



TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET

Friday, 30 January 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.

ATTENDEES	
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	Leader, Middlesbrough Council
Councillor Lisa Evans	Leader, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Councillor Alec Brown	Leader, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Matthew Ord	Chair of the Business Board
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
Craig Peacock	Director of Inward Investment & Marketing, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Jonathan Spruce	Director of Infrastructure, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Jeanette McGarry	Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Beverley Bearne	Chief Operating Officer, Hartlepool Development Corporation
Amy Wennington	Assistant Director, Law & Governance, Darlington Borough Council,
Erik Scollay	Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Council
Brian Archer	Chief Executive, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Mike Greene	Chief Executive, Stockton Borough Council
Sally Henry	Governance Officer, TVCA
Councillor Ian Blades	Chair of 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 68/25	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Denise McGuckin, Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council</p> <p>Sarah Walker - Director of Business Solutions, Tees Valley Combined Authority</p>
TVCA 69/25	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Hargreaves declared an interest in agenda item 6 - Appointment of New Chair - Hartlepool Development Corporation.</p>
TVCA 70/25	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>Councillor Ian Blades noted that the Deputy Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had attended the previous Cabinet meeting but her name was omitted from the minutes.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record, once Councillor Creevy's attendance was recorded.</p>
TVCA 71/25	<p>TEES VALLEY MAYOR'S UPDATE</p> <p>The Mayor welcomed both Jonathan Spruce and Jeanette McGarry to the Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>He 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 72/25</p>	<p>APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER AND UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR PERMANENT CHIEF LEGAL & MONITORING OFFICER AND FINANCE & RESOURCES DIRECTOR.</p> <p><i>Appendix 1 to this report is exempt and not for publication by virtue of paragraph 1 (information relating to any individual), paragraph 2 (information which may identify an individual) of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972).</i></p> <p>Jeanette McGarry left the meeting room.</p> <p>The Chair advised members that as the appendix to the report is confidential, if it is to be discussed, members of the public would need to leave the room.</p> <p>Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive seeking approval to appoint an interim Monitoring Officer and also an update on the recruitment process for a permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and Finance & Resources Director.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. APPROVE: the appointment of Ms. Jeanette McGarry as Interim Monitoring Officer for a period of up to six months. B. NOTE: the process for the recruitment of the permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and Finance and Resources Director. <p>The Chief Executive highlighted the key points of the report and noted that the proposal for the appointment of Jeanette McGarry to the role of Interim Monitoring Officer and the retention of Jodie Townsend in a consultancy role, is cost neutral and increases governance capacity.</p> <p>He then provided an update on the recruitment process in place to recruit a permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and Finance & Resources Director.</p>

	<p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.</p> <p>CLlr Brown enquired how long the consultancy role would last. He was advised it is envisaged that once the permanent Monitoring Officer is in post, the consultancy role would finish. He was also advised that the role was being undertaken remotely.</p> <p>Councillor Hargreaves noted that the fact we are moving to recruit full time, permanent people is good. She commented that strengthening the governance arrangements by keeping Jodie Townsend on in a consultancy role is a good thing. They are all positive steps.</p> <p>Cabinet were advised that Jeanette McGarry will be focussing on the day to day Monitoring Officer role while Jodie Townsend will be focussing on strategic governance improvements, including the Constitution and Single Assurance Framework.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. APPROVE: the appointment of Ms. Jeanette McGarry as Interim Monitoring Officer for a period of up to six months. B. NOTE: the process for the recruitment of the permanent Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer and Finance and Resources Director <p>Jeanette McGarry returned to the meeting room.</p>
<p>TVCA 73/25</p>	<p>APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHAIR - HARTLEPOOL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</p> <p>Cabinet received a report informing them that, in exercise of the powers vested in the Mayor, the decision has been made to bring Mark Robinson's term as Chair of the Hartlepool Development Corporation (HDC) to a close and appoint Councillor Pamela Hargreaves, Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, as the new Chair.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTE that, in accordance with the statutory powers conferred under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Localism Act 2011, and supporting Orders, the Mayor has concluded Mr. Mark Robinson's term as Chair of Hartlepool Development Corporation and appointed Cllr Pamela Hargreaves in his stead. <p>The Chair expressed his thanks to Mark Robinson and also to Councillor Hargreaves for accepting the role of Chair of the Hartlepool Development Corporation.</p> <p>Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions. No questions or comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <p>NOTE: that, in accordance with the statutory powers conferred under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Localism Act 2011, and supporting Orders, the Mayor has concluded Mr. Mark Robinson's term as Chair of Hartlepool Development Corporation and appointed Cllr Pamela Hargreaves in his stead.</p>
<p>TVCA 74/25</p>	<p>DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27 & REVISED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN</p> <p>Cabinet received a report from the Interim Director of Finance & Resources presenting the draft budget 2026/27 & Revised Medium Term Financial Plan for consultation.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> APPROVE the draft Budget for Mayoral Functions for 2026/27 for consultation; APPROVE the proposed Concessionary Fares budget of £14.834m for 2026/27 APPROVE the draft Combined Authority Revenue Budget for 2026/27 for consultation APPROVE the proposed consultation plan set out at Appendix 2 APPROVE the updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2029/30

- F. **NOTE** the draft Capital Budget for 2026/27 and revised capital programme to 2029/30
- G. **APPROVE** the transfers to/from reserves as set out in Table 17 of the report
- H. **NOTE** the forecast revenue reserves on 31 March 2027
- I. **NOTE** the forecast capital reserves on 31 March 2027
- J. **NOTE** the key financial risks for the MTFP period
- K. **NOTE** that the S73 Officer's S25 Statement will be included with the final budget proposals

The Interim Director of Finance and Resources introduced the paper and provided Cabinet members with the key facts to note.

The Chief Executive advised that the final budget will be presented to Cabinet on 20th March 2026.

Members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.

Councillor Evans noted that the layout and format of this report is much more understandable. She then questioned the financial liabilities and risk of the three Development Corporations and the airport and enquired how they would affect the TVCA budget and would it impact on future funding and investment for the rest of the Tees Valley.

The Chair advised that, advice from Government is that risks and liabilities of the Development Corporations do not sit with TVCA. He advised that the written advice will be circulated to Cabinet members post meeting.

Mayor Cooke enquired whether TVCA have sufficient capacity in the teams to compete with the other Combined Authorities in, for example Inward Investment. He suggested that the Directors should be given the opportunity to present where they see the pressures within their Directorate.

The Chief Executive advised that capacity within all the directorates is being considered as part of the budget setting process and he advised that he would be happy to discuss further with Cabinet.

Councillor Evans enquired whether further information about the capability and capacity within the finance directorate could be made available.

The Interim Director of Finance and Resources advised that an interim structure is in place and interims are currently in place and there is an allowance in the budget for that. The structures of both the finance and legal governance teams are currently being reviewed. She advised that it is not necessarily about increasing or decreasing the head count, but more about ensuring the right people are doing the right roles.

Councillor Brown requested a further explanation on the recharge of the support grants and asked whether this would impact on the amount of the grants going to the Local Authorities.

He was advised that previously, a consistent recharge mechanism had not been in place. Most grants allow for top-slicing and some grants stipulate a maximum amount that can be recharged. The LGA are undertaking a piece of work to support us in ensuring that the mechanism is robust and that will be complete in time for the final budget. It was acknowledged that if support costs are being recharged, residual funds will be less, but it is essential to ensure that appropriate support services are in place to ensure service delivery.

The Chief Executive noted that there is a revenue pot which sits alongside the Transport Capital Fund which covers staffing and support services costs.

Councillor Harker queried the key financial risks which are included in the report – namely the STDC loan and the airport loan.

He was advised that for the loans to STDC, we are in the process of finalising the loan agreements and this will be reported back to Cabinet.

Also, so far as the airport loan is concerned, the report stipulates that it is not expected to be repaid in the foreseeable future. This will also be quantified in the final budget.

The Chair advised that, once the budget setting process has been concluded, we will discuss working more collaboratively and planning ahead for the future.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- A. **APPROVED** the draft Budget for Mayoral Functions for 2026/27 for consultation;

	<p>B. APPROVED the proposed Concessionary Fares budget of £14.834m for 2026/27</p> <p>C. APPROVED the draft Combined Authority Revenue Budget for 2026/27 for consultation</p> <p>D. APPROVED the proposed consultation plan set out at Appendix 2</p> <p>E. APPROVED the updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2029/30</p> <p>F. NOTED the draft Capital Budget for 2026/27 and revised capital programme to 2029/30</p> <p>G. APPROVED the transfers to/from reserves as set out in Table 17 of the report</p> <p>H. NOTED the forecast revenue reserves on 31 March 2027</p> <p>I. NOTED the forecast capital reserves on 31 March 2027</p> <p>J. NOTED the key financial risks for the MTFP period</p> <p>K. NOTED that the S73 Officer's S25 Statement will be included with the final budget proposals</p>
	<p>DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, 20th March 2026 at 10:00am • Friday, 24th April 2026 at 10:00am <p>The Chair thanked all in attendance.</p>