

Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Mandela Room, Middlesbrough Town Hall, Albert Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2QJ
Thursday 14th July 2022 at 10:00am**

Present:

Cllr John Hobson (Chair) (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Sandra Smith (Vice Chair) (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Cllr Stephen Harker (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Jack Sowerby (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Chris Hobson (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Tony Riordan (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Norma Stephenson (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr David Branson (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Brenda Harrison (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Cllr David Nicholson (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Cllr Pauline Beall (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Chris Jones (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
TBC (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
TBC (Hartlepool Borough Council)

Officers in Attendance:

Gary Macdonald – Group Director of Finances and Resources
Peter Judge - Chief Legal Officer, Monitoring Officer TVCA (via Teams)
Alan Weston – Transport & Infrastructure Manager
Nicola Dean – Governance & Scrutiny Officer (via Teams)
James Grant – Governance and Business Support Manager

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Steve Nelson (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Bob Donoghue (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Mike Renton (Darlington Borough Council)
Julie Gilhespie (Group Chief Executive, TVCA)

1 Chair's Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for absence were noted, as above.

The Chair asked the Committee could they be upstanding for a minute silence in remembrance of Cllr Brenda Loynes, a valued member of the Committee who passed away in February 2022. A minute's silence was held.

2 Declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th January 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2022 were agreed as a true record subject to the following amends:

Cllr Stephenson (**NS**) drew the Committee's attention to Item 8 Paragraph 2 and noted that the last line should read that it was agreed to have more 'named substitutes'. The minutes will be amended to reflect this.

Cllr Harrison (**BH**) confirmed that she had sent apologies for the last meeting, but this wasn't noted in the Minutes. The minutes will be amended to reflect this.

4 Group Chief Executive's Update

A paper gave Members an update on the key activities of the Combined Authority since the last Committee meeting.

In the absence of the Group CEO, Gary Macdonald (**GM**), Group Director of Finance and Resources at TVCA, provided a summary of the areas of the CEO Update including:

- Teesworks
- Freeport
- Teesside International Airport
- One Public Estate
- Business Investment
- Education, Employment and Skills
- Mayoral Development Corporations
- Transport (noted presentation to follow)
- Clean Growth and Innovation
- Creative Place

Cllr Branson (**DB**) noted that Middlesbrough Council are looking at pollution and concerns on the amount of pipe being found off the coast as a result of the construction of South Bank Quay. He explained that Middlesbrough Council had asked TVCA to do an investigation of this to determine if there is a link to the noted increase in crabs and lobsters dying. BH supported this question on sea life and the dredging situation and deemed it a priority, supporting an investigation into this urgently. GM advised that TVCA aware of this and that he will refer the points to colleagues internally.

It was asked whether the Middlesbrough Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is linked to Middlesbrough Council and how will it be scrutinised? GM advised that legislation is first required, and it was confirmed that each of the Development Corporations are separate to each Local Authority. It was explained that the relationship is as a stakeholder Local Authority. The detail, in terms of governance structure and powers, was noted, as yet to be decided.

The position of TVCA in regard to the proposed MDCs was queried, and Members were informed that the relationship to the Development Corporation (DC) is through TVCA and it is separate. Peter Judge (**PJ**), Monitoring Officer, explained the process that would follow consultation - the Mayor will write to the

Secretary of State designating a Mayoral Development Area and if it is designated, the Secretary of State is then obliged to set up an MDC. It was explained that, although TVCA are carrying out a consultation on the mayoral development area, the Secretary of State will also do the same in regard to any publicly owned land to be transferred into the ownership of the MDC and will engage with LAs and other public landowners as to whether the land should be transferred into the MDC. It was explained that the Cabinet of TVCA are being asked if they support the Mayor's proposal to set up a DC. PJ advised Members that it is a mayoral power to set up a DC and it is the Secretary of State power to set up the Corporation, which requires secondary legislation and if the Secretary of State makes the order, it will then be laid to Parliament in the usual way. It was confirmed that the Board of the Development Corporation runs the DC and the Chair will be determined by the Tees Valley Mayor.

Cllr Harker (**SH**) raised the concern in seeing a lack of scrutiny in any DC established. PJ explained O&S can examine any decision of TVCA in relation to the funding or otherwise of the DC's but that the decisions inside the DC are matters for its Board.

It was asked if the result of the consultations on the MDCs is that people don't want these to progress, what would happen? PJ advised that if the result of the consultations is that the MDCs are overwhelmingly not supported, and whilst this is ultimately a matter for the Mayor, PJ would be surprised if the Mayor would exercise the power to do so.

Members discussed the governance of the Freeport Board, and it was explained that the Freeport Board comprises both public and private sector representation and the Freeboard Board is constituted as a TVCA Committee under its constitution. PJ clarified that the Freeport Board is created by the Cabinet of TVCA and is part of the Constitution, so in regard to the scope of the activity of the Board, it must operate in accordance will all the transparency rules and the reach of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to its decisions.

BH asked if other freeports are looked at to see how they work. GM confirmed that Board Members attend a freeport regulatory network where all freeport representative's meet on a regular basis to share knowledge, and this is a network that feeds into one another. In addition, it was advised that there also events that Freeport Board members attend to share knowledge and experience.

5 Transport Update

Alan Weston, (**AW**) Transport & Infrastructure Manager at TVCA delivered a Transport Update presentation to Members.

The presentation covered the following points:

- World Class Transport Plan
- Making Cycling & Walking the Natural choice for shorter journey's (20 year plan)
- Tees Valley Active Travel Hubs
- Transforming the Tees Valley Rail System

- Shared Commitment with Operators to transform Tees valley bus services and grow passenger numbers
- Progress on the BSIP Five Point Plan
- Positioning the Tees valley at the forefront of decarbonising Transport
- Putting the Tees Valley at the heart of the Digital Transport Revolution
- Ensuring everyone can access opportunity
- Tees Valley Transport Brand & Customer Information
- Budget

DB commented that although there is a will to cycle, this is often difficult as train providers discourage cycling through a lack of facilities. It was suggested that thought needs to be given to linkage and how that works. AW advised that this is recognised and is being looked at nationally and what solutions could be available. Members agreed it was good to see a commitment to investing in rail and it was considered essential to consider how to integrate trains with other areas of transport.

Connectivity to the Whitby line was discussed, and AW explained that there are conversations taking place with North Yorkshire in this regard, and that they have their own aspirations. Middlesbrough and Nunthorpe were agreed to be an issue, but Members were assured all stations were being looked at.

SH asked why the Transport Portfolio Member was not in attendance for this update. It was advised as Cllr H Scott had stood down as Leader of Darlington Council, she was no longer a member of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet, nor lead for Transport. Until the next Cabinet meeting (22nd July 2022), a Portfolio Lead Member for Transport could not be formally designated.

6 Delegated Decisions

A report was circulated detailing the Delegated Decisions taken by the Combined Authority since the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the detail of the report was noted.

7 DRAFT Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022

A DRAFT of the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022 was provided to Members in advance of the meeting. Members were informed this Report would be presented to Cabinet detailing the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the last municipal year.

Members were asked to provide feedback on content and agree for the report to be submitted at the July Cabinet meeting.

NS referenced the point in the Report that the Mayor hadn't attended meetings in the last year and noted that the Committee is here to scrutinise both the Combined Authority and the Mayor but with the lack of attendance, it was questioned how the Committee could do that. Members agreed that as the Mayor is responsible for decisions, the Committee Chair should write to him and ask he attend some future meetings for his decisions to be scrutinised.

NS noted that the DRAFT Report details that the Committee exists to “scrutinise and support the decision making of the Combined Authority and the Mayor” and instead it was suggested that the Committee exists to “challenge and scrutinise the decision making” of the Combined Authority and the Mayor if there is a need. It was agreed the Report would be amended to reflect this.

For the purposes of accuracy, NS referenced the incorrect spelling of her surname, and it was confirmed this would be rectified.

RESOLVED that the Chair will seek to make contact with the Mayor regarding attendance at Committee meetings.

8 Feedback of Consultation on Quorum in Other Combined Authorities

Members were provided with a paper detailing the findings of a consultation with Monitoring Officers of other Combined Authorities on their experience of quoracy on their Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Members were asked to consider the feedback received, whilst reviewing the TVCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s attendance between 2019 and 2022 to determine a course of action.

PJ noted that because of steps taken by the previous Chair, Cllr Stephenson, and the use of substitute members, it appeared the Committee was having a less difficult time in regard to quorum, than the other Combined Authority Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED that the position in regard to the quoracy of Committee meetings should continue to be monitored.

9 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The Chair explained the next meeting would be arranged for after the upcoming TVCA Cabinet meeting and would be the Annual meeting. Meeting dates for the municipal year would be finalised and invites sent as soon as dates agreed.