

## **Cabinet**

27 July 2021

(2.00 - 3.18 pm)

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

## **Minutes**

### **Present:**

Chair: Mayor J Driscoll

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

### **16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G Sanderson.

### **17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R Wearmouth declared an interest in all relevant agenda items on the agenda due to being a Director of Advance Northumberland. Councillor Wearmouth stayed at the meeting and took part in the decision-making on all agenda items.

### **18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **19 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID (IF ANY)**

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

The Mayor, on behalf of the Cabinet, welcomed the good news regarding the Blyth Power Station site development and the jobs this would bring to the region.

## **NORTH OF TYNE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY REPORT AND UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE NORTH OF TYNE ENERGY, GREEN GROWTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE BLUEPRINT**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which presented the conclusions and recommendations of the North of Tyne Citizens' Assembly (Citizens' Assembly) regarding climate change and proposed next steps, including for building on NTCA's existing programme of activities. The report also set out how the region was responding to the shared challenge of climate change already.

The report was introduced by the Mayor. He highlighted the outcomes of the Citizens' Assembly and spoke about the relevant work that was already being progressed by the combined authority, the magnitude of the climate change agenda and the importance of collective and individual responsibility. He emphasised NTCA's focus on partnership working.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. This is a summary of the comments and references made during the discussion:

- Thanks were offered to all who had been involved in the Citizens' Assembly.
- The important recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly would need to be carefully considered and cross-referenced with the work that was currently being undertaken in the North of Tyne area to align and maximise efforts.
- As the evidence regarding climate change was becoming clearer and clearer, the importance of continuing to take action to tackle climate change.
- Actions on climate change should be free of politics.
- The many projects that were already progressing in the region to improve the environment and tackle climate change; and the achievements of the individual constituent local authorities.
- The importance of seeing climate change not just as a threat but also a great opportunity for job creation for the region; and the importance of seizing the opportunity as a matter of priority and making the NTCA area a world-class place for green technology and innovation across all spectrums of daily life.
- The need for support and resources from government, including match-funding and further devolved powers, specifically regarding skills; and the importance of being able to demonstrate how the combined authority's work could add value.
- The need for private investment; and the need for instruments to incorporate that investment and manage risks.

- The importance of understanding that green economy was for *now* and for the future. And within that context, the need for further devolution and investment for getting ready for the employment opportunities in green economy. And, equally, the need to achieve employment opportunities sooner for the existing appropriately skilled workforce.
- The advantages of the public and private sectors working in partnership to progress the work on tackling climate change and developing green economy urgently.
- The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) welcomed progress; emphasised the urgency and the importance of working in partnership; and reconfirmed its commitment to being a key partner in this work.

Thanks were offered to the North East LEP for their work.

- The importance of collective and individual responsibility and everyone being involved in actions to tackle climate change. And the importance of appreciating the strength of the threat of climate change and taking all actions possible to tackle this global problem.
- NTCA's "Zero Carbon, Zero Poverty" ambition and its programme of work, which was building on the significant work by the constituent local authorities, the North East LEP and wider partners.
- The need to take urgent action.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Thanked all those who participated in the Citizens Assembly including the Oversight Panel and Expert Commentators.
- ii. Received the Citizen's Assembly Report and endorsed their collective statement which set out the need for urgent action.
- iii. Endorsed collaboration between NTCA and the three constituent Local Authorities to jointly respond to the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly, and jointly develop project proposals where the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly provided clear opportunities to add value, scale up, or enhance the work currently underway through the NTCA Energy, Green Growth and Climate Change Blueprint and Local Authority Climate Emergency plans.
- iv. Agreed to receive a report in autumn that would provide further detail on how NTCA intended to work with the three constituent Local Authorities and wider regional stakeholders to respond to the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.

## 21 CO-PRODUCTION AT NTCA SCRUTINY REPORT

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

The Cabinet considered the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its work to examine the issue of co-production and produce a report with recommendations. The report was introduced by Councillor C Seymour, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Seymour offered thanks to the five members who had served on the working group, namely Councillors L Wright (Vice-Chair of the committee), G Roughead (previously the Chair of the committee), S Graham, G Stewart, and the late Councillor A Lower, for their work and recommendations; and the officers E Kerr, R Redfearn, L Mills, A Doherty and R Bearne for their work and support.

The review of co-production had resulted in the following recommendations to Cabinet:

That Cabinet should request the Director of Policy and Performance to:

- Create and deliver a programme of information sharing and awareness raising on the different approaches to engaging with residents, partners and colleagues on the ladder of participation and co-production for the whole NTCA officer team;
- Utilising the “Ladder of Engagement”, develop guidance for officers to use when beginning work on a project or plan which would allow them to positively identify the most appropriate participation approach for the topic; and
- Develop a co-production network to identify appropriate groups of people to enable the involvement of harder to reach groups in the work of the NTCA and its constituent authorities.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. This is a summary of the comments and references made during the discussion:

- The importance of listening to and engaging with residents, seeing them as partners and allies;
- Whilst the concept of co-production was not new and engagement was an essential part of political work, there were now new challenges in existence and, therefore, the need to do things differently. New approaches, where residents were defined as collaborators and participants, were welcome;
- The combined authority’s focus on doing things “with residents” and “not to residents”;
- The benefits of co-production, including getting things right the first time and therefore in a more cost-effective way, building strong relationships,

gathering knowledge and building on the existing insights, ideas and work, despite the additional costs, efforts and challenges that could be involved in co-production;

- The benefits of inbuilding co-production into the early stages of work programmes.
- The way the funding was released from the government needed to change to encourage co-production. A member urged the Cabinet to continue to campaign for a single pot of money for the region.

The Mayor, on behalf of Cabinet, thanked Councillor C Seymour and the working group for their work and the report.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet noted the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Co-Production at NTCA and accepted its recommendations.

## 22 **NORTH BANK OF THE TYNE GROWTH CORRIDOR**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out proposals regarding the protection of the valuable River Tyne asset and unlocking its future potential for economic growth. The proposals entailed building on the findings of the North Bank of the Tyne Economic Corridor Study, which was progressing well and nearing completion.

The report proposed the establishment of a targeted Task Force, which would provide joined-up leadership and strengthen cross-sector collaboration, supported by a technical capacity fund to enable rapid business case development of projects and the creation of a credible pipeline of proposals. The report was introduced by Councillor R Wearmouth.

The Cabinet welcomed the report. This is a summary of the comments and references made during the discussion:

- Engagement with the private sector, attracting private investment, working in partnership and cross-sector collaboration were pivotal for the success of NTCA's ambitions regarding the economic growth and jobs creation; and this was inbuilt into NTCA's activities.
- In addition to the opportunities presented by local markets, consideration should be given to exploring the potentials of international markets, particularly regarding new technologies and innovation. The North East was the centre of excellence and this should be promoted. It was in the region's interest to work closely with international businesses to unlock further opportunities.
- The importance of private investment and NTCA's facilitatory role, particularly regarding skills and supply chain.

- It was the region’s responsibility to support and facilitate innovation and the development of the green sector, helping ambitious companies within the sector to grow and create jobs.
- The importance that the opportunities within the green agenda should reach communities that had been suffering from the long-term unemployment. Work should continue to engage with these communities, supporting residents with getting new skills, thereby stimulating inner pride and dignity, and returning people into employment.
- The great significance of the proposals for the region; and the importance of effective publicity.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted the report;
- ii. Commented on future collaborative arrangements as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report; and delegated approval to the Head of Paid Service to work with other stakeholders to bring forward detailed proposals;
- iii. Agreed an allocation of up to £500k from the North of Tyne Investment fund to establish a Technical Capacity Fund, subject to the development of a business case; and
- iv. Authorised the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Investment Panel, the Mayor and the Portfolio Holders, to consider and approve the business case for the Technical Capacity Fund, and to then make subsequent funding awards.

23

**NORTH OF TYNE DIGITAL: 5G AND FUTURE CONNECTIVITY**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which set out proposals for investment to unlock an allocation from the Investment Fund to create a “5G and Future Connectivity” programme that would build on the NTCA existing investment. The report explained the advantages of the proposals.

The report was introduced by Councillor R Wearmouth. He explained the benefits of the proposals for the NTCA area and urged providers to get in touch with the combined authority.

Comments were made about the benefits of digital progress, including for the development of green economy, and the importance of the NTCA area being ready for the infrastructure that underpinned innovation. Good connectivity and digital infrastructure were pivotal for unlocking opportunities for economic growth.

Thanks were offered to the NTCA officers for their work.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted the report and endorsed the priorities as set out.
- ii. Endorsed a headline allocation of £7m to support the delivery of the priorities set out in the report.
- iii. Authorised the Head of Paid Service to take next steps in designing the programme, including undertaking market engagement activity, inviting forward proposals and allocating funding in consultation with Investment Panel, Portfolio Holder and the Mayor.
- iv. Authorised the Head of Paid Service to finalise the conditions to be attached to subsequent funding awards; and authorised the Interim Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation.

24 **INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE**

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

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on progress with the North of Tyne Investment Fund, including new projects to support economic recovery through investment into key sectors, place-recovery, people and communities. The report was introduced by Councillor C Johnson.

The Cabinet welcomed the report and the progress made. This is a summary of the comments and references made during the discussion:

- The success of NTCA's Inward Investment Fund, specifically regarding the creation jobs well ahead of the targets of the Devolution Deal.
- The commendable number, quality and value of the jobs created over the last two years through programmes and projects that were supported by NTCA.
- The importance of supporting the creation of a successful local economy.
- The importance of recovery and evolution of high streets.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted the progress to date on the Investment Fund, achievement of key milestones and ongoing development work, particularly in respect of defrayed expenditure and achievements in terms of tangible jobs for residents as a direct result of NTCA's investment.
- ii. Approved funding of £5.14m to the four digital ecosystem projects: Digital Business Pipeline, Digital Cluster Development, Digital Inward Investment and Talent Engine – with the project details set out in section 1.3 of the report.

- iii. Approved funding of up to £200,000 for ongoing promotion, co-ordination and delivery support to maximise the value of NTCA's Digital Programme, with authority delegated to the Head of Paid Service for implementation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
- iv. Authorised the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Mayor, Portfolio Holder and Investment Panel, to approve funding up to a maximum of £1million to support 'Town and High Street' recovery innovation projects being developed by Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Councils, subject to satisfactory completion of the project development and appraisal process. Whilst also supporting the development of a 'Future Towns and High Streets programme', to explore common issues and solutions, and to promote the case to Government for further funding.
- v. Approved £199,990 of business case development funding to New Writing North, to enable them to develop proposals for a Centre for Writing and Publishing.
- vi. Agreed an allocation of £1.3m from the NTCA Investment Fund to strengthen the inward investment pipeline, delegating authority to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Mayor, Portfolio Holder and Investment Panel, to consider and approve a proposal for funding.
- vii. Authorised the Head of Paid Service to finalise the conditions to be attached to the above funding awards and authorised the Interim Monitoring Officer to complete the necessary documentation.

## 25 **INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INNOVATION FUND AND BOARD 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 an update on progress with NTCA's Inclusive Economy Innovation Fund and Inclusive Economy Board.

The report was introduced by Councillor K Kilgour. Amongst key matters, which included achievements and challenges, Councillor Kilgour also spoke about the combined authority growing a national reputation for its work on economic inclusion and the importance of working in partnerships. She urged all potential stakeholders to contact NTCA for collaboration opportunities.

Speaking about the efforts to ensure a more equal, fair and harmonious society, Councillor Kilgour, on behalf of Cabinet, condemned the outbreak of racism during recent sports events and emphasised the importance of action, in partnership.

She invited all potential stakeholders and co-investors, including businesses, charitable trusts and social investors, to join NTCA on projects and interventions.

The Cabinet welcomed and commended the report. The ensuing discussion included the NTCA inclusive approach regarding residents' needs; the value of co-

design and co-production; the importance of protecting people of all backgrounds from racism and other discrimination; and achieving a richer society.

New members were welcomed to the Inclusive Economy Board.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet:

- i. Noted and commended the progress on the work of NTCA’s Inclusive Economy Innovation Fund and Inclusive Economy Board.
- ii. Approved the new nominated members of the Inclusive Economy Board as set out in paragraph 1.7 of the report.
- iii. Delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Inclusive Economy Board Chair and Vice-Chair (Education, Inclusion and Skills Portfolio Holder) to agree in-year replacements to the membership of the Inclusive Economy Board.

## 26 **2021/22 QUARTER 1 NTCA BUDGET MONITOR REPORT**

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

The Cabinet considered the monitoring report setting out the financial position for the first quarter of the financial year 2021/22. The report brought together the forecast financial position for both the Corporate, Investment Fund, Brownfield Housing Fund and Adult Education Budget and provided an indication of the potential position of the Combined Authority at 31 March 2022. The report also set out the potential position on the reserves at the year end.

The report was introduced by J Gillespie, the Chief Finance Officer. She confirmed that, whilst there were no issues to report, the financial position would continue to be subject to close monitoring and regular reporting.

The Mayor, on behalf of Cabinet, welcomed the continuing good financial position, with the combined authority’s costs remaining under the budget despite overachieving its targets; and thanked all members and officers for their work.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet noted the forecast budget monitoring position for the Combined Authority as set out in paragraphs 1.2, 1.3,1.4 and 1.5 of the report and the reserves position in paragraph 1.6 of the report.

## 27 **NORTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - FUNDING DECISIONS UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Cabinet considered the report which provided an update on the work and decisions of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP), since 26 January 2021. The report provided summary information about the Local Growth

Fund (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF), Enterprise Zone (EZ), and North East Investment Fund (NEIF) programmes.

The report was introduced jointly by the Mayor and J Gillespie, the Chief Finance Officer. The Mayor explained the NTCA role as the accountable body for the North East LEP.

Thanks were offered to the North East LEP for their work as the key partner of the combined authority and specifically for their contribution and work regarding addressing skills gap and promoting inclusive growth.

**RESOLVED** – That the Cabinet noted the report which provided information on the work and decisions of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) since the North of Tyne Combined Authority Cabinet meeting held on the 26 January 2021.

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

22 September 2021 at 2pm.

29 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the duration of the consideration of agenda item 15 (North East Local Enterprise Partnership - Funding Decisions Update - Appendix A: Copy of the North East LEP Board, Investment update paper - 27 May 2021) because exempt information was likely to be disclosed and the public interest test against the disclosure was satisfied.

30 **NORTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - FUNDING DECISIONS UPDATE - APPENDIX A: COPY OF THE NORTH EAST LEP BOARD, INVESTMENT UPDATE PAPER - 27 MAY 2021**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Noted.