Portfolio Lead Cllr Miller.

It was highlighted to Members that in the first three quarters of 2019/20, there has been 24 inward investment projects in the NECA area. This resulted in 801 new jobs. These comprised of 17 FDI projects, creating 494 new jobs and 7 UK projects creating 307 new jobs.

Members also noted that across the wider region (NECA/NTCA), there has been a total of 53 successes, generating 1860 new jobs.

**RESOLVED That:**

- i. the report be noted.

**7. TRANSPORT THEMATIC PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of the Thematic Lead for Transport (previously circulated and copy attached to the official minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on activity and progress under the Transport theme of the Combined Authority. This included updates on the Transforming Cities Fund, the North East Transport Plan, as well as road, rail and metro updates for the area.

**RESOLVED That:**

- i. the report be noted.

**8. FINANCE AND SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT THEMATIC PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of the Corporate Director (previously circulated and copy attached to the official minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on activities within the Finance and Skills and Employability theme together with the baseline position for a future 'Skills and Employment' ask for the North East Combined Authority. Cllr Marshall presented the report in absence of Thematic Portfolio Lead Cllr Henig.

Members noted that the Fair Funding Review is due out later this calendar year, which will have a significant impact on local constituent authorities.

**RESOLVED That:**

- i. the report be noted.

**9. AMENDMENT TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL ADVISORY BOARD'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Submitted: Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer of NECA (previously circulated and copy attached to the official minutes).

The Deputy Monitoring Officer of NECA presented the report which proposed a change to the Terms of Reference of the Economic Development and Digital Advisory Board (EDDAB) in the NECA Constitution.

Members noted that EDDAB agreed to undertake a review in relation to its role and remit in March 2019. The outcome of the review was presented to EDDAB in November 2019.

It was noted that recommendations included allowing co-opted Members of EDDAB to nominate a substitute to act in their absence. This would require of the Leadership Board to amend Part 3.2 of the NECA Constitution which outlined EDDAB's Terms of Reference.

The Leadership Board accepted the proposed change to the Terms of Reference of EDDAB.

**RESOLVED That:**

- i. that the amendment to EDDAB's Terms of Reference in Part 3.2 of the NECA Constitution be approved to allow business representatives to nominate a substitute.

**10. MOTION RECEIVED UNDER RULES OF PROCEDURE 1.1**

Proposed: Motion on the Adoption of the International Anti-Semitism Definition

Recognises:

- 1.1 The leadership already shown by the NECA constituent authorities in addressing anti-Semitism within their areas and their previous acknowledgement of the seriousness of religious or cultural intolerance.
- 1.2 The NECA constituent authorities have already acknowledged the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism which is supported by the major representative bodies of the Jewish Community including the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the European Jewish Congress.
- 1.3 That a vast amount of work is taking place across the NECA area to support and celebrate the cultural and religious differences within our communities.

**In recognition of the seriousness of anti-Semitism, the North East Combined Authority resolves to:**

- i. To adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism which reads:  
“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”;
- ii. Continue to support and celebrate the cultural and religious differences within our communities;
- iii. Working with other partners and stakeholders to take a zero tolerance approach to religious and cultural discrimination within our communities.

Proposer: Councillor I Malcolm

During discussion, it was noted that the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism has been adopted by all four constituent authorities of NECA. Members noted that NECA will continue to support and celebrate cultural and religious differences within our communities and work with a range of partners to ensure a zero tolerance approach to religious and cultural discrimination. The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism has been adopted by both government and non-government agencies.

It was noted that by adopting this motion, NECA would publicly demonstrate that it is committed to combatting anti-Semitism in all forms.

The motion was carried.

**11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9 June 2020 at 2.00pm.

**12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Under section 100A and Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting for consideration of Agenda Item 12 (Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting held 04 February 2020), because exempt information was likely to be disclosed and the public interest test against disclosure was satisfied.

**13. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 4 FEBRUARY 2020**

The confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 04 February 2020 were approved as a correct record.