

AGENDA ITEM 4**REPORT TO THE TEES VALLEY
COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET****29th JANUARY 2021****REPORT OF THE TEES VALLEY MAYOR****TEES VALLEY MAYOR'S UPDATE****SUMMARY**

This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Mayor and Combined Authority since the last Cabinet meeting, which are not covered in other reports to this meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet notes the report.

DETAIL**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

1. The Combined Authority continues to work closely with our partners to facilitate and deliver rapid responses to help businesses manage the immediate impact of the pandemic, whilst also planning for longer-term recovery.
2. We continue to act as regional collator of business and economic intelligence, providing local intelligence and economic analysis to ensure that government is aware of the impacts of Covid-19 on our economy and to help shape the national response.
3. We have made the following interventions to support businesses and residents manage the immediate impacts, in addition to those previously reported.
 - Obtaining Cabinet approval to implement a town centre free parking scheme covering all five local authority areas in the Tees Valley, the scheme will encourage people to support local shops, cafés and businesses, as restrictions allow.
 - Securing £75,000 of funding to support transport demand management ahead of an anticipated “return to the workplace” in coming months.
 - Securing a further £631,012 of funding to support home to school and college transport in the January/February half-term, bringing the total amount received by to almost £1.75m.

4. As the regional lead agency for economic development, we are continuing to develop an Economic Recovery Plan of proposed interventions for a more sustainable, resilient and stronger Tees Valley economy in the medium to long-term and to engage with government to secure the necessary resources to put the plan into action. The Recovery Plan is a 'live' document, which ensures that we are taking appropriate action in response to the continuing economic impacts of Covid-19 to support our businesses and residents.
5. A number of key government policy papers and prospectuses expected early in 2021 – including further details of the planned Shared Prosperity Fund, the National Industrial Decarbonisation Plan, a Place-Based Innovation Strategy and the Devolution and Economic Recovery White Paper – which will inform the development of the Tees Valley approach to recovery going forward.

BUY LOCAL TEES VALLEY

6. In early November, the Buy Local Tees Valley website was redeveloped to give the public information on local goods and services open and operating during the second national lockdown and in the run-up to Christmas. Since its relaunch until mid-December, the site has seen over 17,000 would-be shoppers visit the site, with more than 1,000 businesses now signed up.

TEESSIDE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

7. Teesside International has reached a major milestone after confirming that Europe's no.1 airline, the low cost operator Ryanair is set to be flying from the airport in 2021.
8. In preparation for the increased number of passengers expected to use the airport due to 2021's expanded summer schedule of flights and beyond, major renovation work is under way to improve the customer experience. Disused areas of the airport are being brought back to life, with new check-in desks, bars, two executive lounges and a coffee shop as well as a remodelled security area. This includes state-of-the-art bag and body scanners to make moving through security quicker and smoother. We are engaging with local businesses for this work, due to be completed in April.
9. Teesside International has been working in partnership with local specialist testing, treatment and treatment service Recovery4Life, which has established a new COVID-19 testing facility at the airport. It aims to give passengers peace of mind and potentially reduce the need for them to self-isolate when travelling internationally. It offers four types of testing options and is the most competitively priced of its kind in the North East and Yorkshire.

MIDDLESBROUGH STATION REDEVELOPMENT

10. Phase 1 of the redevelopment of Middlesbrough Station is due to start on site in January 2021. The works will extend platform 2 and provide a turnback facility to enable longer trains to serve the station. This will be the first significant investment in a Tees Valley rail station since the opening of the James Cook University Hospital Station in 2014.

11. The works are required in advance of the anticipated LNER London to Middlesbrough service that is due to be introduced in 2021. The significant progress made in less than a year has been a result of collaborative working between the Combined Authority and Network Rail, which has enabled new ways of working to be adopted and timescales significantly cut.
12. Further phases of work include the redevelopment of the station undercroft, a new platform 3 to provide additional capacity for more rail services, enhancements to station facilities and public realm improvements around the station. All phases of the project are due to be completed by 2023.

CULTURE AND TOURISM

13. Work is now underway to progress the four 'foundation frameworks' which will underpin the new Growth Programme for the Creative & Visitor Economies, approved by the Combined Authority Cabinet on 27th November 2020:
 - Cultural Industries sector analysis;
 - Case for Capital;
 - Destination Management Plan;
 - Events & Festivals Framework.
14. The independent Cultural Industries and Visitor Economy Recovery Task Force, established by the Tees Valley Mayor in June, has now met four times, providing insights and guidance to shape the detail and delivery of the £1m Cultural Industries & Visitor Economy Recovery Programme. Significant progress has made on two key strands in recent months:
 - a. The Cultural Development & Innovation Fund is a £350k grant fund designed to support businesses in the culture sector to build resilience by making strategic step-changes in business activity / business models with a view to diversifying income streams, protecting jobs and growing sustainability in the longer term. Over 150 Expressions of Interest were received in late October, of which 53 were invited to make a full application. The deadline for the full applications was the 27th November and these applications were assessed by Umi (an independent Grant Management partner) and their assessment was moderated by TVCA. The outcome of the appraisal was then taken to an independent Expert Panel who were asked to review and moderate a recommended portfolio of investment within the level of available funding. Final approvals were made in December / January with an anticipated investment portfolio including 20 businesses receiving between £2,500 – £25,000.
 - b. Tees Valley Young Creatives: Class of 2020 seeks to ensure recent creative graduates / education leavers are supported to continue to develop the essential skills, networks, understanding and experience necessary for building fulfilling creative careers despite the sectoral uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Following a competitive procurement process, ARC has been selected to deliver a 12month programme of network development and online training / support for the Class of 20/21 cohorts. The programme is expected to launch in late January, in partnership with Stockton Riverside College, MIMA School of Arts & Design and Northern School of Art.

15. The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England have approved an extension to the Great Place programme until March 2021, to support Tees Valley cultural venues to adapt to the current climate and develop new ways to maintain connections with their local audiences. The Reconnecting Communities programme will enable the delivery of a series of pilot projects, testing new approaches for renewing audience/ visitor confidence and attendance, whilst creating work opportunities for local artists and freelancers. Five pilot projects have been selected in the first phase and further expression of interest have been received for Phase 2, with outcomes to be announced in the New Year.
16. The Combined Authority has been successful in securing £100k (matched with £100k of Combined Authority funding) of Partnership Investment funding from Arts Council England (ACE) to build a Tees Valley-wide Creative Education Partnership. The funding will enable the delivery of a two-year programme of pilot and research projects, network development and, ultimately, the creation of a new Creative Education Strategy for the region.

TEESWORKS

17. Demolition and land preparation work at a 153-acre portion of land on the South Bank area at Teesworks is drawing to a close. As part of the work, carried out by Hall Construction, 12 buildings have been demolished, a 12m-high concrete railway bridge has been removed and more than 1km of old railway lines and sleepers have been cleared. Planning permission has been granted for a 4.5million sq ft offshore wind manufacturing zone on the site, which could create 9,000 jobs plus 1,000 in construction. It will also support a 1.3km, £90million heavy load quay.

TEESWORKS SKILLS ACADEMY

18. Teesworks has appointed the Education Training Collective (Etc.), which includes Stockton Riverside and Redcar and Cleveland Colleges, to lead the work on Teesworks Skills Academy. The Skills Academy will help local people take advantage of job opportunities by training them to gain skills they need and linking them with employers who are recruiting across Teesworks. Etc. will be joined by Darlington, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool FE Colleges and Teesside University and the Learning Curve Group to help deliver the academy, alongside Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's community-based training and employment hubs. Work is now under way to develop a skills and recruitment plan for the site.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

19. Eight applications have now been submitted to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for the Kickstart programme. Of the 501 placements created from 110 businesses 354 have been approved by the DWP. There is a longstanding issue with the eligibility of Sole Traders who want to utilise the scheme which the Secretary of State is keen to resolve, there has also been a relaxation regarding the criteria that businesses need to be trading for 12 months to qualify, which should mean businesses that have not been trading for 12 months can have their applications resubmitted to the DWP by the Combined Authority. Work has now commenced to recruit young people into the placements created. The opportunity remains open and businesses are encouraged to engage either directly with DWP if they can offer more than 30 placements or partner with a "Gateway" organisation such as the Combined

Authority. There are additional gateway organisations approved to operate within Tees Valley.

20. Colleagues have been working with DWP and Department for Education (DfE) to develop new national programmes of support for the unemployed and raise skill levels. As a result, early in 2021 we expect to see a proportion of the £95m National Skills fund devolved to the Combined Authority and involvement in the procurement process for Restart which will, from next summer offer intensive support to residents who are 12-18 months unemployed.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION & ENERGY

21. Planning permission has now been granted for both of the Combined Authority's proposed Hydrogen Fuelling Station sites. Commercial discussions are ongoing with suppliers and landowners with a view to progressing the project in 2021.
22. The Combined Authority has signed a Collaboration Agreement with BP and NEPIC for the delivery of its Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Cluster Plan. The project will focus on the Tees Valley which is the UK's most compact and integrated industrial cluster. The cluster includes 5 of the UK's top 25 CO2 emitters and is responsible for 5.6% of UK industrial emissions; the Tees Valley process sector generates £12bn of exports annually, employs over 12,000 people and contributes £2.5bn to UK GVA.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no financial implications to this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no legal implications to this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

25. This report is an update and therefore is categorised as low risk.

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