

**Subject:** Business Case Development Fund – North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan  
**Report of:** Principal Economy and Strategy Manager  
**Portfolio:** Culture, Creative and Rural

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**Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to approve the Business Case Development funding of £500,000 for the development of the North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan.

**Recommendations**

The Chief Executive is recommended to

- i. approve £500,000 of Business Case Development funding for the development of the North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan.

**1. Background & Proposal**

- 1.1 Rural growth and productivity are fundamental to the North of Tyne Combined Authority. The Devolution Deal commits us to achieving ‘rural exemplar’ status – working in-step with local, regional, and national partners to maximise the economic and social potential of our unique geography and natural assets. The development of a Stewardship and Rural Growth investment plan will enable NTCA and broader partners to further strengthen and coordinate the approach to enable rural growth, enhance the area’s natural capital assets and level up our rural communities.
- 1.2 The Investment Plan agreed by NTCA’s Cabinet in April 2019 allocated £4.5m to support business case development work. In addition, NTCA Cabinet agreed on the 25th January 2022 an allocation of up to £500k to develop the Northumberland Stewardship & Rural Growth Investment Plan and related interventions and authorised the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Investment Panel, the Mayor and the Portfolio Holder, to consider and approve the business case and to then make subsequent funding awards.

<b>Proposal Name</b>	North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	NTCA
<b>Delivery Areas</b>	Northumberland (with links to urban areas)
<b>Timescales</b>	March 2022 -June 2024 (includes retrospective expenditure from the date of Cabinet agreement on the financial allocation)
<b>Project Value</b>	£500,000
<b>Grant / Loan amount requested</b>	£500,000
<b>NTCA Budget Implications:</b>	This project will be funded from the £4.5m Business Case Development Fund workstream of the NTCA Investment Plan of which £1,803,030 remains (excluding this application)

- 1.3 The central aim for the Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan sets out a fresh approach to investing in our unique natural, economic and cultural assets in a way that will simultaneously

enhance our environment, grow our rural economy, and improve opportunity and prosperity in our communities. The approach aligns and balances investment in:

- Stewardship: looking after and enhancing our precious natural assets in a way that provides environmental, social, and economic benefits.
- Rural growth: developing the rural economy, and growing businesses, jobs and wealth in a way that simultaneously delivers environmental and social benefits

1.4 The Investment Plan will provide the catalyst and framework to work with key partners and investors to agree a sustained, long-term, co-investment approach, capable of delivering transformational change in the North of Tyne rural environment and economy. This will mean harnessing regional resources alongside national funding (e.g. UK Government, private investors, charitable trusts and foundations), and local funds (e.g. local authorities, Borderlands Growth Deal, devolved investment funds) to deliver a shared vision and priorities, maximise leverage and establish long-term funding sustainability.

1.5 The Business Case Development proposal for the development of the North of Tyne Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan has been appraised internally with the appraiser noting that the proposal demonstrates a strong strategic fit setting the foundation for the combined authority to fulfil its aspirations and commitments within the devolution deal of achieving a rural exemplar status. NTCA Investment Panel considered the proposal on 1the 9th May and recommended to the Chief Executive that funding of £500,000 is agreed.

## **2. Potential Impact on Objectives**

2.1 The Rural Economy is identified as an opportunity and priority in the North of Tyne Devolution Deal, the North of Tyne Corporate Plan, and the North East Strategic Economic Plan. The Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Plan will align with the Authority's objectives around both jobs and economic inclusion.

## **3. Key Risks**

3.1 The project risks have been considered as part of the application process. The application has been appraised and funding will be subject to quarterly monitoring returns to ensure progress is made in line with agreed timelines.

## **4. Financial and Other Resources Implications**

4.1 £500,000 has been allocated to this proposal for spend through to June 2024.

## **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 The Interim Monitoring Officer's comments have been included in this report.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

6.1 As required by Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010, the Combined Authority has considered its obligations regarding Public Sector Equality Duty and there will be no anticipated negative impact on groups with protected characteristics from this proposal.

## **7. Inclusive Economy Implications**

7.1 The approach taken will positively contribute to creating a more inclusive economy in the North of Tyne with specific positive impact on addressing the needs of businesses and residents in the rural communities.

## **8. Climate Change Implications**

8.1 Climate change implications will be assessed on an individual project basis as part of the development process. The activity which will be brought forward as part of the investment plan is considered to positively support the climate change priorities of the Combined Authority, particularly by developing a new approach for natural capital, becoming a national exemplar for how our countryside is managed and invested in. The proposed investment plan aligns with the recommendations of the North of Tyne Citizens' Assembly on nature and green spaces.

**9. Consultation and Engagement**

9.1 The project will be developed in conjunction with local communities, partners, key stakeholders, incorporating the two strands of productive stewardship and inclusive rural growth.

**10. Appendices**

10.1 None

**11. Background Papers**

a. Item 6 North of Tyne Rural Economy - Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth - <https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Agenda-25.01.2022.pdf>

**12. Contact Officers**

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**13. Glossary**

13.1 NTCA – North of Tyne Combined Authority NTCA – North of Tyne Combined Authority

**11. Sign-off Sign-off**

Portfolio holder Yes	Director/SMT Yes	Chief Finance Officer: Yes	Monitoring Officer: Yes
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