

29 June 2021

(10:00 – 11:22)

Meeting held: Banqueting Hall, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Draft Minutes

Present:

Chair: Cllr C Seymour

Councillors L Bowman, S Fairlie, M Hall, J Hunter, J Kirwin, P Scott and G Stone.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

John Softly (NTCA Monitoring Officer) opened the meeting and introductions were made.

John Softly went on to confirm that the chair had to be from a different political party to that of the Elected Mayor.

Councillor Seymour was nominated and seconded for the position of Chair.

Councillor Wright was nominated and seconded for the position of Vice Chair.

RESOLVED that -

Councillor Seymour was duly appointed Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

Councillor Wright was duly appointed Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Lower and Wright.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4 **AGREEMENT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2021**

It was pointed out that bullet point three on page 4 should have stated 'Higher education' not 'further education'.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the remote meeting held on 9 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

Submitted: Report of the Principal Governance and Scrutiny Manager (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

The report set out the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's provisional work programme for the 2021-22 municipal year and proposed a change to the committee's start time from 10.00am to 10.30am.

Elizabeth Kerr presented the report and stated that the framework for the year ahead reflected discussions held at a workshop in June.

RESOLVED – That Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- 1) agreed the provisional work programme for the year ahead, noting that it could change throughout the year to respond to matters as they arose, and make any recommendations considered appropriate; and
- 2) agreed that the meetings of the committee would be held at 10.30am for the remaining meetings of the 2021-22 municipal year.

6 **COVID-19 RECOVERY UPDATE**

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

Dr Henry Kippin introduced the report which provided a regular update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the role NTCA was playing in supporting COVID-19 response and recovery in the region. It built on the framework set out in the report to Committee in March 2021.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to questions, it was noted that:

- A requirement of the Levelling Up Fund was that local authorities had to submit bids rather than combined authorities. It was hoped that further rounds of this funding stream would become available in the future. The local authority criteria for bidding was dependent on where they were in the project cycle and the government guidelines on priority places. There was also a set of stipulations around support from MPs. The NTCA had added its full support to the bids submitted from the North of Tyne region including three from Newcastle.

- The bid for the Tyne Bridge had wide cross party support across the region as well as the support of the Mayor of the NTCA.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the information and make any comments and/or recommendations as appropriate.

7 **NTCA ANNUAL REPORT AND CORPORATE PLAN**

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

The NTCA's Annual Report, endorsed by Cabinet in March meeting, set out the Authority's achievements and the work of the Mayor and Cabinet over the last year. 'Working Together For You' included stories on how NTCA was creating opportunities and driving innovation and included an annual update from the Inclusive Economy Board, the Housing and Land Board and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Stakeholder Engagement Group.

At the Annual Meeting in June, Cabinet endorsed NTCA's first Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan set the direction for delivery across the authority over the next three years and beyond. The report provided an overview of content, outlining NTCA's ambitions and delivery priorities, described within seven delivery themes and three cross cutting themes.

Henry Kippin introduced the report and gave a presentation on the content of the NTCA's Annual Report and Corporate Plan.

During the ensuing discussion and in response to questions, it was noted that:

- In response to a question about projected job numbers, there was a natural lag between the investment made, the jobs the NTCA contracted for and 'real' jobs. The NTCA was confident that the pipeline showed 4000 jobs as a result of its investment so far; some of these jobs would come quickly and some less quickly. Over time there would be a tapering together of projected jobs and real jobs.
- Regarding how NTCA annual income had grown – from £20m per year in the original Devolution Deal, to £62.75m this year – was down, principally, to two particular funding streams as a mayoral combined authority: the Adult Education Budget and the Brownfield Housing Fund, which is just over £24m for this region for a period of five years.
- A clear set of bids had been submitted to government in response to the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the Recovery Plan. There was also the Community Renewal Fund, the Levelling Up Fund and the post EU Shared Prosperity Fund.
- It was important that the NTCA was seen as a collaboration. All investment coming into the region was to be welcomed as it was value for everyone. It was suggested that a similar discussion take place after the next CSR.
- Regarding education, the devolved powers of the NTCA were currently focussed on adult education and the NTCA had a strong relationship with the universities in terms of bringing through innovation assets.

- In terms of school age education, the Devolution Deal set out the joint basis for a School Improvement Strategy and was taken to Cabinet last year as a means of unlocking further funding from government for the Education Challenge. A package of work would go through Cabinet over the coming months to provide updates on the School Improvement Strategy and ‘the ask’ of government would be shared with Committee Members. Digital connectivity was vital and anecdotal evidence indicated that work life would be different going forward. A partnership programme between Northumberland County Council and the NTCA had secured for a £12m investment from the Local Full Fibre Networks Programme. The NTCA was keen to invest in digital connectivity and would actively work to seek additional funds.
- On a point about clean energy connectivity, the NTCA was at the early stages of a long term programme and the intention was to look at the assets in the region, see what was ready for transition and invest in making sure that jobs were protected and give the best possible chance for transitions as appropriate.
- The NTCA did not have responsibility for transport at the moment unlike some other combined authorities. Greater Manchester and London had different governance arrangements for police and fire services and Manchester also had a deal around health and social care. The NTCA worked with the powers that it had and placed more emphasis on collaborative working.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the Annual Report and Corporate Plan.

8 **2020/21 OUTTURN REPORT**

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

Katy Laing (Strategic Finance Manager) introduced the report which informed the Committee of the provisional 2020-21 outturn position of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) including the Corporate Fund, Investment Fund, Adult Education Budget, and Brownfield Housing Fund. The 2020-21 outturn position is provisional at this point as it will be subject to external audit as part of the Audit of the 20-21 Statutory Accounts.

In response to a question about underspend, Committee was advised that at the end of the year all underspends would be carried forward and added to the Investment Fund reserve for future delivery.

RESOLVED – that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

9 **CO-PRODUCTION WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Submitted: Report of the Principal Governance and Scrutiny Manager (previously submitted and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

Elizabeth Kerr introduced the report which set out the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's first working group established to consider co-production and how the model could be applied to the work of the NTCA.

RESOLVED – That Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report and its recommendations and agreed to approve the report for submission to Cabinet.

10 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

10:30am, Tuesday 12 October 2021 (venue tbc)