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## **Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting  
Thursday, 12th November, 2020 at 10:00 am.**

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**Present:**

Cllr Stephenson (Chair) (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)  
Cllr Hobson (Vice Chair) (Middlesbrough Council)  
Cllr Harker (Darlington 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 Smith (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)  
Cllr Johnson (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)  
Cllr John Tennant (Hartlepool Borough Council)

**Officers:**

Gary MacDonald - Group Director of Finance & Resources  
Alison Fellows - Group Director of Commercial & Delivery  
Chris Beck - Director of Business & Skills  
Tom Bryant - Head of Transport  
Charlie Kemp - Culture Manager  
Peter Judge – Group Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)  
Sharon Jones - Governance & Scrutiny Officer  
Sally Henry - Governance Officer

**Also in attendance:**

Mayor Andy Preston - Mayor of Middlesbrough  
Cllr Shane Moore - Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council  
Annabel Turpin - Head of Culture Taskforce

**Apologies for absence:**

Cllr Barlow (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)

**1 Declarations of interest**

Cllr Eileen Johnson declared an interest as a Member of the Board of Teesside International Airport.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 13th August were agreed as a true record.

**3 Business Growth Portfolio Update: Mayor Andy Preston**

A paper was circulated giving an overview of the Business Growth Portfolio.

It was advised that setting up the funding for the different schemes and grants varies as they all take different times to put in place. The general Business Support Grants for SMEs are now all up and running. The SME grant scheme has a small backlog at the moment, but officers are working through this. In

terms of Covid support grants, officers have tried to react as quickly as possible to get much needed support to businesses. Some of these grants have been turned around in less than a week. Officers continue to work closely with the Local Authorities to achieve this.

It was agreed that a breakdown of Apprenticeship Grants by Local Authority will be circulated to the Committee to show how many apprenticeships have been created and how many are intended moving forward. **Action: CB**

The Apprenticeship grants referred to in this report is an Additional £1m that was provided specifically for Covid support. The scheme is now closed as it is fully allocated. There is separate ongoing support for apprenticeships provide by TVCA

Members:

- commented that that the report circulated showed a number of different ways that support can be accessed and that it seemed to be a complex system, especially if you also take into account grants that may be available via the Local Authorities, and asked if this could be made simpler for businesses who need access to support. The committee was advised that this is because traditionally business support has been delivered through different discreet projects. To make this easier for business TVCA has implemented the Business Gateway, which provides one place to go in order to navigate the system and access the right support. The Business Advisors have now been brought in house and can give advice around all streams of available funding with one telephone number and one email address.
- questioned whether there was any information regarding funding that was previously received as European Funding and how this would be replaced post Brexit. The Committee was advised that TVCA has been told the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will replace EU funding but officers are not aware that anything concrete had been announced at this stage. Officers are working hard to get clarity on funding available to support economic growth. Members noted the need to keep pressure on Government to clarify future funding proposals.
- questioned whether the figure in the report of £9200 cost per job has been benchmarked across the UK for comparison. The committee was advised that the average cost per job across the UK is between £10-15k. Care needs to be taken when comparing with other regions as this region has a lot more engineering type jobs, which tend to cost more than other roles such as service centre jobs etc. It is therefore not always a straight comparison.
- asked if the money that has been provided for Covid support can be increased as demand for support increases. The committee was advised that the direct Covid support costs for businesses are managed by Local Authorities. The additional money to the Combined Authority is from the Peer Network and the Business Support Programmes. There is no additional funding coming in or expected in. Officers are keeping focus on businesses that want to grow and supporting them to do this. The

TVCA team are also working closely with LA business teams to ensure the work we are doing is joined up.

- noted that the structure diagram on Page 70 of the report is incorrect as it shows the Tees Valley Business Growth Board reports to the Tees Valley Mayor's office rather than TVCA Cabinet. A correction note will be published to show the correct management groups and structure.

In terms of measuring success, the Committee was advised that TVCA measure the impact of non Covid related activity on an ongoing basis. A full impact assessment will be done on Business Compass and will continue to closely monitor all projects. With regard to Covid related impact, the team will be looking at this over the coming months but we will need to wait until the pandemic is subsiding to allow us to see the full impact. Impact analysis for projects that are already available will be shared with the Committee.

**Action: CB**

Alongside this work a company called SQW has been procured by central Government to report on first 5 years of all Combined Authorities across the country. Officers have been working with them in production of this report and will publish this once it's finalised.

**It was resolved: that the content of the report be noted**

#### **4 Group Chief Executive's Update**

A paper detailed significant developments at the Combined Authority since the last meeting.

Questions were asked regarding the following areas of the report:

- When will the Economic Recovery Plan be available publicly? The Committee was advised that the plan is based on medium term & long-term impacts on the economy. TVCA officers are working with Government to maximise global resource and put in place building blocks for future growth. The impact of Covid needs to be included within the plan, and uncertainties remain due to the second wave and current additional lockdown instructions. There is currently no agreed date for publication for the plan.
- Can the submission to the comprehensive spending review be shared with the Committee? The submission from TVCA will be shared.  
**Action: CB.** The Committee were advised that there are multiple submissions to this from many areas across the region, including each Local Authority.
- is the Teesside International Airport item on November Cabinet agenda a public paper? It was confirmed that it would be public with some confidential Appendices.
- Darlington Link Road - TVCA are currently exploring a funding package for the project. The cost is estimated at around £200m and is being examined to see if this can be broken down to different funding sources.

Officers are in discussions with DFT, Homes England, Highways England and Darlington Council on this matter. The business case submission for the additional Tees Crossing has just been received by DFT, so it is a difficult time to ask for further funding for the region.

**Resolved: that the report be noted**

**5 Culture Taskforce Update: Annabel Turpin**

A presentation was delivered giving an update on the work of the Culture Taskforce. The presentation will be circulated to members and published following the meeting. **Action: Governance Team**

Members asked:

- why Local Authority Officers are not involved in the new panel given that Local Authorities are lead enablers with culture & tourism activities and have their own culture programmes? It was confirmed that the portfolio officer from the lead council for that theme would be on the Panel and would act as a conduit to the other council officers, but it was advised that it was felt the Panel should be balanced so as to give confidence to the sector. The Chair of the Task Force and TVCA Officers continue to work closely, and regularly with the Local Authority Culture Officers.
- what mechanisms are being used to ensure we get buy in on culture across Tees Valley as a whole? The committee were advised there are numerous networks within the Combined Authority and Local Authorities which are used to promote opportunities in the widest possible way. For example, Tees Valley Business channel, Local Authority partners, Social Media channels. TVCA uses these to actively make sure opportunities are promoted across region. Officers also monitor the responses received to inform the approach going forward. There is good engagement from harder to reach businesses, which is really positive.

**Resolved: that the details of the presentation are noted.**

**6 Acquisition of South Tees Site Company Limited by South Tees Development Corporation**

A report was circulated regarding the Acquisition of South Tees Site Company Limited by South Tees Development Corporation.

A member asked how scrap from the demolition on site would be managed. It was advised that officers are currently working within a demolition framework and any agreements with contractors would include details for removal of scrap. The contract is out to tender now for the demolition contract and has made it very explicit that tenders must clearly show arrangements for scrap.

A member stated that the Committee feels they have not been consulted thus far on STSC Acquisition. There was no opportunity to review the Business case or the transition piece and it would be useful to know where there might be future opportunity to review progress. GM confirmed that the papers relating to the key decisions had been sent to the Committee in the usual way and it was open to Committee to examine the decision if they feel appropriate. He also referred the Committee to the report which shows that in accordance with the

Assurance Framework scrutiny of decision making will be provided by this Committee.

Cllr Jefferey questioned the robustness of STDC Governance arrangements as a recent Freedom of Information request has ruled that the appointment of an MP to the STDC Board was not made in line with the Constitution.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that he had undertaken a review as part of the Authority's Fol procedures and confirmed that, as with councils, the Constitution of the Authority is agreed by Cabinet. The appointment was unanimously agreed by Cabinet Members. It is entirely appropriate for Cabinet to make that determination.

The split of financing between Government funding and tax payer's funding was questioned. It was explained that the local element in the table in the report was the figure of £44m – everything else in the table is from central Government. The percentage split is 14.5% local and 85.5% central funding.

The Committee requested that they are able to see and comment on the quarterly monitoring reports to Government, as per their role in the Assurance Framework. It was agreed that this can be done, reports are produced quarterly in arrears. **Action: GM**

Timescales for decontamination and demolition are given as 3-4 years. It was questioned if this will inhibit inward investors. The Committee was advised that there is a clear strategy for development of zones within the site and investors will be well aware of this. TVCA has had a lot of positive enquiries and there is no suggestion to date that this is a problem for inward investors.

It was agreed that once site tours are able to start up again the Committee will be invited to take part in a tour and gain a better understanding of plans for the site. **Action: Governance Team**

**Resolved: that the report be noted**

## **7 Delegated Decisions**

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

**Resolved: that the report be noted.**

## **8 Meetings and Forward Plan**

The next meeting is scheduled for 7th January 2021