

North of Tyne Combined Authority, Cabinet

24 April 2019

Meeting held: Mansion House, Fernwood Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1TJ

Minutes

Present:

Chair: Mayor N Redfearn

Councillors W Daley, P Earley, N Forbes, P Jackson, J McCarty and B Pickard and Mr M Thompson

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mr A Hodgson.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr M Thompson declared an interest in agenda items 6 (Investment Fund Update and Funding Approvals) and 7 (Operational Update) due to the involvement of Ryder Architecture in the feasibility work on the Campus for Ageing and Vitality and the designing of The Lumen at Newcastle Helix. Mr Thompson remained at the meeting but did not participate in the discussion on the agenda items 6 and 7.

40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

41 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY AND EDUCATION CHALLENGE

Submitted: A report of the Interim Head of Paid Service (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided information on the work of the Authority to lead on education improvement and invited associated approvals. The report was introduced by Councillor W Daley, the Portfolio Holder for Education Improvement.

Members welcomed this important opportunity to work jointly to improve education in the North of Tyne Combined Authority's area.

In discussion, Members also talked about:

- the clarity of the ambition to improve education in the Authority's area;
- the focus of the Education Challenge and the uniqueness of this opportunity;
- the issues of the current education system;
- the importance of transformation of the school system;
- the importance of early years education and support;
- the benefits of working collaboratively with business partners; and
- the importance of a clear action plan.

The Chair noted that the North of Tyne Education Improvement Challenge and Joint School Improvement Strategy were part of the devolution deal for the area, and that it had been a hard journey to achieve the devolution agreement with the government and secure this important opportunity to drive education improvements for the area.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The priorities for the Joint School Improvement Strategy and the focus for the Education Challenge as set out in the report be approved;
- ii. The approach to developing both of the above, including the proposed governance, as set out in the report be approved; and
- iii. The investment in further resource to develop both of the above, subject to a more detailed application to the Business Case Development Fund be approved, and the final approval be delegated to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

42 **ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET (AEB) DEVOLUTION**

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 approach being adopted in preparing for Adult Education Budget (AEB) devolution and a summary of the progress to date, timelines and next steps. The report was introduced by Councillor J McCarty, Portfolio Holder for Employability and Inclusion.

Members welcomed the strategic thinking for the North of Tyne area and effective links between the Authority's Cabinet portfolios. A Member raised the issue of the capacity to manage the funding and the cost of that capacity.

The Chair welcomed this important opportunity, which was aimed at helping to deliver adult education that responded better to local needs.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The approach being adopted to demonstrate to the Government the Combined Authority's readiness for Adult Education Devolution be approved; and
- ii. The Interim Head of Paid Service be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to finalise and provide to the Department for Education (DfE) the Authority's submission to demonstrate its readiness for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget.

43 **INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE AND FUNDING APPROVALS**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on investment decisions and invited further decisions on the allocation of funding. The report also provided an outline of a proposed Investment Plan for the allocation of Investment Fund resources over the next 5 years. The report was introduced by Councillor B Pickard, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth.

Members welcomed the progress achieved, the proactive approach, the planning ahead in the current, somewhat uncertain, times and the early start of delivering jointly on the vision for the area and on the promise made to the government, which, amongst other matters, was key to attracting further funding.

The Chair spoke about the hard work that had been undertaken by the three local authorities to achieve the devolution deal, which set out to bring improvements to the area, whilst meeting the area's requirements and addressing its challenges. She thanked everyone involved for their hard work and mentioned that this was only the start of this important journey for the area.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The award of £400,000 to Northumberland County Council to the costs of organising a stage of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race in September 2019 be noted;
- ii. The progress that had been made with the development of the STEM and Digital Skills call for applications be noted;
- iii. Business Case Development funding of £200,000 to Newcastle University for the North of Tyne: A Campus for Ageing & Vitality be approved;
- iv. The Interim Head of Paid Service be authorised to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards, and the Interim Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the necessary documentation; and
- v. The Investment Plan, including the allocation of funding to different themes, be approved.

44 OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Submitted: A report of the Interim Head of Paid Service (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the recent business and community and voluntary sector engagement events, staff recruitment and the progress of preparation for the Mayoral Election 2019. The report also sought Cabinet's approval for the location of office accommodation for the Combined Authority.

In discussion, Members made the following suggestions:

- the need for engagement with young people, including Youth Councils;
- the need for continued engagement with the Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assist its understanding of the Authority's work, including targeted training and the use of a holistic approach; and
- the need for further engagement and regular communication with the Voluntary and Community Sector with the aim of keeping the sector informed about the Authority's activities.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The latest progress with recruitment and staffing, business and community and voluntary sector engagement and election preparations be noted;
- ii. Approval be given to the permanent location of office accommodation for the Combined Authority at The Lumen, Newcastle Helix;
- iii. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Elected Mayor, the Interim Section 73 Officer and the Interim Monitoring Officer to negotiate lease arrangements for the permanent office accommodation location; and
- iv. Approval be given to the temporary location of Quadrant West, Cobalt Business Park as office accommodation for a short-term period of up to 12 months pending completion of the development of The Lumen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements from the Interim Mayor

With the meeting being the last scheduled meeting in the current municipal year and in the light of the forthcoming mayoral election, Mayor Norma Redfearn, the Interim Mayor of the Combined Authority and the Chair of the Cabinet, spoke about the Authority's ambition, welcomed the joint working and thanked everyone for their support during her role as the Interim Mayor.

Thanks to the Interim Mayor

Members expressed their sincere appreciation to Mayor Norma Redfearn for her leadership and asked for this to be recorded.

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

Tuesday, 4 June 2019 at 2pm (Annual Meeting).