

## Minutes

### North of Tyne Combined Authority, Cabinet

22 September 2021

(2.00 - 3.18 pm)

Meeting held: Committee Room, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH. The meeting was streamed live.

#### Present:

Chair: Mayor J Driscoll

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

#### 31 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N Forbes.

#### 32 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 33 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 34 **MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS: COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW SUBMISSION**

H Kippin, the Managing Director, delivered a presentation on the proposals for a programme of interventions and investment designed to create jobs, skills and economic opportunity for the North of Tyne region. He noted that this built on a strong vision set out by the NTCA Mayor and Cabinet and a multi-million NTCA programme of investment that was already delivering better outcomes for the region (a copy of the presentation slides is attached to the Official Minutes).

Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following: the ongoing engagement with the Government on Clean Energy Economy, and Offshore Wind in particular; good collaboration between the partners; closer working between the constituent local authorities; and the cross-cutting economic advantages of the proposals for the region.

The Combined Authority was congratulated for its open and collaborative engagement approach with the North East LEP, which had resulted in a consistent and united message on behalf of the region.

The Cabinet noted the presentation.

35 **ANY OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND/OR THE MANAGING DIRECTOR**

None.

36 **EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT WORK PROGRAMME**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out an innovative Education Improvement pilot which was building upon the co-designed priorities of the NTCA Joint School Improvement Strategy. The report was introduced by Councillor K Kilgour, the Cabinet member for Education, Inclusion and Skills.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. The ensuing discussion included matters such as the important role of children and young people in the future of the region and the priority of investment in their education; the Combined Authority's continuous commitment to the Education Improvement agenda; the commendation of the progress achieved; the scope and value of the proposed spending commitment; and the vital importance that the Government supports the NTCA Education Challenge as part of the Budget, Comprehensive Spending Review and COVID-19 Recovery Package submissions.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Approved funding of £967,800 for a pilot NTCA Education Improvement programme, with authority delegated to the Managing Director for implementation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Inclusion and Skills; and
- ii. Delegated authority to Managing Director and Chief Finance Officer to sign off amendments to the programme if required once delivery has commenced.

37 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A FUTURE APPROACH**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the main community engagement platforms in the North of Tyne area and outlined plans for future activity. The report was introduced by Councillor K Kilgour, the Cabinet member for Education, Inclusion and Skills.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. The Mayor, on behalf of Cabinet, commended the Combined Authority for its pioneering approach to co-design and co-production; praised the success of Spacehive; and spoke about the role of engagement, which enabled the Combined Authority to achieve a substantial amount of progress fast.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet authorised the Managing Director, in consultation with the Mayor as the Cabinet Member for Social Economy and Communities, to finalise and implement all steps in taking forward a further phase of community engagement work, including securing and agreeing appropriate funding from NTCA's Investment Fund of no more than £375,000.

### 38 **LOW CARBON AND GREEN JOBS: AN UPDATE**

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 investment and collaboration that was being undertaken by the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) to reduce carbon emissions and create green jobs.

The report was introduced jointly by the Mayor J Driscoll and Councillor R Wearmouth, the Cabinet member for Clean Energy and Connectivity.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. The ensuing discussion included matters such as the importance of the Low Carbon and Green Jobs agenda; the proactive approach that the constituent local authorities were taking in this area of work and the importance of collaboration between them at an Officer level to ensure the most effective use of resources; the confirmation that collaboration was at its strongest when working on specific projects and that work would continue in this direction to improve collaboration even further; the importance of using the expertise of the two universities in the North of Tyne area, which offered a valuable, world-class research facility; the vital new employment opportunities for the North of Tyne area, particularly for the deprived communities with a history of long-term unemployment due the collapse of industries, restoring pride and dignity; the importance of delivery; and the track record of success of NTCA in delivering programmes.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted the report and that the Combined Authority will be imminently issuing calls to promote Green Skills and Offshore Wind Innovation;
- ii. Agreed a further allocation of £4m from the NTCA Investment Fund to increase opportunities for further jobs and investment in offshore wind; and delegated authority to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Mayor, Cabinet Member and Investment Panel, to consider and approve proposals for funding; and

- iii. Authorised the Managing Director to finalise the conditions to be attached to subsequent funding awards and authorised the Interim Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation.

## 39 **FUNDING FOR SMES, SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND FOR IMPROVING INNOVATION**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out a series of proposals for the Combined Authority to invest resources, strengthen outcomes and encourage recycling of regional wealth into local funds and businesses, helping to make finances available and accessible for businesses to enable the economy to grow, renew and innovate, and to create and sustain good jobs and services. The report was introduced jointly by the Mayor J Driscoll and Councillor C Johnson, the Cabinet member for Investment and Resources.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion were the following: the value of the right financial support for businesses; the value of feedback from businesses and other stakeholders at appropriate stages of the programme to enable more tailored packages and to identify other opportunities; and the need for regular updates to Cabinet on progress.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted the report and endorsed the proposed objectives as set out in section 1.2 of the report.
- ii. Agreed an overarching allocation of £15m over 5 years to enable the first phase of investment in a strategic approach to achieving these objectives.
- iii. Authorised the Managing Director in consultation with Investment Panel, the Mayor and Cabinet Member for Investment and Resources to consider proposals and award funding to deliver activity aligned with the specific proposals set out in section 2, with Cabinet to be updated on progress; and with provisional allocations as follows:
  - a. £900k to improve ecosystem coordination, maximise take-up of existing finance on offer and improve investor readiness.
  - b. £10m for equity investment, including through seeding or investment in new or existing Venture Funds, with the objective of improving finance for high growth potential organisations based in the North of Tyne.
  - c. £4m to establish a social finance fund with the aim of filling gaps in the finance market, including loan and equity, for socially trading and or employee-owned businesses operating in our key sectors.
  - d. £100k to commission advice on how NTCA and wider stakeholders can improve the flow of local capital into existing or new regional funds

and vehicles; retaining regional wealth in our access to finance ecosystem and boosting investment in our key objectives of innovation, growth, and transition to net-zero.

- iv. Agreed that the development of proposals should continue to be overseen by the Chief Finance Officer and Managing Director, with ongoing input from the Local Authority Financial and Economic Directors.
- v. Agreed that it should receive regular reports on progress.

#### 40 **INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE AND FUNDING APPROVALS**

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 Fund, including projects to create jobs and support the economic recovery from COVID-19, alongside programmes to strengthen educational outcomes and help address child poverty, while also building on the previous commitments. The report was introduced by Councillor C Johnson, the Cabinet member for Investment and Resources.

The Cabinet welcomed the report and commended the significant amount of work that was being progressed to address regional challenges and create jobs.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted progress to date on the Investment Fund, achievement of key milestones and ongoing development work, particularly in respect of defrayed expenditure and achievements in terms of tangible jobs for residents as a direct result of the NTCA investment.
- ii. Noted that approval of the Battleship Wharf to Northumberland Energy Park and Inward Investment Capacity projects were subject to a delegated decision by the Managing Director; a separate report on the Cabinet agenda for this meeting sought approval for the Education Improvement Pilot Programme.
- iii. Approved £906,052 of funding to Newcastle Gateshead Initiative Ltd to deliver the Localised Supply Chains and Tourism Product Innovation project – creating jobs and supporting economic recovery in these sectors.
- iv. Approved funding of £887,500 to North of Tyne Combined Authority, to deliver an innovative NTCA Child Poverty Prevention Programme.
- v. Authorised the Managing Director to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards and authorised the Interim Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation.

**41 2022-2026 NTCA FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGET PROCESS**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which sought approval for the Authority's Financial Planning and Budget process for 2022/23 as part of the proposed framework for the four years' period 2022/23-2025/26. The report was introduced by K Laing, Strategic Finance Manager. It was noted that a report to the November meeting would outline the initial Budget proposals.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet approved the proposed outline 2022-2026 Financial Planning and Budget process, which incorporated the key decision milestones and dates as set out at Appendix A to the report.

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

Tuesday, 30 November 2021 at 2pm.

**Venues of future meetings**

Members agreed that consideration should be given to reinstating the rotation of meetings of Cabinet across the venues of the constituent local authorities.

Consideration should also be given to the possibility of the Cabinet meetings being held at alternative venues, including the possibility of hosting at organisations where the Combined Authority was working in partnership.

**Thank you and farewell to Pat Ritchie**

Thanks and commendation were offered to Pat Ritchie, the outgoing Chief Executive Officer of Newcastle City Council. Members commended her work, including being instrumental in the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority, working with a wide range of partners, including in the Government. She was also commended for her work as the former Head of Paid Service of the Combined Authority.

Whilst it was understood that Pat Ritchie was stepping back from her role as the Chief Executive Officer of the Newcastle City Council, members expressed hope that she would continue in a role both locally and nationally. The Mayor and the Cabinet wished her well for the future.