

A meeting of the: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
will be held on: **Tuesday 4 February 2025**
at: **10.00am**
in: **the Reception Room, Town Hall & Civic Offices, Westoe Road,
South Shields, NE33 2RL**
to consider the following

AGENDA

	Page No
1. Apologies To record any apologies for absence and the attendance of any substitute members.	
2. Declarations of Interest Members of the committee are required to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest, in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members .	
3. Minutes To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 November 2024. The notes of a meeting of committee members held on 10 December 2025 are also attached for information.	3 - 9
4. Education Improvement Programme To consider the latest position and planned actions relating to education improvement activity and to make any comments and/or recommendation as to how the initiatives may be developed in the future.	10 - 15
5. Supporting people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment To consider the Authority's emerging programmes to support people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment and to make any comments and/or recommendation as to how they be developed in the future.	16 - 21
6. Highways Infrastructure Funding To examine the proposed approach to regional highways maintenance funding.	To follow

7. **2024/25 Budget Monitoring Position Update** **22 - 31**
To review the revised budget position for 2024/25.
8. **Work Programme** **32 - 41**
To review the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.
9. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
To note that the next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 10.00am in Quadrant, North Tyneside.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 November 2024

(10.00am)

Meeting held in: Committee Room 1, City Hall, Sunderland

Minutes

Present: Councillor Colin Ferguson (Chair)
Councillor Rob Crute
Councillor Steve Fairlie
Councillor Brian Gallacher
Councillor Chris Lines
Councillor John McCabe
Councillor Dominic McDonough
Councillor Jim Montague
Councillor Claire Rowntree
Councillor Willie Samuel
Councillor Dawn Welsh

OSC10/11/24 Apologies for Absence and Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Richard Dodd.

Councillor Charlie Gray. Councillor Willie Samuel attended the meeting as his substitute.

Councillor Antony Mullen. Councillor Dominic McDonough attended the meeting as his substitute.

Councillor Linda Wright. Councillor Steve Fairlie attended the meeting as her substitute.

OSC11/11/24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Colin Ferguson declared a Registerable Personal Interest in relation to the Authority's child poverty reduction initiatives (Minute OSC14/11/24) by virtue of his employment with Altitude Foundation.

OSC12/11/24 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

OSC13/11/24 Unlocking Finance for North East Businesses to start, and to grow

The Cabinet had approved proposals to create new equity and loan products for regional businesses underserved by the mainstream market. Janice Gillespie, Director of Finance and Investment, and Mark Stamper, Head of Economic Delivery, presented details of the funds.

One fund would respond to the main gap in available finance which would emerge when the current North East Fund ceased investing in December 2024. This fund would be in the region of £90m in size, made up from £60m of Combined Authority investment (borrowing and grant) and £30m of legacy funding to be recycled from previous regional funds). Another fund would target risk tolerant and patient investment at relatively high-risk, high-growth potential early-stage ventures, starting up because of commercialisation of research and innovation activity in our universities, NHS and Catapults. This fund would be in the region of £28m, made up from £10m of North East CA investment and co-investment from regional universities. This fund would provide early-stage funding to turn innovative research and novel technologies into scaling businesses based in the region. The North East Fund Limited, would operate the funds and undertake the role of ‘implementing body’ including the procurement and management of fund managers.

The Committee sought assurances as to how the risks associated with the funds would be managed by the North East Fund, the fund managers and the Authority through its Single Assurance Framework (SAF). The Committee acknowledged the role of the Audit and Standards Committee in reviewing the application of the SAF and its intention to do so at a workshop to be held in November 2024. Members agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ought to work in conjunction with the Audit and Standards Committee so that it too could be assured of the effectiveness of the SAF and noted that the topic had already been included in the work programme.

The Committee also asked a series of questions when the following aspects of the funds were examined in more detail:

- a) how the funds would form part of a broader range of support offered to local businesses;
- b) how the funds would have a clear focus on supporting businesses with a material interest in the North East area;
- c) how the use of the funds and their impact in terms of economic growth would be spread and evaluated across the 7 constituent council areas;
- d) whether the initial recyclable investment represented value for money;
- e) the benefits of local fund managers being present in the region, understanding local needs and attracting new and additional flows of capital into the region; and
- f) the extent to which the funds would address the long term structural problem of low availability of investment in the region.

It was **agreed** that:

1. the Committee work in conjunction with the Audit and Standards Committee to review the operation of the Authority’s Single Assurance Framework;
2. the Committee receive a progress report in relation to the management of the funds at a future meeting in 12 months time; and
3. a briefing note setting out initial progress be provided to members of the Committee after 6 months.

OSC14/11/24 Child Poverty Reduction

Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, and Jackie Laughton, Director of Operations, attended the meeting to present and discuss details of the Authority’s child poverty reduction initiatives.

An allocation of £2.7m from the Investment Fund had been approved to extend child poverty reduction work in schools, workplaces and families across the North East area during the 2024/25 academic year. The Cabinet had also recently agreed to establish a Child Poverty Reduction Unit. The purpose of the Unit would be to create a convening and delivery function which could marshal evidence, bring partners together, accelerate work with central government and influence how the Authority’s investment in areas like job creation, skills, transport and housing would directly impact on the people who need it the most.

The Committee asked a series of questions and made comments in relation to the initiatives when the following issues were discussed in more detail:

- a) how the programmes would engage with hard to reach children who may not be attending school;
- b) whether the £0.5m to be invested in the establishment of the Child Poverty Reduction Unit would be better spent supporting existing child poverty prevention initiatives. In response the Chief Executive set out the aim of the unit in terms of building a strategic long term and collaborative approach to child poverty reduction in the region, building on existing initiatives and sharing best practice;
- c) the opportunity for the child poverty initiatives to facilitate minor adjustments in how services are delivered depending on the local situation so everyone felt included and the role of the Authority in normalising those messages and approach at a strategic level;
- d) the Authority's intention to draw together the two different approaches to the child poverty reduction work in schools in the northern and southern parts of the region into a single unified programme which would still recognise and support local needs; and
- e) the scale of the challenge in tackling child poverty and the connections between the Authority's regional approach and the impact of national policies.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and for answering members questions and he indicated that the Committee were likely to return to the topic at a future meeting.

OSC15/11/24 Mayor's Opportunity Fund

The Committee met with Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, and Jackie Laughton, Director of Operations, to examine proposals to establish a Mayor's Opportunity Fund. The Fund would involve an investment of £1million in a community grants programme supporting activities delivered by small charities and grassroots community groups. To be eligible applicants would have to be based and working within the region, have an annual income of less than £500,000 per year, have at least two board or committee members who were not related and have a bank account in the organisation's name. Four rounds of funding would be allocated over a two-year period with the first funding round due to be launched in November 2024, would seek to invest £225,000 in activity that supports cohesion, inclusion and resilience in some of the most socially and economically deprived areas. Grants would range from £1,000 to £10,000.

The Committee welcomed the fund as it provided much needed investment in small and grassroots groups who were well placed to make a positive impact in their communities. Members also commented on the scale and delivery of the Fund. In particular, the Committee:

- a) highlighted the relatively small amount of investment (£1m over two years) compared to the amounts already being invested by constituent councils to support community groups;
- b) queried the need to appoint an external delivery partner when constituent councils had existing mechanisms in place to administer the promotion, awarding, monitoring and evaluation of grants. Systems such as the Area Action Partnerships in Durham and those developed by town and parish councils had built up a wealth of knowledge and experience and members urged the Authority to consider utilising existing mechanisms to effectively deliver its grants;
- c) asked whether support could be offered to community groups on how to apply for the grants;
- d) suggested that priority be given to applications from those organisations who have not previously been in receipt of grant funding so that the Fund could act to plug gaps in the sector;
- e) stated that some organisations required very small amounts of funding and whether there was a possibility of offering grants of less than £1000; and
- f) emphasised the importance of engaging and empowering grassroots organisations in communities to help tackle the issues of poverty and deprivation.

It was **agreed** that the comments set out above be referred to relevant officers to be considered as part of the mobilisation of the Mayor's Opportunity Fund.

OSC16/11/24 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee considered a revised work programme following work with the Chair and Deputy Chair to reflect on comments and suggestions made by members at its previous meeting. It was suggested that the Committee should consider housing issues as part of its work programme, including details of new housing bills, the private rentals sector and new homes building.

It was **agreed** that:

1. the revised Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be approved;
2. the Chair and Vice Chair be authorised to continually review and revise the work programme as necessary so that the Committee can react to changes within the Authority and so scrutiny can be undertaken on policy development as it evolves; and
3. the work programme be included as a standing item on the agenda of future Committee meetings to provide an opportunity for members to review the work programme, suggest items for inclusion and agree any changes.

Meeting of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 December 2024

(10.00am)

Meeting held in: Swan/Parson Room, Newcastle Civic Centre

Notes

Present:

- Councillor Colin Ferguson
- Councillor Steve Fairlie
- Councillor John Eagle
- Councillor Willie Samuel
- Councillor Jim Yare
- Councillor Les Bowman
- Councillor Rob Crute
- Councillor Dawn Welsh
- Councillor Tracy Dodds

The following items of business were considered by members and substitute members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when there were an insufficient number of members present to conduct a quorate meeting of the Committee.

1. North East Environmental Stewardship, Coast and Rural Growth Investment Plan

At its meeting on 26 November 2024, the Cabinet had approved an Environmental Stewardship, Coast and Rural Growth Investment Plan. The plan had been progressed as an early priority for the Authority as both the Mayoral Manifesto and the Devolution Deals were clear that future economic growth needed to benefit all, including those who faced rural disadvantage. The plan sought to create and deliver new solutions to environmental stewardship and coastal and rural growth opportunities and challenges, making use of natural assets to combat climate change and build better places to live.

In approving the plan, the Cabinet had approved:

- a) an indicative budget allocation of £15.75m to facilitate the delivery of the Investment Plan, focussed on the following two priority areas, £7.25m for the environment and nature and £8.5m for rural and coastal growth; and
- b) a £1.25m Environment, Coast & Rural Enabling Fund, including £300k for resources to oversee the implementation of the Investment Plan and to provide secretariat support for a Rural & Coastal Taskforce; £300k for a climate resilience pilot; and £650k to support the development of investible propositions in accordance with the strategic priorities set out in the plan.

The programmes set out in the Plan were indicative at this stage and subject to the usual business case development and approval processes as required by the Authority's Single Assurance Framework.

Councillor Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coast and Rural, had been invited to the meeting but had been unable to attend due to other commitments. Members discussed different aspects of the Plan with Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, Ross Lowrie, Principal Manager (Low Carbon Growth and Net Zero) and Sarah McMillan, Northumberland County Council's Director of Economic and Growth. During the discussion the following issues were considered in more detail:

- a) how the Authority would balance different, potentially conflicting aims, such as recovering local nature and preserving land whilst also supporting tourism, economic growth and house building,
- b) the extent, definition and significance of rural areas in the region and the need for a definition of coastal areas,
- c) the poor condition of the region's National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), funding pressures on work to protect areas like the Northumberland Coast and the opportunity to develop and implement high integrity carbon and nature markets to repair and restore landscapes and nature,
- d) the opportunity to attract inward investment which will generate biodiversity net gain, nature recovery and reduce carbon emissions,
- e) the Authority's approach to natural carbon capture,
- f) how the allocations agreed by Cabinet represented the first phase of investment. The Authority working with others would use the indicative funding to seek further investment and to leverage an overall package of at least £25m of activity over the next 5 years,
- g) the connections between the Investment Plan and other related portfolios such as transport, tourism, housing and skills,
- h) the merits of supporting innovative and emerging technologies as opposed to revisiting traditional rural and coastal industries such as mineral extraction and fishing and
- i) the value of the plan in providing a value set within which the Authority could adapt and respond to new legislation and government policy.

2. Budget Monitoring Position as at 30 September 2024

Members examined the Authority's revised budget plan for 2024/25, showing the updated positions for the corporate budget and delivery programmes. The report included a summary of performance in relation to the Authority's programmes, a review of treasury management at the mid-year point and a statement of the Authority's reserves. The report had previously been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 26 November 2024.

Members asked a series of questions of Janice Gillespie, Director of Finance and Investment, when the following aspects of the report were examined in more detail:

- a) the reasons for a total of £449.363million of cash balances currently being held as investments,
- b) the timetable of the ongoing Local Transport Plan consultation which would close after the Committee's budget workshop on 14 January 2024, but before the Cabinet were due to consider and approve its Budget and Corporate Plan on 28 January 2024,
- c) the differences between the Authority's Strategic Reserve and its Strategic Capacity Reserve and
- d) clarification in relation to the meaning of committed and uncommitted funds in the report.

Officers undertook to provide members of the Committee with supplementary information in relation to:

- i) the operating profit of TT2 Ltd, the operator of the Tyne Tunnels; and
- ii) details of the Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) maturity loans held by the Authority.

Members confirmed their desire to examine on a regular basis budget monitoring and performance management reports. Members also asked that they be provided with training to help them to read and interpret the Authority's budget monitoring reports.

3. 2025-26 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Plan

Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, and Janice Gillespie, Director of Finance and Investment, presented the Authority's initial 2025-26 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Plan proposals. Members were invited to make any comments which would be taken into account in formulating the final proposals. The final proposals would be presented to a budget workshop to be held on Tuesday 14 January 2024 when the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be provided with a further opportunity to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Members asked questions and made comments in relation to:

- a) the governance of the Authority and in particular the role and membership of the advisory boards, which were to be reviewed annually, and the officer and political level collaboration between the Authority's committees and boards. It was suggested that these connections could be better reflected in the Corporate Plan,
- b) balancing investment in new and emerging industries with support for existing and available options for economic growth,
- c) the interdependency between the Authority and its constituent councils and the implications for the Authority of financial pressures within its constituent councils,
- d) the need for a performance management framework to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the Authority's activities over the long term,
- e) the need for resilience in the regional economy so that it could respond to market changes and maximise the potential for developing supply chains to support inward investment,
- f) how the Authority could support young people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment and help fill gaps in local authority provision. Members expressed an interest in examining these programmes in more detail, including the Connect to Work programme and
- g) the Authority's overall approach to driving transformational growth in the regional economy, encompassing inward investment, development of the foundational economy and investment in skills and transport.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Chair suggested that the focus of the budget workshop in January should be on:

- a) seeking evidence of a golden thread between the missions set out in the Corporate Plan and the spending plans set out in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan;
- b) examining whether the budget contains adequate resourcing to achieve the Authority's stated missions; and
- c) exploring the proposed performance monitoring arrangements to better understand expected outputs, outcomes and milestones and how these would be measured to ensure they were being delivered.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chair sought members views on the option of appointing a task and finish group to examine the business case for the re-opening of the Leamside railway line. A number of members expressed their support for such an exercise and indicated they would be willing to serve on a group.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2025

Title: Education Improvement Programme
Report of: Adrian Dougherty, Interim Strategic Leader for Skills, Inclusion and Public Service Reform

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Combined Authority education improvement initiatives which are underway or planned over the coming months.

This report provides a summary of the current challenges for the region, and summarises the position at the beginning of 2025, regarding the mobilisation of current funding allocations in the policy area. This includes Investment Fund allocation of £2.1m to extend education improvement work to support education settings across the North East Combined Authority region during 2024/25 academic year. As work commences to agree a new set of priorities by regional stakeholders, including Directors of Education from our constituent Local Authorities, the report highlights examples of the ongoing work in this policy area for context.

Councillor Tracey Dixon, North East CA Cabinet Member for Education, Inclusion and Skills, and relevant officers have accepted an invitation to attend today's meeting to present details of these programmes, discuss their development and receive members' comments to help shape and influence future developments.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the latest position and planned actions relating to education improvement activity and to make any comments and/or recommendation as to how the initiatives may be developed in the future.

A. Context

1. Background

- 1.1. According to Schools North East's analysis of the 2024 GCSE results, 65.3% of GCSE students in the North East received a grade 4 or above, with 17.6% receiving a 7 or above. This represents a 1.2% increase on 2019, before the pandemic, and represents the third highest increase in the country. However, despite the increase, the North East had the lowest rates of top grades, which continues a longstanding trend. London saw the largest increase in top grades, with the gap between London and the North East rising from 9.3% in 2019 to 10.7% in 2024.
- 1.2. Similarly, despite the increased percentage of North East students receiving top A-Level grades this year compared with pre-pandemic levels, the gap in top grades between our region and London has increased from 3.9% in 2019 to 7.4 % in 2024. However, context is key - our schools are often portrayed in a negative way on a national level, but this fails to take into account the educational challenges and high-impact long-term deprivations some of our communities face.
- 1.3. Ultimately, the exam results in 2024 continue to map the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most deprived regions like the North East. Rates of disadvantage have increased significantly since 2019, and already stretched services that support students and young people are working at capacity. By the end of Key Stage 4, students from disadvantaged backgrounds were 18.1 months

behind their peers in 2019. In 2022, this had risen to 18.8 months. The gap has increased at all stages of education, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds 4.8 months behind their peers before starting school.

- 1.4. Persistent absence rates are double the pre-pandemic rates and the region has consistently had amongst the highest rates of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in children, rising from 12.6% in 2019/20 to 14.6% in 2023/24, and now the highest in England. This places significant pressures on schools, teachers and Local Authority funding.
- 1.5. Attendance has been a key challenge for schools this year and, while absence rates have improved on the previous year, they remain above pre-pandemic levels.¹ GCSE students in the North East had the highest absence rates in the 2022/23 academic year. Pupils in Year 11 have also been more likely to regularly miss lessons than other year groups in the last academic year. Almost a third of last year's GCSE cohort missed at least 10% of lessons, double the pre-pandemic rate.²
- 1.6. There are no great schools without great teachers. A key barrier to improvement in some of our secondary schools is that they struggle to recruit, retain and develop great teachers. Regional insight tells us that our existing leadership development programmes have proven strengths but could benefit from further development. We see a need to incorporate elements of training to address the current challenges of school leadership. Nationally, we know that the wider context in which Headteachers operate can create pressure that leads to excessive workload that distracts teachers from teaching. Not enough early career teachers receive the high-quality support they need to build the foundation for a successful career. For too many, a career in teaching does not adapt to their expertise and lives outside of the classroom.
- 1.7. Local Authorities report increasing numbers of residents requiring support numbers due to poverty, and the individual impact of poverty in later life is grave. According to work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, children growing up in poverty face significant negative impacts on their future prospects. Children who qualify for free school meals are less likely than those who don't to obtain good English and Maths GCSEs. This is likely to also impact their future job prospects, and children who grow up in poverty generally report lower earnings in adulthood and fewer hours worked.³

2. Combined Authority investments

- 2.1. The Mayor's manifesto commits to lifting children in the North East out of poverty through a long-term, structural approach; proposing potential interventions such as: ensuring every investment decision has a measurable impact on child poverty; developing Sure Start-style children's services; and developing a Mayoral childcare grant. The education improvement work is closely aligned with, and positively contributes to, the ambitions of the Mayor and Cabinet to reduce child poverty.
- 2.2. The North East Devolution Deal commits to enable education recovery to address COVID learning loss, addressing disparities and improving life chances for our children throughout their time in education, starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Furthermore, the Devolution Deal commits support and enables collaboration between all parts of our local education system.
- 2.3. In June 2024 the North East Combined Authority committed funding to enable delivery of a programme of work across all seven constituent Local Authorities – building on three years of work with schools, Multi Academy Trusts, Local Authorities, Teaching School Hubs, Research Schools, Higher Education establishments and the wider education sector.
- 2.4. In September 2024, the North East CA Cabinet agreed to the convening of a Child Poverty Reduction Summit to bring together stakeholders as part of a cross-regional call to action and the scoping of a long-term approach and approved an indicative budget of £500K for the establishment of a North East Combined Authority Child Poverty Reduction Unit. The education improvement work highlighted in this report will contribute to the CPRU.

3. Progress to date

¹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>

² <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2023/06/year-11-attendance-this-year/>

³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/child-poverty>

Investment Fund allocation of £2.1m for education improvement objectives to support schools during the 2024/25 academic year.

- 3.1. Following investment fund allocation from North of Tyne Combined Authority in March 2024 and investment fund allocation from the North East Combined Authority in June 2024, work is currently being mobilised through commissioned services and grant funded support across three interlinked objectives through commissioned services and grant funded support: 1) School Improvement; 2) Professional Development; 3) Responding to Local Priorities.
- 3.2. There are currently 492 schools supported (from a total of 844 across the North East CA region) across 748 points of engagement.
- 3.3. Work currently underway includes a region-wide whole school approach to oracy, early literacy skills development, cultural capital projects, mental health support for children and young people, professional development for teachers and school leaders, a project to reduce school exclusions, projects to improve transition between school phases for vulnerable pupils, climate change engagement, reading for pleasure/reading fluency interventions and support for a regional festival of languages. 42 schools across the region have also accessed North East CA 'Inspire' Grants, a grant programme designed to enable schools to focus on, and address, an identified issue or need which aligns with the aims of the North East CA's Education Improvement programme.
- 3.4. It is intended that these outputs will result in a combination of outcomes including improved pupil measures (including attendance and attainment), and improvements in teacher and leader retention and progression.
- 3.5. Following North East CA Cabinet's approval of funding, and business case approval in July and August, Officers have been working with colleagues across constituent authorities, to develop delivery plans to respond to needs in Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

4. Future Developments

- 4.1. Work is underway with regional stakeholders, including Education Directors from constituent Local Authorities, to identify the new regional priorities which will inform the strategic direction of the education improvement programme from September 2025.
- 4.2. The strategic direction will also consider the aims of the new Child Poverty Reduction Unit to build a strategic, long-term and collaborative approach to addressing child poverty in the region.
- 4.3. Initial discussions and research have identified the following priority areas: Inclusion, Realising Potential and Teacher Wellbeing and Development.
- 4.4. Subject to final agreement, the work on Inclusion will focus on, but is not limited to, projects and interventions that support school attendance, the social, emotional mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, and transitions both into school and within phases.
- 4.5. The Realising Potential priority area will, subject to final agreement, invest in projects that allow for Action Research and the Sharing of Best Practice, support skill development in Literacy, Oracy and Mathematics for our most disadvantaged children and young people, and promote Cultural and Social Capital.
- 4.6. The Teacher Wellbeing and Development priority area will invest in the skills, resilience, and leadership of our teachers, to create a sustainable culture of excellence. This will include coaching and mentoring, supervision and wellbeing for school leaders and through investing in high quality professional development.
- 4.7. The programme will, where appropriate, take into account, and contribute to, central Government work and emerging work from the North East CA Public Service Reform Portfolio around children with special educational needs and disabilities.

- 4.8. The programme will also work alongside the North East CA Skills for Business and Adult Skills Teams around careers advice and guidance, and on reducing regional levels of children and young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).

B. Potential Impact on Objectives

1. This programme of work and approach aligns with and contributes to the North East CA's commitment to champion the full potential of the region, collaborating with partners and Local Authorities to create a better way of life by connecting communities, giving people the skills to succeed, and improving wellbeing for all.
2. By tackling educational challenges, this work will contribute to the North East CA commitments to achieve a fairer, successful North East, helping people to thrive and reducing inequalities. Specifically, this programme contributes to Mission 1, to create a 'home of real opportunity' by investing in the foundations of the economy and removing barriers that prevent people succeeding.

C. Equalities Implications

1. The North East CA follows the Public Sector Equality duty and the work referenced in this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010.
2. The activity outlined in this report, and a forthcoming Education Improvement Strategy will contribute to the North East CA equality objectives, including deepening our understanding of the inequalities faced by residents in our region and the impact of those on people's lives.

D. Consultation and Engagement

1. Consultation has taken place with Directors of Children's Services, Directors of Education and their respective teams within each Local Authority, Multi Academy Trust leaders, Teaching School Hubs, Research Schools, Higher Education establishments and education specialists.
2. Schools will be engaged in workstreams through partnership work with Local Authorities, Multi Academy Trusts and other stakeholder/influencer groups as well as commissioned providers.
3. Consultation has taken place with officers at constituent Local Authorities and it is anticipated that further consultation and engagement will take place once specific priority areas are finalised by Education Directors.

E. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft North East CA Vision for Education, Schools and Inclusion.

F. Background Papers

Cabinet Paper, North of Tyne Combined Authority, Education Improvement Programme, March 2024
Cabinet Paper, North East Combined Authority, Education Improvement Programme, June 2024

G. Contact Officers

Andrew Garrad, Senior Programme Manager (Education Improvement)
andrew.garrad@northeast-ca.gov.uk

Adrian Dougherty, Interim Strategic Leader for Skills, Inclusion and Public Service Reform
Adrian.dougherty@northeast-ca.gov.uk

H. Glossary

CPRU	Child Poverty Reduction Unit
North East CA	North East Combined Authority

Our Vision

An inclusive Education Improvement Programme that creates a home of real opportunity, where all children and young people – regardless of their background - have equal opportunities to realise their potential and be part of the region's future success.

Our Education Improvement Programme reflects the ambition of the Mayoral Combined Authority and collaborates with our constituent Local Authorities to create opportunity for all. Rooted in the values of inclusion, equity, and partnership, we will deliver transformative change that supports every child, teacher, and community to thrive.

We will deliver against three Priority Areas.

- 1) **Inclusion.** We are committed to breaking down barriers to success, ensuring that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, is valued, supported, and included in a nurturing and positive learning environment. This will include projects and interventions to support Attendance, Social, Emotional Mental Health & Wellbeing, and Transitions both into school and within phases.
- 2) **Realising Potential.** We will enable all learners to achieve their full potential. We will work with Local Authority school improvement teams, school leaders, and community partners to address inequalities and deliver high-impact interventions that create a level playing field for every child. We will invest in projects that allow for Action Research and the Sharing of Best Practice, support skill development in Literacy, Oracy and Mathematics, and promote Cultural and Social Capital.
- 3) **Teacher Wellbeing & Development.** Recognising that great schools are built on empowered educators, we will prioritise staff wellbeing and professional growth. By investing in the skills, resilience, and leadership of our teachers, we will create a sustainable culture of excellence. This will include Coaching and Mentoring, Supervision and Wellbeing for School Leaders and investing in High Quality Professional Development for educators.

We will work in partnership with:

- Central Government and the North East CA Public Service Reform Portfolio on the SEND agenda.
- The newly formed Child Poverty Reduction Unit
- The North East CA Skills for Business and Adult Skills Teams around careers advice and guidance, and on reducing regional levels of children and young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2025

Title: Supporting people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment.

Report of: Leigh Mills, Head of Skills and Inclusion

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information to enable the Committee to undertake a scrutiny exercise to examine and comment on how the Authority can support people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment, including the new Connect to Work and Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programmes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the Authority's emerging programmes to support people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment and to make any comments and/or recommendation as to how they be developed in the future.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 In considering the Authority's budget proposals at its meeting 10 December 2024, members of the Committee queried how the Authority could support young people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment and help fill gaps in local authority provision. Members expressed an interest in examining these programmes in more detail, including the Connect to Work programme.
- 3.2 In response, and following consultation with the Chair, an invitation was made to and accepted by Councillor Tracey Dixon, North East CA Cabinet Member for Education, Inclusion and Skills, and relevant officers to attend today's meeting to present details of these programmes, discuss their development and receive members' comments to help shape and influence the Authority's approach. Members are invited to comment on the development and implementation of the new Connect to Work Programme and Economic Inactivity Trailblazer activity and agree to receive future updates on the impact and outcomes associated with this new activity.
- 3.3 The following sections within this report provide an overview of the national and regional context; the North East Labour Market and current employment support system; and finally details of new more specialist programmes to support people into work.

4. National and regional policy context

National context: Get Britain Working White Paper

- 4.1 The recently published 'Get Britain Working' White Paper sets out the UK Government's plans to tackle high levels of economic inactivity and unemployment, and to raise skills and productivity. Addressing these challenges is key to the Government's plans to boost economic growth and living standards, tackle poverty and inequality, and improve the health of the nation. Central to this mission is the long-term ambition to achieve an 80% employment rate in the UK, which would mean over 2 million more people in work. This ambition is built on three pillars:

1. Modern Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans, to create more good jobs in every part of the UK.
 2. Improving the quality and security of work through the 'Make Work Pay Plan' which aims to tackle low pay, poor working conditions and poor job security.
 3. Significant reforms to employment support, including integrating skills and health services to get more people into work and to progress in work.
- 4.2 'Get Britain Working' focuses on the third pillar: reforming employment support to ensure everyone in the country has the opportunity for secure, rewarding and fulfilling work. Key reforms include:
- Scaling up and deepening the contribution of the NHS and wider health system to improve employment outcomes, including reducing NHS waiting times, increasing access to mental health services, and an increased focus on prevention to stop people from becoming ill.
 - Backing local areas to deliver effective work, health and skills support for local people, with mayoral combined authorities leading the way. Eight place-based trailblazers, including the North East, will trial new interventions to reduce economic inactivity among people with health conditions and disabilities. The new Connect to Work programme will help people with health conditions and those facing complex barriers to find sustainable work.

Regional Context

- 4.3 Investing in job creation, good work, and a skilled regional workforce lie at the heart of the North East Mayor's manifesto commitments and through our Devolution Deal with government we have secured more resources to invest in boosting skills and employment, alongside additional powers to influence skills, careers, and employment support policy. This is giving our region more freedom and flexibility to support people to develop their skills, find good work, and progress in employment, and help our businesses to develop, recruit and retain the skilled workforce they need to thrive.
- 4.4 The North East Mayor's Child Poverty Reduction Unit has committed to support parents into employment or with career progression by establishing a Mayoral Childcare Grant Programme.
- 4.5 Through our emerging Local Growth Plan (Creating Real Opportunity) the North East Combined Authority will invest in our businesses, key sectors, and workforce skills, in partnership with government, the private sector and other stakeholders, to create a thriving North East economy with opportunities that all our residents can contribute to and benefit from.
- 4.6 Finally the creation of the new North East CA Employment and Skills Strategy will play a vital role in building the sound employment and skills foundations the region needs to achieve our Local Growth Plan ambitions and the Mayor's Manifesto commitments. It will position the region to capitalise on good quality new jobs and skills opportunities in our growing sectors, at the same time as tackling the challenges facing our labour market. It will play a crucial role in achieving our ambitions to deliver a more prosperous, greener, inclusive economy, providing good work for all our residents and the right conditions for our businesses to thrive - a new deal for North East workers.

5. An overview of the North East Labour Market

Challenges

- 5.1 There are too many people in our region who are not working at all or are struggling to stay in work. The North East CA area has a consistently higher economic inactivity rate than the national average - currently one quarter of working age people in the North East CA area are economically inactive. Excluding students this is 247,900 people. The largest groups of unemployed and economically inactive people need help to get jobs and keep them, including: people with health conditions and disabilities; caring responsibilities; or facing other barriers (e.g. homelessness, ex-offenders, language barriers).
- 5.2 Health inequality is a significant and entrenched challenge in the North East. Healthy life expectancy in the region for males is 60.4 years of age compared to a national average of 64.1; and 61.9 years of age for females compared to 65.5 for England. The region has a persistently high rate of economic inactivity among residents experiencing long-term sickness, health conditions, and disabilities. The number of people economically inactive due to poor health and disability has been

growing in recent years, and there are now 107,100 people in the North East CA area who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness. The rate of economic inactivity in the North East amongst people with a disability or work limiting health condition is 49%, almost double the rate for the overall working age population in the region.

- 5.3 Long-term sickness is the primary reason for economic inactivity in the region and a trend that is significantly reducing the size of the potential workforce. People in the North East who are living with a disability or long-term health condition are disproportionately likely to be out of work and are excluded from training and education opportunities that would help them to develop the skills they need for work.
- 5.4 Many people in the North East with disabilities or long-term health conditions can and want to work and could make a valuable contribution to the economy, as well as significantly improving their own health, wellbeing and outcomes. An estimated 25,000 people in the North East CA area who are economically inactive for health reasons say they want to work. However, targeted action is needed to address the specific barriers they face to accessing education, training and employment opportunities.

Current Support to residents

- 5.5 While the North East is home to many good quality employment and skills providers, and there is a range of excellent strengths and successes to build on, the current provision of employment support is complex and fragmented. It is difficult for many residents and employers to understand what support is available to them and how and where they can access it.
- 5.6 There is inconsistency in the levels of support services available across the region, with some places providing a significant level of service, while in other places support is very limited. In addition, many services are stop-start due to the short-term nature of funding available. This makes it difficult for service providers to build a sustained presence with users, undermines confidence in the services among residents and employers, and makes it difficult for providers to retain experienced staff who are critical to good quality service delivery.
- 5.7 While many people need extra help to develop their skills and tackle the barriers they face to getting and keeping a job, the current system of support is complex and can be difficult to navigate. Simplifying the system and creating more opportunities for people to develop and improve their skills will enable them to progress at work and enhance their long-term prospects. As well as improving quality of life and wellbeing for individuals, getting more people into secure and well-paid jobs will boost regional economic growth and productivity.

6. New provision, new way of working integrated with health.

- 6.1 Capitalising on the new freedoms and flexibilities that devolution brings (including more devolved funding) along with the development of the Local Growth Plan and the North East CA Employment and Skills strategy, we can deliver more integrated, innovative regional employment support equipped to accelerate inclusive economic growth and deliver better outcomes for all residents and businesses.

Connect to Work

- 6.2 Connect to Work is the first major element of the Get Britain Working Strategy, see paragraph 4.1, and this new programme will take a collaborative, locally led approach to tackling 'Hidden Unemployment'. The development of this programme will help connect local work, health and skills support and provide a coherent, systematic, and joined up approach to maximise the benefits available for individuals and local communities.
- 6.3 The North East CA will be an Accountable Body for the Connect to Work Programme and will enter into a grant agreement with DWP. The total funding value is £49,950,000, to support 13,500 people across the whole delivery period. It is expected that first referrals will be received in July 2025 and the programme will end on 31 March 2030. The North East CA will commission all delivery.
- 6.4 Connect to Work is a voluntary programme that will provide a specific form of support targeted at the right people at the right time, based on their individual circumstances. To be deemed eligible for

the programme, participants must have a disability, health condition or belong to a specified disadvantaged group (such as ex-offenders, carers or young people at risk of violence or gang involvement). Whilst the programme is primarily aimed at those residents who are out of work, there will be an element of provision for residents who are in work and at risk of losing their employment.

- 6.5 Unlike the majority of current employment support activity, interventions provided via this programme will be delivered using the very specialist evidence-based 5-stage “Place, Train and Maintain” Supported Employment Model, via two types of interventions:
- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an intervention which integrates employment support alongside primary and secondary health services, and other support services. Support will be delivered based on the IPS fidelity scale. Approximately £35M will be invested within this element of the programme.
 - Local Supported Employment (LSE) is a more intensive intervention than IPS, due to the depth of support provided to those individuals with multiple and complex barriers to work. In delivery terms, this may mean that a participant will receive more contact and support from their Employment Specialist. Support will be delivered based on the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) fidelity scale. Approximately £12M of the grant will be invested into this element of the programme.
- 6.6 The supported employment programme should maintain integrity to the Fidelity approaches, and the practices already established within the two models. Maintaining integrity to each model ensures the established evidence-base is followed, ensuring the most appropriate and effective support is delivered to Participants. This will mean that evidence-based support maintaining Fidelity to the models is available at a national scale.
- 6.7 A key element of the Supported Employment models is that services are well embedded with other local support for the target groups and local labour market systems. This is vital for strong and effective introduction channels and to ensure that the support received, to achieve sustained work, is holistic and can be appropriately linked with the support to address other challenges.
- 6.8 Employer engagement is a fundamental element of the programme. Employment Specialists working closely with local employers to match participants into open labour market jobs quickly, providing on the job support to both the participant and the employer to enable work to be sustained.
- 6.9 An Implementation Group has been established to provide direction and oversight for the programme and will oversee the development of the Connect to Work Delivery Plan and Grant Cost Register setting out how the North East CA intend to implement and deliver the programme across the North East. The group will ensure there is a strategic fit with the Combined Authority priorities and adherence to relevant local and national assurance requirements.
- 7 Economic Inactivity Trailblazer**
- 7.1 Again captured within the Get Britain Working white paper, eight Trailblazer areas across England and Wales are being created that bring together health, employment, and skills services to improve the support available to those who are inactive due to ill health and help them return to work.
- 7.2 In December 2024 the North East CA were identified as an Economic Inactivity Trailblazer and will receive £10M from DWP in FY 2025/26 to support the delivery of the three key objectives -
- Maximise the reach, effectiveness and impact of the range of existing services that could support people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market, by transforming how partners and services work together locally.

- Test new and innovative approaches to: Identifying and engaging people who are economically inactive and supporting people who are economically inactive to participate in the labour market.; and
- Provide a platform for longer-term systems reform, to deliver a coherent, joined-up local work, health and skills offer.

7.3 The development of this Trailblazer programme is still in the early stages; however, emerging design features include:

- Outcomes: primary goal is to increase the number of economically inactive people move towards and into work. Additional goals are to build capability and capacity to test new approaches and evidence about what works.
- Target group: economically people with health conditions, caring for others or early exit from the labour market (excluding students).
- Interventions: North East CA is to develop and propose innovative approaches to system reform identifying engaging and supporting people in innovative ways.
- Connecting services: there will be a focus on bringing together the support offer through locally strong collaboration with all relevant partners and exploring new approaches to system stewardship, supporting people to navigate a fragmented system.

7.4 Alongside the development of this trailblazer, the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) has been confirmed as a Health and Growth Accelerator site and will receive £18M of funding in 2025/26 to deliver a programme of activity focused on improving population health outcomes and increasing economic growth by reducing health-related labour market inactivity.

7.5 The principal objective of the NENC ICB Health and Growth Accelerator is to support 2,073 more people to be economically active through health-orientated interventions, compared to a do-nothing scenario. A further objective of this programme is to take a new system-wide approach to learning and testing new ways of working at scale. The Accelerator programme will enable the NENC ICB and partners to develop a coherent strategy for work and health, and propel a cross-sector, mission-driven focus on delivering three key shifts:

- From treating sickness to prevention.
- Wholesale reductions in health-driven economic inactivity; and
- Reductions in health inequalities

7.6 To ensure alignment of both the Health and Growth Accelerator, Trailblazer Activity and Connect to Work a dedicated group has been established, to oversee the development, implementation, and delivery of all activity. The group will comprise of representatives from NENC ICB, North East CA, DWP and constituent local authorities (public health). This group will meet monthly and provide the mechanism to support, develop and sustain a cohesive and coordinated approach to work and health across the region.

8 Potential Impact on Objectives

8.1 This programme of work and approach aligns with and contributes to the North East CA's commitment to be the home of real opportunity, collaborating with partners and local authorities to create a better way of life by creating and delivering an integrated, innovative regional employment system equipped to accelerate inclusive economic growth and deliver better outcomes for all residents and businesses.

9 Equalities Implications

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising out of the recommendations in this report. However, the Overview and Scrutiny should be mindful of its Public Sector Equality Duty and consider whether what is before them eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advances equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fosters good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Committee should also note that the

North East CA has adopted equality objectives to reflect its different roles as an employer, a commissioner, deliverer of services and a civic leader.

- 9.2 When developing the Connect to Work programme and Economic Inactivity Trailblazer, the North East CA will be trialling an Integrated Impact Assessment approach which extends beyond the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to consider the wider socio-economic conditions that lead to inequalities, especially in population health. This should provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with additional assurances of the seriousness with which the North East CA consider its responsibilities to tackling inequalities in all its forms.

10 Consultation and Engagement

- 10.1 Initial consultation regarding both Connect to Work and Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programmes has taken place with NENC ICB, Department of Work and Pensions, VONNE and Economic Directors and their respective teams within the local authorities (including Public Health). The Education, Inclusion and Skills Portfolio Advisory Board have also informed the development of the Connect to Work programme. It is anticipated that further and more detailed consultation and engagement with wider stakeholders will take place once the initial design and implementation details for both programmes are agreed.

11 Appendices

None

12 Background Papers

None

13 Contact Officers

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14 Glossary

IPS - Individual Placement and Support
LSE - Local Supported Employment
SEQF - Supported Employment Quality Framework
NENC ICB – North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
VONNE - Voluntary Organisations' Network North East
DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2025

Title: 2024/25 Budget Monitoring Position Update
Report of: Michael Robson, Senior Governance Officer and Scrutiny Officer

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow the Committee to review the North East CA 2024/25 Budget Monitoring Position. A report setting out a revised budget position for 2024/25, showing the updated forecast spend for the North East Combined Authority's Corporate Budget and delivery programmes will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 28 January 2025. This is attached as Annex A.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to review the revised budget position for 2024/25.

3. Context

- 3.1 At its meeting on 28 January 2025 Cabinet will consider a report from the Director of Finance and Investment in relation to revised budget position for 2024/25, showing the updated positions for the Corporate Budget and delivery programmes.
- 3.2 The Committee has a role in reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Authority in delivering its programmes and strategies and in fulfilling this role the Committee agreed to include budget monitoring reports within its work programme. Access to financial information may also help inform development of the overview and scrutiny work programme. The Committee is therefore invited to examine the budget monitoring report and Mags Scott, the Director of Finance and Investment, will be in attendance to answer any questions.

4. Implication Statements

- 4.1 The policy, equalities and engagement implications of the budget monitoring report are set out in the report to Cabinet.

5. Appendices

Annex A: Report to Cabinet in relation to 2024/25 Budget Monitoring Position

6. Background Papers

The following background documents have been used in the compilation of this report and are available for inspection either by clicking on the links below or by contacting the report author:

- [North East CA Constitution](#)
- [Cabinet Agenda - 28 January 2025](#)

7. Contact Officers

Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment mags.scott@northeast-ca.gov.uk
 Michael Robson, Scrutiny Officer Michael.robson@northeast-ca.gov.uk

Title: 2024-25 Budget Monitoring Position Update
Report of: Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment
Portfolio: All Portfolios

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Mayor and Cabinet a revised budget position for 2024/25, showing the updated forecast spend for the North East Combined Authority's Corporate Budget and delivery programmes.

The report will also identify any further updates expected to impact on either the corporate or service delivery planned budgets in 2024/25. These will require budget realignments to be processed once approved.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the updated corporate budget position for 2024/25;
2. Note the planned funding and commitment levels for the delivery programme; and
3. Approve the planned budget updates.

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the laying of the statutory order (the order) to create the North East Combined Authority (North East CA), the Authority came into existence on 7 May 2024. The order provided for the creation of the North East CA, with the necessary arrangements that the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the former North East Combined Authority approving the first budget and corporate plan prior to its creation on 7 May.

2. Revised Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25

- 2.1 The 2024/25 budget is an 11-month plan that spans the period from 7 May 2024 to 31 March 2025. The initial budget plan was reviewed by North East CA management, with a revised Corporate Budget presented to Cabinet in November 2024 for approval.
- 2.2 Table 1 shows the initial and revised budgets as reported to Cabinet in November 2024.

Table 1	Initial Budget 2024/25	Revised Budget 2024/25	Approved Realignment
	£m	£m	£m
Employees	13.110	14.250	1.141
Premises	0.632	0.433	(0.198)
Transport	0.008	0.008	0.000
Supplies and Services	89.919	92.409	2.490
Third Party Payments	0.399	0.399	0.000
Central Support and Other Recharges	13.896	13.896	0.000
Total Expenditure	117.963	121.396	3.433
Contributions Summary	(101.023)	(103.301)	(2.278)
Grant	(4.813)	(5.150)	(0.337)
Interest Summary	(1.730)	(1.730)	0.000
Other Income Summary	(0.016)	(0.834)	(0.818)
Recharges	(0.509)	(0.509)	0.000
Total Funding	(108.091)	(111.524)	(3.433)
Funding towards costs from Tyne Tunnel	(9.872)	(9.872)	0.000
Net Budget	0.000	0.000	0.000

3. Forecast Position for the Corporate Budget

- 3.1 Forecast spend vs budget has been reviewed and updated via budget meetings with heads of service over November and December.
- 3.2 Staffing costs budgets were set before the impact of the pay awards was known. The contingent value already included in the budget (£0.468m) broadly equal to the additional costs arising from the pay award. Further detail is given in section 4.1.
- 3.3 The forecast spend against the corporate budget suggests an overall underspend of £0.755m. The reasons for the budget variances can be summarised as follows:
- Staff vacancies resulting in an underspend of £0.973m due to higher-than-expected staff turnover or posts held vacant in whilst funding clarified.
 - Staffing also includes £0.100m of contingent spend for set up costs of the Connect to Work programme. This is offset by £0.100m grant funding.
 - Higher recruitment costs, with a forecast overspend of £0.100m.
 - Additional transition costs in relation to consolidating offices at the Lumen of £0.050m.
 - Communications and marketing for media management overspend of £0.038m.
 - Procurement support from partner authorities is expected to cost £0.030m more than planned.
- 3.4 The forecast position against budget is set out in Table 2, including the savings and pressures detailed in 3.3. Detail of these variances by Directorate can be found in appendix A.

Table 2	Revised Budget 2024/25	Forecast 2024/25	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Employees	14.250	13.377	(0.873)
Premises	0.433	0.483	0.050
Transport	0.008	0.008	0.000
Supplies and Services	92.409	92.547	0.138
Third Party Payments	0.399	0.429	0.030
Central Support and Other Recharges	13.896	13.896	0.000
Total Expenditure	121.396	120.741	(0.655)
Contributions Summary	(103.301)	(103.301)	0.000
Grant	(5.150)	(5.250)	(0.100)
Interest Summary	(1.730)	(1.730)	0.000
Other Income Summary	(0.834)	(0.834)	0.000
Recharges	(0.509)	(0.509)	0.000
Total Funding	(111.524)	(111.624)	(0.100)
Net Budget	4.049	1.474	9.872
Funding towards costs from Tyne Tunnel	(9.872)	(9.872)	0.000
Net Budget	0.000	(0.755)	(0.755)

3.5 Work with the directorate management teams to mitigate these variances is ongoing.

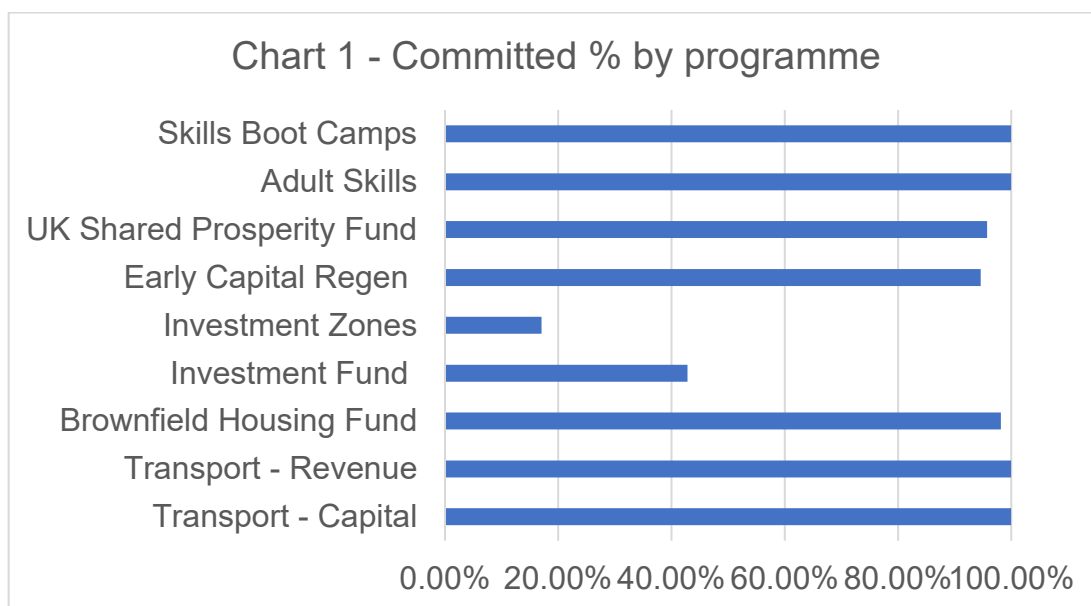
4. Programme Delivery

4.1 The five-year planned programme delivery was reported to Cabinet on 26 November 2024 with a total forecast spend of £1,421.846m (£1.4bn). This value was split between revenue spend of £681.781m and capital spend of £740.085m. The next programme delivery update to Finance and Investment Board is due in February 2025, after this report is prepared. Table 3 shows the summary 5-year planned spend for the overall programme.

Table 3	5-Year Plan £m
Revenue:	
Investment Fund	51.152
Legacy Investment Fund	65.680
Investment Zones	8.890
Enterprise Zones	71.957
Transport- Revenue	93.640
Adult Skills Funding	307.422
Skills Bootcamps	44.385
Free Courses for Jobs	8.347
UKSPF and Multiply	30.288
Total Revenue	681.761
Capital:	
Investment Fund	81.200
Brownfield Housing Fund	41.574

Early Capital	69.605
Investment Zones	18.303
Transport (inc Metro Flow)	517.932
UKSPF and Multiply	11.471
Total Capital	740.085
TOTAL PLANNED SPEND	1,421.846

4.2 Over the 5-year programme plan, committed spend is an 81.59% average across all programmed works, as shown in chart 1 below.



4.3 Forecast expenditure on the delivery programme for 2024/25 is £407.747m, of which £138.768m has been paid out. The overall programme delivery for 2024/25 is still reported as on track, though some projects have been flagged as being at risk of slippage. Plans are being made by service teams to mitigate this by maximising delivery in the last quarter of the financial year.

4.4 The next Finance and Investment Board will consider proposals put forward by the Technical Officer Group (TOG). This group is made up of relevant officers of the Authority and the seven constituent authorities. TOG functions as an advisory panel to the North East CA Cabinet, Finance and Investment Board, or the designated officer in line with agreed delegations, in respect to investment decisions on funding programmes operated by the North East CA, including (but not exclusive to), the North East CA Investment Fund.

4.5 TOG previously agreed (28 November 2024) that the following investment decisions be taken to Finance & Investment Board in January 2025, then to Cabinet for confirmation:

- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Safe and Accessible Bus Stop
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Customer Experience

4.6 TOG also agreed (19 December 2024) that the following be considered by Finance & Investment Board before being reported to Cabinet:

- Made Smarter one-Year Extension 2025/26
- North East Fund Ltd UKSPF Supplementary Funding
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Bus Priority Infrastructure
- Plans for UKSPF Transition Year 2025/26
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Regional transition year arrangements for 2025/26
- Investment Zones Wave 1 – NETPark Phase 3a

- 4.7 Several investment decisions were approved via delegated decision in November and December 2024. These include:
- North East Energy Accelerator Grant Funding Agreements
 - UKSPF Localised Business Provision
 - Transforming Cities Fund: East Gateshead Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Phase 1
 - Common Room for the Great North - £130k Grant support from Investment Funds
- 4.8 Go Ultra Low North East (GUL) - replacement contract of the GUL legacy project will go to the Finance and Investment Board in January 2025 for a delegated decision prior to tender, with the aim of selecting a provider from the NEPO framework for a 7 year contract, with the aim of a successful handover between current and new providers in May 2025.

5. Budget Updates

- 5.1 As discussed in section 3.2, the Authority's staff have now received pay awards with final back-dated payments (for April to November) made in December 2024. The initial budget plan set aside £0.468m for pay awards, which was held as a contingent budget to be allocated based on forecast need. Preliminary forecasts show an expected requirement of £0.512m, just under £0.044m more than budgeted. These forecasts will be confirmed between finance and the directorate management teams, then the relevant budget will be realigned, with any increased requirement taken from the general contingency established to meet unforeseen pressures.
- 5.2 The Department of Work and Pensions has offered the Authority £10m per year for a Trailblazer programme to run alongside the £49m Connect to Work Programme. As part of the Trailblazer offer, £0.100m funding can be drawn forward to implement the new programme. The proposed plan is to bring in resource to help design the DWP Trailblazer programme, as detailed below.
- 5.3 As set out in the Autumn Budget (October 2024) and Get Britain Working White Paper (November 2024) building a thriving and inclusive labour market and increasing the number of people in work is central to growing the economy. Economic Inactivity Trailblazers are one of a suite of measures intended to provide opportunities for residents to participate and progress in work. DWP has committed £125m to mobilise eight trailblazer areas in England and Wales that will bring together and streamline health, employment and skill services to improve the support available for people who are economically inactive.
- 5.4 As part of the eight inactivity trailblazers, the North East is one of three areas that has been selected to deliver joint activity with the NHS. The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (NENC ICS) has been selected as an NHS England Health and Growth Accelerator and will develop evidence of the impact of targeted action on the top health conditions driving economic inactivity. North East CA will work in partnership with the NENC ICS to maximise and integrate the existing and emerging work, health and skills offer to tackle economic inactivity.
- 5.5 The North East CA will receive up to £10m for delivery over the 2025/26 financial year. The exact funding envelope will be agreed with DWP once a delivery plan has been agreed, and accordingly an update will be provided to Cabinet in March 2025. The £0.100m funding in 2024/25 will be used to construct a delivery plan to bring in the full £10m.

B. Impact on North East Combined Authority Objectives

The Initial Corporate Plan – informed by the Devolution deals together with the Mayor's Manifesto – set out the developing strategic objectives of the authority. Budget monitoring is part of the process that ensures the North East CA has properly discharged its functions and thereby assists in delivering the Authority's vision, policies, and priorities.

C. Key risks

There are no specific risks relating to this report other than those highlighted in the above report.

D. Financial and other resources implications

This is a financial report with associated implications set out in the detail of the report.

E. Legal implications

1. The Authority has a legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice; the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Prudential Code: Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Department of Levelling up Communities and Housing Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments.
2. The Authority is required to agree a balanced budget annually and to monitor performance against that budget throughout the year. The Authority must also make provision for an adequate level of un-earmarked reserves. It is also required to ensure that good financial governance arrangements are in place.

F. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising out of the recommendations in this report.

G. Consultation and engagement

The creation of the Authority has been subject to significant and regional consultation. The 2024/25 budget was subject to wide consultation across the North East. The overall devolution proposals were developed from close collaborative working across the local authorities and specifically the LA7 Chief Executives, Finance Directors and Economic Development Directors and a wide range of stakeholders and the public. Further joint working has been undertaken since the Mayor was elected on the development of the Local Growth plan. Engagement continues among key stakeholders across the region.

H. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Updated 2024-25 Budget Forecast by Directorate

I. Background papers

Cabinet report on finance at 26 November 2024

23 January Report to the former North East Combined Authority :North East Mayoral Combined Authority 2025-2029 Draft Corporate Plan, Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Proposals

J. Contact officer(s)

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Noel Kay, Strategic Finance Business Partner, Noel.Kay@northeast-ca.gov.uk

K. Glossary

Not required.

Appendix A – Corporate Budget Forecasts by Directorate

Revised Corporate Forecast for 2024/25

Category	B91001- Operations	B91002- Finance & Investment	B91004- Economic Growth & Regeneration	B91003- Skills, Inclusion & Public Reform	B91005- Transport	B91000- Chief Executive	Grand Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Employees	3.021	2.248	1.914	2.570	2.578	1.047	13.377
Premises	0.483						0.483
Transport					0.008		0.008
Supplies and Services	0.913	1.593	1.463	0.057	88.488	0.033	92.547
Third Party Payments		0.042			0.387		0.429
Central Support and Other Recharges	0.401	11.685			1.780	0.030	13.896
Total Expenditure	4.818	15.567	3.377	2.627	93.241	1.110	120.741
Contributions Summary	(0.288)	(10.865)			(92.029)	(0.120)	(103.301)
Grant		(1.860)	(2.407)	(0.100)	(0.883)		(5.250)
Interest Summary		(1.730)					(1.730)
Other Income Summary	(0.149)			(0.090)	(0.595)		(0.834)
Recharges					(0.509)		(0.509)
Total Funding	(0.437)	(14.455)	(2.407)	(0.190)	(94.015)	(0.120)	(111.624)
Net Forecast	4.049	1.474	1.303	2.791	(0.758)	1.013	9.872
Net Forecast		(9.872)					(9.872)
	4.049	(8.399)	1.303	2.791	(0.758)	1.013	

Appendix A – Corporate Budget Forecasts by Directorate

Revised Corporate Budget for 2024/25

Category	B91001- Operations	B91002- Finance & Investment	B91004- Economic Growth & Regeneration	B91003- Skills, Inclusion & Public Reform	B91005- Transport	B91000- Chief Executive	Grand Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Employees	3.258	2.258	2.247	2.824	2.594	1.070	14.250
Premises	0.433	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.433
Transport	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.008
Supplies and Services	0.775	1.593	1.463	0.057	88.488	0.033	92.409
Third Party Payments	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.387	0.000	0.399
Central Support and Other Recharges	0.401	11.685	0.000	0.000	1.780	0.030	13.896
Total Expenditure	4.867	15.547	3.710	2.881	93.257	1.133	121.396
Contributions Summary	(0.433)	(10.999)	(0.075)	0.000	(92.029)	(0.120)	(103.655)
Grant	0.000	(1.860)	(2.407)	(0.200)	(0.883)	0.000	(5.350)
Interest Summary	0.000	(1.730)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(1.730)
Other Income Summary	(1.067)	0.000	0.000	(0.090)	(0.595)	0.000	(1.752)
Recharges	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.509)	0.000	(0.509)
Total Funding	(1.500)	(14.589)	(2.482)	(0.290)	(94.015)	(0.120)	(112.996)
Funding towards costs from Tyne Tunnel		(9.872)					(9.872)
Net Budget	4.049	(8.399)	1.303	2.791	(0.758)	1.013	0.000

Appendix A – Corporate Budget Forecasts by Directorate

Variance to Corporate Budget for 2024/25

Variance	B91001- Operations	B91002- Finance & Investment	B91004- Economic Growth & Regeneration	B91003- Skills, Inclusion & Public Reform	B91005- Transport	B91000- Chief Executive	Grand Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Employees	(0.237)	(0.010)	(0.333)	(0.254)	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.873)
Premises	0.050						0.050
Transport							0.000
Supplies and Services	0.138						0.138
Third Party Payments		0.030					0.030
Central Support and Other Recharges							0.000
Total Expenditure	(0.049)	0.020	(0.333)	(0.254)	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.655)
Contributions Summary							0.000
Grant				(0.100)			(0.100)
Interest Summary							0.000
Other Income Summary							0.000
Recharges							0.000
Total Funding	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.100)	0.000	0.000	(0.100)
Net Budget	(0.049)	0.020	(0.333)	(0.354)	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.755)
0		0.000					0.000
Net Budget	(0.049)	0.020	(0.333)	(0.354)	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.755)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2025

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Report of: Michael Robson, Senior Governance Officer & Scrutiny Officer

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the latest version of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for review and, if necessary, revision.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to:
- a) review the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme as set out in Appendix A; and
 - b) if necessary, propose any additions or changes to the work programme.

3. Context

- 3.1 The Committee has previously agreed that its work programme be reported to each Committee meeting to enable all members of the Committee to review the work programme, suggest items for inclusion and, if necessary, agree any changes. This will provide flexibility to react to changes within the Authority and so scrutiny can be undertaken on policy development as it evolves. The Chair and Vice Chair will also continually review and revise the work programme as necessary.

4. Potential Impact on Objectives

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee enables local councillors, on behalf of their communities, to scrutinise and challenge the Cabinet and the Mayor on delivery of the Authority's ambitions and objectives and to consider matters of strategic importance to residents within the Authority's area with a view to influencing their decisions.

5. Equalities Implications

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny should be mindful of its Public Sector Equality Duty and to consider whether its activities and the work it is scrutinising eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advances equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fosters good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 Discussions with the Chair, Vice Chair and senior officers within the authority have culminated in the production of the work programme. The work programme is regularly reported to the Committee and the Authority's Senior Leadership Team.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

8. Background Papers

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 November 2024

[Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities)

[Scrutiny Protocol for English institutions with devolved powers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/scrutiny-protocol-for-english-institutions-with-devolved-powers)

[Centre for Governance and Scrutiny - Overview and scrutiny in combined authorities: a plain English guide 2nd Edition](#)

9. Contact Officers

Michael Robson, Senior Governance Officer and Scrutiny Officer

Michael.robson@northeast-ca.gov.uk 0191 277 7242

The North East CA has appointed an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable local councillors, on behalf of their communities, to scrutinise and challenge the Cabinet and the Mayor and to consider matters of importance to residents within the Authority's area with a view to influencing their decisions. Effective scrutiny arrangements are an essential component of local democracy, enhancing accountability and transparency of decision making.

This work programme sets out how the Committee intends to fulfil this role. The programme will be regularly reviewed and refreshed by the Committee so that it can react to changes within the Authority and so scrutiny can be undertaken on policy development as it evolves.

When deciding whether an item should be included in the work programme, the Committee should consider the following evaluative questions:

- Do we understand the benefits scrutiny would bring to this issue?
- How could we best carry out work on this subject?
- What would be the best outcome of this work?
- How would this work engage with the activity of the executive and other decision-makers, including partners?"

Anyone who has any suggestions for inclusion in the work programme can contact:

Michael Robson

Senior Governance Officer

Email: michael.robson@northeast-ca.gov.uk

Tel: 0191 277 7242

Part A – Work Programme

The Committee intends to undertake the following scrutiny exercises.

4 February 2025 – Committee Meeting (South Shields Town Hall)		
Education Improvement Programme To examine the CA's approach to collaborating with the Department for Education and school leaders in co-designing the scope of an Education Improvement Programme and to contribute to the development of the programme.	Councillor Tracey Dixon Cabinet Member for Education Skills and Inclusion Adrian Dougherty, Interim Strategic Leader for Skills, Inclusion and Public Service Reform Andrew Garrad, Senior Programme Manager	
Supporting People into Employment To examine how the Authority can support people with disabilities, health conditions and additional barriers to seek sustained employment, including the Connect to Work, Economic Inactivity Trailblazer and UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes and to contribute to the development of the programmes.	Councillor Tracey Dixon Cabinet Member for Education Skills and Inclusion Leigh Mills Head of Skills and Inclusion Ruth Gaul Principal Programme Manager	

Highways Infrastructure and Funding	Philip Meikle Jonathan Bailes Chrisi Page	
Budget Monitoring Report To monitor the Authority's financial position for the Corporate Budget and all funding streams.	Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment	

4 March 2025 – Committee Meeting (Quadrant, North Tyneside)		
Housing and Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brownfield housing fund • new housing bills • private rentals sector • new homes building. 	Dame Norma Redfearn Cabinet Member for Housing and Land Heather Orton Principal Housing Infrastructure Manager Peter Mennell Director of Housing, North Tyneside	
North East Local Transport Plan To receive and consider the feedback received during the public consultation exercise on the draft Local Transport Plan.	Tobyn Hughes Director of Transport Philip Meikle Rachelle Forsyth-Ward Jen Robson Emma Bennett	Cabinet due to approve final LTP on 11 March 2025.
Leamside Investment Corridor To consider the proposed development of a strategy for a Leamside Investment Corridor.	Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment Ian Freshwater Senior Economic Development and Regeneration Officer	
Equality Objectives To review delivery of the Authority's initial equalities objectives set for 2024/25 and to contribute to the formulation of a set of longer term equality objectives to be agreed by Cabinet in May 2025.	Robin Fry, Inclusive Economy Advisor	

July 2025		
North East Mayor To receive an annual report from the North East Mayor on the delivery of the Strategic Portfolio Delivery Plans.	Kim McGuinness	
Budget Outturn Report To monitor the Authority's financial position for the corporate budget and all funding streams as at the end of the financial year 2024/25.	Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment	

<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report To approve the annual report for submission to Cabinet.</p>	<p>Michael Robson, Scrutiny Officer</p>	
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Autumn 2025		
<p>Unlocking Finance for North East Businesses to start, and to grow To receive a progress report in relation to the management of the funds in 12 months time.</p>	<p>Rob Hamilton, Interim Strategic Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration</p> <p>Mark Stamper, Head of Economic Delivery</p>	<p>Previously reported to the Committee on 5 November 2024.</p>

December 2025		
<p>Initial Budget and Corporate Plan Proposals</p> <p>a) To consider the Cabinet and Mayor's initial budget and Corporate Plan proposals (including performance management framework) and accompanying information; and</p> <p>b) make recommendations on these, where it is considered appropriate, to the Cabinet and Mayor.</p>	<p>Mags Scott Director of Finance and Investment</p> <p>Alan Reiss Director of Operations</p>	
<p>Budget Monitoring Report To monitor the Authority's financial position for the Corporate Budget and all funding streams as at 30 September 2024.</p>	<p>Mags Scott Director of Finance and Investment</p>	<p>The Committee may prefer to receive a broader combined financial and non-financial CA performance report once the performance framework is finalised.</p>

January 2026		
<p>Revised Budget and Corporate Plan Proposals</p> <p>a) To consider the revised Budget & Corporate Plan proposals;</p> <p>b) To make any any recommendations and/or observations to the Mayor/Cabinet;</p> <p>c) To examine the proposed performance management framework and to consider its relationship with it; and</p> <p>d) Review and reflect on the role and operation so far of OSC within the CA.</p>	<p>Mags Scott, Director of Finance and Investment</p> <p>Alan Reiss Director of Operations</p>	

Spring 2026		

2026-27		
Bus Reform To consider the outcome of the Bus Franchising Assessment.	Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport Lucy Keating, Head of Bus Reform	Bus Reform Options were previously considered in Oct 2024.
Metro Expansion and Leamside Line To consider the Outline Business Case for the Washington Metro Loop and the Strategic Outline Case for the re-opening of the southern section of the Leamside Line.	Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport	

Part B – Potential Exercises

The following topics have been suggested as areas for examination but the timing and method of scrutiny have yet to be determined. There are a range of methods which may be used including formal committee meetings, the appointment of task and finish groups, meetings with the Mayor and Cabinet members, informal briefings, workshops, all day inquiries, fact finding visits or community engagement.

Scrutiny Exercise	Lead Cabinet Member /Officer(s)	Notes
Local Growth Plan To contribute to the development of a local plan to grow the economy in the North East area.	Kim McGuinness, North East Mayor Rob Hamilton, Interim Strategic Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration.	Likely to be ready around April time.
Community Infrastructure Fund Councillor Dixon offered to provide the Committee with more details of a proposed Community Infrastructure Fund when more details were available. The aim of the fund will be to help communities to secure community buildings and assets within their local area.	Councillor Tracey Dixon Mandi Cresswell Policy & Economy Adviser (Social Economy)	
Single Assurance Framework Councillor Michael Mordey indicated he would welcome the Committee's input into the management of the assurance framework.	Councillor Mordey Director of Finance and Investment	The ASC and OSC to co- ordinate an approach to the SAF as the Audit and Standards Committee also intends to review the framework.

		OSC Members were invited to ASC workshop on 19 Nov 2024.
<p>Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination Development Partnership</p> <p>Councillor Hopgood has invited the Committee to consider and make recommendations on options for delivery of a Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy and whether there should be one organisation for the whole of the area or if they should remain separate.</p>	<p>Councillor Hopgood</p> <p>Mark Adamson Principal Sector Growth & Delivery Manager</p>	
<p>Employer Accreditation Scheme</p> <p>To consider proposals to establish a framework to help employers identify what 'good work' looks like, get recognised or make improvements.</p>	<p>Caroline Preston, Policy & Economy Adviser</p>	<p>The scheme is due to be launched at the end of January 2025.</p>
<p>Brownfield Housing Fund</p> <p>To examine the impact of the Brownfield Housing Fund Programme to remediate and revitalise brownfield sites across the area for the provision of new homes.</p>	<p>Mark Stamper, Head of Economic Delivery</p> <p>Heather Orton, Principal Housing Infrastructure Manager</p>	<p>Previously reported to the NTCA OSC in March 2024.</p>
<p>Adult Well-Being and Health and Ability to Work</p> <p>To examine adult well-being and health and its relationship to individuals' ability to work in the North East.</p>		<p>The NECA OSC held a one day conference in February 2024 with a view to informing the North East CAs work programme.</p>
<p>Inward Investment</p> <p>To examine the region's approach to attracting inward investment into the North East England.</p>	<p>Guy Currey, Head of Inward Investment</p>	
<p>Investment Zones</p> <p>To consider the impact of Investment Zones introduced by Government to catalyse the development of high-potential industry clusters. In November 2023, it was confirmed the North East would benefit from IZ status supported by £160 million investment over 10 years.</p>	<p>Rob Hamilton, Interim Strategic Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration</p>	
<p>Devolution</p> <p>To consider the implications of emerging national policy on the CA and the region, particularly the White Paper on English Devolution.</p>	<p>Henry Kippin, Chief Executive</p>	
<p>North East Railways</p> <p>In querying the need for increasing freight capacity on the rail network it was suggested that members may wish to consider in more detail the Authority's ambitions for rail services</p>	<p>Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport</p>	

and how these can be delivered in collaboration with Great British Railways.		
<p>Northumberland Line It is suggested that in order to review and assess the benefits of transport investment, members ought to undertake visits and they could begin with a train journey on the Northumberland Line to Ashington where the Committee could hold a future meeting. It was noted that an external review of the Northumberland Line project was being undertaken and its findings could be reported to the Committee</p>	Northumberland CC	Officers have advised that this is a Northumberland CC scheme, not CA. They suggest an informal visit to the line, later in the year after May in the context of improving OSC's knowledge of developing and constructing rail schemes, with members of the Northumberland Line project to talking through the key features of the scheme and lessons learnt.
<p>Nexus To review the performance of Nexus against its Corporate Business Plan for 2023/24</p>	Catherine Massarella, John Fenwick and Stuart Clarke, Nexus	Previously reported to the JTC OSC in Oct 2023. In Sept 2024 Chair & Vice Chair agreed that performance info needed to be scrutinised but by another body not OSC.
<p>North East Bus Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) To examine progress in delivering the programme of interventions to reverse the decline in bus patronage and increase bus modal share.</p>	Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport Heather Jones, Head of Enhanced Partnerships	Previously reported to JTC OSC Discussed at meeting held on 8 Oct 2024.
<p>North East Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Strategy To examine delivery of the Strategy which seeks to expand the public charging network in the North East, support an increase in the uptake of zero emission vehicles and look at alternative fuels.</p>	Rachelle Forsyth-Ward, Head of Transport Policy and Strategy Development	Previously reported to JTC OSC
<p>North East Active Travel Strategy To examine delivery of the North East Active Travel Strategy which set a target for over half of all shorter journeys in the North East (under 5 miles) to be made by active travel by 2035, up from 37% in 2018/19.</p>	Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport	
<p>Key Route Network To consider proposals for a Key Route Network (KRN) Strategy, the development and delivery of a single asset management plan for the North East road network and its relationship with National Highways.</p>	Tobyn Hughes, Director of Transport	

Part C – Member Development

In addition to conducting scrutiny exercises set out above, the Committee will also undertake other activities to enhance members’ knowledge and skills to effectively fulfil their role as scrutineers.

Activity	Detail	Timescale
Induction	<p>A presentation from the Chief Executive on the North East CAs vision, powers, priorities and structures.</p> <p>Introduction to the role of O&S, the difference between local and combined authority scrutiny, work programming and the role and expectations of a scrutiny members.</p> <p>Review of work programme and methods of working.</p>	July 2025
Pre-Meetings	The Committee will meet remotely and informally ahead of each Committee meeting and following publication of the agenda to prepare and co-ordinate key lines of enquiry.	To be held at 12noon on the Friday before each committee meeting via Microsoft Teams.
Informal Workshops	The Committee may wish to meet informally to review and determine its work programme, methods of working or undertake preparatory research ahead of formal meetings.	
Members’ Briefing	Members of the Committee will be sent regular written briefings containing details of news and developments relating to the North East CA.	Monthly
Specific Briefings	Members may request on line or in person briefings to gain a better understanding on specific areas of the Authority’s work and provide members with an opportunity to select topics for further more detail scrutiny.	
Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Training	It is proposed that the CfGS be commissioned to deliver a bespoke training session for OSC members.	To be arranged.
Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Training	Members will be encouraged to join the annual training programme delivered by the CfGS in the region.	
North East Scrutiny Network	Members will be encouraged to participate in the Network to liaise with other authorities and share good practice.	Quarterly Meetings

Part D – Action List

The action list below records and tracks the Committee’s requests for information.

Meeting Item	Requested Action	Outcome/Status	Owner
16 July 2024 Minute OSC5/7/24	Members asked that they be provided with supplementary information regarding expenditure on consultancy support for the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme.	Information circulated with written monthly briefing on 19 August 2024.	Jonathan Bailes Head of Transport Programmes Eleanor Goodman Finance Manager
8 Oct 2024 Note 2 of Appendix to Minutes	It was reported that multi-operator, multi-modal capped tickets targeted at those aged 21 and under had increased usage in the age group by 25%. Officers undertook to provide members of the Committee with further details.	Information circulated with written monthly briefing on 4 November 2024.	Heather Jones Head of Enhanced Partnerships
8 Oct 2024 Note 3 of Appendix to Minutes	Members asked that they be notified of the commencement of the public consultation exercise.	Information circulated with written monthly briefing on 4 November 2024.	Jen Robson Head of Business Transformation, Performance and Insights
5 Nov 2024 OSC13/11/24	A briefing note setting out initial progress on Unlocking Finance for North East Businesses to start, and to grow be provided to members of the Committee after 6 months.	Due May 2025	Mark Stamper Head of Economic Delivery
5 Nov 2024 OSC15/11/24	It was agreed that the OSCs comments regarding the Mayor’s Opportunity Fund be referred to relevant officers to be considered as part of the mobilisation of the Fund.	Comments referred to the Chief Exec, Director of Operations and Director of Finance on 11 Nov 2024.	Michael Robson Scrutiny Officer
10 Dec 2024 Note 2	Members asked that they be provided with training to help them to read and interpret the Authority’s budget monitoring reports.	Delivered during the budget workshop held on 14 January 2025.	Mags Scott Director of Finance & Investment
10 Dec 2024 Note 2	Officers undertook to provide members of the Committee with supplementary information in relation to: i) the operating profit of TT2 Ltd, the operator of the Tyne Tunnels; and ii) details of the Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) maturity loans held by the Authority.		Mags Scott Director of Finance & Investment