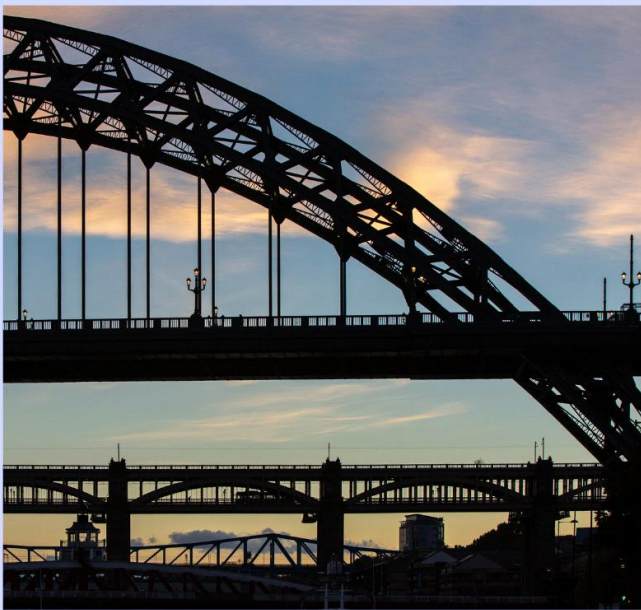




ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24



**NORTH
OF TYNE**



**COMBINED
AUTHORITY**

Section 1: Introduction

This Annual Governance Statement provides an overview of how the North of Tyne Mayoral Combined Authority's governance and internal control arrangements operated during 2023/24, including how they are reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective.

Section 2: Scope of Responsibility

The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) is a cross-party, cross-region collaboration led by a Mayor and Cabinet to create a dynamic and more inclusive economy, one that brings together people and opportunities to create vibrant communities and a high quality of life, narrowing inequalities and ensuring that all residents have a stake in our region's future.

It was established on 2 November 2018 to deliver the devolution deal agreed between Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Councils, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) and Central Government. Devolution has given us the chance to make our own decisions about our own future - with a shift of power, funding and responsibility from central government to the region. It does not replace the three constituent councils, nor take away any of their statutory powers.

We work in partnership and create connections between our programmes and projects for the region. We target investment where we know we need it most and make connections between economic growth and providing the skills, education and confidence local people need to benefit. We work collaboratively with:

- The North East LEP to support delivery of the objectives of the regions Strategic Economic Plan. We are the accountable body of the North East LEP with all its funding decisions being held to account through NTCA.
- The North East Combined Authority to support the region, including transport. To oversee strategic transport functions a Joint Transport Committee has been established with members from both Combined Authorities.
- All seven Local Authorities, and other regional bodies on issues that relate to the wider region.

NTCA is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It is also responsible for ensuring that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority's Cabinet and Statutory Officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements (known as a Governance Framework) for:

- (i) the governance of our affairs and
- (ii) facilitating the effective exercise of our functions, including arrangements for the management of risk

In relation to (ii) the Authority has developed a system of internal control designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- a) identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our, aims and objectives; and
- b) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Combined Authority has developed a Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register which is reported regularly at meetings of the Authority's Audit and Standards Committee.

Section 3: Purpose of the Governance Framework

Corporate governance is a phrase used to describe how organisations direct and control what they do. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFAs) publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" (2016 Edition), sets a framework, and the standard, for local authority governance in the UK. The Framework sets out a set of principles which we test our governance arrangements against to consider the extent to which the Authority complies with the principles of good governance as set out in the Framework. This is reported through the Annual Governance Statement. It also enables us to monitor the achievement of the Authority's priorities and to consider whether those priorities have led to the delivery of appropriate services which represent value for money.

The Governance Framework has been in place for the year ended 6 May 2024 and up to the date of approval of the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts.

This Annual Governance Statement meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (6) (1) to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls required by Regulation 3 and prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

Section 4: The Governance Framework

The core principles and outcomes of our Governance Framework are set out overleaf. This includes examples of how the Authority has adhered to its governance commitments set out in the Constitution and includes sources of further information which include more detail about how NTCA has implemented its commitments.

Principles of Good Governance

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| A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law | E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it |
| B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement | F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management |
| C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits | G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability |
| D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes | |

The Governance Framework		
A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
<i>The Authority's Commitment of Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
Behaving with Integrity	<p>The 2023/24 budget and our medium-term financial plan for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27 has been developed within the context of the Authority's strategic priorities and policy decisions made by the Mayor and Cabinet. This ensures that the Combined Authority's strategic plans are delivered within the financial resources available.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan provides a clear blueprint for the work of the Authority and shows how it will deliver on the outcomes shaped by the Mayor and Cabinet. The Plan builds on well-established portfolios, clear strategic priorities and a culture of collaboration that is knitted into everything it does.</p> <p>A Deed of Cooperation was made on the 4 July 2018 between the seven Constituent Authorities in the area which outlines a framework for collaborative working across the region.</p> <p>A register of Members' interests (including gifts and hospitality) is also maintained. The register is reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer advises on compliance with our Constitution, ensuring that decision making is lawful, fair and ethical.</p>	<p>2023-2027 Budget Proposals</p> <p>Working Together: Our Corporate Plan 2023-2024</p> <p>Gifts and Hospitality Policy</p>

	<p>Our financial management arrangements conform to the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer and are the responsibility of the NTCA Chief Finance Officer.</p>	
<p>Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values</p>	<p>Our Constitution defines our standing orders, standing financial instructions, and scheme of delegation. These clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks. We will ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer advises on compliance with our Constitution, ensuring that decision making is lawful, fair and ethical.</p> <p>Codes of conduct are set out in the Constitution, defining standards of behaviour for Members and Officers working on behalf of the Authority. Audit and Standards Committee deal with issues of conduct and generally promote high standards among officers and members.</p> <p>Our Freedom of Information Scheme is published on our website</p> <p>We ensure that there are effective arrangements for “Whistle-blowing” and for receiving and investigating complaints from the public. Administration of the Authority’s policies on anti-fraud and corruption is undertaken by Internal Audit. Whistleblowing policy and procedure is at Part 5.5 of our Constitution</p> <p>The Authority appoints Statutory Officers who have the skills, resources and support necessary to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are complied with.</p>	<p>The Constitution is available on the NTCA website.</p> <p>Cabinet Rules of Procedure (“Standing Orders”) can be found at <u>part 3.1</u> of the Constitution</p> <p>Codes of Conduct can be found at <u>Part 5.2</u> of the Constitution</p> <p>Freedom of Information Scheme</p> <p>Whistleblowing Policy</p>

	<p>Data Protection and Confidentiality; Environmental; Equalities and Diversity; Inclusive Economy, Modern Slavery; and Social Value policies are in place and available on the Transparency page of our website.</p> <p>We work with Cabinet and wider partners and stakeholders to develop a clear set of values by which we work which are outlined in our Corporate Plan.</p>	<p>Transparency Policies</p> <p>Working Together: Our Corporate Plan 2023-2024</p>
<p>Respecting the Rule of Law</p>	<p>NTCA has measures to address breaches of its legal and regulatory powers. The Authority’s Monitoring Officer has statutory reporting duties in respect of lawful decision and maladministration.</p> <p>We review and update our standing orders, standing financial instructions, scheme of delegation and support procedure notes/manuals – these clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks.</p> <p>Scheme of Delegations - The proposed scheme identifies a number of officers as “designated officers” who can exercise the delegated functions allocated to them in the scheme. These designated officers are the Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer, and Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Performance, as well as the Chief Executive of the North East LEP (whose delegation relates to North East LEP matters only).</p> <p>Our financial management arrangements conform to the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer is advised on compliance with our policy framework, ensuring that decision making is lawful and fair and ethical.</p>	<p>Constitution 2.9 – Scheme of Delegations</p>

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

The Authority's Commitment to Good Governance	How the Authority meets these principles	Where you can see Governance in action
<p>Ensuring Openness Engaging Comprehensively with Institutional Stakeholders</p>	<p>We are clear on delivering the objectives of the Combined Authority and intended outcomes of our vision. Our Corporate Plan outlines the things we are doing and will do in future – using the powers and resources from our Devolution Deal, and the rapid progress we have made since – to drive jobs, inclusion, new homes and positive economic change in our region.</p> <p>Each year NTCA produces an Annual Report which sets out the Authority's achievements and the work of the Mayor and Cabinet.</p> <p>The Authority's significant partners (Nexus and the North East LEP) provide signed assurance statements which contains an assessment of their governance and internal control systems. The statement provides additional evidence for this AGS.</p> <p>The Authority produces an Annual Report to set out the Authority's achievements and the work of the Mayor and Cabinet over the last year. This year will be the final Annual Report of the NTCA and as such reflects the lifetime of the Authority.</p> <p>The Annual Report 2023-2024 which is presented to Cabinet also includes updates from the Inclusive Economy Board</p>	<p>Working Together: Our Corporate Plan 2023-2024</p> <p>Delivering Devolution Together – Annual Report</p> <p>Cabinet report 12 March 2024 presents updates from IEB, HLB, & VCSE</p>

	<p>(IEB), the Housing and Land Board (HLB), and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Group (VCSE)</p> <p>The Elected Mayor chairs the Cabinet and Cabinet decisions will be subject to scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Elected Mayor has a number of specific powers and financial resources which Cabinet can make representations on, and which can also be subject to scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Transport is of strategic importance to the North East and together with the North East Combined Authority a North East Joint Transport Committee has been established bringing together members from across the seven local authorities, allowing effective decision making across the region to ensure that the local needs and transport priorities are delivered.</p> <p>The NTCA Adult Education Strategic Skills Plan sets out our ambitious programme for skills development. It highlights strengths, opportunities and challenges across our region and sets out the NTCA key priorities to ensure our residents have the skills to get a good job, progress in work and that employers have people with the right skills.</p> <p>The Skills for Growth programme has been developed using the flexibilities provided by devolved funding to enable investment in innovation and sector growth to be complemented by support for skills and talent pipeline development. Click on the link to read more about the skills for growth priorities.</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 and Decision Review</p> <p>North East Joint Transport Committee</p> <p>Opportunity for All – North of Tyne Strategic Skills Plan</p>
<p>Engaging stakeholders effectively, including</p>	<p>Meetings, agendas and minutes are accessible via the website. All meetings are held in public (other than where consideration of confidential or exempt information).</p>	<p>NTCA website</p>

<p>individual citizens and service users</p>	<p>We publish a register of key decisions to notify the public of the most significant decisions the Combined Authority is due to take. Details of each decision are included on the Forward Plan 28 days before the report is considered and any decision is taken. This allows an opportunity for people to find out about major decisions that NTCA is planning to take.</p> <p>Our Freedom of Information Scheme is published on our website.</p> <p>The appointment of a Mayoral Ambassador for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) and supporting Accord, which sets out a framework to deliver our shared vision of an inclusive economy.</p> <p>We continue to use Facebook and Twitter as primary social media platforms to provide information on news and events for residents, businesses and visitors.</p> <p>Our website includes a transparency page where you will find the non-financial information the North of Tyne Combined Authority is required to publish under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with our adult education providers. The hyperlink to the mid-year update provides an update on provision that has been delivered through the devolved Adult Education Budget for the period 1 August 2023 to 6 February 2024.</p> <p>The Skills Bootcamps update included within the same hyperlink as above reports on the performance of the Skills Bootcamps and describes the range of sector areas which</p>	<p>Forward Plan</p> <p>Freedom of Information Scheme</p> <p>VCSE Stakeholder Engagement Group Annual Report 2023/24</p> <p>Social Media House Rules</p> <p>Transparency Information</p> <p>Devolved Adult Education Budget – mid year update</p> <p>Skills Bootcamps update</p>
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	<p>are included i.e. digital, logistics, technical and engineering and shows over 340 employers are engaged in the Bootcamps.</p> <p>In 2022 and 2023 NTCA held three engagement events – Open the door a little wider - (2 for residents and 1 for employers) to listen to the experiences of both residents and employers focusing on challenges and successes in getting good work</p>	<p>The Open the door a little wider report presents the findings from the three events.</p>
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C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits		
<i>The Authority's Commitment to Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
<p>Defining Outcomes</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan sets out the ambitions of Cabinet for the authority for the year ahead with a roadmap for action. It captures the breadth of work undertaken and ensures activities are aligned allowing for clear collaborative working.</p> <p>The North East LEP works with its partners, which includes NTCA and NECA, to deliver the regions Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The Plan reflects on recent changes to the global and national economy as well as the UK's departure from the European Union. It also looks at how the North East can maximise opportunities around the UK's Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>We incorporate good governance arrangements in our partnerships and reflect these in our overall governance arrangements.</p>	<p>Working Together: Our Corporate Plan 2023-2024</p> <p>Strategic Economic Plan</p> <p>UK's Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>Significant Partnership Register</p>

<p>Sustainable, Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits</p>	<p>To build on the engagement that is already happening across the North of Tyne region regarding climate change, Cabinet has approved the creation of a Citizens' Assembly to look at a specific set of issues relating to climate change.</p> <p>NTCA have embedded our 'zero-carbon – zero poverty' approach; the Energy, Green Growth and Climate Change programme, improving the north bank of the Tyne, green crowdfunding and our Green New Deal which will create jobs, reduce emissions, and save money – it's the kind of innovation that's needed for local areas to become net-zero. Creating jobs need not cost the Earth.</p> <p>As part of the business planning process the Authority sets out how it will work towards its agreed equality objectives, with Equality Impact Assessments undertaken to ensure we consider the likely impact of our policies and plans on different groups of people to ensure they do not inadvertently disadvantage anyone.</p> <p>Equality implications are considered in all our decision-making reports - with reporting templates prompting report authors to record the equality implications arising from their reports.</p> <p>Our Social Value Policy sets out how the Authority will deliver social value through their commissioning and procurement activities and to set the Authority's priorities in relation to social value.</p> <p>NTCA has developed a programme to understand what 'Good Work' should look like in the North of Tyne and how NTCA can promote and reward employers that are offering the elements of 'Good Work'. This has included the</p>	<p>Zero carbon, Zero poverty: Our 5 point plan</p> <p>Annual update on NTCA's performance against its Equality Objectives</p> <p>Social Value Policy</p> <p>Good Work Pledge Article</p>
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development of a Good Work Pledge, which enables employers to understand the key elements of ‘Good Work’, what they can do to achieve this for their employees and what support is available to help them get there. The pledge covers over 40,000 employees who now have secure employment, a decent wage and proper representation and a ladder to boost skills to turn a job into a career.

The Adult Education Budget provision supports key elements of the North East Strategic Economic Plan, and the emerging Local Industrial Strategy and plays a key role in NTCA's economic growth and reform agenda.

Inclusive Economy Board was launched in March 2020 and advises the NTCA Cabinet on inclusive economy interventions across the North of Tyne area, championing the NTCA vision and supporting the area to become a national exemplar in inclusive growth

The Housing and Land Board provides robust governance around an integrated strategic approach to improving the quality and quantity of homes in the North of Tyne area.

A North of Tyne Poverty Truth Commission brought together community, civic and business representatives with people with experience of living in poverty. The Commission led to a better understanding of the specific features of poverty for people living in Newcastle, North Tyneside, and Northumberland and it produced collaborative and practical solutions. The project concluded with a final ‘call to action’ event held in January 2024 which showcased the work of the

Adult Education Budget mid-year update

Inclusive Economy Board Annual Report 2023/24

Housing and Land Board Annual Report 2023/24

Children North East to lead on Poverty Truth Commission

Education Improvement and Child Poverty Prevention Report

Poverty Truth Commission

	<p>commission and the projects developed by each of its working groups.</p> <p>Crowdfund North of Tyne will fund projects to help communities - its aim is to bring people together, create or improve green spaces, improve mental health, inspire creativity and opportunity for all, or support social enterprise and co-operative development.</p>	Crowdfund North of Tyne
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D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes		
<i>The Authority's Commitment to Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
Determining Interventions	<p>Cabinet regularly receive Budget Monitoring Reports.</p> <p>Our scrutiny arrangements enhance accountability and transparency of decision making. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can review and scrutinise decisions made by the Mayor and Cabinet and can call-in decisions where there is evidence which suggests that the decision was not taken in accordance with the principles of decision making .</p> <p>A Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol has been agreed which defines the relationship between Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, providing a framework for disagreement and debate and a way to manage it when it happens.</p>	<p>Cabinet Reports</p> <p>Constitution (Part 1.2)</p> <p>Annual Report and Decision Review</p>

	Strategic risks are owned by our Senior Leadership Team and reported to Audit and Standards Committee on a regular basis	
Optimising Achievement of Intended Outcomes	The strategic, crosscutting nature of much of the Authority's work means that delivery is often achieved through collaboration with NTCA partners and North of Tyne Council's. An example of this collaboration is in our Recover, redesign, reimagine plan which was put forward to Government demonstrating our commitment to post-covid recovery and renewal.	Recover, Redesign, Reimagine

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

<i>The Authority's Commitment to Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
Developing the Organisation's Capacity	We have defined and documented in our Constitution the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet, Scrutiny and 'proper' officer functions (Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer), with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication. The collective and individual roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet, Members and Officers have been agreed by the Combined Authority.	Part 2 Constitution – Responsibility for Functions - NTCA (northoftyne-ca.gov.uk)
Developing the Capability of the Organisation's Leadership and Other Individuals	We identify and aim to address the development needs of members and senior officers through the annual appraisal process, in relation to their strategic roles, and support these with appropriate training.	

	<p>Values and behavior’s workshops have been delivered to all staff, with staff appraisals undertaken with agreed targets and objectives linked to NTCA’s work programme.</p> <p>Staff are also reminded of our information governance/data security requirements whilst working remotely, to ensure they continue to work safely and securely. Additional health and safety modules have been made available on our Learning Management System alongside advice from the Health & Safety Executive to ensure all our staff work safely at home.</p>	
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F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management		
<i>The Authority’s Commitment to Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
Managing Risk	Our Risk and Opportunity Management Policy and Strategy outlines our arrangements for managing risk. Risk management is an integral part of our decision-making processes. To inform decision making all committee reports include a section which highlights the key risks to the decisions or proposed recommendations and how they are being addressed.	Risk Management Policy and Strategy 2023/24
Managing Performance	Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive quarterly finance reports, monitoring the Authority’s financial position and treasury management activity.	Overview and Scrutiny Committee March 2023/24 Budget Monitoring Report

	<p>Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive six monthly reports monitoring the financial position of the North East LEP and Invest North East England.</p>	<p>Funding Decisions Reports</p>
<p>Effective Overview and Scrutiny</p>	<p>Our scrutiny arrangements enhance accountability and transparency of decision making. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee acts in accordance with the principles of decision making as set out in our Constitution (Part 1.2) and will call-in decisions where there is evidence which suggests that the decision was not taken in accordance with the principles.</p> <p>A Cabinet Scrutiny Protocol has been agreed which defines the relationship between Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, providing a framework for disagreement and debate and a way to manage it when it happens.</p> <p>There are regular meetings between the Mayor and the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Adoption of Cabinet-Scrutiny Protocol</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 and Decision Review</p>
<p>Robust Internal Control</p>	<p>An Officer holds the position of Data Protection Officer and is responsible for overseeing the Authority's Data Protection and Confidentiality Strategy and its implementation to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p> <p>The Authority regularly reviews policies relating to records management, data quality, data protection and information security.</p> <p>The Audit and Standards Committee acts as principle advisory committee to NTCA, providing independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and internal control environment.</p>	<p>Data Protection and Confidentiality Strategy</p> <p>Audit and Standards Committee</p>

	<p>An assessment of the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the Authority's internal auditors. The Chief Internal Auditor will provide an annual opinion for 2023/24 to support this Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>A 2023/24 Strategic Audit Plan which was approved by Audit and Standards Committee April 2023, has been prepared to ensure Internal Audit resources are deployed in areas that will provide optimum benefit and value to the Authority. Progress against the 2022/23 Audit Plan was reported to Audit and Standards Committee at its January 2023 meeting.</p>	<p>Internal_Audit reports to Audit & Standards Committee</p>
<p>Managing Data</p>	<p>All staff must undertake data protection e-learning training annually. The programme of training and awareness for all staff and members continued during 2023/24.</p> <p>The Authority makes information available to the public via the information access regimes provided for by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.</p>	<p>Freedom of Information Scheme</p>
<p>Strong Public Financial Management</p>	<p>The control and financial management arrangements are reviewed by internal and external audit throughout the year. The outcomes for 2023/24 are noted in Section 5 of this Annual Governance Statement – Annual Review of Effectiveness of Governance Framework.</p>	

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

<i>The Authority's Commitment to Good Governance</i>	<i>How the Authority meets these principles</i>	<i>Where you can see Governance in action</i>
Implementing Good Practice in Transparency	<p>Mayor's Question Time – Mayor Driscoll hosts regular themed online Mayor's question time, welcoming questions and comments on key issues.</p> <p>We publish details of delegated decisions on our website.</p> <p>We publish NTCA's £500+ spend monthly</p>	<p>How can devolution help us get to net zero</p> <p>delegated decisions website.</p> <p>2022/23 Transparency Spend Documents</p>
Implementing Good Practices in Reporting	<p>We ensure that our Audit and Standards Committee undertakes the core functions identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018.</p> <p>Internal Audit compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards</p> <p>Production of the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts</p>	<p>Review of Audit and Standards Committee Arrangements</p>
Assurance and Effective Accountability	<p>The Assurance Framework explains the arrangements for NTCA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that arrangements are in place to ensure accountable and transparent decision-making • Appraise projects and allocate funding; and • Monitor and evaluate projects to ensure that they achieve value for money and projected outcomes <p>The Assurance Framework has been designed to meet the National Guidance for Single Pot Assurance Frameworks,</p>	

	<p>issued by MHCLG for localities in receipt of a Single Pot as part of their Devolution Deals.</p> <p>Section 5 of this Annual Governance Statement provides the views of our internal and external auditors. Auditors report regularly to Audit and Standards Committee and provide their annual opinion on the adequacy of the effectiveness of our governance, risk and control framework.</p> <p>The Authority monitors the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations. Audit and Standards Committee receive regular reports summarising performance regarding implementation of recommendations.</p> <p>Information on expenditure, performance and decision making is sited together on the Transparency page of the Authority's website and can be accessed quickly and easily.</p>	
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Section 5: Annual Review of Effectiveness of Governance Framework

We have a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of our governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review is led by Officers and Members of Audit and Standards Committee who provide independence and challenge.

The review is informed by:

- (a) An assessment of the Authority's Constitution, including its committee structure.
- (b) The views of Internal Audit.
- (c) Assurance from Statutory Officers, including the Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Senior Information Risk Owner, through written signed statements.
- (d) The views of External Auditors.
- (e) Activity of the Audit and Standards Committee, including ethical governance
- (f) Partnerships, including the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and Nexus, through a written signed statement
- (g) The Risk Management process, particularly the Strategic Risk Register
- (h) Performance information which is reported to Cabinet and other meetings on a regular basis.

Section 6: North East Devolution Deal and Election of a Mayor

The leaders of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland councils have agreed to a devolution deal for the region which will unlock £4.2 billion of investment, over 30 years, and see additional powers transferred from Whitehall to local people with better knowledge and experience of our communities.

This deal is expected to create 24,000 extra jobs, create 70,000 courses to give people the skills to get good jobs and lever £5.0 billion of private sector investment. It represents a significant opportunity to make a difference to people who live and work in the North East and could have a hugely positive impact on the big issues that matter.

Whether that is new and better paid jobs, more affordable housing or placing ourselves at the forefront of Net Zero revolution, the chance of more decision-making powers and millions of pounds in funding will have a major impact on the North East.

The devolution deal is subject to adopting the model of a directly elected mayor over the whole of the Combined Area and replacing the North of Tyne Mayoral Combined Authority and the North East Combined Authority, with a single new North East Mayoral Combined Authority.

The new authority, which would cover an area which is home to around 2 million people, will have the power to make decisions on areas such as transport, skills, housing, finance and economic development. This will result in the functions of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport North East and Invest North East England being delivered by the new combined authority.

Following an order being laid in Parliament to establish the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority election will take place in May 2024 to elect a Mayor for the region. The new authority will be formed on 7 May 2024.

We the North of Tyne Combined Authority have a strong track record on governance, accountability and transparency measures having successfully passed our Gateway Review therefore the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority will maintain and build on this track record.

An interim Corporate Plan for the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority is available.

Section 7: Significant Weaknesses in Governance and Internal Control

The system of governance (including the system of internal control) can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period, that value for money is being secured and that significant risks impacting on the achievement of our objectives have been mitigated.

The review highlighted no significant weaknesses in governance or internal control during 2023/24.

Section 8: Conclusion

We consider the governance and internal control environment operating during 2023/24, to provide reasonable and objective assurance that any significant risks impacting on the achievement of our principal objectives will be identified and actions taken to avoid or mitigate their impact.

The annual review has shown that the arrangements for 2023/24 are in place and operating as planned.

Mayor of the North of Tyne Combined Authority

Chief Executive

Full Name:

Full Name:

Signature:

Date:

Signature:

Date:

