



Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet

Cabinet Meeting

Date: Friday 25 July 2025 at 9:00am

Venue: Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington, DL2 1NJ

Membership:

Mayor Ben Houchen (Tees Valley Mayor)
Councillor Stephen Harker (Leader of Darlington Borough Council)
Councillor Brenda Harrison (Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council)
Mayor Chris Cooke (Mayor of Middlesbrough)
Councillor Alec Brown (Leader of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Councillor Lisa Evans (Leader of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
TBC (Chair of Tees Valley Business Board)

Agenda

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.

3 (a) Appointment of Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and Interim Monitoring Officer

To receive a report from the Chief Executive seeking approval to appoint an interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and an interim Monitoring Officer for up to twelve months following the departure of the previous postholders.

Cabinet will also be invited to note the continuation of the interim arrangements for the Director of Business Solutions and the Director of Infrastructure.

3. (b) Exclusion of the Press & Public – in relation to Item 3(c)

To consider passing a Resolution Pursuant to Section 100A (4) Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act) excluding the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that if present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within paragraph 1 (information relating to an individual) and paragraph 2 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual), paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

3 (c) Confidential Appendices to Item 3(a)

Cabinet to consider the content of the Confidential Appendices referred to in the Report at Item 3(a) of this Agenda.

4. Date and Time of Next Meeting:-

Friday 26th September, 2025 @ 10am

Members of the Public – Rights to Attend Meeting



With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please contact: The Governance Team – tvcagovernance@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk



Tees Valley Combined Authority Declaration of Interests Procedures

1. The purpose of this note is to provide advice and guidance to all members (the Mayor, elected and co-opted members, substitute members and associate members) of the Combined Authority Cabinet, Sub-Committees and Tees Valley Business Board Board, on the procedure for declaring interests. The procedure is set out in full in the [Combined Authority's Constitution](#) under the "Code of Conduct for Members" (Appendix 8).

Personal Interests

2. The Code of Conduct sets out in full, the principles on the general conduct of members in their capacity at the Combined Authority. As a general principle, members should act impartially and should not use their position at the Combined Authority to further their personal or private interests.
3. There are two types of personal interests covered by the constitution:
 - a. "disclosable pecuniary interests". In general, a disclosable pecuniary interest will involve any financial interests, such as paid employment or membership of a body, interests in contracts, or ownership of land or shares. Members have a pecuniary interest in a matter where there is a reasonable likelihood or expectation that the business to be considered will affect your well-being or financial position, or the well-being or financial position of the following persons:
 - i. a member of your family;
 - ii. any person with whom you have a close association;
 - iii. in relation to a) and b) above, their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or a company of which they are a director;
 - iv. any person or body in whom persons described in a) and b) above have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
 - v. any body as described in paragraph 3 b) i) and ii) below.
 - b. Any other personal interests. You have a personal interest in any business of the Combined Authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:
 - i. any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Combined Authority;
 - ii. any body which:
 - exercises functions of a public nature;
 - is directed to charitable purposes;
 - one of whose principle purposes includes influencing public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management).

Declarations of interest relating to the Councils' commercial role

4. The constituent councils of the Combined Authority are closely integrated with its governance and financial arrangements, and financial relationships between the Combined Authority and Councils do not in themselves create a conflict of interest for Council Leaders who are also Combined Authority Cabinet members. Nor is it a conflict

Anything is possible

of interest if the Combined Authority supports activities within a particular council boundary. Nevertheless, there are specific circumstances where the Cabinet is considering entering into direct contractual arrangements with a council, for example in relation to a particular commercial investment project, or in which that council is a co-funder. In these circumstances a non-pecuniary declaration of interest should be made by the Council Leader or their substitute.

Procedures for Declaring Interests

5. In line with the Code of Conduct, members are required to adhere to the following procedures for declaring interests:

Register of Interests

6. Each member is required to complete a register of interests form with their personal interests, within 28 days of their appointment to the Combined Authority. If no declaration is received from elected members within 28 days the matter may be referred to the Head of Paid Service of your local authority and Leader of the political group you represent on your council for action. If a Declaration is not submitted within an appropriate timescale you may be prevented from attending committee meetings.
7. Details of any personal interests registered will be published on the Combined Authority's website, with the full register available at the Combined Authority's offices for public inspection. The form will be updated on an annual basis but it is the responsibility of each member to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes to the register throughout the year. Notification of a change must be made to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of becoming aware of that change.

Declaration of Interests at Meetings

8. The Combined Authority will include a standing item at the start of each meeting for declaration of interests. Where members are aware that any of their personal interests are relevant to an item of business being considered at a meeting they are attending, they must declare that interest either during the standing item on the agenda, at the start of the consideration of the item of business, or when the interest becomes apparent, if later.
9. Where members consider that their interest could be considered by the public as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the members' judgement then they may not participate in any discussion and voting on the matter at the meeting, but may attend the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the business, before it is discussed and voted upon.
10. If the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest (as summarised in paragraph 3a) then the member must leave the meeting room during discussion and voting on the item of business, but may make representations, give evidence and answer questions before leaving the meeting room. Failure to comply with the requirements in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests is a criminal offence.

Sensitive Information



11. Members can seek the advice of the monitoring officer if they consider that the disclosure of their personal interests contains sensitive information.



Appendices 1 & 2 to this report are not for publication by virtue of paragraphs 1 (Information relating to an individual) and 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.)of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appendix 3 to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

Agenda Item 3
Report to the TVCA Cabinet
25 July 2025
Report of the Chief Executive

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & RESOURCES AND INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

SUMMARY

This report seeks Cabinet approval to appoint an Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and an Interim Monitoring Officer for up to twelve months following the departure of the previous postholders.

Furthermore, the report asks Cabinet to note the continuation of the interim arrangements for the Director of Business Solutions and the Director of Infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Approve the appointment of Jo Moore as Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources for a period of up to twelve months (see paragraph 9 and **Appendix 1**).
- ii. Approve the appointment of Jodie Townsend as Interim Monitoring Officer for a period of up to twelve months (see paragraph 9 and **Appendix 2**).

- iii. Note the continuation of Sarah Walker as Interim Director of Business Solutions (see paragraph 15).
- iv. Note the continuation of Julie Hurley as Interim Director of Infrastructure (see paragraph 16).
- v. Note that the additional cost of £204K for these interim appointments (plus agency fees (see **Appendix 3**)), for up to twelve months, will be funded by delivering a saving on the expenditure on external legal/governance advice (see paragraphs 19 – 29).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Under Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985, the Combined Authority is required to appoint an officer to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. In the Combined Authority, this role is currently discharged by the post of Group Director of Finance & Resources. Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 also requires the Combined Authority to appoint a Monitoring Officer. The alternative options that have been considered and not recommended are:

Designate internal officers as the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer. This option is not recommended as there are no internal candidates who currently have sufficient experience at this level in dealing with the challenges facing the organisation. The challenges facing the authority necessitate experienced candidates who have operated in these roles previously.

Designate constituent Local Authority officers as the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer. This option was not pursued, as whilst the constituent Local Authorities have officers with the requisite experience and skillset, it is not felt that they would have the capacity to jointly undertake these roles on behalf of the Combined Authority and their respective authorities. It is felt that statutory officers focussing solely on TVCA business are required given the challenges facing the authority.

Appoint interims on a lower day rate. Other interim candidates were interviewed who had a lower day rate (circa £1,000 per day). However, they were not felt to have the requisite skillset, experience or organisational fit considering the challenges facing the organisation. It is therefore felt that this would be a sub-optimal option and would not give the organisation the best possible chance of effectively delivering the Organisational Improvement Plan.

DETAIL

Background

1. Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) is legally required to appoint the following statutory officers:
 - Monitoring Officer – responsible for monitoring the lawfulness of TVCA's actions under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
 - Section 73 Chief Finance Officer – responsible for administering TVCA's financial affairs in accordance with Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985.
2. The previous post holders for both statutory roles have recently left the organisation.
3. Under a delegation to the Head of Paid Service (HPS5) in the TVCA Constitution, the Chief Executive has arranged, on a short-term basis, for the Group Financial Controller to discharge the functions of the Group Director of Finance & Resources and for the Deputy Monitoring Officer to discharge the functions of the Monitoring Officer.
4. On 3 April 2025 TVCA was issued with a non-statutory Best Value Notice by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Organisational Improvement Plan developed in response to this Notice was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 June 2025.
5. Furthermore, TVCA's external auditor (EY) wrote to TVCA Cabinet on 15 April 2025 issuing three recommendations under Section 24, Schedule 7 (2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The TVCA actions in response to these recommendations were approved by Cabinet at an extraordinary meeting on the 14 May 2025.
6. There is a need to ensure that TVCA appoints a suitably qualified Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer, with the requisite skill set and experience to support the organisational improvement required.

Proposal for Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer

7. It is proposed that interim appointments are made to both the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer roles. There are several reasons for this proposal:
 - To ensure effective delivery of the Organisational Improvement Plan. As this has a strong emphasis on governance and finance, there is a need to appoint suitably qualified individuals with an appropriate level of experience.
 - There is a need to fill both roles quickly and it is estimated that appointing permanent candidates through an external recruitment process could take up to six months (considering the recruitment process and likely notice periods).
 - Given the Best Value Notice and letter from the external auditor, it is felt that now is not the right time to seek to appoint both roles on a permanent basis.

8. The Chief Executive has therefore worked with Solace in Business, a subsidiary of Solace (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) and CIPFA-Penna – a partnership between the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and Penna, a people management business – both of whom specialise in providing candidates for this type of interim role.
9. The Chief Executive interviewed four candidates for the Group Director of Finance & Resources role and two candidates for the Monitoring Officer role. Following this process, two proposed candidates have been identified:
 - Group Director of Finance & Resources – Jo Moore. In recent years Jo has held the following positions: Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer) London Borough of Enfield; Interim Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) London Borough of Barking and Dagenham; Interim Chief Finance Officer CIPFA; Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) Cumbria County Council; and Interim Deputy Chief Executive/S151 Officer Cotswold District Council. Jo is a Fellow Chartered and Certified Accountant (FCCA), a highly respected professional qualification in the field of accounting, which demonstrates extensive experience.
 - Monitoring Officer – Jodie Townsend. In recent years Jodie has held the following positions: Director of Law, Governance & Compliance and Monitoring Officer East Midlands Combined County Authority; Governance Consultant/Improvement Programme Lead Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority; Governance Consultant (Assistant Director Portfolio Office) Homes England; Governance Consultant West Midlands Combined Authority; and Governance Consultant North of Tyne Combined Authority.
10. The CV and references for Jo Moore are included in **Appendix 1** and the CV and references for Jodie Townsend are included in **Appendix 2**.
11. The Chief Executive has also engaged with Rob Whiteman, Chair of the Independent Advisory Board, on the two proposed candidates. Rob has previously worked with Jo and is supportive of the interim appointment. Jodie is well known to Helen Edwards, Monitoring Officer at West Midlands Combined Authority, who is a member of the Independent Advisory Board, and she is supportive of the interim appointment.
12. It is proposed that both the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer interim appointments are made for up to twelve months.
13. The Chief Executive has stressed the requirement for both proposed interim candidates to regularly work from the TVCA offices and this will be stipulated in the contractual arrangements.

14. At this stage, a decision has not been made on when to commence the process for the recruitment of a permanent Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer. The proposal is therefore to appoint both interim appointments for up to twelve months, which provides flexibility. Cabinet will be informed of the plan for the permanent recruitment of both posts in due course.

Other interim Director appointments

15. Following the departure of the previous Director of Business Solutions, Sarah Walker was appointed by the previous Group Chief Executive as Interim Director of Business Solutions on the 1 February 2025, under a delegation to the Head of Paid Service (HPS5) in the TVCA Constitution. Sarah's substantive post is Head of Investment Development.
16. Similarly, following the previous Director of Infrastructure being appointed as Interim Chief Executive, Julie Hurley was appointed as Interim Director of Infrastructure on the 28 April 2025. The appointment was made by the Interim Chief Executive under the same delegation in the TVCA Constitution. Julie Hurley has previously worked at Atkins Realis, the Sheffield City Region and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.
17. Cabinet is asked to note the continuation of both Sarah Walker as Interim Director of Business Solutions and Julie Hurley as Interim Director of Infrastructure, until permanent appointments are made to both posts.
18. It is proposed that the process for the recruitment of a permanent Director of Business Solutions and Director of Infrastructure commences in September 2025 and is reported to Cabinet for approval at its meeting on the 12 December 2025. The process will mirror the recent recruitment of the Director of Inward Investment & Marketing, supported by an external recruitment agency, and involving internal, stakeholder and appointment panels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources

19. The salary for the Group Director of Finance & Resources post is £129,103, which is subject to employers' national insurance and pension on costs. Therefore, the total cost of £169,148.98 is included in the TVCA budget. However, the proposed interim candidate is not willing to enter a fixed-term contract.
20. The proposed Group Director of Finance & Resources candidate has a day rate of £1,250. This is an all-inclusive rate and TVCA would only pay for the days worked and would not be liable for holiday pay, sick pay, pension contributions or National Insurance contributions. There is also an upfront one-off agency fee as detailed in **Appendix 3**. The total estimated cost for twelve months is £215,000 (plus agency fee), based on four days per week, as set out in the table below. It should be noted that this is based on

assumptions around the number of potential holiday/sick days. This represents an estimated additional cost of £45,851.02 (plus agency fee) over twelve months in the overall staffing budget.

Twelve month estimated cost interim Group Director of Finance & Resources	
Item	Cost
Estimated number of days worked 172. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Based on 253 working days in 2025</i> • <i>Minus 52 as contract will be 4-days per week</i> • <i>Minus 22 days (28 days estimated holiday (legal holiday entitlement) factored down to 4-days per week equivalent)</i> • <i>Minus 7 days (9 days estimated sickness (LGA report average sick days of 8.8 per year) factored down to 4 days per week equivalent)</i> 	172 x £1,250 = £215,000
Total	£215,000

Monitoring Officer

21. The salary for the post is £98,916.00, which is subject to employers' national insurance and pension on costs, with a total cost of £143,509.66. However, the previous postholder worked four days per week and therefore, a total cost of £116,242.82 is included in the TVCA budget. However, the proposed interim candidate is not willing to enter a fixed-term contract.
22. The proposed interim Monitoring Officer candidate has a day rate of £1,350, which is an all-inclusive rate. There is also a one-off upfront agency fee as detailed in **Appendix 3**. TVCA would only pay for the days worked and would not be liable for holiday pay, sick pay, pension contributions or National Insurance contributions. The total estimated cost for twelve months is £291,600 (plus agency fee), based on five days per week, as set out in the table below. It should be noted that this is based on assumptions around the number of potential holiday/sick days. This represents an estimated additional cost of £148,090.34 (plus agency fee) over twelve-months in the overall staffing budget (on a like for like five days per week comparison).

Twelve month estimated cost interim Monitoring Officer	
Item	Cost

Estimated number of days worked 216. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Based on 253 working days in 2025</i> • <i>Minus 28 days estimated holiday (legal holiday entitlement)</i> • <i>Minus 9 days estimated sickness (LGA report average sick days of 8.8 per year)</i> 	$216 \times \text{£}1,350 = \text{£}291,600$
Total	£291,600

Interim Director of Business Solutions

23. The interim Director of Business Solutions is being paid the salary for this role, which is £129,103, subject to employers' national insurance and pension on costs. The total cost of £169,148.98 is included in the TVCA budget.

Interim Director of Infrastructure

24. The interim Director of Infrastructure is being paid the salary for this role, which is £129,103, subject to employers' national insurance and pension on costs, plus £850 per month for accommodation costs (subject to tax and NI). The total cost is therefore £179,348.98, with £169,148.98 included in the existing budget, and an additional cost of £10,200 over twelve months in the overall staffing budget.

25. This was a negotiated position as the post holder was secured through a recruitment agency proposing a day rate of £1,062 plus expenses for travel, accommodation and subsistence. A cost has been estimated should the postholder have been appointed on a day rate as per the table below. The negotiated position therefore represents a saving on the estimated cost of appointing on the day rate of £68K over twelve months.

Twelve month estimated cost should interim Director of Infrastructure have been appointed on a day rate	
Item	Cost
Estimated number of days worked 216. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Based on 253 working days in 2025</i> • <i>Minus 28 days estimated holiday (legal holiday entitlement)</i> • <i>Minus 9 days estimated sickness (LGA report average sick days of 8.8 per year)</i> 	$216 \times \text{£}1,062 = \text{£}229,392$

Estimated expenses for travel, accommodation and subsistence	£1,500 per month = £18,000
Total	£247,392

Budget saving to fund the additional costs

26. In recent years TVCA has incurred significant spend on external legal/governance advice as set out below:

- 2023/24 - £908K
- 2024/25 – £796K
- 2025/26 first quarter – £242K (projected total = £968K)

27. There is felt to be potential to reduce external legal/governance expenditure, and the intention is to offset the additional cost of £204,141.36 (plus agency fees) for the interim appointments against savings on this budget. It is therefore envisaged that the proposal will be cost-neutral and further updates will be provided to Cabinet on the financial position.

Value for money

28. The proposed interim appointments to the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer roles are considered to offer value for money as the individuals will provide significant experience and expertise. This is critically important given the challenges facing the authority, specifically the Best Value Notice and the letter from TVCA's external auditor (EY). The day rates for the proposed candidates are similar to other candidates on the market with a comparable skill set and level of experience. The off-payroll working rules (IR35) ensure that a worker (sometimes known as a contractor) pays broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance as an employee would.

29. The alternative options section of the report sets out why the other options considered are not recommended.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

30. The TVCA Constitution includes a delegation to the Head of Paid Service (HPS5) to "Take any action which is necessary or required as a matter of urgency in the interests of the Combined Authority, in consultation (where practicable) with the Mayor (Chair of the Combined Authority Cabinet), the Monitoring Officer and the Group Director of Finance and Resources." This delegation has been used to appoint Sarah Walker as interim Director of Business Solutions and Julie Hurly as interim Director of Infrastructure.

31. The TVCA Constitution also states in paragraph 119 that Cabinet shall appoint as senior officers of the Combined Authority a Monitoring Officer, a Group Director of Finance and Resources and other Directors as necessary. Whilst this report proposes interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and interim Monitoring Officer appointments, they could be in post for up to twelve months, and they have therefore been treated as 'appointments' in relation to the definition in the Constitution.
32. The Mayoral Development Corporation Constitutions (South Tees, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough) state that the roles of the Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer of the Development Corporations are discharged by the Group Director of Finance and Resources and Monitoring Officer for TVCA respectively.

RISK ASSESSMENT

33. Given the non-statutory Best Value Notice referenced in paragraph 4 and the letter from TVCA's external auditor (EY) referenced in paragraph 5, the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and interim Monitoring Officer is critical in implementing the Organisational Improvement Plan. The proposed candidates for both roles are felt to have the requisite experience and skill set required given the challenges facing the authority.
34. The progress made in implementing the Organisational Improvement Plan will influence the timeframe for undertaking the recruitment process to appoint permanent candidates to the role of Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer.

CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION

35. There has been engagement with Cabinet and Chief Executives during the process.
36. An internal and external communications plan has been developed to ensure staff, stakeholders, partners, and the public are appropriately engaged and informed.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

37. The recommendations in this report do not directly impact on groups of people with protected characteristics.
38. The interim appointments detailed in this report have been appointed based on their skill set, experience and suitability for the roles, particularly given the challenges facing the organisation.
39. The process to appoint permanent appointments for all roles will be undertaken in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.



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