

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 23 March 2021 at 10.00 am

The meeting will be held remotely and live streamed at:
<https://youtu.be/1HocUykEpfk>

AGENDA

Page No

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 for approval** 1 - 12
5. **Cabinet Member Portfolio Update**
 - (a) **Place and Productivity** 13 - 20

In attendance: Cllr Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Place and Productivity

Attached: Report

6. **Covid-19 NTCA Response and Recovery Plans** **21 - 26**
- In attendance: Dr Henry Kippin
- Attached: Report
7. **Education Improvement Update** **27 - 30**
- In attendance: Cllr Richard Dodd, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement
- Attached: Report
8. **Poverty Truth Commission** **31 - 34**
- In attendance: Ruth Redfern
- Attached: Report
9. **Annual Report and Review** **35 - 48**
- In attendance: Elizabeth Kerr
- Attached: Report
10. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
- 29 June 2021 at 10.00am (tbc)

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 February 2021

(10.00 am - 1.10 pm)

The meeting was held remotely

Draft Minutes

Present:

Chair: Cllr G A Roughead

Vice Chair: Cllr L Wright

Councillors: S Fairlie, A Lower, G Stewart, P Earley, S Graham, M Hall and L Dunn

90 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting.

91 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr S Dungworth. Cllr L Dunn attended as a substitute for Cllr Dungworth

92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

93 AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair via email.

94 CABINET MEMBERS PORTFOLIO UPDATE

(a) Housing and Land

Mayor Redfearn had previously provided a briefing note, a copy of which was

circulated and attached to the Official Minutes.

Mayor Redfearn provided a verbal update on his portfolio highlighting the following points:

At the heart of the work of the Housing and Land Board is collaboration, achieving considerable progress over the last twelve months. Driving the goals is the aim of increasing the baseline for houses from 1800 a year to 3000 by 2022. There are areas of deprivation across the North of Tyne and all families deserve decent quality housing.

The team works closely with Local Authority partners, with regular advice and oversight from a Housing and Land Board comprised of senior level private, public and social sector partners.

Achievements over the last year are:

- Establishing a set of operating principles underpinning work that has been developed in partnership with partner Local Authorities, and which were formally ratified by Cabinet in April 2020.
- Unlocking a £500,000 Housing Business Case Development Fund – providing resource to support the development of business cases and unlock the necessary capacity to accelerate early delivery.
- Setup and early-stage delivery of a five year, £24m Brownfield Housing Fund – moving to ‘spades in the ground’ within months of funding award as a result of rapid and focused work from NTCA Cabinet and NTCA/LA teams.
- Formalising of a working relationship with Homes England (the Government’s housing accelerator) based on a joint pipeline of sites across the North of Tyne and the potential to unlock further resources and capacity.
- Development of a ‘joint infrastructure’ plan for North of Tyne – including the completed delivery of detailed work on the economic value of transport schemes to underpin this.
- Embedding shared housing and land ambitions within North of Tyne and cross-regional recovery strategies; and within major infrastructure schemes such as the Northumberland – North Tyneside – Newcastle line.

The first two sites to be approved are Scotswood Phase 2 and Newbiggin Hall; the Commissioner’s Quay and the North Shields Masterplan Area are expected to be approved in the near future.

To date 18 brown field sites have been agreed; these were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report

The Devolution Deal agreed with Government included a commitment to work with Homes England to progress strategic sites, identifying capacity and unlocking resources. The purpose of the Joint Pipeline is a better coordination of the sites,

involving each local authority. Seven sites have been identified across the three local authorities: Forth Yards, the Centre for Ageing and Vitality, Newburn Riverside and Scotswood Phases 4 and 5, Killingworth Moor, Tanners Bank, Northumberland Line Economic Corridor and Hexham cluster and Berwick cluster. A flexible action plan with clear deliverable timescales will be developed for each site.

Mayor Redfearn gave a brief outline on the development of a Joint Infrastructure Statement, a commitment set out in the original Devolution Deal. The Joint Infrastructure Plan will be developed in two ways; working with local authorities to prioritise investments already contained within Infrastructure Delivery Statements of each Local Authority; consideration will be given to the cross regional infrastructure requirements that will support future housing and growth. An important early piece of work has been the Cross Regional Transport Planning Framework which sets out a long term pipeline of schemes such as the Northumberland – North Tyneside – Newcastle railway line, an important strategic network link. Derelict land running alongside the line can be reclaimed and used to provide new homes. This was delivered through funding secured via the North of Tyne business case development fund.

Speaking about the next steps, Mayor Redfearn explained that the focus is on housing, continuing to work together with local authority partners, Homes England and stakeholders ensuring that there are benefits for tenants. The NTCA team will continue to ensure the continued delivery of the five year, £24m Brownfield Housing Fund, making certain that spending targets are met. The team will continue to promote and demonstrate the impact the work of the Combined Authority is having on communities. Continue to develop the Strategic Pipeline ensuring that each site has a specific work plan with realistic timescales and resources. Before moving to questions Mayor Redfearn explained that the Housing and Land portfolio and the work involved with Brownfield sites is an opportunity to tackle regeneration, provide employment opportunities, enable young people to access apprenticeships and involve the local building industry in the development of sites.

Mayor Redfearn responded to comment/questions from Members which included:

- A member welcomed the progress with Brown Field sites and the projects identified in the report. Mayor Redfearn was asked what support can be given to sites under private ownership once development has commenced on local authority owned land. A question was also asked as to whether young people can be given support to access the housing ladder, what percentage of housing on local authority owned land can be made available to young people and will the Combined Authority ensure that all new homes are environmentally sustainable. In responding Mayor Redfearn explained that the Housing and Land Board will need to work with private land owners and Homes England to progress site development. Assisting young people to access the housing ladder is important and the Housing and Land Board will also look at supported living accommodation. Referring to green homes, Committee were advised that the Housing and Land board are already working with partners to ensure that all new houses are environmentally sustainable.

- Referring to partnership working with local authorities and Homes England, Mayor Redfearn was asked if this would give credence to those private land owners who have held onto sites for a considerable length of time, was there a possibility of cash incentives to enable derelict land to be cleared. A question was also asked as to whether development sites can have a banner displayed advertising the fact that the Combined Authority is progressing the work and, can the Housing and Land Board investigate various types of tenures. In responding Mayor Redfearn advised that banners are already being made. Homes England, who have a very strong relationship with the Housing and Land Board and the Combined Authority, have requested that strong business cases be submitted for the projects currently agreed to aid faster development.
- A member referred to the sites listed in Appendix 1 and requested information on the plans for each site in respect of the types of dwellings, numbers to be built and development stages for each site.
- Reference was made to infrastructure, roads and transport and the vital links between shopping and housing. Ideally new housing sites would have the infrastructure in place to support communities and thereby reducing journeys to out of town supermarkets and retail sites. Mayor Redfearn was also asked if support could be given to transport providers such as Nexus who are currently under financial pressure due to the impact of Covid-19 and the bus operators who whilst providing a service to communities are at the same time reducing the number of journeys. In responding Mayor Redfearn explained that some of the Brownfield sites are close to town centres and advised that elements such as schools, shopping and infrastructure will be considered at the planning stage. Proposals for each site can be shared with Committee Members. Referring to transport, Mayor Redfearn agreed that transport connections are vital and are also linked to the green agenda.
- A Member asked what criteria is used to select Brownfield sites as those listed in Appendix 1 are projects that will be easy to deliver. There are other good sites but remedial costs would be high. In response Mayor Redfearn explained that when the Combined Authority was awarded the £24m of funding in July 2020 it was on the understanding that the Authority would be able to demonstrate that the funding would be used on clear, deliverable projects.
- Several comments were made in relation to opportunities to regenerate town centres, increased footfall on the high streets, reinvigorating communities, Homes for Life, future builds that can be adapted for an ageing population. H Kippin gave assurances that the building trade have representatives on the Housing and Land Board and discussions do take place in respect of Homes for Life.
- H Kippin addressed two of the points raised. He advised that information will be circulated as to the current position on each site and, the reason certain sites are prioritised is because the Authority have to be able to deliver in a short space of time.

The Chair thanked Mayor Redfearn for attending and addressing the meeting.

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

(b) Business Competitiveness

Cllr Forbes had previously provided a briefing note, a copy of which was circulated and attached to the Official Minutes.

Cllr Forbes provided a verbal update on his portfolio concentrating on three broad areas of activity and highlighting the following points:

The Combined Authority has moved very quickly to provide additional support to businesses who are struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic. The North of Tyne team have been flexible and responsive.

Digital Sector – the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a digital sector and improved digital connectivity. The North of Tyne have invested an overall budget allocation of £10m to support an ambitious Digital Growth and Innovation Programme. Cllr Forbes drew attention to the potential for a digital divide between different geographical areas and different generations. The North of Tyne are refocussing activities to ensure that where there is a tendency of a digital divide, work is reshaped. Linked to this is the challenge to close the education gap for children who have been affected by the lack of schooling over the last year.

Green Growth Sector – significant work has been carried out to decarbonise heat, transport and energy. There are expressions of interest in respect of the Green New Deal Fund, felt to be one of the major growth areas for the future. Cllr Forbes stressed the importance of generating income and providing match funding. The North of Tyne are currently lobbying government regarding an expected announcement in respect of a Green Budget. Conversations also need to be held with communities about how residents can be taken through a period of change that will feel positive; the last economic restructure was the shift from manufacturing in the 1980's with the loss of the steel and mining industries.

Aging Sector – the North of Tyne continue to work with the National Innovation Centre for Ageing to explore proposals for investment that would boost the capacity of our region to improve the experience of aging across our society. By working across all sectors of our economy, we hope to unlock social and economic value and position the region as an international leader in ageing well and the ageing and longevity economy.

As a final point Cllr Forbes commented that the challenging year would have been more difficult if the three partner local authorities did not have the value of the Combined Authority, bringing jobs and prosperity to the region.

Cllr Forbes addressed questions and comments from Members which included:

- A member referred to the devolved Adult Education Budget and asked if there was potential for some of the funding to be used to provide digital connectivity for residents, enabling them to develop skills. Reference was

also made to the use of community centres and libraries as possible venues that could provide training. In response Cllr Forbes explained that work was underway to provide ultrafast broadband to homes and communities, therefore providing greater opportunities for the use of community buildings. The correct infrastructure will create equal opportunities for those living outside of town and city centres and assist in retraining.

- A Member referred to the comments made in relation to the restructure of the economy in the 1980's and the move away from manufacturing industries. Cllr Forbes was asked what the steps the North of Tyne were taking to enable training and the matching skill sets needed for future employment. In responding Cllr Forbes commented that the difference between the restructure during the 1980's and now is that employment is more locally led and young people should not have to move away from home to find employment. There are major changes in the service sector as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic such as employees working from home. This enables the area to be marketed as a good place for global businesses to locate to. Cllr Forbes referred to the London based businesses who are looking to relocate to mitigate the rising costs in renting large office venues.
- Cllr Forbes was asked a question regarding the bid submitted for a Freeport. What briefing the leaders of the 7 local authorities have had, will a Freeport be good for the economy and are there any concerns in respect of employment rights. Cllr Forbes confirmed that the LA7 group had spent considerable time ensuring that the bid matched the ambitions for how people will be treated, how people will be employed and how the economy would work. There are concerns in relation to displacement activity in Freeport areas and business rate retention and the possibility that those businesses within a Freeport area will pay lower tax rates than those outside of a Freeport area.
- A Member referred to the spending recovery announcement and the Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up Funds and asked Cllr Forbes if Covid-19 recovery was now programmed into North of Tyne projects and, if so, has this made any difference to future prospects. In response Cllr Forbes explained that over the last year the North of Tyne have been providing support for practical requirements such as ensuring that businesses premises are Covid-19 safe. This provides opportunities to promote the area as a safe, secure place to visit. The Levelling Up Fund and Towns and Cities Funds are all national funds that the North of Tyne has to bid for.
- A Member referred to the Climate Change emergency declared by all councils in the region and the open green spaces in the North of Tyne area. Given that the Combined Authority will need to become carbon neutral Cllr Forbes was asked if any plans were in place to generate income for the Combined Authority area in terms of carbon credit that other authorities can buy into. Cllr Forbes explained that evidence has demonstrated that the greatest difference will be through reducing energy consumption in homes and commercial properties and reducing carbon output in transport. The three areas are the main focus for the North of Tyne. Cllr Forbes provided a brief explanation of the purpose of the £10m Green New Deal Fund.

- With the challenges of an ageing population and a reduction in those of working age, Cllr Forbes was asked if serious consideration needed to be given to future employment prospects. In response Cllr Forbes commented that the North of Tyne Cabinet are bold, visionary and forward looking. This give hope and purpose for the future and engenders a sense that the region is where people want to build their lives and enjoy a good quality of life. Part of the vision for success in that the region is a net contributor and not a net recipient to the UK economy. Whilst there are challenges ahead the North of Tyne is confident that with the right investments and willingness to succeed the region will prosper.

The Chair thanked Cllr Forbes for addressing the Committee.

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

95 **COVID-19 NTCA RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLANS**

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

H Kippin introduced the report which is one of a series of reports updating the NTCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the role NTCA is playing in supporting COVID-19 response and recovery in the region. It builds on the framework set out in the report to the December Overview and Scrutiny Committee – noting additional developments since that point including an early assessment of outcomes from the Spending Review.

During the presentation Members received a quick snap shot with the following points:

Context – Since the previous meeting the vaccination strategy has progressed, and it was expected that the Prime Minister will shortly address the nation to explain how the lockdown will be eased. On the ground Response and Recovery is ongoing with strong collaboration across sectors and ongoing discussion with government. The implications of Brexit are still unfolding and the LA7 group have submitted a bid for Freeport status. If granted this would include the 3 ports and the airport. Information on the budget is expected in early March. It is anticipated that further detail will be provided on several funding measures. Jobs and Skills are progressing but there are other factors to consider; the government are looking at what benefits will be required for those who come off furlough and will rely on benefits and programmes to support people back into work.

Pandemic Impacts – Discussions have taken place at the North of Tyne Cabinet about the impacts of the Pandemic, a once in a generation shock which has impacted on families in terms of bereavements, employment and communities and struggling high streets. Work patters have changed with the majority of work forces working from home and the need to adapt to digital methods of working. The governments approach has focussed on mitigation and is driven by Whitehall. Recovery for the North of Tyne will be what good looks like regionally. The

Pandemic has provided opportunities to move forward on green energy and inward investment, creating new jobs.

Themes – 5 themes have been built into the Covid Recovery Plan.

- Jobs, skills and livelihoods
- Accelerating transition to the future economy
- Supporting businesses, high streets and places
- Fiscal innovation, health and prevention
- Transport, infrastructure and connectivity

Building on quick progress - recovery is aligned around the investment decisions already agreed by Cabinet and are important to the North of Tyne. Investments are in areas where transition will be necessary.

Skills and Welfare Interventions – H Kippin provided a quick update and further details on skills and welfare interventions where Members have previously sought further clarification.

- Adult Education Devolution - flexibilities have been built in to support learners and providers and new ways of working. The Combined Authority are now expecting the funding for year 2.
- Kick Start – the North of Tyne are supporting an initial 67 placements through 13 employers and more placements are in the pipeline.
- Apprenticeship Hub – the North of Tyne have developed an apprentice hub and are investing in a digital platform to create a single front door for young people and employers. The aim of the hub is to be ready for future funding rounds that can be accessed quickly.
- Youth hubs – officers are working with the DWP to support quicker routes into training and work for young people. The youth hubs will require some funding from local authorities.
- Digital exclusion – an early investment was made to support digital exclusion, unlocking approximately £600k to provide connectivity and devices to vulnerable adults and children over the summer

Next steps – ensure that the team retain the confidence to deliver progress on the ground maintaining flexibility and innovation. Active work is ongoing with Government to secure a recovery funding package for the North of Tyne and the wider north east region. Cabinet continue to develop a medium term programme. Members noted that the Combined Authority team is small but the care, welfare and work life balance of staff is ensured at all times in what are challenging circumstances.

Questions and comments from Members included:

- A Member requested a copy of the presentation.
- Reference was made to digital exclusion and the problems faced by many families in accessing school meal vouchers online, providing home schooling and the job recruitment process. H Kippin was asked if there was any possibility of using the funding for digital exclusion to work with

Adult Education providers to develop basic IT skills. IN response H Kippin advised that local authorities have developed a number of measures and a report has been produced which identifies the gaps in IT skills. Work has begun on joint investment with the private sector but intervention is still required at a national level.

- A Member spoke about church services many of which are currently held using Zoom but are not accessible by many of the older population leading to increased levels of isolation. A question was asked as to whether any support can be provided to address the situation. In response H Kippin recognised the concerns raised and gave assurances to factor in to support packages.
- H Kippin was asked how the Combined Authority is submitting a bid for Freeport status and how can the authority demonstrate that a Freeport is for the benefit of the economy and the region and not seen as a tax haven for larger commercial enterprises. Reference was also made to the fact that there are more than 3 ports in the region. H Kippin acknowledged the number of ports in the region and advised that the Freeport submission was a competitive process and is a joint collaboration of the Combined Authority, the LA7 group, the North East LEP and stakeholder partners. In terms of the economy, the bid is strongly aligned to the North of Tyne and is framed to include clean technology encompassing, the digital economy, economic growth and net zero emissions.

Committee Members praised all staff for their commitment to the North of Tyne what are extremely challenging circumstances.

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

96 **BREXIT UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report the purpose of which was to provide a short update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement, which came into effect from 1st January of this year.

Points highlighted included:

Since the last meeting of the Committee on 8 December 2020 a deal has been agreed; the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement allows for zero-tariff, zero-quota, trade in goods. The deal included level playing field provisions in respect of environmental and employment rights, stated aid and tax.

Smaller business in particular will face some challenges in regulatory requirements. The shellfish sector is struggling, impacting on the industry at the North Shields Fish Quay who are not able to export their full quota. Conversations with the Fish Quay Management Company revealed that before December 2020 they were exporting 20 pallets of shellfish, since December it was now only exporting 2 pallets.

Comments and questions from Members

- Reference was made to the Freeport bid and whether if successful it would include the North Shields Fish Quay. In response the Chief Economist explained that the Freeport provides opportunities for manufacturing businesses and those businesses wishing to relocate. The issues for the fishing industry, including shell fishing relate to the regulatory requirements which will probably not be resolved by the creation of a Freeport.

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

97 **Q3 BUDGET MONITORING**

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

The report informed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 2020-21 Q.3 Budget Monitor position from December to the year end on the Corporate Budget, the Investment Fund, the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and, the Brownfield Housing Fund in addition to the potential position on reserves at the year end.

Members were requested note the report.

Questions/comments from Members

References were made to work undertaken in relation to workforce planning to explore the capacity of the NTCA. Once finalised, the Chief Finance Officer was asked if information on the Corporate Staffing Structure could be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

- 1) Noted the report.
- 2) Requested sight of the future Corporate Staffing Structure once completed.

98 **CABINET'S RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 2021- 2025 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

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

The purpose of this report was to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Cabinet's response to the committee's recommendations on the 2021-2022 Budget Proposals and included the final proposals as agreed at Cabinet on 26 January 2021. Members had discussed the draft budget proposals at the workshop on 12 January 2021 and considered that Cabinet should agree the recommendations as set out in the budget proposals.

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

99 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

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

Members considered the report the purpose of which was to update the committee on progress against the work programme and seek agreement to establish a working group on co-production to examine the different approaches and models and consider how co-production could be applied to the work of the NTCA.

In the ensuing discussion Members debated what would be suitable topics for a working group to explore. There was a view that a suggestion has already been put forward to explore the role of transport in its wider remit. The Governance and Scrutiny Manager advised that she was in discussion with colleagues at the North East Combined Authority on the exchange of information between Scrutiny Committees on transport but transport is not within the remit of the North of Tyne Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There are also Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who are members of the Joint Transport Committee's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A suggestion was made that transport implications could be linked to brownfield sites.

Committee agreed that the membership of the co-production group will be Cllrs Roughead, Wright, Lower, Stewart and Graham.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

- 1) Agreed to establish a working group on co-production.
- 2) Agreed its membership.
- 3) Agreed the remit for the working group as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

100 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Under section 100A and Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 because exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the public interest test against disclosure is satisfied.

101 **NORTH EAST LEP UPDATE**

Submitted: Report of the North East LEP Chief Executive (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

The Chief Executive gave a brief summary of the report the purpose of which was to provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work and decisions of the North East LEP from September to December 2020 with a focus on project funding decisions related to the programmes managed by the North East LEP.

Further details of spend and the impact of Covid 19 were set out in the two confidential appendices.

Comments and questions from Members:

- A Member referred to page 48, Annex 1 of Appendix A COVID 19 Response Fund and the projects listed. Additional information was requested as the projects did not appear to be Covid 19 related.
- Reference was made to Appendix B table 4 – Key Performance Indicators. The Chief Executive was asked to explain what seemed to a huge difference between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 and the year-end costs. It was agreed to circulate the Quarter 3 position to Members.
- A Member referred to table 4 Appendix A, Crowd Fund North East Fund and requested additional information on the 11 projects that were rejected or withdrawn.

RESOLVED that –

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

The additional information requested in the above points be circulated to Members.

102 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

23 March 2021 at 10.00am

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has invited each Cabinet Member to a committee meeting to provide the committee with an update on the work and plans of their portfolio area.

This briefing at the 23 March 2021 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting will be from **Cllr Glen Sanderson, Portfolio Holder for Place and Productivity**

The following pages provide a brief overview of the portfolio, followed by an update on progress.

1. **Overview of the Culture, Creative and Tourism element of the Place & Productivity Portfolio**
 - 1.1. Creating innovative, long-term opportunities for growth that reflect a transforming economy is a priority for the Combined Authority, with a recognition that the Culture and Creative and Tourism sectors in the North of Tyne area have the potential to support recovery and growth. Heritage, culture and events are crucial to the identity of our communities, associated leisure and business tourism are a key part of our economy - providing jobs for thousands of residents and the culture and the culture & creative sector makes an important contribution to the business stock, employment and GVA output in the local economy, with major opportunities for the sector to flourish.
 - 1.2. In January 2020 Cabinet agreed an overall investment fund allocation of £6m (up to 2023) for a Culture and Creative Programme, £4.75m funded from the Culture, Creative and Tourism allocation and £1.25m funded from the Skills for Growth allocation in the NTCA Investment Plan. Cabinet and also agreed an indicative ten-year Tourism & Events programme allocation of £15m, with an initial agreed budget of £3.5m till 2023 for the first phase.
 - 1.3. The Combined Authority has set out the opportunity and commitment for these sectors from the very start and is now progressing a set of initiatives which will support the sectors to recover and grow. Progress over the last year has been considerable within a particular challenging operating context for these sectors internationally, nationally and right here in the North of Tyne. As a Combined Authority we have been responsive to adapt our programmes to ensure that the appropriate catalytic investment is brought forward to enable the sectors to recover and grow and establish delivery mechanisms that have the ability to be adaptive.
 - 1.4. Specific deliverables during this last year include:
 - Establishing the North of Tyne Tourism and Events programme - setting an approach for the first three years of a ten-year strategy to support recovery of the sector with the ambition to expand the scale and impact of the North of Tyne visitor economy.
 - Adapting the Culture and Creative Programme to focus initial investment on recovery of the sector and establish a Culture and Creative Recovery Fund which will support provide for freelancers, SMEs and smaller cultural organisation to adopt new innovative ways of delivery and establish new or revised business models.

- Designing a Tourism & Local Supply Chain Innovation Challenge which will support innovation in product development/service delivery for the tourism sector and improve the connection between local demand and local supply chains across a range of sectors including food and drink.
- Progressing the development of Culture and Creative Zones
- Developing the Culture and Creative component of the Skills for Growth programme

The following sections set out a bit more detail on each of these deliverables.

2. Programme Activity Updates

2.1 North of Tyne Tourism and Events Programme

2.1.1 The aim of the North of Tyne Tourism Events programme is to secure benefits to the area by expanding the scale and impact of the North of Tyne visitor economy - giving people more reasons to visit, stay longer, do more and spend more. The programme will deliver an outstanding programme of events, capable of achieving national and international profile; create compelling visitor experiences that join up the best of our City plus Coast plus Countryside; and increase the impact and value for money of tourism development and promotion through a more co-ordinated approach across the area's full range of tourism assets.

2.1.2 The proposed approach for the North of Tyne includes a multi-layered portfolio of events to deliver distinctive experiences for visitors and residents which will also support inclusive growth. The proposal is for NTCA to invest in a mix of established successful events; in new events which can be developed; and in attracting national/international events to the region. The Combined Authority also wants to foster closer collaboration with the sector – engaging with a broader range of independent promoters, producers and venues. A vibrant independent events sector is vital to staging distinctive, high-quality events that people will travel for.

2.1.3 The events strategy envisages an annual calendar of Events and Festivals, with something happening each season. The programme will include stand-alone events of national and international status – mostly home-grown but some bought in – or collections of events under umbrella themes. This annual programme will be augmented by a high-profile international major sporting or cultural event presented at least every three years.

2.1.4 The three types of events are:

- Major Events – large-scale events with international status, attract large-scale audiences and extensive media coverage; taking place at least every 3 years. The proposed approach includes establishing close collaboration with national cultural agencies and with UK Sport; supporting bids through a dedicated budget; and investing in capacity building and ensuring that we prioritise a legacy for communities beyond the event.
- Signature Events - events which make a substantial contribution to national profile and attract staying visitors from across the UK; either unique to the area or with a strong sense of place. The North of Tyne approach includes establishing four or five big impact cultural and sporting highlights; Investing in existing high-quality events with substantial growth potential; attracting national sports championships; and commissioning new events.
- Anchor Events – distinctive, high-quality home-grown events rooted in the culture of the area, attract reasonable numbers of visitors. The North of Tyne approach includes growing existing events rooted in landscape, history and culture of the region which have high levels of quality and ambition; investing in new and better programming; investing in achieving greater public profile and visitors; and exploiting niches and filling gaps in annual calendar.

- 2.1.5 To enable the strategic aim of visitors ‘staying longer, doing more and spending more’, new ‘bookable products’ will also be developed as part of the North of Tyne Tourism and Events programme. Products in this case include packages, tours and thematically presented collections of attractions and activities.
- 2.1.6 Working with partners, including our local authorities and our Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) - NewcastleGateshead Initiative and Visit Northumberland, a consensus has been reached on the strongest themes for the products, which have broad appeal, extend the bookable season for tourism and draw from the entire geography of NTCA. These are: Winter Escape, Adventure Route and Authentic Experiences. A call for proposals will open in early-Spring 2021 to bring forward proposals for delivery of these products between March 21 and March 23. With the UK COVID roadmap announced, NTCA will seek to bring forward products as soon as possible to make the most of the anticipated boost in domestic tourism into 2021.
- 2.1.7 To support DMO promotional activity and explore longer-term strategic opportunities in the region, it is intended that NTCA will use a portion of the available budget to directly commission immersive videography/XR content for the area, and begin the process for a tourism-specific sustainable-transport review, to align to Net-Zero ambitions.
- 2.1.8 The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the effective hiatus of the event sector since March 2020 with no large scale, in-person events taking place during the 12 months to March 2021 and significant disruption to the tourism sector. As a result, NTCA, in collaboration with our Local Authorities and DMOs, have developed a phased approach to compensate for lost time and account for the significant economic effects that Covid-19 related restrictions have had on the sector. This phased approach is set out in the following table.

Year	Phase	Objectives
1: July 20-Mar 21	Engagement & Pipeline Development	Programme year 1 has been severely disrupted by Covid. The focus has been to build awareness, partnerships and develop a product and event pipeline.
2: Apr 21-Mar 22	Restart	<p>Interventions must be grounded in the context of significant disruption across the visitor, events, hospitality and transport sectors. There will be a requirement for the programme to de-risk investment to provide confidence of delivery while uncertainty remains in regards to demand and potential future restrictions in the Autumn/Winter of 2021/22.</p> <p>This phase of the programme will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of small-scale events adjacent to High Streets & Local Centres to support footfall and consumer confidence such as the proposed Big Hoot event in North Tyneside • Delivery of key events including the NTCA Winter Festival and Rugby World Cup Cultural Wraparound Programme • Further pipeline development to continue for latter years of the programme, to ensure that momentum is maintained. • Support for sustained Marketing & Communication campaign to stimulate demand ahead of product/event launch to residents, in-region visitors and national/international visitors • Delivery of the first tourism products to make the most of the anticipated domestic tourism boost.

<p>3: Apr 22-Mar 23</p>	<p>Recovery</p>	<p>Significant recovery is anticipated in year 3 of the programme which will be enabled by sustained sector engagement in years 1 and 2 to build and sustain the pipeline of events.</p> <p>This phase of the programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a range of events such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and Hadrian’s Wall 1900th Anniversary programme of events • Continuous development of the pipeline for future years of the programme including the development of a major event for April 2023 onwards. • Delivery of key tourism products, which will play a key role in creating demand across the visitor economy stimulating positive economic externalities for hospitality, retail, transport and other local sectors impacted by the pandemic.
<p>April 23 onwards</p>	<p>Growth</p>	<p>Anchor and Signature events during the previous programme years will stimulate increasing demand for, and provision of, a diverse range of events as well as tourism products which are beginning to extend the tourism season and see greater opportunities to develop the ‘off-season’ offer. On-going strategy development will focus on internationalisation, business travellers and events and mainstreaming net-zero events, products and services as a key offer within the North of Tyne.</p>

2.2 Recovery Innovation Fund: - Tourism and Local Supply Innovation Challenge

2.2.1 In November, NTCA Cabinet approved £10million of funding to support post-COVID-19 economic recovery – for innovations that will make a difference now, and that will leave a legacy that lasts beyond the immediate crisis. NTCA is moving to operationalise three key strands of an Innovation Recovery Programme, which includes the Tourism and Local Supply Chain Innovation Challenge. The aim is for the Challenge to be operational by Summer 2021.

2.2.2 The Tourism and Local Supply Chain Challenge will encourage and facilitate cross-sector collaboration that brings forward innovative products/services which can underpin and accompany the activity of the North of Tyne Tourism & Events programme, complement the plans of our DMOs, bring together key private sector anchors in hospitality, and promote a local sustainable economy by exposing local produce to bigger markets.

2.2.3 The Tourism and Local Supply Innovation Challenge is specially designed to

- support innovation in product development/service delivery for the tourism sector and
- support localised delivery models – improving the connection between local demand and local supply chains across a range of sectors including food and drink.

The Challenge will support the following outcomes:

- Increased adoption of digital and/or green technologies within products and services delivered by the tourism industry, and introduction of new service lines into the industry
- Increased collaboration between traditional tourism subsectors (food and drink, hospitality, leisure, attractions, etc.) and non-tourism sectors, particularly those in the NTCA priority areas (digital, renewables, culture and creative, and ageing)

- Improve the credentials of the North of Tyne tourism ecosystem by becoming; smarter, greener, more inclusive, and more authentic (routed in place-based initiatives and activity)
- Improve the productivity, turnover and resilience of the North of Tyne tourism ecosystem and local supply chains
- Improved marketing of local produce through stronger place-based branding
- Leverage private sector funding into the North of Tyne geography
- Improved regional and national profile for the NTCA area, as a significant cluster of tourism sector businesses, expertise, and talent

2.3 Culture and Creative Programme

2.3.1 In January 2020, Cabinet agreed an allocation of £6m of the Investment Fund to support the growth of the culture and creative sector. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the sector has been extreme and has highlighted the need to stabilise the sector before it is realistic to expect growth opportunities. In June 2020 accordingly, Investment Panel agreed an approach for the Culture and Creative Programme with

- £3.25m to be utilised to establish a North of Tyne Culture and Creative Recovery Fund focusing on the restart and recovery phases for the sector.
- £1.5m for Culture & Creative Zones till 2023 with Cabinet to consider a longer-term allocation till 2028
- £1.25m for the Creative People component of NTCA's Skills for Growth approach

2.4 North of Tyne Culture and Creative Recovery Fund

2.4.1 The NTCA Culture and Creative Recovery Fund is not intended as crisis funding to provide subsidy for the organisations to cover overheads during lockdown but instead is focused on supporting innovation in recovery. The fund is aimed at supporting recovery for smaller organisations, SMEs and freelancers and will provide support to adopt new modes of delivery and establishing new or revised business models. The fund will support and enable the Culture and Creative sector in the North of Tyne area to recover; encourage organisations and individuals in the sector to think about adaptation in the face of changed market conditions; help make the sector more resilient in the long term; and target local culture and creative infrastructure and support recovery at the grass roots level, which is essential for the long-term health of the sector. The intention is to support the sector through to recovery but also to establish support mechanisms which have the potential to become longer term vehicles for delivery. NTCA and partners are of course continuing to engage with Government on the national support packages needed for the sector.

2.4.2 NTCA launched a call for proposals to deliver the Recovery Fund in August 2020 which closed in September and Investment Panel considered the outcome of the call process in October 2020.

2.4.3 The proposal from Creative England achieved the highest score with a thorough and evidenced based approach entirely in line with the specification set out the call definition document. The strong local partnership support, the organisation's knowledge of the culture and creative landscape, the extensive experience of managing these types of fund and the strong process and procedures in place to manage the Culture & Creative Recovery fund were particular strengths.

2.4.4 The partnership proposal led by Creative England centres around two elements

A) Investment

- Grant funding for earlier stage businesses, individuals, artists and creative practitioners to support new IP
- Recoverable investment for early stage businesses to support new IP, market research, diversification, and skills

- Loan finance for increasing capacity, building infrastructure, leveraging further investment, and scaling

B) Investment and Business Support Package

Wraparound support designed to target specific market failures of access to finance / fundraising capacity; lack of investors in the sector; and cross-sector collaboration/ effective networks. The support package will include business diagnostics and signposting; and accelerator programme; investor cultivation; brokering cultural collaborations; leveraging partnerships

- 2.4.5 Investment Panel considered the outcome of the call process and recommended that the Interim Head of Paid Service should approve the funding for the Creative England Proposal. A Delegated Decision was approved in February 2021 and work is now underway with Creative England to establish the fund, with the aim of being operational in May 2021. Creative England will appoint a local delivery team which will be led by Carol Bell OBE as Strategic Engagement Lead. This local team will be supplemented by Creative England Leadership Team.
- 2.4.6 The Creative England delivery model includes robust governance arrangements to oversee both the delivery of the programme in line with strategic priorities and individual investment decisions against applications for funding. Creative England will establish an Advisory Group which will provide oversight for the delivery of the programme and ensure that the programme aligns to regional priorities whilst remaining responsive to challenges and opportunities over the lifetime of the programme. An Investment 'decision making' panel will be also be established with appropriate private and public sector representation, including representation from NTCA and our three constituent Local Authorities. The Investment panel members will have significant investment and sector expertise. They will provide scrutiny and due diligence for all investment decisions administered through the fund, ensuring lean, commercially experienced, and outcomes-focussed oversight.

2.5 Culture and Creative Zones

- 2.5.1 The Culture and Creative Recovery fund will be complemented by Culture and Creative Zones which will be established and operational in 2022. The ambition, as set out in the Cabinet report agreed in January 2020, is to establish the North of Tyne as a Culture and Creative Enterprise Area, putting in place one of the most supportive and attractive environments in the country for creative and cultural businesses and people to locate, start-up, grow, and flourish.
- 2.5.2 The support package will be delivered through three Culture and Creative Zones in different geographical settings to test and showcase a range of incentives targeted at supporting the growth of culture and creative businesses. Any learning from the Culture and Creative Recovery fund will be used to inform the development of the Culture and Creative Zones prospectus and subsequent proposals as will learning from other areas who have developed similar approaches.
- 2.5.3 At this early stage NTCA is working with local partners and national stakeholders to develop the prospectus which will shape a co-development phase with our local authority partners to establish three Culture and Creative Zones. With a focus on longer term recovery, the zones will be operationalised in 2022 and form part of a longer-term approach stretching into the next programme period (2023-28) subject to Cabinet decision in due course.
- 2.5.4 The type of support will be refined through the development of the prospectus but could include:
- permanent, affordable workspace where businesses will co-locate and collaborate within a creative community;
 - targeted financial incentives to support growth;
 - accelerated access to relevant infrastructure such as superfast broadband;

- hubs for the delivery of business growth, innovation, and skills support.
- a focus on stimulating co-location and collaboration with digital technology businesses, generating new opportunities through the fusion of disciplines.

2.5.5 It is currently expected that the Culture and Creative Zones prospectus will be finalised and published in the summer of 2021, followed by a period of co-development with our local authorities and with a view to operationalised zones established in 2022.

2.6 Creative People

2.6.1 The employment and skills element of the NTCA Culture, Creative and Tourism programme is currently under development as part of the broader NTCA Skills for Growth programme. In March 2019, NTCA Cabinet agreed to allocate £5m to support Skills for Growth to ensure that NTCA funding for innovation and targeted investment was underpinned by development of the skills and talent pipeline. Priorities for this funding were further refined through the agreement of sector narratives. Since then, the impact of Covid-19 has altered the economic and skills landscape and will create new skills and transition challenges. But the key principle of 'employer-ownership of skills' remains.

2.6.2 The approach for skills for growth seeks to stimulate innovation in both the supply and demand for skills, including skills pipeline and innovation in 'provision' that is required to support both job transition and job creation in key sectors. While complex, this local knitting together of skills supply and demand - and being a catalyst for innovation - is a key role of devolution and wider regional flexibility: incumbent in this is recognising that the future of skills will need to look different from the past.

2.6.3 Over the coming months, NTCA Officers will work collaboratively across portfolios to develop a call for proposals which will seek to leverage significant additional funding through a range of means including, where appropriate, European Social Fund, Apprenticeship Levy, discreet central Government funding and private/VCSE sector match.

2.6.4 Officers hope to achieve an appropriate mix of qualifications-led and employer-led programmes accounting for the differing capacity of sectors to engage with the employment and skills landscape. There is further scope to develop a significant programme of re-training to support the transition to a post-Covid, net-zero economy.

3. Next Steps

Our priorities for the next six months are clear and these include:

- Operationalisation of the Tourism & Events Delivery Plan with the first deliverables launching in Summer 2021.
- Launch the Creative Enterprise programme with Creative England May 2021
- Develop and launch the Culture and Creative Zones prospectus in the summer of 2021
- Work with internal and Local Authority colleagues to further develop Creative People programme and prepare for call for proposals.

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Subject: COVID-19 Response and Recovery Update
Report of: Dr Henry Kippin, Director of Economic Growth

Report Summary

The purpose of this series of reports is to update the NTCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the role NTCA is playing in supporting COVID-19 response and recovery in the region. It builds on the framework set out in the report to February Overview and Scrutiny Committee – noting additional developments since that point including an early assessment of outcomes from the Spending Review.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the information and make any comments and/or recommendations as appropriate.

1. Background

- 1.1 I noted in previous reports that the impact of COVID-19 has been deep, wide and cross-sector. This very much remains the case. At the time of writing, we are in the early stages of a phased process of emergence from lockdown. Schools have opened, with further loosening of social restrictions planned subject to the data supporting those actions. Large sections of the people-facing economy (e.g. non-essential retail, leisure) remain under restriction. Transmission, hospitalisation and excess death rates have been subdued (country-wide), though the picture remains fragile.
- 1.2 Measures to accelerate vaccination and targeted community testing are ongoing, and are perceived to have progressed well, relative to the early stages of the pandemic. A national vaccination strategy has been published, and Government efforts to create secure supply chains and distribution mechanisms have been complemented by a massive collective effort within towns, cities and regions. Economic support measures are ongoing; including an extended period of furlough, further discretionary grant funding to certain businesses and Local Authorities, and an extension of the Universal Credit uplift alongside other measures set out the Budget (considered below).
- 1.3 The Chancellor of the Exchequer set out his Budget statement on 3rd March. This included a number of headline spending measures, an extension of crisis response funding for sections of the economy, and the beginnings of a forward view on the balance between tax and spending that we can expect to see over the remainder of this Parliament. The Budget also included a number of new funding streams that will be relevant to the region – including the Levelling Up Fund, the Community Renewal Fund, the Community Ownership Fund and future 'Intra-City Transport' funding for regions.
- 1.4 I noted at December Overview and Scrutiny that the Spending Review had set out the scale of what the Chancellor called the 'economic crisis' facing the UK. He noted that the UK economy will contract by 11.3% this year with a budget deficit of 19%, projecting that it will take until the end of 2022 for the economy to return to its pre-pandemic size. The picture painted at this Budget was somewhat more optimistic about the pace of recovery, and the potential to suppress the projected peak in unemployment (projected as a percentage point lower than previously). But the thrust of his previous analysis remains; as does the scale of the recovery challenge.
- 1.5 All of the above continues to play out in a challenging day-to-day context for many of our communities, businesses, places and public services. Lives, livelihoods and patterns of living, working and socialising have been lost. Many see light at the end of the tunnel as a result of a positive early-stage vaccination roll-out. But – as noted at the previous meeting – it is reasonable to

expect that recovery will continue to be complex, and that we will not simply revert to the way things were pre-pandemic. The resilience and collective determination shown by the region continues to be evident.

- 1.6 The region – via its Local Resilience Forum and a range of additional partners – continues to collaborate strongly in response (overseen by a Strategic Coordination Group) and recovery functions (through a Recovery Coordination Group). The LA7 Local Authorities – from Durham to Northumberland – are actively collaborating at a political and officer level, and the NTCA has played an ongoing role supporting these efforts and leading elements of recovery planning – including the development of a regional ‘Recovery Roadmap’.
- 1.7 NTCA Mayor and Cabinet rightly continue to emphasise ongoing delivery of our key projects; and ensure that we remain on the front foot to adapt to new measures, funding streams and delivery requirements. At March Cabinet, this will include a substantial package of investments in clean energy, ageing economy and place-based regeneration.
- 1.8 Committee members will note the NTCA executive’s ongoing commitment to update the Committee on the wellbeing of the staff team at NTCA – and I remain grateful to Members for the opportunity to do this. The whole team continues to show focus, commitment and ongoing collaboration– and has done a fantastic job of keeping things moving as lockdown rules (and school opening arrangements) have changed. We are grateful to our partners within our Local Authorities who are, as ever, intrinsic to our work. We continue to prioritise good communication, resilience building and strong collaboration in everything we do. This continues to be a tricky period and we know that looking after our collective mental wellbeing is crucial.

2. Role of NTCA

I noted at previous Overview and Scrutiny Committees that the NTCA had been particularly active in a number of areas, which are updated by exception below:

1. Ongoing Planning for Economic Recovery – including the submission of an economic recovery plan for the North of Tyne; and appropriate profiling of NTCA investments to support recovery within our three Local Authorities and the region more widely. Most recently this has included preparation of a recovery ‘roadmap’ with RCG partners.
2. Supporting NE-wide plans for recovery and transport connectivity – including playing an active role in the NE-wide submission to CSR, and the development of an integrated transport connectivity plan for the region, and subsequent negotiations with Government which are ongoing.
3. Engagement in regional COVID-19 response arrangements - the Head of Paid Service and Director of Economic Growth continue to play a coordinating role across the region’s SCG and RCG arrangements (alongside Constituent Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health and senior officers), supporting ongoing efforts to coordinate our work across sectors as the crisis evolves.
4. Accelerating COVID-19 response and recovery funding – exemplified by the £5m COVID-19 Response Fund, through which Local Authorities have delivered business support, skills, VCS and staff interventions within their local areas. In November 2020 Cabinet agreed the allocation of £10m from the NTCA investment fund to develop a ‘Recovery Innovation Deal’. We committed to a period of co-design with partners in order to develop an appropriate delivery plan, with proposals endorsed by Investment Panel heading for March Cabinet.
5. Delivering funding to address digital divide in education and vulnerable settings – through NTCA investment in digital support (laptops and connectivity) for school-age children and vulnerable adults – delivered in partnership with our three Local Authorities. NTCA officers continue to work

with their Local Authority counterparts to understand potential next steps in relation to digital exclusion, including through our Digital Adoption programme. We continue to engage with private and social sector partners in this space – as evidenced by the announcement from software company Sage to support digital adoption for small businesses building on the NTCA programme.

6. Augmenting national funding streams to maximise local benefit – such as augmented support for DWP measures – including playing an intermediary role within the KickStart scheme (which will already be enabling SMEs to take part); working closely with DWP on proposals for augmented employment support and IAG (information, advice and guidance) through Youth Hubs; and developing an online platform to support more young people into apprenticeships.
7. Understanding the impact of the crisis on poverty and inequality – such as through the Inclusive Economy Board, remains a consistent part of our cross-sector engagement during the crisis. The Board, chaired by Bishop Christine Hardman, has encouraged the development of a ‘poverty truth commission’, which was noted at the February meeting, and has now been approved and is being taken forward.
8. The specific focus of this month’s update is the culture and creative sectors – wherein the NTCA is bringing forward a number of investments that will be important to recovery. These will be considered in more detail within Cllr Sanderson’s portfolio briefing, but include:
 - a. A £3.2m culture and creative recovery innovation fund – which will provide financial and wrap around support for organisations within those sectors to adapt, transition and innovate their business models through recovery
 - b. A substantial tourism and events programme – which has been modified due to the pandemic, but which is focused on preparing a number of events and product development in readiness for the coming months.

3. Reflections on Budget and Recovery Planning

At the February meeting I set out reflections on the Spending Review and upcoming policy and fiscal events. We have now had a Budget, which allows us to firm up some of these indicative policies into tangible funding streams and programmes:

1. The Committee will note a number of targeted investments related to ‘levelling up’ which were announced in the Chancellor’s statement. These included Freeports, Towns Fund and the location of the proposed Treasury North campus. These followed a number of pre-Budget announcements on (for example) the Northumberland Line and the CLG campus in the West Midlands.
2. Three new funding streams were announced: the Levelling Up Fund, the Community Renewal Fund, and the Community Ownership Fund. The NTCA and Local Authority teams are working together on opportunities for the North of Tyne to bid in to these funds. Each have distinct application processes (albeit short term – with late-June deadlines), and different sets of criteria and underlying purposes.
3. As noted above, the Budget also contained a number of country-wide measures which extend modes of emergency support in the business, local authority, skills and welfare space. Some limited tax measures were announced (e.g. a future raise in business rates), and incentives to encourage investment within the manufacturing sector (via the ‘Super-Deduction’) and in the housing market (e.g. via an extension of stamp duty holiday)
4. MCAs are working closely with Government on delivery arrangements for the various funding streams announced. The reality will be a varied picture in which local and regional collaboration is vital. We continue to press the case – alongside our Local Authority partners – that citizen and

employer engagement are best done at a local level; and that any major new schemes should not fragment and over-complicate what can already be perceived as a confusing skills and welfare landscape.

5. The Budget also reinforced headline commitments to future transport funding that had been previously announced, including allocations of transport investment to city-regions (subject to some governance stipulations), climate-related spending such as on Electric Vehicle infrastructure, and a promise of further clean energy related investment in the run up to COP26. Work to translate these commitments into benefits for the North of Tyne is ongoing.
6. Suggestion from our colleagues in Government is that the Budget will be followed by a multi-year Spending review and further fiscal event towards the Autumn. Obviously this will be subject to events.

4. Equalities Statement

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advances equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fosters good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and also considers the implications for people from different socio-economic backgrounds/low pay as a protected characteristic.

5. Inclusive Economy Statement

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of the NTCA's inclusive economy ambitions and the five characteristics of an inclusive economy: participation; equity; growth; stability and sustainability and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision has taken these fully into account. The Inclusive Economy ambitions are central to our recovery plans.

6. Climate Change Statement

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful that the NTCA's and the three constituent Local Authorities have declared a Climate Emergency and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision has taken climate change fully into account.

7. Consultation and Engagement

The collaborative response measures have been overseen by a Strategic Coordination Group and recovery functions through a Recovery Coordination Group. All seven Local Authorities across the region are actively collaborating and the NTCA has played an ongoing role supporting these efforts. The Combined Authority and constituent local authorities are in regular contact with businesses, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP), the Voluntary and Community Sector and Trade Union and information is being shared with national Government.

8. Appendices

None

9. Background Papers

None

10. Contact Officers

Henry Kippin, Director of Economic Growth, henry.kippin@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

11. Glossary

CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
IAG	Information, advice and guidance
LA	Local Authority
MCA	Mayoral Combined Authority
NTCA	North of Tyne Combined Authority
RCG	Recovery Coordination Group
SCG	Strategic Coordination Group
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise
SR	Spending Review
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

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Subject: Schools and Education Update
Report of: Strategic Lead Education Challenge

Report Summary

This report gives an update on the progress of two significant projects from the Education Improvement portfolio; the Joint School Improvement Strategy and preparations for a North of Tyne Education Challenge.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the work and progress made towards the Joint School Improvement Strategy, a shared workplan with the Department for Education and the continued work with government to negotiate long term funding for a North of Tyne Education Challenge and make any comments/suggestions/recommendations as appropriate.

1.1 Background

The North of Tyne Devolution Deal provided the opportunity to seek an Education Challenge: Powers and funding to improve education for over 120,000 children and young people who live in the area. In addition, it outlined a commitment for North of Tyne Combined Authority constituent Local Authorities to work together to develop a unified approach to school improvement through the preparation of a Joint School Improvement Strategy, to collectively learn from and replicate good practice. On 28th July 2020, the North of Tyne Combined Authority Cabinet approved the Joint School Improvement Strategy, endorsing the proposed approach of raising standards by sharing best practice. Officers at each constituent Local Authority and North of Tyne began the implementation of this strategy.

1.2 What are we trying to improve?

- 1.2.1 Evidence suggests that not enough of our children enter the North of Tyne education system ready for school, with early reading highlighted as one of our biggest areas of concern. This contributes to a long-term negative impact on academic outcomes. We are also concerned about the mental health of our pupils, highlighted by a rising number of Education, Health and Care Plans accountable to Social, Emotional & Mental Health issues. We expect this situation to have been exacerbated due to the mental health impact Covid-19.
- 1.2.2 Progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 has historically been and continues to be a significant problem. At the end of Key Stage 4, 4000 of our young people do not achieve a 'strong' 9-5 pass in English and Maths GCSEs. In addition, our exclusions North of Tyne are higher than the national average, both for fixed-term and permanent arrangements.
- 1.2.3 The achievement gap (the difference in attainment between pupils from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds) is one of the biggest challenges in the North of Tyne education system. Evidence suggests this problem will be compounded due to Covid-19 school disruption.
- 1.2.4 Historically, too many of our young people leave school to find themselves Not in Education, Employment or Training. Covid-19 has significantly increased this problem, for example, sharply reducing the number of young people taking up apprenticeships. We also face an employability skills gap, which needs to be addressed before our young people leave school.

1.2.5 Evidence tells us that quality teaching has the most positive impact on pupil outcomes, particularly for those from a disadvantaged background. It is therefore of concern that we have a notable gap in Physics, Maths and Computing specialist teachers, and a problem retaining new entrants to the profession.

1.2.6 93% of our Primary schools and only 68% of our Secondary schools are graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Our leadership development training therefore needs to better reflect the current challenges of school leadership, to raise standards and prepare a strong pipeline of tomorrow's school leaders.

1.3 **Education Challenge progress**

1.3.1 We have engaged with a diverse group of education stakeholders to co-develop our priorities and produce a prospectus for the Education Challenge. Following discussion with Cabinet, the contents of our Education Challenge prospectus have been shared with officials in the relevant Government Departments and informally through political channels. The Challenge was specifically highlighted as a key part of our budget submission and featured in the North of Tyne Comprehensive Spending Review submission. Work continues on the prospectus to update the data and to reflect the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. The Education Challenge features as a key part of our Covid Recovery Deal.

1.4 **Joint School Improvement Strategy progress**

1.4.1 Initial progress has been made on the Joint School Improvement Strategy – against a difficult backdrop of uncertainty and school disruption. Some progress of note includes:

- **Blended learning.**
Representatives from each LA, sector experts, the Education Endowment Foundation and school leaders have established a Blended Learning working group. Best practice has been shared across hundreds of our schools to reduce potential learning loss and maximise remote learning opportunities while ensuring no pupil is left behind.
- **Careers Pathways.**
Work on the Careers Pathways priority is underway, capitalising upon and contributing to North of Tyne Inclusive Economy Board work focusing on young people and good work. This includes support for young people to access apprenticeships.
- **NU Futures**
Work has continued with Newcastle United Foundation to develop an ambitious Futures programme, intended to inspire young people who are struggling to engage with education. This high-profile, transformative outreach programme will support work already being done in our constituent Local Authorities
- **STEM & Digital**
Launched (and rebooted) a STEM & Digital programme delivered by partners Kielder, Woodhorn, Sunderland Software City, Digital Catapult and NUSTEM to better serve schools in the current challenging climate, building on an initial launch last academic year.

1.4.2 Recognising the difficulties schools are currently facing, LA lead officers for education met with NTCA in February 2021 at the request of the portfolio holder to agree how best the priorities of the Joint School Improvement Strategy can be delivered, given current challenges schools and school leaders face.

1.4.3 At the Portfolio Holder's request, NTCA officers met with the Regional Schools Commissioner and her team to discuss a collaborative approach to supporting our schools, alongside the political conversations around funding the Education Challenge. As a next logical step in delivering the Joint School Improvement Strategy, an opportunity was identified to develop a shared workplan which will align the strategy with incoming initiatives from the Department for Education. This shared workplan (incorporating input from LA lead education officers) is currently being drafted.

1.5 Next steps

In addition to delivering the Joint School Improvement Strategy, it is proposed that work will continue with Government to negotiate the overall funding package to improve education in our schools through an Education Challenge as outlined in the North of Tyne Devolution Deal.

2. Equalities Statement

As required by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Combined Authority has considered its obligations regarding the Public Sector Equality Duty and there will be no anticipated negative impact on groups with protected characteristics from these proposals. Further, we anticipate that those young people from a socio-economic disadvantaged background will gain significantly from the strategy and the unified approach to school improvement ensures that we will work positively with schools to improve life chances for young people with protected characteristics.

3. Inclusive Economy Statement

The Combined Authority believe the Joint School Improvement Strategy and Education Challenge will positively contribute to creating a more inclusive economy in the North of Tyne with a specific positive impact on addressing inequalities in the achievement gap (the difference in attainment between pupils from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds). As stated, evidence suggests this problem will be compounded due to Covid-19 school disruption. The Joint School Improvement Strategy will ensure that young people in the North of Tyne will improve their attainment and will be able to contribute to and benefit from economic growth in the future. The Combined Authority will monitor the impact of the Strategy on the inclusive economy aspirations as part of our performance management processes.

4. Climate Change Statement

There are limited climate change implications to this strategy, however NTCA will ensure that interventions identified as a result of activity on this strategy will signpost to local services and NTCA's climate education programme.

5. Consultation and Engagement

We have worked with over 250 education professionals to co-develop our strategy and test the vision, scale of ambition, and priority areas. We value the expertise of school leaders, teachers, governors, teacher educators, sector trade unions, local and national system leaders. To this end we have engaged over time with this diverse group of stakeholders. An initial round of stakeholder events was held, followed by discussions with MHCLG and the DfE, and then further stakeholder workshops and headteacher briefings. Meetings with teaching unions followed conversation between the NTCA Mayor and TUC. Views gathered from school leaders, teachers, health and social care leaders, businesses, government representatives, teaching unions and sector experts have been fed into the strategy.

6. Appendices

None

7. Background Papers

Joint School Improvement Strategy

8. Contact Officers

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9. Glossary

DfE (Department for Education)
ONE (Opportunity North East)

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

ECF (Early Career Framework)

AD (Associate Director [for Education])

EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)

SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health)



Subject: NTCA Poverty Truth Commission
Report of: Ruth Redfern, Director of Policy and Performance

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) members with an update on the North of Tyne Combined Authority's (NTCA) Poverty Truth Commission project. This is felt to be particularly important given the seismic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report provides OSC with an overview of the model and next steps in its development, as well as an update on supporting commitments from regional and national funders.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

- 1.1 Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on poverty and inequality, such as through the Inclusive Economy Board has been an important part of our cross-sector engagement during the crisis. The Board, chaired by the Right Reverend Bishop Christine Hardman, has encouraged the development of a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC), which Cabinet agree to take forward at its meeting on 24 November 2020.
- 1.2 PTCs are models of direct engagement where community, civic and business representatives are brought together with people with lived experience of poverty. Commissions work to understand the specific features of poverty in their areas and work collaboratively to come up with practical solutions – delivering policy change in partnership. Central to the PTC model are the principles of fairness and equity.
- 1.3 PTCs are usually supported by local authorities but not led by them. They are usually hosted independently to ensure their work is genuinely equitable and collaborative. PTCs aim to help to facilitate a wider-range of voices to join decision-making, intending to make better decisions as a result. PTCs are recognised as a strong example of co-production practice.
- 1.4 Poverty Truth Commissions:
 - Run on average for two years.
 - Recruitment from a wide range of communities of place and interest, prioritising the voices of groups which are rarely heard in traditional methods of engagement.
 - Secure funding from a mix of public, civic and/or business sources to support collaboration.
- 1.5 **Purpose and Timing of a PTC for the North of Tyne**
- 1.6 COVID-19 is exacerbating inequalities nationally and regionally: this is explicitly acknowledged in NTCA's Recovery Plan. Providing the opportunity to hear directly from our residents and communities about this issue will help the Combined Authority, and our partners, to respond to COVID-19 effectively. Our PTC is unique: we will be the first Commission to occur on a Combined Authority footprint.
- 1.7 At its November meeting Cabinet approved the proposal for a PTC for the North of Tyne; and in January of this year Investment Panel approved funding to progress the project. Officers are now working on a specification exercise to engage a host organisation to deliver our PTC.

1.8 We are pleased to report that in December 2020 the Community Foundation for Tyne, Wear and Northumberland offered match funding for the project. The Community Foundation is the main philanthropic organisation in our area; working in partnership on the PTC brings a range of additional insights and expertise. We have also been invited by Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) to provide a proposal for some further supporting funding to enable learning from the PTC in relation to co-production to influence NTCA's wider approach in this area. This will support OSC's own working group considering co-production on behalf of the Combined Authority.

2. Equalities Statement

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any decision eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advances equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fosters good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and also considers the implications for people from different socio-economic backgrounds/low pay as a protected characteristic.

2.2 It is anticipated that NTCA's PTC will have specific positive impacts for groups experiencing protected characteristics, under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Residents with protected characteristics are more likely to experience the effects of socio-disadvantage which result in poverty. By creating a mechanism to directly improve the relevance, responsiveness and quality of interventions by the Combined Authority, and others for people experiencing poverty a PTC will specifically deliver the aims of the 2010 Equality Act: to advance equality of opportunity for all, especially for residents experiencing low pay/socio-economic disadvantage. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken accordingly.

3. Inclusive Economy Statement

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of the NTCA's inclusive economy ambitions and the five characteristics of an inclusive economy: participation; equity; growth; stability and sustainability and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any decision has taken these fully into account. The PTC meets these ambitions by supporting the development of an inclusive economy in line with the following characteristics:

- Participation – Delivering a people-centred approach to local economic development by co-designing responses to COVID-19 which are based on the lived experience of our residents, especially those whose voices are least heard.
- Equity – Tackling inequality in the North of Tyne by creating a mechanism whereby the voices and view of residents experiencing poverty and socio-economic disadvantage are given parity with the experience of public sector and business and civil society commissioners.
- Growth – Informing the quality of NTCA policies, programmes and projects to target and effectively address poverty, directly targeting poorer communities, families and individuals.

3.2 The PTC is part of NTCA's Employability and Inclusion policy priority, developing activities and interventions which achieve local economic resilience via strengthened communities, and more and good jobs.

4. Climate Change Statement

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful that the NTCA's and the three constituent Local Authorities have declared a Climate Emergency and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any decision has taken climate change fully into account. The PTC will offer NTCA the opportunity to learn about residents' experiences and views of climate change from the perspective of lived experience of poverty. This will support the work of our Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change and our partnership project with Ashden, the climate change charity.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 Under the direction of Portfolio holders, NTCA officers presented these proposals to the Inclusive Economy Board in September 2020 for early advice and support. Officers have also worked closely with both the independent Poverty Truth Commission Network and JRF as an experienced PTC partner and funder, to build on best practice. The three constituent local authorities have been actively involved throughout: NTCA officers have benefitted from advice from Northumberland's senior manager with responsibility for poverty programmes, as she has previously worked on two PTCs nationally.

6. Appendices

None.

7. Background Papers

[NTCA Cabinet Report](#), Poverty Truth Commission, November 2020

8. Contact Officers

Ruth Redfern, Director of Policy and Performance, NTCA
Ruth.Redfern@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

9. Glossary

NTCA	North of Tyne Combined Authority
PTC	Poverty Truth Commission
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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Subject: Annual Report and Review
Report of: Elizabeth Kerr, Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is twofold. To begin with it presents the Committee's Annual Report for submission to Cabinet. It then provides the Committee with a review of the decisions taken under any of the urgency provisions this year and the use of Call-In.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Make any comments/suggestions on the draft Annual Report and agree its submission to the Annual Meeting of Cabinet in June 2021; and
2. Note the report and make any recommendation(s) as appropriate on the information provided.

1. Background Information, Proposals and Timetable for Implementation

1.1 Annual report

- 1.1.1 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide and the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny Committees refer to an Annual Scrutiny Report. Whilst the context of the reference relates to local authorities and the importance of ensuring that Council and not just the Executive are aware of the work of Overview and Scrutiny, for Combined Authorities the Statutory Guidance states:

"In order to maintain awareness of scrutiny at the Combined Authority and provoke dialogue and discussion of its impact, the business of scrutiny should be reported to the Combined Authority board". (paragraph 11 j, page 10)

- 1.1.2 It was agreed as part of the Committee's work programme for 2020/2021 that an annual report of the work of the Committee would be produced for the last meeting of the municipal year. It is expected that this report will be submitted to Cabinet as part of the Annual Meeting in June to maintain its awareness of the activity of the Committee.
 - 1.1.3 The report is intended to illustrate to the public and Cabinet the Committee's approach to its work this year, how it has developed and the impact it has made. The report is attached at appendix A.
- #### 1.2 Review of decisions
- 1.2.1 In accordance with the Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol, decisions taken under any of the urgency provisions are reported to the last committee meeting of the municipal year.
 - 1.2.2 On 23 March 2020 the Government announced a national lockdown in response to the coronavirus pandemic. NTCA was expected to hold a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 24 March which had to be cancelled as the members could not meet in person and the emergency coronavirus regulations enabling online meetings to take place had not been laid. The decisions expected to be made at the Cabinet meeting, as well as one relating to an immediate response to the impact of coronavirus, were taken under special urgency provisions of the Constitution on 30 March 2020 by the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Mayor and the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring

Officer, as it was unknown at that point when a 'meeting' of Cabinet might be able to take place.

- 1.2.3 The NTCA became the Accountable Body for the North East LEP on 1 April 2020. On 24 April 2020 the North East LEP took a special urgency exception decision regarding a project to support businesses which were not eligible to receive support from the Government's Small Business Grants Fund or Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the North East economy. This decision was also exempted from Call-In on the grounds that any delay to implementation would reduce the impact of the funding scheme, and it would take longer for eligible businesses to access grant funds, which could ultimately lead to loss of employment and failure of businesses.
- 1.2.4 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee did refuse a request in June to exempt the decision on a digital framework for the North East LEP from Call-In on the grounds that he did not consider that a delay to the implementation of the decision to allow for the Call-In period would create a risk of serious prejudice to the interest of the Authority.
- 1.2.5 Another decision exempted from Call-In was the final approval of the Statement of Accounts. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the deadline for the publication of audited accounts was moved from July to 30 November 2020. The audit of NTCA's accounts cannot be completed until the audits of certain other bodies' accounts (including NECA and Nexus) had been completed. As the work on these other audits had not been finalised, it was not possible for the external auditors to issue their final opinion on the NTCA accounts prior to the meeting on 24 November. Cabinet agreed the Statement of Accounts as reported to its meeting on 24 November and authorised the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, to approve the audited Statement of Accounts on the satisfactory completion of all the audit issues. An exemption from Call-in was granted on the grounds that not to do so would mean NTCA missed a statutory deadline.
- 1.2.6 No Call-In requests were made in the year and it is considered that the use of the operation and provisions relating to Call-In and urgency is suitable and is being used for its intended purpose.

2. Equalities Statement

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of its duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advances equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fosters good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and also considers the implications for people from different socio-economic backgrounds/low pay as a protected characteristic.

3. Inclusive Economy Statement

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful of the NTCA's inclusive economy ambitions and the five characteristics of an inclusive economy: participation; equity; growth; stability and sustainability and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision has taken these fully into account.

4. Climate Change Statement

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is mindful that the NTCA's and the three constituent Local Authorities have declared a Climate Emergency and when undertaking scrutiny of a particular topic looks to see that any policy/event/decision has taken climate change fully into account.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 The Chair and Vice Chair have been consulted on the production of the annual report and are consulted on key decisions which are being taken without 28 days notice; 'general exception' and

'special urgency' decisions. This process is set out in the NTCA Constitution.

6. Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

7. Background Papers

Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol

NTCA Constitution

North East LEP Crowd Fund report [April 2020](#)

Statement of Accounts – Report to [Cabinet 24 November 2020](#)

8. Contact Officers

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9. Glossary

NTCA North of Tyne Combined Authority

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Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21



March 2021

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Foreword from the Chair



As the Chair of the North of Tyne Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is a real privilege and honour to be able to introduce our Combined Authority's second Annual Scrutiny Report.

The Committee is composed of Elected Members from Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council who, as Councillors, all come from and represent different communities. During the course of this year, we have seen some changes to Committee Membership.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to place on record our thanks to former Members and Substitutes for their service. Also, I will take this opportunity to formally welcome new Members and Substitutes and wish them well in undertaking their roles. Details of the current Membership can be found within this report.

At the Combined Authority meeting in June 2020, our proposed Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol was successfully endorsed and adopted by Cabinet. In line with the ethos of the Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol, the Mayor and every Cabinet Member will have each attended at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to present and undergo questioning on their portfolio areas by the end of the 2020/21 municipal year. The Vice Chair and myself have continued to hold our regular meetings with the Mayor which have been held via videoconferencing due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions. As Chair, I have attended Cabinet meetings throughout the year to present recommendations from the Committee. Overview and Scrutiny holds the Mayor and Cabinet to account for the decisions and actions that affect the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) area. To be able to do this effectively, there undoubtedly needs to be a good working relationship between the two, the aforementioned cases demonstrate how we in NTCA have established and maintained this good working relationship.

Over the past 12 months, Covid-19 has been a standing agenda item and the Committee have received regular briefings, reports and presentations concerning regional recovery in response to the pandemic. I would like to thank our Director of Economic Growth, Dr. Henry Kippin for leading on this regional work and being fully committed to engaging with Overview and Scrutiny. By the end of the municipal year, the Working Group on Co-Production will have completed its report, this is our Committee's first dedicated working group.

I would like to thank our Scrutiny Officer, Elizabeth Kerr, along with our Democratic Services Officer, Lynn Camsell, for their continual support to the Committee, both Officers are a credit to the Combined Authority. I would also like to thank the current Members for their hard work undertaken over this year; especially my Vice Chair, Councillor Linda Wright for her dedication to the role.

Looking toward the future, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need to remain flexible with its Forward Plan while the pathway for regional recovery continues to emerge and become clearer. Additionally, the Combined Authority as a whole will need to be prepared to discuss governance implications, opportunities and risks should Her Majesty's Government decide to devolve further powers and budgets to NTCA as part of regional recovery plans.

For more information about the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its meetings please visit the dedicated page on the Combined Authority website: www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny-committee

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this foreword and hope that you find this Annual Scrutiny Report interesting and informative as to the work of the North of Tyne Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Councillor Gregah A. Roughead



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members



Cllr Susan Dungworth
Northumberland County
Council



Cllr Peter Earley
North Tyneside Council



Cllr Stephen Fairlie
Newcastle City Council



Cllr Sandra Graham
North Tyneside Council



Cllr Margaret Hall
North Tyneside Council



Cllr Anita Lower
Newcastle City Council



Cllr Gregah Roughead
(Chair)
Northumberland County
Council



Cllr Gordon Stewart
Northumberland County
Council



Cllr Linda Wright
(Vice Chair)
Newcastle City Council

The Scrutiny Year

Scrutiny at a combined authority level will necessarily look and feel different to local authority scrutiny due to the strategic nature of the Mayor's role and the unique Mayor/Combined Authority relationship.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic 2020 will not be a year that will be easily forgotten. The formal work programme of the committee had been finalised at its last meeting of the 2021/22 municipal year on 10 March and so there was time to take stock and learn new skills before holding an online workshop in June to discuss the work programme for the committee for the year ahead in such unprecedented circumstances.

In June, the committee held its first online meeting, which was also streamed live on YouTube. At the meeting the committee agreed a work programme mindful that it would need to be flexible to respond to the demands of the coronavirus pandemic and the Authority's response to events and plans for recovery and with the intention of convening a working group or a scrutiny in a day session at some point in the municipal year.

Since the June 2020 meeting, the work programme has been met with additional items presented to the committee on the NTCA Citizens Assembly, Brexit and the proposed NTCA Poverty Truth Commission.

Members of the Committee have been kept informed of progress of the work of the NTCA, other meetings in the region and matters of interest by monthly Scrutiny Briefings. As the Committee has five meetings a year this is particularly useful in keeping members informed between formal meetings.

Members of the public, Councillors or officers can make suggestions for issues to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the future by emailing the team at scrutiny@northoftyne-ca.gov.uk

Details of all matters considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can be viewed on the NTCA website at <https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/who-we-are/committees/>

Holding Decision Makers to Account

The Elected Mayor, Jamie Driscoll, has attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present his plans and the progress of the NTCA. There are also regular meetings between the Mayor and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At each meeting of the committee this year a Cabinet member has attended to provide an update on their portfolio area of work and how coronavirus has impacted/been addressed. The Director for Economic Growth, Dr. Henry Kippin, has also been present at every meeting to ensure the Members were informed on developments relating to the impact of the pandemic on the region and the NTCA's plans and projects and the wider regions recovery plans.

In April 2020 the NTCA became the Accountable Body for the North East LEP. A report is submitted quarterly to update the committee on its work which includes information on funding allocations, progress to date, with a focus on decisions and their implementation and future plans. The Committee also scrutinised the North East LEP's budget proposals as part of its work on the budget setting process. The Chair, Lucy Winskell O.B.E, and the Chief Executive, Helen Golightly, attended the meeting in February to present the latest update and answer any questions the committee had.

Quarterly budget monitoring has been a regular feature of the committee's work as the organisation has developed and grown since its establishment in 2018; these reports will in future provide more information on the work behind the figures so the committee can see what the NTCA is achieving in the real world.

In addition, each report to the committee now includes a paragraph which demonstrates how the project/policy/decision relates to or impacts on NTCA's inclusive economy ambitions; equalities; climate change; and consultation and engagement.

Pre-scrutiny work

NTCA Approach to Communications

In October 2020 the committee invited the Head of Communications, Engagement and Organisational Development to present an overview of how NTCA communications and engagement activity is planned to develop and to seek the committee's views and observations. The committee welcomed the approach and made suggestions relating to how the NTCA could ensure its involvement with projects and events was visible and promoted and the importance of being seen and thought of as making a difference as well as actually making a difference.

NTCA Poverty Truth Commission

At its March meeting the committee received a presentation from the Director of Policy and Performance, Ruth Redfern, on the work to develop a Poverty Truth Commission (PTCs) for the North of Tyne. PTCs are models of direct engagement where community, civic and business representatives are brought together with people with lived experience of poverty. Commissions work to understand the specific features of poverty in their areas and work collaboratively to come up with practical solutions – delivering policy change in partnership. PTCs aim to help to facilitate a wider range of voices to join decision-making, intending to produce better informed decisions as a result.

At the meeting [to be completed after the March committee meeting]

Co-Production Working Group

At the beginning of the year the committee agreed to undertake some scrutiny work outside of the confines of a formal committee meeting, either through a Scrutiny in a Day session or by establishing a working group. In February 2021 the committee agreed to establish its first working group on co-production to examine the different approaches and models and consider how co-production could be applied to the

work of the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA). The working group has five members and will undertake its work during Spring 2021 with a report of its findings and recommendations presented to the full committee at its first meeting of the new municipal year.

The NTCA Budget 2020-2021

In accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Rules of Procedure (Part 3.2 of the Constitution) Cabinet must present to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the budget setting process, the initial proposals and have regard to any recommendations and/or observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when finalising the Authority's budget.

At its 13 October 2020 meeting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the 2021-2025 Financial Planning and Budget Process which provided information in relation to the proposed 2021-25 Financial Planning and Budget process, including the development of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the development of the detailed budgets for 2021-22 and the timetable for key decision milestones and dates for the setting of the budget.

Cabinet met on 24 November 2020 to consider the initial draft budget for NTCA for 2021/22 and the medium-term financial plan for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. On 18 December 2020 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met to receive the draft budget proposals and accompanying information which included a draft budget in respect of the Corporate Budget, Investment Fund, Adult Education Budget and the Brownfield Housing Fund. As NTCA are the accountable body for the North East LEP the report also included those proposals.

As part of its scrutiny of the proposals the committee held a workshop in January 2021, attended by the Chief Finance Officer who presented information on what had changed since the draft proposals were received, discuss the proposals and to answer questions.

Topics raised included the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the monitoring of the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the programme; the details of what lay behind the figures committed in the last 12 months and what projects had been earmarked; how the NTCA anticipated ensuring the team had capacity to successfully deliver its projects whilst remaining a lean organisation; and the different requirements of capital grants, which the authority will begin to receive. The committee sought clarification on the assumptions made with regards to growth for the next 4 years and the engagement process with the business and voluntary and community sectors and the public in general.

The committee welcomed the beginnings of a process for engaging with the public on the budget proposals and supported the inclusion of similar exercises in future budget setting processes. Overall the committee was satisfied with the proposals and made no recommendations on the individual elements.

Relationship Building

By the end of the municipal year, the Chair and Vice Chair will have met informally with the Mayor on nine occasions to discuss the Forward Plan and the work of the

NTCA. This regular discussion helps to keep the committee informed of progress being made on projects between formal meetings and creates a good working relationship between scrutiny and the executive.

The committee members have also attended a joint briefing with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) on the region's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst work to develop a closer working relationship with the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the North East Joint Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee has stalled due to the limitations and change of focus required by the coronavirus pandemic, the development of this relationship is still very important.

As the Accountable Body for the North East LEP, the Chair, Lucy Winskell O.B.E, and the Chief Executive, Helen Golightly, have both stated a willingness to share information and present to the committee when required and did attend the February meeting of the committee. Also, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been invited to attend as an observer to meetings of their Leadership Board.

The establishment of the first scrutiny working group will provide a good opportunity for the committee to extend its contacts and relationships across the region, both in the constituent authorities and with partners and other voluntary and community organisations. This work may also lead to suggestions for topics for scrutiny coming from the community which would be welcomed.

Looking Forward

Whilst it is acknowledged that the transport functions for the area are managed by the North East Joint Transport Committee, the committee is conscious that transport matters are fundamental to the successful implementation and take up of a lot of the NTCA's projects relating to training, education and work opportunities. The development of closer working relationships by individual committee members with those who are members of the appropriate committees for their respective constituent authority and the committee as a whole is a priority for the year ahead.

As the NTCA is beginning to move into delivery after the initial establishment and planning phase it is expected that the work of the committee next year will move to examining how the NTCA has operated and if it is meeting the targets it has set itself. As work on the delivery of the Devolution Deal progresses, the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will become more focussed as the committee agrees its priorities and which areas of work it can clearly demonstrate it adds value to.

Once the committee membership is appointed for 2021-22 a workshop will be held to discuss the work programme and ways of working for the year ahead and begin to set its priorities.

Useful Websites



[North of Tyne Combined Authority](#)

[Centre for Governance and Public Scrutiny](#)

[Local Government Association](#)

[North East Combined Authority](#)

[The North East Local Enterprise Partnership](#)

Contact Officers

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