

**Approved minutes
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

12 February 2020

(10.00 am - 12.00 pm)

Meeting held: North Tyneside Council, Cobalt Business Park, The Quadrant, 16 The Silverlink N, Newcastle upon Tyne NE27 0BY

Minutes

Present:

Chair: Cllr G A Roughead

Councillors: S Graham, M Hall, P Holland, G Stewart, G Stone and S Cox

34 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

35 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Lower, L Wright, P Earley and S Dungworth. Cllr Stone attended as a substitute for Cllr Lower. Cllr Cox attended as a substitute for Cllr Earley.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

37 AGREEMENT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38 AGREEMENT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 **CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT**

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

Cllr Daley provided an update on his portfolio highlighting the following points:

Details of the proposals for a North of Tyne Education Challenge, a key element of the Devolution Deal. The aim of the Challenge is to raise education outcomes across the North of Tyne area.

The development of an evidence base to inform the proposals were achieved through workshops which have taken place with education professionals, stakeholders, partners and Trade Unions. Matters raised included the need to provide additional support for those schools rated by Ofsted as not good or outstanding; the deficit in educational attainment across the North of Tyne area and children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are not able to achieve the same level of achievement as their peers; the importance of all children being ready to start school with possible interventions such as support for parents and targeted school based early years provision.

The responses from the workshops had been refined into 6 key ambitions for the Education Challenge:

1. Make sure every young person is ready for school
2. Make sure all schools in North of Tyne are Good or Outstanding
3. Make sure no one is left behind
4. Develop and deliver a universal mental health offer to all schools
5. Create a North of Tyne Teacher Deal
6. Create a North of Tyne Leadership Deal

The development of a universal mental health resilience support programme available to all schools was also explained. Additional support would be provided with classroom support teachers and a triage system whereby schools can support and develop a package of teaching specific to each child. Reference was also made to the number of teachers who leave the profession early because of work pressures and find that they cannot cope.

Schemes to attract graduates to fill vacancies and an attractive retention scheme. Possible interventions include targeted bursaries and supporting the development of work/life balance.

Cllr Daley responded to questions/comments received from members which included:

- Cllr Daley was asked to provide an example of how improved early years can be achieved and to ensure there was no duplication of effort. He explained that the Directors in the three local authorities of the North of Tyne area are

working together to develop early years education. It was important to note that the Education Challenge funding was in addition to funding already received from central government by the three local authorities. Working with families from birth to pre-school age should enable professionals to develop a suite of key measures to ensure children are ready for school; some children attend school not toilet trained or able to focus and interact and be ready to learn.

- Responding to a comment in respect of ensuring looked after children are given the opportunity to access university and develop a career, Cllr Daley explained that the Education Challenge is for all children, the Virtual School Head for Looked After Children is involved and all the special schools.
- A member referred to children's mental health and how schools outside of local authority control will be included in the Education Challenge. In his response Cllr Daley gave assurances that the Regional Schools Commissioner is on board and academies have attended the workshops and are in support of the proposals. The Education Challenge was for the family of all schools in the North of Tyne area. In relation to mental health, teachers will be provided with additional support so they can help children who show signs of anxiety or mental health issues; they will also be provided with support for their own mental health.
- The support available in the transition to secondary school as it's a key factor in attainment dropping off. Cllr Daley gave an example of good practice in a school whereby a child was teamed with a 'buddy' already in the secondary school before the start of the school year; someone to talk to and provide help and guidance.
- Referring to the Education Challenge, Cllr Daley was asked when the authority will be in a position to deliver the proposals. Cllr Daley advised that officers now have detailed, costed proposals which have been submitted to central government. Cabinet have agreed the broad parameters which have been shaped and formed to address the challenges facing the NTCA and which will make a significant impact on educational attainment for many children, both now and in the future.
- The Chair queried whether a summary of the workshops could be circulated to committee members. Cllr Daley responded in the affirmative and added that copies of the presentations could also be shared.

The Chair thanked Cllr Daley for attending and addressing the committee.

40 **CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE AND PRODUCTIVITY**

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

Cllr Jackson provided an overview on his portfolio highlighting the following points:

The creation of a dynamic economy, attracting both national and international investment, which will provide employment opportunities for many families with low career prospects and raise wages and productivity.

Recognition of the North/South divide and the need to raise the profile of the Combined Authority area.

Cllr Jackson referred to Offshore wind, renewable energy and subsea technologies.

Committee also heard about three initiatives which have received awards from the Business Case Development Fund:

- £25,000 to Northumberland County Council to support the Hexham Hydro feasibility study for a hydro power proposal on the River Tyne.
- £30,850 to Advance Northumberland to undertake a full technical feasibility study for an Offshore Wind 'Plug and Play', full turbine prototype test facility as part of Northumberland Energy Park Phase 3 which forms part of Energy Central.
- £40,000 to the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult (OREC) for a feasibility study for the development of dedicated Offshore Renewables Robotics and Autonomous Systems test and validation facility at Blyth which would be the first of its kind in the UK.

£1,265,307 has been awarded to Northumberland County Council for the North of Tyne Rural Business Growth Investment Fund.

Wider regeneration and renewal of places; a scheme which focuses on town centres and high streets. Specific reference was made to the Cramlington Moor Farm roundabout on the A189, a major transport route but one that requires major improvement works to help attract economic investment. Cllr Jackson also spoke of the programme of strategic transport priorities, such as the dualling of the whole of the A1, the Metro twin tracking scheme and the Northumberland-Newcastle Line scheme.

Cllr Jackson responded to questions/comments received from members which included:

- A member voiced concerns regarding both portfolio reports which were felt to be large summaries of proposals currently under development, but which did not give a sense of what has been delivered. This did not provide opportunities for effective scrutiny. In response Cllr Jackson explained that the Combined Authority was still in its infancy and time was needed for projects to be completely developed and costed before implementation.
- Responding to a question as to the impact of the Northumberland Line, Cllr Jackson explained that it was anticipated that the Line will provide better access to employment; link with Northumberland Park and be a contributor towards reducing congestion in Newcastle City Centre.

- Responding to a comment regarding the lack of a fully integrated transport system Cllr Jackson explained that although the NTCA is the only Combined Authority without sole responsibility for transport it was important that the region spoke with one voice on the importance of an integrated transport system across the North East.
- Cllr Jackson was asked to explain how the Combined Authority could attract major industries. In response Cllr Jackson reported that supporting business is central to the Combined Authority and the Investment Fund is available to businesses looking to invest in the area; there is support for small or medium sized businesses looking to develop growth plans and to support economic growth in the rural areas.

The Chair thanked Cllr Jackson for attending and addressing the committee.

41 **TOURISM, MARKETING AND EVENTS IN THE NORTH OF TYNE AREA**

Submitted: Report of the Interim Head of Rural Growth (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

Committee considered the report the purpose of which was to note progress on the work undertaken by the NTCA on promoting the North of Tyne area through tourism, marketing and events. It also outlined the impact of the NTCA sponsorship of a stage in the Tour of Britain cycling race and the commission undertaken by Blue Sail to review current destination marketing arrangements; the findings of the review and a North of Tyne Events Strategy.

The role of the NTCA was to be strategic and a co-ordinator and lift the work of the three authorities to the next level. Four areas of focus had been identified, which were: destination marketing; event strategy; Hadrian's Wall; and transport.

Members noted that Cabinet had approved an indicative budget of £15m over 10 years and, £3.5m for the Tourism Programme up to 2022/23.

Cllr Jackson spoke about the successful North of Tyne stage of the Tour of Britain 2019 cycle race which attracted over 175,000 visitors and was screened in 89 countries. Participants and organisers had commented that the event's organisation and the support received had been excellent.

Comments and queries from members.

- A member commented on the attractions on the Gateshead Quays, in particular the Sage, and suggested that they should be included when marketing the area. Cllr Jackson assured the Committee that he was not an isolationist and recognised that working with partners outside of the North of Tyne area was also important to this work. Reference was also made to the splendid castles and churches in the North of Tyne area which could shape a marketable package, particularly for cruise ships.

- Reference was made to future events and the need for a fully integrated transport system to enable visitors and residents to move across the three local authority areas.

RESOLVED – that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report and commented on the proposed approach for the tourism marketing and events programme.

42 **BREXIT UPDATE**

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

R Hamilton introduced the report the purpose of which was to provide the latest update on Brexit, a summary of the national context and key timescales and the potential implications for the North of Tyne Combined Authority and its response.

- The main concern voiced by members were in relation to European funded programmes, including ERDF and ESF. In response members heard that payments made from EU programmes will cease at the end of their individual programmes, which typically ran for 2 years. Government has indicated that arrangements will be put in place with similar objectives through the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- In response to a query regarding the development of a regional Free Trade Zone and the area to be included in the Zone, R Hamilton advised that discussions had taken place with the NE Local Enterprise Partnership and regional colleagues, and the anticipated approach should it be pursued would be a Free Trade Zone covering the boundaries of the seven local authorities rather than one single site within the region.

RESOLVED – that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of this report.

43 **Q3 BUDGET MONITORING**

Submitted: Report of the Interim Section 73 Officer (previously circulated and a copy attached to the Official Minutes).

J Gillespie introduced the report the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the 2019/20 Budget Monitor Report Q3 and brings together the forecast financial position for both the Corporate and Investment Fund budget and provided an indication of the potential position of the Combined Authority at 31 March 2020.

Committee noted that in terms of the investment Fund, Cabinet have approved 25 projects to date committing £20.9m of the Investment Fund with a further £67m projects in the pipeline anticipating in the region of 2,571 jobs.

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

44 **CABINET'S RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE 2020-2021 BUDGET PROPOSALS**

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

The Chair informed the Committee that he had presented the Committee's recommendations to Cabinet at its meeting on 28 January 2020 and all their recommendations had been accepted.

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

45 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

10 March 2020, 10.00am at Newcastle Civic Centre