

AGENDA ITEM 8

**REPORT TO THE TEES VALLEY
COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET**

1 JUNE 2018

REPORT OF CHAIR OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

This report summarises the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the period of May 2017 to April 2018.

The report will be presented to Cabinet by the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet note the report.

DETAIL

THE COMMITTEE

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consists of 15 members, 3 nominated from each Constituent Authority. The Committee is required, as far as reasonably practical, to reflect the balance of political parties of the Constituent Authorities collectively.
2. The objective of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise and support the decision-making of the Combined Authority Cabinet and the Tees Valley Mayor.
3. This includes:
 - monitoring the decisions or other actions taken by the Cabinet and/or Mayor and submitting reports and making recommendations for improvements or change
 - Reviewing the Strategies and policies of the Combined Authority and holding the Mayor, other Cabinet members, and officers, to account for their delivery.
4. The Committee has the power to “call-in” for review or scrutiny decisions made by the Combined Authority before they are implemented.

5. The Chair of the Committee for the period of 2017-2018 has been Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE, Stockton Borough Council. The Vice-Chair has been Councillor Ian Haszeldine, Darlington Borough Council.
6. For the period of May 2017- April 2018 the Committee have 7 scheduled meetings. They usually meet every 6 weeks where possible to do so.
7. In addition to the ordinary meetings the Committee have also met for one additional meeting to discuss Durham Tees Valley Airport and also as a smaller established task & finish group focussing solely on the budget.
8. The Managing Director of the Combined Authority attends the meetings to answer questions from the committee, and there is the facility for the committee to provide written questions in advance of meetings. The Tees Valley Mayor attended for a meeting to answer a wide range of questions from members.
9. The Committee has not felt it necessary to utilise their power of “call-in” throughout the period of May 2017-April 2018.
10. Of the 6 meetings held to date one of these has not been quorate and therefore no decisions could be made. Attendance has been an issue at a number of meetings with some of the Constituent Authorities being continually better represented than others. This has been fed back to the authorities via Chief Executives and leaders in the hope that attendance at the meetings will improve in future.

2017-2018 WORK PROGRAMME

11. The Committee have carried out their Overview and Scrutiny duties in some of the key areas of Combined Authority business.

- i. Housing**

The Committee were provided with an overview of housing priorities within the Tees Valley. This gave members a good insight into the role of the Combined Authority with regard to housing and a detailed understanding of the housing issues facing the Tees Valley and the opportunities from devolution. There were concerns raised from members following the Grenfell Tower tragedy as to how prevention of such an event was being addressed throughout Tees Valley. These concerns have since been addressed by individual Local Authorities via their representatives on the Scrutiny Committee.

- ii. Industrial Strategy & Sector Action Plans**

The Combined Authority’s Economic Strategy and Intelligence Manager gave a presentation to the Committee on the development of Sector Action Plans, following on from the launch of the refreshed Strategic Economic Plan for Tees Valley.

- iii. Culture & Tourism**

The Combined Authority’s Head of Culture and Tourism and Mayor David Budd, as portfolio holder for Culture, gave a presentation to the Committee detailing the ambition and plans of the Combined Authority with regard to

Culture and Tourism. The Committee were informed that Tees Valley Combined Authority is currently the only Combined Authority to include culture within its devolution deal and the presentation demonstrated the ambitious plans that the Combined Authority have for the future.

iv. “Inspiring Our Future” - Education, Employment & Skills Strategy

The Head of Education, Employment and Skills gave a presentation regarding the draft Education, Employment and Skills Strategy. This was delivered whilst the draft Strategy was out for public consultation to allow the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to comment on the Strategy and contribute to the consultation. Committee members, alongside their fellow Tees Valley Councillors' were invited to a consultation workshop on 18th December to look at the draft strategy in more detail.

v. Budget

In order to scrutinise the budget in detail the Committee made the decision to assign a small task and finish group to achieve this. The group consisted of 4 councillors representing 3 of the 5 Constituent Authorities. Questions from Committee Members were submitted to the Chair of the task and finish group, Cllr Ian Haszeldine and these were put forward to the Managing Director and Finance Director at a meeting designated specifically for budget scrutiny. The session allowed the questions to be answered in detail and further information to be provided where necessary.

A full report from the Task and Finish Group was provided to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process, this details all of the questions submitted from the Committee and the full responses to these.

To allow continuous scrutiny of the Combined Authority budget it was agreed that Quarterly Budget updates be added to the work programme for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the forthcoming year and that delegated decisions also be added to future Overview & Scrutiny agendas to allow full transparency of these decisions.

vi. Governance

The Committee have looked in detail at the staffing of the Combined Authority. The majority of this was done as part of the budget task and finish group and took into account recruitment planned for the next financial year. An organisational chart has been provided to the Committee to allow them to understand the current staffing structure and further information has been provided where requested regarding recruitment to new posts and the reasons for the creation of these posts. Following the appointment of the Tees Valley mayor the Committee requested further information regarding the appointment of the Special Advisor. The committee were informed that it was standard practice for a Special Advisor to be appointed to provide political advice to political leaders, and that the role is subject to specific codes and regulations. All other Mayoral Combined Authorities have made similar appointments. A timetable detailing the recruitment to this post was circulated to the Committee for their information.

vii. Tees Valley and the Northern Powerhouse

The committee discussed the Authority's relationship with the Northern Powerhouse at its meeting on 27th February 2018.

viii. Durham Tees Valley Airport

A separate meeting discuss Durham Tees Valley Airport took place on 15th March 2018.

iv. Annual portfolio report

The committee received comprehensive written reports from all five portfolio areas at its meeting of April 26 2018, and had the opportunity to question both portfolio holders and senior officers.

2018 - 2019 WORK PROGRAMME

12. The committee has 8 scheduled meetings from April 2018 – April 2019. A discussion on the priorities and work programme for these meetings will be taking place at the June 7 2018 meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

15. Not Applicable

CONSULTATION

16. Not Applicable

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