



TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET

Friday, 25 July, 2025 at 09.00am

Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington

<u>ATTENDEES</u>	
Members	
Mayor Ben Houchen (Chair)	Tees Valley Mayor
Councillor Brenda Harrison	Leader Hartlepool Borough Council
Mayor Chris Cooke	Leader, 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
Clare Cuskin	Head of Legal Services, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Shaun Natrass	Group Legal Services Manager, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Denise McGuckin	Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council
Erik Scollay	Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Council
Brian Archer	Managing Director, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Ged Morton	Corporate Services Director, Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Amy Wennington	Assistant Director – Law & Governance, Darlington Borough Council
Kate Smith	Governance Officer, TVCA

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>
<p>TVCA 30/25</p>	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Councillor Stephen Harker, Leader, Darlington Borough Council Rose Rouse, Chief Executive, Darlington Borough Council, Mike Greene, Chief Executive, Stockton Borough Council Matthew Ord, Interim Business Board Chair</p> <p><u>Substitutes</u></p> <p>Amy Wennington, Assistant Director – Law & Governance, Darlington Borough Council attended on behalf of Rose Rouse.</p> <p>Ged Morton, Corporate Services Director, Stockton on Tees Borough Council attended on behalf of Mike Greene.</p>
<p>TVCA 31/25</p>	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None were declared.</p>
<p>TVCA 32/25</p>	<p>APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & RESOURCES AND INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER</p> <p>Cabinet received a report seeking approval to appoint an interim Group Director of Finance & Resources and an Interim Monitoring Officer. The report detailed the proposed appointments and the requirements under legislation to ensure that TVCA has both a Monitoring Officer and a Section 73 Chief Finance Officer. Cabinet was advised by Tom Bryant, Chief Executive that the Group Director of Finance and Resources, and the Group Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer have recently left the organisation.</p> <p>It was explained that recruitment agents had been engaged to ensure the interim replacements have the requisite experience and expertise, and it is proposed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Moore is appointed Interim Group Director of Finance and Resources • Jodie Townsend is appointed Interim Monitoring Officer.

	<p>Tom Bryant explained that both candidates offer significant experience and expertise and will be valuable additions to the organisation, particularly with the implementation of the Organisational Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Cabinet was advised that opinion was also sought from Rob Whiteman and Helen Edwards from the Independent Advisory Board (IAB) who have previously worked with both candidates and are supportive of the appointments.</p> <p>Members were advised of a clarification that the intention is to have a permanent Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring in post within the next 12 months, and it is proposed to advertise these roles in approximately 6 months' time to give time to go through a thorough process.</p> <p>Cabinet was also asked to support the continuation of Sarah Walker as Interim Director of Business Solutions, and Julie Hurley as Interim Director of Infrastructure and note that the recruitment for permanent appointments will commence in September and be reported to December Cabinet for decision.</p> <p>Cabinet was advised that the cost for the 12-month period will be £204,000, plus the agency fees to recruiters set out in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Questions and comments from members were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Harrison stated that the process has been done well and agreed with going out to agency to engage the best candidates for the interim role. She noted that, if approved there will 4 'interim' directors, and requested assurances that this will be resolved in the next 12 months. Tom Bryant confirmed that there is the desire to get the permanent leadership team in place as soon as possible. It was outlined that the intention is to advertise the roles of Director of Business Solutions and Director of Infrastructure in September and go through the formal process of recruitment to bring back to Cabinet for approval in December. Discussions were had amongst members and the Chair in relation to the Group Director of Finance & Resources and Monitoring Officer roles, which will be advertised early in 2026. The Chair suggested that it may not be in time to bring back to Cabinet in March, however it was felt that, if necessary, an additional Cabinet meeting could be held in late Spring/early summer. Members agreed that the process should be agreed collaboratively with Cabinet.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Brown asked whether the appointment of Interim officers may have negative repercussions on the lifting of the BVN, and if any impacts on the Development Corporations are foreseen. Tom Bryant clarified that there is no direct correlation, and the proposed interim appointments have been discussed with the IAB. It has been made clear in the plan to Government that the interims will transition into permanent appointments and will not impact on the ability to make improvements. With regards to the Development Corporations, TVCA currently provide group support services, although the Chief Operating Officers of the respective DCs are carrying out options reviews of support services going forward. In the short-term TVCA will continue to support. Cllr Brown also stated that Sarah Walker has been excellent in her role and asked for this to be placed on record. • Mayor Cooke raised a concern that the process for permanent recruitment has been discussed verbally, but has not been recorded and Members agreed that it should be noted. Mayor Houchen concurred and confirmed that the move to permanency needs to be at the correct point. It was stated formally that a permanent recruitment process will commence in early 2026 and the process will be developed collaboratively with Cabinet. • Tom Bryant reassured members that the appropriate people will be on the recruitment panel for the roles of Director of Business Solutions and Director of Infrastructure, and the process will follow recent similar recruitments. Members agreed this should begin in mid-September. • Cllr Evans asked whether the process would be developed in collaboration with Cabinet and was assured this would be the case . • Cllr Brown concluded by asking whether there is a handover of any pipeline from previous Officers, and Tom Bryant confirmed that arrangements are in place to ensure business as usual. <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approved the appointment of Jo Moore as Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources for a period of up to twelve months. Approved the appointment of Jodie Townsend as Interim Monitoring Officer for a period of up to twelve months.
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	<p>iii. Noted the continuation of Sarah Walker as Interim Director of Business.</p> <p>iv. Noted the continuation of Julie Hurley as Interim Director of Infrastructure.</p> <p>v. Noted that the additional cost of £204K for these interim appointments (plus agency fees), for up to twelve months, will be funded by delivering a saving on the expenditure on external legal/governance advice.</p> <p>vi. A permanent recruitment process will commence in early 2026 and the process will be developed collaboratively with Cabinet.</p>
	<p>DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10am Friday, 26 September 2025 <p>The Chair thanked all in attendance and Cabinet concluded 09:15am.</p>