

Cabinet (Extraordinary Meeting)

2 March 2016

Present: N Redfearn (Elected Mayor) (in the Chair)
Councillors CA Burdis, R Glindon, IR Grayson,
JLL Harrison, CB Pickard, LA Spillard, JJ Stirling and
A Waggott-Fairley.

In Attendance: M Almond (Voluntary and Community Sector)
D Bavaird (Business Sector)
R Layton (North Tyneside JTUC)

CAB134/03/16 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor E N Darke and M Cushlow (North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group).

CAB135/03/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

CAB136/03/16 North East Combined Authority – Proposed Devolution Agreement and Elected Regional Mayor (All Wards)

Cabinet considered a report setting out information on the consultation exercise that had been undertaken to date on the devolution proposals contained in the proposed Devolution Agreement.

On 23 October 2015 NECA and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had agreed a proposed Devolution Agreement. The proposed Agreement was expressed as being “conditional on the legislative process, the Spending Review, further public consultation, agreement by the constituent authorities, and the formal endorsement by the Leadership Board and Ministers early in the New Year.”

Extensive consultation had taken place at various stages. Prior to entering into the proposed Agreement in October 2015, NECA had undertaken a number of consultation “road shows” in each of the constituent authority areas setting out clearly the proposed powers and responsibilities that the NECA intended to seek from Government. Since the conclusion of the proposed Agreement further public consultation had taken place including:

- 6 public events across the NECA area in November 2015 where participants had received a presentation on the proposals, then participated in round table discussions followed by a question and answer session. The consultation exercise and local events had been publicised through press releases, individual local authority websites and on social media gaining interest from local and national media and helping to raise awareness of both the North East Combined Authority and the devolution proposals. Over 370 people had signed in at the local events and others had submitted written responses through the NECA website or completed an online feedback form.

- Views of the NECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been sought at their meeting in December.
- Dedicated sessions had also been arranged in January and February 2016 with representatives of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, the regional business sector and also with trade union representatives.
- At a local authority level, constituent authorities had gathered views from a range of local stakeholders to complement the activity being coordinated centrally by NECA. Durham County Council had also undertaken a local postal consultation exercise on the question of the proposals contained in the proposed Agreement.

In North Tyneside, the proposed Agreement had been discussed at Head Teacher forums, business forums, with trade union representatives and representatives of the voluntary sector.

As part of the ongoing consultation exercise, Cabinet was invited to consult with full Council on the proposal that NECA become a Mayoral Combined Authority prior to any formal decision by Cabinet on the creation of the Mayoral Combined Authority.

In terms of the legislative process, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act had received Royal Assent on 28 January 2016. This legislation provided for the creation of Mayoral Combined Authorities, and the move to such an authority by the NECA was an integral element of the proposed Agreement.

The legislation provided for the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority if at least two Constituent Authorities as well as the Combined Authority affected, consented. Should any Constituent Authorities not consent to the creation of the Mayoral Combined Authority and provided the Combined Authority still wished to proceed, the non-consenting Constituent Authorities would be removed from the Combined Authority through the Parliamentary process that provided for a new Mayor. Subject to the necessary consents being provided during February and March it was expected that the requisite legislation would commence Parliamentary processes in May/June 2016 and provide for mayoral elections in May 2017.

In due course further legislation would be required to devolve from Government specific powers to the NECA and also to allocate specific powers to the Mayor, to provide for the election process for a Mayor, to make any necessary amendments to the existing NECA Order, including funding of the NECA, and to make further provision for the operation of Overview and Scrutiny, Audit and Budget setting processes. The legislation would comprise general provisions affecting all Combined Authorities moving to a Mayoral model (there were currently six Combined Authorities considering this change including the NECA), as well as bespoke legislation, which would bring into effect the specific requirements of the NECA should the creation of a Mayor proceed.

Cabinet considered the following options:

- (a) Agree to the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report; or
- (b) Not agree to the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report and request that Officers review the information provided and provide additional detail on areas as requested by Cabinet.

Resolved that (1) the current consultation undertaken in relation to the North East Combined Authority proposed Devolution Agreement, including the proposal for an Elected Mayor for the NECA area, be noted;

(2) a report be submitted to Council on 17 March 2016 outlining the proposals contained in the proposed Agreement at **Appendix 1** to the report and detailing the consultation exercise undertaken on the proposed Agreement to date;

(3) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer to provide a report to Council on 17 March 2016 setting out the matters referred to in (2) above and inviting the views of Council; and

(4) a further report be submitted to an extraordinary meeting of Cabinet on 23 March 2016, following the Council meeting, to consider whether to consent to the creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the NECA.

(Reason for decision: The proposed Agreement entered into between NECA and the Chancellor was conditional upon a number of actions being taken by each party. NECA is required to undertake “further public consultation” on the proposed Agreement and this consultation is ongoing.

Whereas the formal consent to the proposal is an executive function, to ensure that the Authority as a whole is fully appraised of the proposals including the proposal that the NECA become a Mayoral Combined Authority it is considered appropriate that Cabinet seek the views of Council at the next ordinary meeting on 17 March 2016 prior to consideration whether to consent by Cabinet at an extraordinary meeting on 23 March).

CAB137/03/16 Dates and Times of Next Meetings

6.00pm on Monday 14 March 2016 (Ordinary Meeting)
6.00pm on Wednesday 23 March 2016 (Extraordinary Meeting)

Minutes published on 3 March 2016.

The decisions contained within these Minutes may be implemented (unless called in by 3 Non-Executive Members for consideration by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee) immediately following the expiry of the call-in period; i.e. 5.00pm on 10 March 2016.