

Minutes

Cabinet

22 November 2022

(2.07 - 2.55 pm)

Meeting held: Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF.
This meeting was also streamed live on YouTube.

Minutes

Present:

Mayor J Driscoll (Chair)

Councillors C Johnson, N Kemp, K Kilgour, G Sanderson and R Wearmouth, Mayor N Redfearn and Ms L Winskell

Also: Mr R Fry (Observer)

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received from members.

An apology for absence was received from Ms L Goodwin, the Mayoral Ambassador for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector and an informal observer on Cabinet.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41 ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND/OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor, on behalf of the Combined Authority, offered congratulations to Northumbria University for being named "University of the Year 2022" in the prestigious Times Higher Education (THE) Awards. The Mayor also offered congratulations to Ms L Winskell on her contribution to this achievement.

42 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43 **ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET ANNUAL UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of Head of Inclusive Growth (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the performance of the Adult Education Budget in the academic year 2021-22 and on planned provision for the academic year 2022-23. The report was introduced by Councillor K Kilgour, Cabinet Member for Education, Inclusion and Skills.

The Cabinet welcomed the report and commended the Combined Authority for the results achieved. Thanks were offered to all NTCA officers who had contributed to this area of work. Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- the value of the work to support people into employment, including as a key approach for improving the economy;
- the NTCA success in engaging with the hard-to-reach communities and areas of additional needs, and the results achieved;
- an observation that, where there was willingness, there was no “hard-to-reach”;
- a request for moving away from the term “hard-to-reach”, whilst appreciating that there were areas of additional need and those areas required additional, targeted interventions and support;
- the importance and value of a community-based provision;
- the importance of empowering, enabling and supporting people to gain employment; and the role of employment in improving social and psychological aspects of people’s lives, such as dignity and pride;
- the importance of continuing to recognise, appreciate and support the value of a university degree, especially as a requirement for many professional roles. The option of studying for a degree at a university should be on an equal footing in the mix of proposition for options for learning;
- the significance of the Combined Authority’s successful outcomes, including offering good value for money and setting a track record of effectiveness; and, within that context, the importance of continuing to lobby the Government for further funding.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. the performance of the devolved Adult Education Budget in AY 2021-22; as detailed in this report, be noted; and
- ii. the approach to managing Adult Education Budget delivery for the third academic year (1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023) be endorsed.

44 **NORTH OF TYNE STEWARDSHIP AND RURAL GROWTH INVESTMENT PLAN**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Economist (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report, which presented and sought approval for the North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan to achieve and deliver transformational change in the North of Tyne rural environment and economy. The report was introduced by Councillor G Sanderson, the Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative and Rural.

The Cabinet welcomed the report and the proposals. Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- the role of the Plan within the context of food security;
- the similarity of the challenges faced by urban and rural communities; and
- the number and variety of industries within rural communities.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The contents of the report be welcomed, and the North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan be endorsed;
- ii. The North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan be launched in early 2023;
- iii. The approach for the £3,043,546 Rural England Prosperity Fund allocation be agreed, and the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Mayor and the portfolio holder, to submit the UK Shared Prosperity Fund addendum to Government;
- iv. An allocation of up to £3m from the North of Tyne Investment fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund till March 2025, to align with Rural England Prosperity Fund investment, be agreed;
- v. An indicative allocation of a further £3m of North of Tyne Investment funds for March 2025 – March 2028 be agreed;
- vi. The Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Investment Panel, the Mayor and the Portfolio Holder, to consider and approve individual business case and delivery models;
- vii. The Chief Executive be authorised to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards, and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the necessary documentation; and
- viii. The Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Mayor, to agree the terms of reference for and establish a Rural Advisory Board.

45 **INVESTMENT FUND AND FUNDING APPROVALS UPDATE: PART 1**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Economist (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report, which provided an update on progress with the North of Tyne Investment Programme and sought associated approvals. The report was introduced by Councillor C Johnson, the Cabinet Member for Investment and Resources.

The Cabinet welcomed the report and commended the Combined Authority for its achievements to date despite the unprecedented challenges and a challenging economic landscape. Thanks were offered to the teams who were progressing this area of work. Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- The welcome changes brought to the Ellington area in Northumberland as a result of the NTCA investment and an invitation to visit the area;
- The welcome investment along the Tyne;
- The level of competition in the Offshore Wind Energy industry and the importance for the region to be in the game. And the significant positive changes that this industry could bring to the region and install the region's place in the national and international economy; and
- The significant level of work being undertaken by NTCA on creating, growing and improving jobs; and how this stood in the context of, and contrasted with, the most recent national picture on unemployment.

RESOLVED – That:

1. The progress to date on the Investment Fund, achievement of key milestones and ongoing project development work, particularly in respect of the creation of new jobs for residents as a direct result of the NTCA investments, be noted;
2. The Chief Executive be authorised to make final approvals, under delegated decision, for the following projects: £224,300 of project approvals to support technical feasibility work overseen by the Tyne Taskforce; £96,150 to strengthen community engagement, through the “Commonplace” digital engagement platform; and £1.294m for the Brownfield Housing Scheme at Ellington, Northumberland; and
3. Information that the Chief Executive and Finance Director oversaw the development and submission of an Investment Zone proposal on behalf of the NTCA, enabling the NTCA to meet Government's deadline, be noted.

46 **2022/23 QUARTER 2 NTCA BUDGET MONITOR REPORT**

Submitted: A report of the Director of Finance (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the second quarter monitoring report on the 2022/23 financial position. The report was introduced by J Gillespie, the Director of Finance.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Combined Authority and Cabinet, congratulated the constituent local authorities on joint working and the remarkable achievements to date. Thanks were offered to the Director of Finance and her team.

RESOLVED – That the forecast budget monitoring position for the Combined Authority, as set out in sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the report, and the reserves position, as set out in section 7 of the report, be noted.

47 **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Submitted: A report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report, which invited it to appoint a new co-opted/independent member to chair the Audit and Standards Committee, following the resignation of the previous Chair. The report was introduced by J Softly, the Monitoring Officer.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Combined Authority and Cabinet, welcomed Mr Willis, who was present in the audience, to the Combined Authority.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Combined Authority, thanked Mr D Ross, the previous independent Chair of the NTCA Audit and Standards Committee, who had resigned due to other work commitments, for his work and commitment.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The resignation of Doug Ross as the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee be noted; and Mr D Ross be thanked for his three years of service to NTCA;
- ii. David Willis be appointed as a co-opted (i.e. independent) member to chair the Audit and Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2022/23, with the option to extend the appointment until the Annual Meeting in 2024 if both parties agreed; and
- iii. The Monitoring Officer be authorised, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, to formalise any such extension.

48 **NTCA 2023-2027 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS**

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

The Cabinet considered the report, which invited it to consider the initial draft budget for the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) for 2023/24 and the medium-term financial plan for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27. The report was introduced by J Gillespie, the Director of Finance.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The draft Corporate Budget for 2023/24 as set out in section 2 of the report, which would then be subject to consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be agreed.
- ii. The draft Investment Fund as set out in section 3 of the report, which would then be subject consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be agreed.
- iii. The draft Adult Education Budget as set out in section 4 of the report, which would then be subject to consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be, agreed.
- iv. the Brownfield Land Programme Budget as set out in section 5 of the report, which would then be subject to consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be agreed.
- v. The Cabinet noted that the Tyne and Wear levies would be issued on the 15 February 2023 preceding the commencement of the financial year in respect of which they were to be issued, in line with the Transport Levying Bodies Regulation.
- vi. Agreement be given to holding the reserves, as set out in section 7 of the report; and the Cabinet noted that the Director of Finance continued to keep the level of resources under review as the Authority developed and new information became available about the financial risks facing the Authority's arrangements for managing risks.
- vii. The North East Local Enterprise Partnership Accountable Body Budget, section 8 of the report, be noted.
- viii. The Draft Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24 be approved.

49 **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 31 January 2023 at 2pm.

50 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the duration of the consideration of the agenda item 13 (Investment Fund and Funding Approvals Update: Part 2), because exempt information was likely to be disclosed and the public interest test against the disclosure was satisfied.