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TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cavendish House, Stockton-On-Tees, TS17 6QY

Thursday 26th April 2018 at 10.00am

MEETING

ATTENDEES

Members

Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE	Stockton on Tees Borough Council	SBC
Cllr Derrick Brown	Stockton on Tees Borough Council	SBC
Cllr Ian Haszeldine	Darlington Borough Council	DBC
Cllr Heather Scott	Darlington Borough Council	DBC
Cllr Sonia Kane	Darlington Borough Council	DBC
Cllr Matthew Storey	Middleborough Borough Council	MBC
Cllr Glyn Nightingale	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	R&CBC
Cllr Phillip Thompson	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	R&CBC
Cllr Marjorie James	Hartlepool Borough Council	HBC
Cllr Katie Trueman	Hartlepool Borough Council	HBC

Apologies for absence

Cllr Denise Rooney	Middlesbrough Borough Council	MBC
Cllr Jean Sharrocks	Middlesbrough Borough Council	MBC
Cllr Neil O'Brien	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	R&CBC

Officers

Sarah Brackenborough	Governance & Scrutiny Manger	TVCA
John Hart	Governance & Scrutiny Officer	TVCA
Andrew Lewis	Managing Director	TVCA
Shona Duncan	Head of Skills, Education & Employment	TVCA
Linda Tuttiett	Head of Culture & Tourism	TVCA
Martin Waters	Head of Housing & Communities	TVCA

Other Attendees

Cllr Bill Dixon	Portfolio Holder for Transport	DBC
Cllr Bob Cook	Portfolio Holder for Housing	SBC

OSC 40/17	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	There were no interests declared	
OSC 41/17	MINUTES	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting on 15th March 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Cllrs Storey and Scott requested that their names be added to list of attendees for the meeting of 27th February 2018. The minutes were otherwise agreed and signed as a correct record.</p>	
OSC 42/17	ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR	
	<p>The Chair made the following announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked that the committee's best wishes be extended to Governance and Scrutiny Officer Sharon Jones at the commencement of her Maternity Leave. • The Chair reminded members that this meeting was the last scheduled meeting of this year's cycle and that the next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting. A final version of the Committee's Annual Report will be presented at the next meeting of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet and will be circulated to committee members in advance. <p>RESOLVED that the Chair's update be noted.</p>	
OSC 43/17	ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR	
	<p>The Managing Director stated all issues he would ordinarily update the committee on would be discussed later in the agenda and invited questions.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Managing Director:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Combined Authority had received additional central government funding supporting the process of Overview and Scrutiny? • Does the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the authority to examine the remuneration of members? <p>The Managing Director reported that the Combined Authority has not been notified of any such funding, but reiterated that the Combined Authority was committed to fully resourcing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its activities and enquiries.</p> <p>He reported that the Tees Valley Combined Authority was established on the basis that members not be remunerated and that revisiting this</p>	

	<p>would be a matter for the Cabinet.</p> <p>Members then held a wide-ranging discussion relating to political support for portfolio holders and other Combined Authority members.</p> <p>During the course of this discussion the Managing Director assured the committee that all the Combined Authority's teams and officers were available to support the work of the portfolio holders, and that an additional Policy Officer has recently been recruited in order to upscale work in this area.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that this matter be deferred for greater examination, proposing the Committee's September 13 2018 meeting as an appropriate date.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Managing Director's update be noted.</p>	
<p>OSC 44/17</p>	<p>PORTFOLIO UPDATES</p>	
	<p>At its last meeting (February 27 2018) the committee agreed that this meeting be used to receive a roundup of the work of each portfolio area over the previous 12 months and to examine priorities for the next 12 months.</p> <p>Cllr Cook, portfolio holder for housing, introduced his report</p> <p>Members asked the portfolio holder questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accuracy of house building targets detailed in the report given that some of the Combined Authority's constituent authorities are yet to complete their Local Plans. • Specific timescales for delivery of projects outlined in the report • The progress of the Combined Authority's mapping of brownfield sites, in particular surplus publically-owned land not limited to local authorities • The development of additional social housing and adapted bungalows for use by families where a member has additional mobility needs. <p>Cllr Cook confirmed that the Combined Authority Land Commission was undertaking work identifying surplus publically-owned land and brownfield sites, and that this register included land held by the National Health Service and the Ministry of Defence. He continued that government cuts to remediation funding had complicated the development of brownfield sites, but gave assurances that timescales for delivery would be forthcoming within the next 12 months. He confirmed that housing building targets within the report had been taken from draft Local Plans where necessary.</p> <p>Cllr Dixon, portfolio holder for transport, introduced his portfolio report by stating that in addition to activities detailed in the report, the Combined Authority also intends to explore opportunities for the development of 5G connectivity in the Tees Valley in the coming 12 months.</p> <p>Members questions for the portfolio holder relating to:</p>	

- Opportunities for bus franchising detailed in the Bus Act 2017.
- Over-crowding on local trains and the feasibility of a Tees Valley-wide light railway system.
- Progress being made towards Teesside achieving Free Port status
- Details of costs incurred to date by legal advice given to the Combined Authority relating to the future of Durham Tees Valley Airport, with a request that this information be made available to the committee.

The Managing Director stated that this information would be included in the next financial report presented to the committee, and reiterated the Combined Authority's commitment to transparency and to making confidential information available to members where not restricted by third party requirements.

The portfolio holder reported that clarity over the nature of Britain's post-Brexit relationship with the European Union, particularly relating to a Customs Union, would be required before progress could be made toward Free Port status.

He recognised that investment was necessary in rail infrastructure, but stated that due to the financial and logistical implications of a new light railway system better use of heavy railways was the Combined Authority's priority.

He stated that while the Bus Act 2017 does offer greater potential for local authorities to develop local bus services, the legal process of franchising is lengthy and uncertain to succeed, as demonstrated by unsuccessful efforts to pursue franchising in Tyne and Wear.

The portfolio holder then gave greater detail about the Combined Authority's ambition to be named a test bed for the government piloting of 5G technology, stating his belief that the Combined Authority met the necessary population and geographical criteria and that work was now underway to develop an argument for how the technology could be used in a 'unique' manner, for example, to drive innovation in the National Health Service.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Dixon and Cook, who left the meeting.

Shona Duncan, Tees Valley Combined Authority Head of Skills, Education & Employment introduced a report on activities in this portfolio area by providing the committee with copies of the newly-launched Combined Authority Skills Strategy.

Members had questions on the report relating to:

- Special needs education provision
- Combined Authority efforts to improve attainment in Secondary Schools.

The Head of Skills, Education and Employment reported that special educational provision is integral to the Combined Authority's plans, and that a specific report on this subject is currently being prepared.

She also reported that an Improvement Board made up of the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Tees Valley local authorities had been established by the Combined Authority to coordinate efforts being made to improve educational attainment, and that this board had already successfully secured government funding for school improvement interventions on four occasions.

The Chair reported that Cllr Sue Jeffrey, portfolio holder for Investment and Business Growth, was unable to attend the meeting, but had agreed to attend a future meeting in order to update members.

Members had questions for the Managing Director relating to:

- The implications of Brexit for the Combined Authority, in particular with regards to potential loss of infrastructure funding and investment in rural areas
- Prospects for the development of the previous SSI site.

The Managing Director reported that £170m of European Union regional development funding available to the Combined Authority is guaranteed until 2020, and can be spent up to 2023, and that the government has guaranteed funding for all European funded projects which commence before Britain leaves the European Union in March 2019.

He continued that he expected the government to bring forward alternative funding options in the event of a “no deal” Brexit and drew the committee’s attention to the government’s announcement of a “shared prosperity” fund to replace European regional development funding post-Brexit, although details of this fund have yet to be forthcoming. He stated that the Tees Valley’s position remains that future regional development funding should be held locally and that the Tees Valley must not be worse off as a result of Brexit, and that the Mayor of the Tees Valley has been conveying this message to central government both independently and in partnership with other Northern mayors.

With regards to the SSI site, the Managing Director reported that development of site is being complicated by significant portions of the land remaining in receivership, with a number of Thai banks retaining a financial interest as a result. The Combined Authority is bringing forward a deal to allow these banks to surrender this interest, and that Compulsory Purchase powers can be utilised if necessary, although the Combined Authority’s priority remains finding a pragmatic, short-term solution.

The Head of Culture and Tourism then introduced a report relating to activities and priorities in this portfolio area. She drew the committee’s attention to the launch of “The Big Conversation” with local communities, designed to inform the developing narrative of the Combined Authority’s Capital of Culture 2025 bid.

The Chair expressed her hope that commemoration of the centenary of the Battle of Stockton would form part of this conversation, a sentiment

	shared by the Head of Culture and Tourism. RESOLVED that: the information in the report be noted	
OSC 46/17	Forward Plan	
	A verbal update about pre-planned committee appearances from portfolio holders for the coming civic year was provided by the Governance and Scrutiny Officer The Chair then closed the meeting.	
OSC 47/17	DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING	
	7 June 2018 at 10.00am	