



TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET

Friday, 24 April 2026 at 10.00am

Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington

These Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next Cabinet meeting and are therefore subject to amendments.

<u>ATTENDEES</u>	
Members	
Mayor Ben Houchen (Chair)	Tees Valley Mayor
Councillor Stephen Harker	Leader, Darlington Borough Council
Councillor Pamela Hargreaves	Leader, Hartlepool Borough Council
Mayor Chris Cooke	Mayor of Middlesbrough, Middlesbrough Council
Councillor Alec Brown	Leader, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Councillor Lisa Evans	Leader, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Officers	
Tom Bryant	Chief Executive, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Sarah Brackenborough	Director of Operations, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Jo Moore	Interim Director of Finance & Resources, Tees Valley Combined Authority (joined on Teams)
Craig Peacock	Director of Inward Investment & Marketing, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Sarah Walker	Director of Business Solutions, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Jeanette McGarry	Interim Monitoring Officer, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Trevor Watson	Executive Director: Economy & Public Protection, Darlington Borough Council
Denise McGuckin	Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council
Matt Wilton	Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council
Erik Scollay	Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Council

Brian Archer	Chief Executive, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Ged Morton	Corporate Services Director, Stockton Borough Council
Jacqui Banks	Business Solutions Manager – Skills, TVCA
Sally Henry	Governance Officer, TVCA
Jodie Townsend	Governance consultant (joined on Teams)
Also in attendance	
Councillor Ian Blades	Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Committee

These Minutes capture the key points and decisions of the meeting, but they do not attempt to reproduce every word spoken. The full recording can be found [here](#).

	<p><u>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</u></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance.</p>
TVCA 90/25	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted by Mike Greene and Rose Rouse.</p>
TVCA 91/25	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The interim Monitoring Officer and the interim Director of Finance & Resources declared an interest in the Governance & Appointment item.</p> <p>All Leaders declared a non-pecuniary interest in the “Skills Programme – Approval of Adult Skills Grant Funded Provider Allocations & Approval of The Process for Awarding The Post-16 Capital Skills Allocations to Providers” item.</p>
TVCA 92/25	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2026 were confirmed as an accurate record.</p>

<p>TVCA 93/25</p>	<p>TEES VALLEY MAYOR'S UPDATE</p> <p>The Mayor advised Cabinet members that he had nothing further to update them on which was not covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p>Members were however given an opportunity ask questions.</p> <p>No questions were asked.</p>
<p>TVCA 94/25</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE & APPOINTMENTS</p> <p>Jeanette McGarry and Jo Moore left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive which provided an update on the recruitment process for the Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and the Director of Finance & Resources and, given that none of the candidates were considered appointable, sought approval to extend the current interim arrangements. It also sought approval for the proposed new members of the Business Board and Independent Remuneration Panel.</p> <p>Cabinet were also asked to note the resignation of two independent members of the Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board, which is currently under review, and note the recruitment of up to three Independent Persons.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>NOTE</u> the update on the recruitment process for the Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and the Finance & Resources Director. B. <u>APPROVE</u> the extension of Jo Moore as Interim Director of Finance & Resources and Jeanette McGarry as Interim Monitoring Officer through to the end of September 2026. C. <u>APPROVE</u> the proposed new members of the Business Board; D. <u>APPROVE</u> the proposed membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), including the Chair appointment. E. <u>NOTE</u> the resignation of two independent members of the Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board.

	<p>F. <u>NOTE</u> the recruitment of up to three Independent Persons.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>Councillor Hargreaves supported the decision not to appoint to the vacancies at the last round of interviews as she noted it is important to ensure the correct people are appointed to the roles of Monitoring Officer and Director of Finance & Resources. The Chair concurred and commented it is vital to extend the contracts of the current interim post holders until permanent appointments can be made.</p> <p>Mayor Cooke asked if Cabinet members can be kept updated with the recruitment process and was advised that members will receive informal updates and an update paper will be presented to Cabinet in June.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised that both interim appointments are committed to staying, providing time for permanent replacements to be appointed.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>NOTED</u> the update on the recruitment process for the Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and the Finance & Resources Director. B. <u>APPROVED</u> the extension of Jo Moore as Interim Director of Finance & Resources and Jeanette McGarry as Interim Monitoring Officer through to the end of September 2026. C. <u>APPROVED</u> the proposed new members of the Business Board. D. <u>APPROVED</u> the proposed membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), including the Chair appointment. E. <u>NOTED</u> the resignation of two independent members of the Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board. F. <u>NOTED</u> the recruitment of up to three Independent Persons. <p>Jeanette McGarry and Jo Moore returned to the meeting at this point.</p>
TVCA	GOVERNANCE REVIEW

<p>95/25</p>	<p>Cabinet received a report, which was presented by Jodie Townsend, and provided details on the ongoing review of governance arrangements and presented recommendations resulting from that review. The report also explained how Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) plans to improve the way it is governed and make decisions. It outlined the changes being proposed, such as creating a new Investment Committee, and set out why these changes are needed, what they will achieve, and how they support the Combined Authority's wider improvement.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. NOTE the ongoing review of governance arrangements and the timetable set out in Appendix A of the report. B. APPROVE the establishment of an Investment Committee and its terms of reference as set out in Appendix B. <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions. No comments or questions were raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. NOTED the ongoing review of governance arrangements and the timetable set out in Appendix A of the report. B. APPROVED the establishment of an Investment Committee and its terms of reference as set out in Appendix B.
<p>TVCA 96/25</p>	<p>SINGLE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Cabinet received a report, which presented for consideration the draft Single Assurance Framework (SAF).</p> <p>The report, which was presented by Jodie Townsend, set out the benefits of a SAF and why it is needed. He advised that it will put TVCA on a footing for devolution compliance and is fundamental to governance improvement. If approved by government, it can be taken that government are aware of the improvements we have implemented.</p> <p>Cabinet was asked to consider the report and approve that it be submitted to Government for clearance, which is required prior to the Combined Authority adopting and then implementing the Single Assurance Framework.</p>

	<p>Cabinet were asked to consider that by providing approval for submission to Government they are providing a commitment to adopt and implement the Single Assurance Framework, although formal adoption will require a subsequent Cabinet decision to be taken following approval by the required Government Departments.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p> <p>A. Consider the report and the draft Single Assurance Framework and approve its submission to Government for clearance consideration.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>No comments or questions were raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <p>Considered the report and the draft Single Assurance Framework and approve its submission to Government for clearance consideration.</p>
<p>TVCA 97/25</p>	<p>LOCAL GROWTH PLAN UPDATE AND APPROVAL OF LOCAL GROWTH FUND PRIORITY ALLOCATION.</p> <p>Cabinet were provided with an update on the Local Growth Plan and asked to note progress, next steps and timescales. They were advised that the full Plan will be brought back to a future meeting for adoption.</p> <p>Cabinet were also provided an update on the Tees Valley Investment Pipeline and asked to note progress, next steps and timescales. They were also advised that the Pipeline will be brought back to a future meeting for adoption.</p> <p>Cabinet was also provided an update on the development of a proposal for the Local Growth Fund and their approval was sought to allocate funds to support Business Growth.</p> <p>Cabinet were recommended to:-</p> <p>A. NOTE the plan and timeline for the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan;</p>

	<p>B. NOTE the progress in the development of a Tees Valley Investment Pipeline;</p> <p>C. APPROVE the prioritisation of the £34m Local Growth Fund to support Business Growth.</p> <p>D. APPROVE delegation to complete and submit the Local Growth Fund Investment Plan and Outcomes Framework to MHCLG to the TVCA Director of Business Solutions in consultation with the TVCA Statutory Officers, the Tees Valley Mayor and Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>E. NOTE that all activity and financial commitments will be subject to proportionate Business Cases in line with the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework and these will be reported to Cabinet for approval in June 2026.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>Mayor Cooke enquired when Cabinet will receive a view from Government and was advised that they have been very supportive of the process to date and an update will be brought to June Cabinet.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <p>A. NOTED the plan and timeline for the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan;</p> <p>B. NOTED the progress in the development of a Tees Valley Investment Pipeline;</p> <p>C. APPROVED the prioritisation of the £34m Local Growth Fund to support Business Growth.</p> <p>D. APPROVED delegation to complete and submit the Local Growth Fund Investment Plan and Outcomes Framework to MHCLG to the TVCA Director of Business Solutions in consultation with the TVCA Statutory Officers, the Tees Valley Mayor and Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>E. NOTED that all activity and financial commitments will be subject to proportionate Business Cases in line with the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework and these will be reported to Cabinet for approval in June 2026.</p>
<p>TVCA 98/25</p>	<p>SKILLS PROGRAMME – APPROVAL OF ADULT SKILLS GRANT FUNDED PROVIDER ALLOCATIONS & APPROVAL OF THE PROCESS FOR</p>

AWARDING THE POST-16 CAPITAL SKILLS ALLOCATIONS TO PROVIDERS.

Cabinet were asked for their approval for the Adult Skills Fund grant allocations and Post-16 Capital and CTEC capital arrangements. Cabinet were also provided an update on the adult skills procurement process and the development of LSIP 2.

Cabinet were recommended to:-

- A. **APPROVE** the recommended allocations for the Grant Funded Providers for the 2026/27-2028/29 academic years, as set out in **Appendix 1** of the report.
- B. **APPROVE** the recommended allocations for the Post 16 Capacity Capital funding and Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) Capital funding as set out in **Appendix 2 and 3** of the report.
- C. **DELEGATE** the process for allocating the remainder of the CTEC (Project Based) capital funding from DfE in the 2026/27 financial year to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Combined Authority Monitoring Officer and the Section 73 Officer), the Tees Valley Mayor and Portfolio lead.
- D. **NOTE** the update on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (2026-29).

The Director of Business Solutions provided Cabinet members with a brief overview of the report.

Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.

Councillor Evans expressed her thanks to the team at TVCA for all the work that has gone into this. There have been workshops and a collective agreement was reached by all stakeholders. This should be recognised as best practice.

Mayor Cooke asked that the population data is kept under regular review as there is a rising number of young people.

This was acknowledged and he was advised that it is under review.

Councillor Hargreaves endorsed the approach taken and the comments from Councillor Evans. All the delivery partners worked together as a sector which has made Cabinet's endorsement of the programme easier.

	<p>The Chair thanked Councillor Evans for all her work.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. APPROVED the recommended allocations for the Grant Funded Providers for the 2026/27-2028/29 academic years, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. B. APPROVED the recommended allocations for the Post 16 Capacity Capital funding and Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) Capital funding as set out in Appendix 2 and 3 of the report. C. DELEGATED the process for allocating the remainder of the CTEC (Project Based) capital funding from DfE in the 2026/27 financial year to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in consultation with the Combined Authority Monitoring Officer and the Section 73 Officer), the Tees Valley Mayor and Portfolio lead. D. NOTED the update on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (2026-29).
<p>TVCA 99/25</p>	<p>YOUTH GUARANTEE TRAILBLAZER YEAR 2 APPROVAL</p> <p>Cabinet was presented with a report from the Director of Business Solutions, which advised that the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer was originally launched as a one-year pilot. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has now confirmed funding for a second year to build on the insights and learning from Year 1. It is a nationally funded DWP initiative being delivered locally by Mayoral Combined Authorities to test innovative, place-based approaches to supporting young people into employment, education and training.</p> <p>The report asked Cabinet for a decision for Tees Valley Combined Authority to continue as accountable body for the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer for Year 2 of the programme (Apr 26 – Mar 27). The Year 2 delivery has been accepted by DWP, and funding has been confirmed by a Grant Funding Agreement received 24 March 2026.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. APPROVE Year 2 of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer and accept £5m from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) into the Investment Plan for the period April 2026 – March 2027. B. APPROVE continuation of the Year 1 delivery model with Stockton Borough Council acting as Programme Manager on behalf of the

	<p>Combined Authority and all five Local Authorities delivering locally, supported by enhanced programme management support from TVCA</p> <p>C. DELEGATE authority to the TVCA Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, to approve any future extension of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Pilot programme, subject to confirmation of funding from DWP.</p> <p>D. NOTE The advanced delegated decision that was taken in March 2026 to mitigate the risk of any pause in programme delivery.</p> <p>The Director of Business Solutions provided Cabinet members with a brief overview of the report.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>There were no questions or comments.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <p>A. APPROVED Year 2 of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer and accept £5m from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) into the Investment Plan for the period April 2026 – March 2027.</p> <p>B. APPROVED continuation of the Year 1 delivery model with Stockton Borough Council acting as Programme Manager on behalf of the Combined Authority and all five Local Authorities delivering locally, supported by enhanced programme management support from TVCA</p> <p>C. DELEGATED authority to the TVCA Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, to approve any future extension of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Pilot programme, subject to confirmation of funding from DWP.</p> <p>D. NOTED the advanced delegated decision that was taken in March 2026 to mitigate the risk of any pause in programme delivery.</p>
<p>TVCA 100/25</p>	<p>DELEGATED DECISIONS</p>

	<p>Cabinet was presented with a report from the Interim Monitoring Officer, which advised of all the Delegated Decisions made since Cabinet last met on 20th March 2026.</p> <p>Cabinet was invited to NOTE the Delegated Decisions.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>There were no questions or comments.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the Delegated Decisions made since Cabinet last met on 20th March 2026.</p>
	<p><u>CHAIRS CLOSING COMMENTS.</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Matt Wilton to his first TVCA Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>The Chair then expressed his thanks to Denise McGuckin for her contribution to TVCA over the years and noted that she will be missed.</p> <p>DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friday 26th June 2026 at 10:00am.