
Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Microsoft Teams Meeting
Thursday, 13th August, 2020 at 10:30 am.**

Present:

Cllr Stephenson (Chair) (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Hobson (Vice Chair) (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Barlow (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Jeffrey (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Cllr Jones (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Cllr Jones (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Rathmell (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Renton (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Riordan (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
Cllr Rooney (Middlesbrough Council)
Cllr Haszeldine (Darlington Borough Council)

Officers:

Julie Gilhespie - Group Chief Executive - TVCA
Geraldine Brown - Strategy, Intelligence & Policy Manager - TVCA
Shona Duncan - Head of Skills, Education & Employment - TVCA
Sharon Jones - Governance & Scrutiny Officer - TVCA
Nicola Dean - Governance Support Officer - TVCA

Also in attendance:

Cllr Bob Cook - Leader - Stockton Borough Council
Paul Booth OBE - Chair - LEP Board

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Harker (Darlington Borough Council)
Cllr Loynes (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Cllr Brown (Hartlepool Borough Council)

1 Declarations of interest

Cllr Doris Jones declared an interest in item 8 as a Member of the Board for Teesside International Airport.

Cllr Chris Jones declared a personal interest in item 6 as his wife is an employee of Stockton Riverside College.

During discussion of item 8 Cllr Stephenson and Cllr Riordan declared an interest as Members of SBC Planning Committee.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 18th June, 2020

The minutes from the meeting held on 18th June were agreed as a true record.

3 Election of Chair & Vice Chair

Nominations were invited for the Position of Committee Chair for the forthcoming civic year.

Cllr Norma Stephenson was nominated by Cllr Denise Rooney. This was seconded by Cllr Doris Jones.

Cllr John Hobson was nominated by Cllr Jon Rathmell and this was seconded by Cllr Tony Riordan.

A vote was taken from Members and Cllr Stephenson was elected as Chair with 8 votes to 3.

Cllr Denise Rooney was nominated as Vice Chair by Cllr Sue Jeffrey and this was seconded by Cllr Doris Jones.

Cllr John Hobson was nominated by Cllr Jon Rathmell and seconded by Cllr Tony Riordan.

A vote was taken from Members and Cllr Hobson was elected as Vice Chair by 6 votes to 5.

4 Chief Executive's Update

A report was circulated from the Group Chief Executive giving the Committee an update on developments within the Combined Authority since the last meeting.

The detail of the report was noted and Members asked questions regarding the following areas:

Culture - it was questioned whether we have fully abandoned all intention of bidding for the City of Culture and if so what approach is being taken to ensure that culture activities are in line with the Investment Plan. It was advised that it is still unknown if City of Culture is going ahead nationally as there have been no updates on this. The Mayor has set up a Culture Task Group, which is being led by Annabel Turpin as LEP Member for culture, to work with the culture sector as well as TVCA Officers and the Portfolio holder on a cohesive plan. We anticipate that the full Culture Programme will be signed off in Autumn. The current intention is that this will connect to 5 smaller Local Authority plans but this may change as we make amendments in response to the Covid outbreak.

Careers Education - The Committee requested information regarding the schools that have been chosen to receive intensive careers support over two years. Specifically, which 12 schools are they and how are they distributed across the 5 authorities. This information will be provided following the meeting.

Emergency travel fund – It was questioned how the distribution of this was worked out. A response will be provided following the meeting.

E-Scooters - We have not had a full briefing with regards to the success of this trial. There were a few teething troubles regarding security but these are now resolved. This is a National pilot and is not funded by TVCA so we are not managing it directly. Once we have a detailed overview of the pilot this will be

shared.

Resolved that the details of the report are noted.

5 Education, Employment & Skills Portfolio Update: Cllr Bob Cook

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A report was circulated providing an update on the progress made in delivering the Education Employment and Skills Strategy; 'Inspiring Our Future' (2018-21)

The Committee asked questions regarding the following areas:

Amazon - It was confirmed that both of the NE Amazon sites will be equipped with advanced Amazon Robotics technology but this will not affect the level of employment of staff. The breakdown of how many of the 1000 staff employed are from Tees Valley and how many are from outside of this area will be provided following the meeting.

RTW - A concern was raised regarding the support to be offered to people whose jobs have been affected by Covid 19 and whether this will then prevent those who are further away from the workplace ever finding employment. It was explained that TVCA are working closely with DWP and Job Centre Plus to maximise the resources announced nationally and we are looking at how we use the good practice from RTW to address the needs of local people to find work following the impact of Covid 19.

Employability Support Programme Mapping - More detail was requested as to how this will be carried out and how any emerging gaps will be filled. It was advised that we are working closely with Government departments to ensure that all necessary funding is kept moving forward. The mapping to date shows that many projects have been extended and funding has been increased where these projects have been successful. The gaps will begin to show when we get into 2023 so we are already preparing for that now.

Impact of Covid 19 - It was questioned when the mentioned "Economic Recovery Plan" will be presented to Cabinet and published. It was explained that the recovery plan is a wider plan that will cover the short, medium and long term impact on the Tees Valley and allow us to make the appropriate interventions. It is a very large piece of work and has been carried out with consultations with Local Authorities and businesses. The short term responses are already happening through the emergency response funds and it is crucial that we get the response to the medium and long term impact right. The plan is close to completion and will be shared with the Committee once finalised.

Tees Valley Careers Hub - It was noted that the TV Hub is the best performing hub nationally. How is this measured and what sets us apart from the others. It was advised that this is measured using the Gatsby benchmarks, which is a national set of criteria that are audited against. The EES Strategy and Careers funding allowed £3m for careers education in schools. We have worked with every school and every education establishment and they have all engaged with us. There are very few LEP areas that have all establishments engaged in their hub. We have an ambition to move into the primary sector with Careers advice.

Covid has unfortunately prevented this from happening as of yet but money has been kept aside to do this as soon as we are able.

Resolved that the Portfolio update is noted.

6 Local Enterprise Partnership Portfolio Update: Paul Booth OBE

A report was provided to the Committee on activity relating to the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) over the past year.

Resolved that the Portfolio update is noted

7 Teesside International Airport Update

A report was circulated updating Members on significant recent developments at Teesside International Airport Limited.

The Committee expressed disappointment with the lack of detail made available to them in the report and concerns were raised that scrutiny was not able to be fully carried out due to lack of available information.

TVCA have committed to share the airport accounts annually and these will be published when they are finalised. There has been a delay to this due to Covid. The Annual Business Plan is also delayed for the same reason. The airport is still operating in accordance with the allocation granted to it by Cabinet in January 2019 and performance pre Covid was in line with the Business Plan. Once the updated information is available this will be shared with the Committee.

Regarding domestic flights, there was not enough opportunity to build these up significantly before Covid caused them to be halted. The newly introduced Newquay flight is going really well and additional flights have been put on due to this success. Most other routes however are only just restarting.

We have commissioned consultants to do work surrounding the reopening of the railway station. That has started but we don't have a date yet. They are currently looking at feasibility and drawing up plans. The reopening of the station is part of TVCA Strategic Rail Investment. The station there is not owned by the airport it just happens to be adjacent to it. We have committed to develop this and all other stations within our routes.

Management of the airport is carried out by the staff working at the airport as they are experts in their field. They make the day to day decisions. TVCA provide the financial envelope which allows them to operate. This is what was signed off by Cabinet. The airport Business Plan and financial results are updated every year and are to be shared once available. Strategic decisions are taken by airport management not by TVCA. In terms of Governance TVCA has reps on the airport Board, as do the 5 Local Authorities. These Board members are provided with updates as appropriate.

The South side development has been funded via a loan, signed off by Cabinet, which will be repaid by investors coming to the site.

It was advised that the Local Authorities will not pick up costs if anything should go wrong in relation to the airport. In fact this is the case for any TVCA commercial investment as these are funded directly from Central Government.

The Chair expressed that the Committee are frustrated with regard to the situation with the Airport and requested that a meeting be arranged to give clarity around the Committee's role in scrutinising this moving forward.

Resolved that the report is noted.

8 Delegated Decisions Report

A report was circulated detailing the Delegated Decisions signed off by the Combined Authority between June 2020 and August 2020.

A question was raised regarding the DD for the Steel Heritage project. Cllr Jeffrey questioned who was consulted with regard to this as the document states it was the "Chair of the taskforce" but as the Taskforce is no longer in place and therefore there is no current Chair. A response to this will be provided following the meeting.

Resolved that the report is noted.

9 Meetings and Forward Plan

The Chair advised that she will meet with the new Vice Chair and look at the Forward Plan for the Committee for the forthcoming year.

Committee Members were asked to put forward the names of their substitute members if they have not done so already.