

North of Tyne Combined Authority, Cabinet

8 June 2021

(2.00 - 3.14 pm)

Meeting held: Committee Room, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH

Approved Minutes

Present:

Chair: Mayor J Driscoll

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

Also: Mr R Fry

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Ms L Winskell mentioned that she represented the North East Local Enterprise Partnership.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

This was the first meeting of the NTCA Cabinet in a committee room, in person, since the lockdown 2020/2021.

The Mayor, on behalf of Cabinet, welcomed the three new members of Cabinet:

- Councillor K Kilgour (Newcastle City Council);
- Councillor C Johnson (North Tyneside Council); and
- Councillor R Wearmouth (Northumberland County Council).

The previous members of Cabinet were thanked for their hard work within their Portfolio responsibilities:

- Councillor B Pickard - Economic Growth,
- Councillor J McCarty - Employability and Inclusion; and
- Councillor R Dodd - Education Improvement.

The Mayor announced that the NTCA had recently completed the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, and reports on this work would be provided to future meetings.

It was also noted that, because the Coronavirus pandemic was still ongoing, the central government was currently consulting on the potential of remote meetings of local authorities. The Mayor was of a view that the reinstatement of remote committee meetings, or at least a hybrid model of meetings, would be helpful. The Cabinet members were in support of this view.

4 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES AND AGREEMENT OF THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out its membership and the proposed appointments to the committees of the Combined Authority and other bodies.

It was noted that the Mayor had asked Norma Redfearn, the Elected Mayor of the North Tyneside Council and a member of the NTCA Cabinet, to continue in her role as the NTCA Deputy Mayor; and this invitation had been accepted by Mayor Redfearn.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The Cabinet membership set out at Appendix 1(a) of the report be noted;
- ii. The Cabinet noted that the Mayor had appointed Norma Redfearn, the Elected Mayor of the North Tyneside Council and a member of the NTCA Cabinet, as the NTCA Deputy Mayor;
- iii. The allocation of Cabinet portfolios set out at Appendix 1(b) of the report be agreed;
- iv. The schedule of committee meetings for the municipal year 2021/22 set out at Appendix 2 of the report be agreed;

- v. The membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Audit and Standards Committee, the Housing and Land Board and the Inclusive Economy Board as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be agreed;
- vi. The appointment of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- vii. The appointment of members and substitute members to the Joint Transport Committee (JTC) and the JTC Tyne and Wear Sub-Committee as set out in paragraphs 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of the report be agreed;
- viii. The appointment of members and substitute members to the board of Transport for the North (TfN) and TfN's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in paragraphs 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 of the report be agreed; and
- ix. The appointment of members to the North East Local Enterprise Partnership Boards and Panels as set out in in paragraph 1.7.1 of the report be agreed.

6 **NTCA CORPORATE PLAN**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which introduced and set out the NTCA's first Corporate Plan.

H Kippin, the Director of Economic Growth, delivered a presentation, recapping the Combined Authority's Annual Report 2020 and introducing its Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet watched a video with examples of the impact that the Combined Authority was having on lives of its residents.

Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- Members welcomed the Corporate Plan.
- Members welcomed the work and achievements of the Combined Authority to date and its ambitions for the future.
- Members commended the opportunity to see the real examples of the impact that the Combined Authority was having on individuals.
- Members welcomed the ongoing strong collaboration between the constituent organisations of the Combined Authority.
- A comment was made that the targets set out as part of the Corporate Plan were sensible and reasonable.
- There was a natural coinciding of the work of the constituent local authorities with the work of the Combined Authority.

- There was a lot of work ahead to deliver more improvements for the area.
- A member highlighted the importance of further work to improve the awareness and understanding about the Combined Authority and its work.
- Attention was drawn to the young age of the Combined Authority, the challenges it had faced since its establishment and its significant achievements.
- Members welcomed the additional funding that was being brought into the North of Tyne area as a result of the formation of the Combined Authority and through its work.
- Members and officers were thanked for their work.

RESOLVED – That the Corporate Plan, its ambitions and delivery priorities, be acknowledged and endorsed.

7 **INCLUSIVE ECONOMY POLICY STATEMENT - UPDATE**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which provided information on progress regarding NTCA's Inclusive Economy Policy Statement and sought approval for next steps.

Councillor K Kilgour introduced the report and highlighted key aspects arising, including the long-standing issues with inequality in the area and the importance of an inclusive economy.

Councillor K Kilgour asked for thanks to be placed on record to her predecessor Councillor Joyce McCarty for her work on Inclusive Economy.

Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- Comments were made about the importance of economic equality.
- There was a lot of research showing that the more inclusive the economy was, the better was the overall economic outcome for everyone.
- The Mayoral Ambassador for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) welcomed the focus on participation and the references to co-design and co-production, working alongside residents and valuing their experiences.
- A comment was made about the importance of residents feeling valued and having a sense of control over decisions.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The work undertaken to update the Inclusive Economy Policy Statement be noted; and
- ii. The revised statement be agreed for publication.

8 **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which informed it of the continued work and commitment to meet the NTCA ambitions regarding equalities, diversity and inclusion.

The NTCA Mayor J Driscoll introduced the report and spoke about the Combined Authority's ambition regarding equality and diversity. He highlighted key achievements to date, including the zero gender pay gap.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The Equalities and Diversity Policy (Appendix B) be approved;
- ii. The Equalities and Diversity Objectives for 2021-2025 (Appendix C) be approved; and
- iii. The progress made on equalities, diversity and inclusion ambitions for NTCA be noted.

9 **CHILD POVERTY PREVENTION PROGRAMME**

Submitted: A joint report of the Head of Inclusive Growth and the Strategic Lead, Education Challenge (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on progress with the development of a Child Poverty Prevention Programme for the North of Tyne area and sought approval for next steps. Councillor K Kilgour introduced the report.

Amongst the matters noted during the ensuing discussion, were the following:

- the importance of this work;
- the importance of the work to tackle unemployment and continued work to engage with deprived and hard-to-reach communities, including with the help of the VCSE sector, and to learn about real barriers rather than use assumptions;
- the moral responsibility to tackle child poverty and this being integral to the role of local authorities; and a great deal of work that was being carried out by the Combined Authority, each of the constituent local authorities, the voluntary sector and charities;

- the statistics showed that child poverty had recently increased, and this created additional pressures on local authorities, who were already dealing with residual poverty. Greater support was needed from central government.
- the impact of the changes to the welfare state, and that this nation-wide issue was beyond the immediate control of local government. Considering the scale of the problem, greater support was needed from central government;
- having a job created an inner pride and gave people confidence due to being able to support their families;
- skills, training and opportunities were pivotal in the work to support people into employment;
- local authorities had social and economic responsibility regarding its residents; and, therefore, social and economic policies should always be integrated;
- whilst local authorities could not help everyone, they had powers to continue to work to make a difference, with a focus on creating jobs, including good jobs, good working conditions, skills and opportunities, because these were the routes out of poverty;
- the limited resources that local authorities had for the scale of the problem, and the creative and innovating approaches that they had to apply;
- whilst this was a dedicated programme to tackle child poverty, this was not the only work that the North of Tyne Combined Authority was doing to address the problem; there were important and ambitious targets regarding the creation of jobs and a request had been submitted to the central government for support as part of the regional Recovery Plan;
- the effective work of the Combined Authority, which had demonstrated a positive impact on individuals.

Clarification would be provided to a member regarding “children living in poverty in working households without the financial resilience to cope with economic shocks”.

Mr R Fry, the Mayoral Ambassador for the VCSE sector welcomed the opportunity to look at the role of the VCSE sector in this programme of work to tackle child poverty.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The progress in relation to the development of a Child Poverty Prevention programme for the North of Tyne be noted; and
- ii. The Head of Paid Service be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to finalise next steps in taking forward the programme, including securing appropriate funding.

10 **INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE AND FUNDING APPROVALS**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on progress with the North of Tyne Investment Fund, including new projects to support the economic recovery, and sought approvals. Councillor C Johnson introduced the report.

When welcoming the report and the proposals, a comment was made about the important role of the Union Learn Fund project in skilling up the existing workforce.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The progress made to date on the Investment Fund, achievement of key milestones and ongoing development work, particularly in respect of defrayed expenditure and achievements in terms of tangible jobs for residents as a direct result of the NTCA investment, be noted.
- ii. The funding of £1.5million to Northumberland Business Services Limited to deliver the Business Recovery Innovation Grants be approved.
- iii. The Interim Head of Paid Service be authorised to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding award; and the Interim Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the necessary documentation.
- iv. The Investment Panel be invited to consider a full business case for the proposed Union Learn project; and the Head of Paid Service be authorised, in consultation with the Investment Panel, the Mayor and the Portfolio Holder for Employability and Inclusion, to authorise funding of up to £430K to support the project.

11 **2020-21 NTCA OUTTURN REPORT, INCLUDING NORTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP AND INVEST NORTH EAST ENGLAND**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which advised it on the provisional 2020-2021 outturn position of the Combined Authority, including the Corporate Fund, Investment Fund, Adult Education Budget and Brownfield Housing Fund.

The report also included the 2020-2021 Outturn position for the North East LEP and Invest North East England. J Gillespie, the Chief Finance Officer, introduced the report and highlighted the key matters set out in the document.

A comment was made about the corporate expenditure being under the forecasted amount, despite the scale of projects being launched and managed, and despite the scale of the challenges faced. The Mayor, on behalf of Cabinet, thanked all officers for their work.

Ms L Winskell, the North East LEP representative, on behalf of the North East LEP, thanked J Gillespie, K Laing and the NTCA finance team for their efficient support.

RESOLVED – That:

- i. The NTCA provisional 2020-2021 Outturn position for the Corporate Fund (section 1.3 of the report), Investment Fund (section 1.4 of the report) be noted.
- ii. The performance against the Brownfield Housing Capital Budget and Investment Fund Capital Budgets (section 1.5 of the report) be noted.
- iii. The performance against the Adult Education Budget (section 1.6 of the report) be noted.
- iv. The decisions that had been made in 2020-2021 in relation to reserves and balances (section 1.7 of the report) be noted.
- v. The Accountable Body Budget Outturn position and the funding position (section 1.8 of the report) be noted.
- vi. The Combined Authority's Treasury Management performance (section 1.9 of the report) be noted.
- vii. The North East LEP 2020-21 Outturn position and 3-year Outline Budget position (Appendix A of the report) be noted.
- viii. The Invest North East England 2020-21 Outturn position (Appendix B of the report) be noted.

12 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted: A report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided information on the work of NTCA's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2020-2021.

Councillor L Wright, the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report.

She thanked Councillor G Roughead, the previous Chair of the committee, for his dedication to the role and wished him well for the future.

Councillor Wright highlighted the key areas of work that the committee was particularly interested in:

- Poverty Truth Commission and the Impact of the Coronavirus pandemic

The committee offered its help in this area of work.

Regarding the earlier discussion about tackling poverty, the committee agreed with the view that training, skills and job opportunities were the answer to help families out of poverty.

- Citizens' Assembly

Other matters raised by Councillor Wright included the following:

- The committee had completed its first task and finish group which was an examination of Co-production. Lessons were learned on the time required to undertake these activities and on engagement with outside organisations and stakeholders.
- Thank you was placed on record to Elizabeth Kerr, the Principal Governance and Scrutiny Manager, and Lynn Camsell, Democratic Services Officer, for their much-valued support.
- The Cabinet members were thanked for their engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a commitment which was appreciated and valued.

The Mayor asked for his thanks to G Roughead, the previous Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to be placed on record. He expressed hope that the effective relationship with Scrutiny would continue.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13 **URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN IN 2020/21**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out information on the use of urgent decision powers by the Head of Paid Service in the previous municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

14 **DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which invited it to designate the Director of Economic Growth as the Head of Paid Service of the North of Tyne Combined Authority with immediate effect.

The Mayor introduced the report and commended Dr Henry Kippin and Ruth Redfern for their effective and value-driven work.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Cabinet, thanked Paul Hanson, the outgoing Interim Head of Paid Service, for this commendable work during the exceptionally challenging times.

Thanks were also offered to all three Chief Executive Officers of the constituent councils for their hard work to establish the Combined Authority and their continued support.

RESOLVED – That Dr Henry Kippin, the Director of Economic Growth, be designated as the Head of Paid Service for the Combined Authority with immediate effect.

Dr Henry Kippin was welcomed into the new role.

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

Tuesday, 27 July 2021 at 2pm.