



North East Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 9th September, 2014 at 2.00 pm

Meeting to be held: **Council Chamber**, Council Chamber, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH

www.northeastca.gov.uk

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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6. Developing the Work Programme	1 - 10

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To All Members

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North East Combined Authority

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 9th September 2014
SUBJECT: Developing a Work Programme
REPORT OF: Scrutiny Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the opportunity to implement a work programme for the Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed topics to be included in the work programme for 2014/15 and endorses the programme, subject to new and emerging issues arising throughout the year.

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1. Background Information

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30th July discussion took place on options for the work programme for 2014/15.
- 1.2 As stated in previous reports, the Committee fulfils a scrutiny role not only in respect of the Leadership Board of NECA, but also the Transport North East Committee (TNEC), the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee of TNEC (TWSC), any other committee, sub-committee or joint committee of the NECA, NEXUS, Durham and Northumberland Councils in relation to the discharge of their operational transport responsibilities and also the North East Local Enterprise Partnership insofar as the NECA and undertakes the role of accountable body for the Partnership.
- 1.3 The work programme will therefore be designed to allow the committee to have an overview of all performance, decision-taking and developments within the NECA, as well as being focused and flexible to allow for new issues and recognising the capacity of the scrutiny committee to respond in a timely way to emerging developments throughout the year.

2. Work Programme Proposals

- 2.1 The NECA Scrutiny Committee will obtain work programme items from the following sources:
- 2.2 Topics submitted by Members (including issues referred by members of other committees in the NECA)

The following list of topics has been submitted in consultation with Members or referred from other NECA members.

1. Integrated Transport
2. Employment and Transport
3. Rationalisation of ticketing arrangements on public transport
4. Taxi harmonisation
5. Pothole project: making our roads better

Further detail of each proposal is set out below:

- Integrated Transport

Transport infrastructure leads to prosperity in our economy, a cleaner environment and would improve the wellbeing of residents through cleaner

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air, less noise and less stress by allowing people who work across our boundaries to leave cars behind. The proposal would be to scrutinise existing initiatives; look at other countries that have solved this problem; encourage more people to make more journeys by other means than by car; promote sustainable travel for everyone; report back on progress and make recommendations.

Comment:

Integrated Transport is one of the Lead Themes for the NECA. A review as described above could contribute towards the development of a Transport Strategy for NECA and provide new thinking, particularly on the issue of exploring new thinking and solutions from other areas.

- Employment and Transport

The Committee could look at issues relating to employment and transport and students travelling across boundaries to all colleges and universities to ensure we are enabling opportunities in the future for employment.

Comment:

A review could contribute towards the Strategic Economic Plan and the development of a Transport Strategy.

- Rationalisation of ticketing arrangements on public transport

Bus tickets that do not appear to pass over into other local authority areas. Need to sort out ticketing arrangements to give good value and help with economic prosperity for the area. Also linked with this, help for young people to help with transport costs. Those young people paying adult fares whilst in full time education or unemployed. Making life easier for them in being able to travel to find a job. Better ticketing and offers to our communities. This could lead to more and greater mobility and economic benefits for this discreet area. Clear and simplified ticketing arrangements that are understandable and will help in regeneration of the NECA areas.

Comment:

This is included as a specific focus within the wider Integrated Transport theme. The committee would need to establish the developments currently underway and to contribute towards this key issue.

- Taxi Harmonisation

During 2013 discussions were held within the Tyne and Wear area about how the services offered by taxis could be better integrated into transport strategies across the area. It was felt that there is a reasonable degree of

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consistency in some respects, however, some local differences occur in relation to accessibility, seating capacity, tinting of windows and frequency of vehicle testing. Differing levels of fees are also charged across boundary areas. Exploratory discussions held with taxi licensing officers in Tyne and Wear for the harmonisation of licensing arrangements. The issues from these exploratory discussions were referred to the ITA LTP Working Group. The conclusion of the Working Group discussion was that the Combined Authority should take up this issue and explore greater harmonisation of procedures across the whole NECA area.

In May 2014 the Law Commission published a report on the legal framework relating to taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs). This report recommends a major simplification and streamlining of the current complex and outdated legal framework governing taxis, including the introduction of national standards for all taxis and PHVs set by the Secretary of State, with the power for local licensing authorities to set additional standards for taxi services only. To date, the Government has made no formal response to the recommendation and no legislation is planned before the General Election.

Comment:

A review could contribute proposals for a new direction in the context of potential new legislation and how this will impact upon local authorities.

- Best Practice Models / Review of setting up a Combined Authority

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee it was agreed to look at best practice of scrutiny arrangements at other combined authorities (in particular Manchester) and explore the possibilities for member visits to other authorities or invite representatives of other combined authorities to visit and share their experiences, as part of the workshops. This exploration of best practice could include a review of how things are going so far in the North East in terms of achieving goals and delivering strategic objectives i.e., a review of our own performance.

Comment:

This will be scheduled into the work programme throughout the year and members will be notified of the likelihood of visits or other meetings to gather this best practice information.

2.3 The Budget and Policy Framework

The Framework comprises The Budget and the following plans and strategies.

- The Growth Plan
- The Local Transport Plan
- Strategic Economic Plan (published March 2014)

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These plans and strategies will be scheduled into the work programme as soon as the NELB's work programme is determined.

2.4 The Forward Plan

The Forward Plan is published for the purpose of giving 28 days' notice of decisions. This provides the opportunity for Scrutiny Committee members to see when decisions are going to be taken, who will be taking those decisions and what information and consultation will contribute to these decisions.

2.5 The Three Thematic Leads – key issues and challenges.

2.6 Briefing sessions will be held on each theme and each lead member will be invited to attend the relevant session to meet with Scrutiny Members.

- Transport (Thematic Lead – Cllr N Forbes, Leader, Newcastle City Council)
- Economic Development and Regeneration update (Thematic Lead – Cllr P Watson, Leader, Sunderland City Council)
- Employability, Inclusion and Skills (Thematic Lead – Cllr G Davey, Leader, Northumberland County Council).

See examples below of key issues and challenges within each theme.

2.6 Employability, Inclusion and Skills

Key issues include:

- Worklessness
- Access / removing barriers to employment e.g. use of public transport
- Structural economic and demographic issues e.g. increase private sector jobs, ageing workforce
- Skills gaps
- Framework for improving employability, welfare to work support, careers education, information and advice
- Increasing social mobility and entrepreneurship
- Higher skill levels
- Targeting youth unemployment

2.7 Transport

Key issues include:

- Development of NECA Transport Strategy for delivery by 2015

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- Integrated transport services (including integrated ticketing, information for passengers, marketing and joint products)
- Better rail (proposed investments contained in Strategic Economic Plan)
- Rail North Partnership
- Metro Strategy 2030
- HS2
- Strategic Roads network and investment (RIS to be published late 2014 by HA)

2.8 Economic Development and Regeneration

Key issues include:

- Delivery of 'More and Better Jobs' – Strategic Economic Plan for the North East
- Economic assets and infrastructure
- Inward Investment (coordinated across LA areas and extended to trade and business tourism)
- Digital Connectivity (supporting digital skills and take up by business and individuals and driving improvement)
- Innovation (supporting the private sector-led Innovation Board. Business support and access to finance – supporting business growth, entrepreneur, enable business investment).

Comment:

The Scrutiny Committee will receive briefings on each of the key themes. It is suggested that after receiving each briefing, the Scrutiny Committee determines an area within each theme to investigate further through detailed reports and evidence to committee. Please note: the Scrutiny Committee will receive a briefing on Employability & Inclusion immediately following the September meeting.

2.9 Policy Review

- 2.10 Topics selected can either be for a review or scrutiny. A topic selected for review should be one that supports the NECA in meeting its strategic priorities, avoids replicating other reviews and investigations, explores issues for future direction and has a perspective which benefits all of the constituent local authorities within the NECA. Final recommendations will be made with a view to improving services and influencing strategic decisions.

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2.11 When considering reviews, members may also wish to determine whether the issue is more appropriately dealt with by one of the constituent authorities or elsewhere.

2.12 Once the Scrutiny Committee has determined a focus from the sources listed in this report, the topics can be slotted into the work programme in a timely way. Currently, meetings are scheduled as set out below, however, depending upon the issues prioritised further meetings and evidence gathering sessions are likely to be necessary.

2.13 Proposed scheduling of NECA OSC

2014/15

	Items from the Forward Plan	Budget & Policy Framework	Standard items	Members items / referrals	Thematic key issues	Evidence gathering for policy review	Informal Briefings (lead members to be invited on thematic briefings)
9 th September			Developing the work programme	Substitute Members			1. Employability & Skills 2. How Scrutiny fits into the NECA
TBA as necessary						TBA	
9 th December		NECA Budget for 2015/16					1. Transport 2. Understanding the role of NECA and the Committee
10 th February							1. Economic Development & Regeneration 2. Best Practice (from other CA's)
TBA as necessary						TBA	

3. Next Steps

3.1 Once the Scrutiny Committee has determined its work programme, the NECA Leadership Board will be notified of the intended work programme as part of the overall work programme and evidence gathering sessions will be programmed in accordingly.

4. Potential Impact on Objectives

4.1 The work programme will contribute towards the development and implementation of the policy framework of the NECA, Nexus and NELEP as well as providing appropriate challenge to decisions taken.

5. Finance and Other Resources

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5.1 No financial or other resource implications are identified at this stage. The financial impact of any proposals or recommendations should be taken into account and any significant implications should be reflected in any scrutiny reviews.

6. Legal

6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from these recommendations.

7. Other Considerations

7.1 Consultation/Community Engagement

Not applicable

7.2 Human Rights

There are no specific human rights implications arising from this report.

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

7.4 Risk Management

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

7.5 Crime and Disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7.6 Environment and Sustainability

There are no specific environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

8. Background Documents

8.1 NECA Scrutiny Committee reports on Work Programme development

9. Links to the Plans in the Policy Framework

9.1 Plans in the Policy Framework will be scheduled into the Work Programme.

10. Appendices

10.1 There are no appendices

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11. Contact Officer

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12. Sign off

- Head of Paid Service ✓
- Monitoring Officer ✓
- Chief Finance Officer ✓

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