

North East Combined Authority, Leadership Board

(Extraordinary Meeting)

6 September 2016

Meeting held Committee Room, Sunderland Civic Centre, Sunderland, SR2 7SN

Present:

Councillor P Watson (Chair)

Councillors G Davey, M Gannon, S Henig, I Malcolm and J McCarty, Mayor N Redfearn and Ms G Hall

40 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (MEMBERS)**

Councillor N Forbes and Mr A Hodgson.

41 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

42 **DESIGNATION OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

Submitted: A report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which invited them to agree the designation of Helen Golightly as the Head of Paid Service of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) with immediate effect.

RESOLVED – That agreement be given to the designation of Helen Golightly as the Head of Paid Service for the North East Combined Authority until the appointment to the new role of Managing Director was made and the successful candidate came into post.

43 **DEVOLUTION UPDATE**

Submitted: A report of the Head of Paid Service (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an update on the assurances sought from Government following the Leadership Board meeting on 19 July 2016 and sought agreement to associated recommendations.

In discussion, Members commented on the importance of devolution for the North East and confirmed their full commitment to real devolution but expressed concern about a number of issues arising from the current position, including in relation to the following:

- fair funding;
- the financial position of the local authorities in the North East as a result of a significant withdrawal of funding from the region in recent years;
- the post Brexit position, including the lack of certainty as to whether the government would target resources to the areas of the biggest need;
- inadequate assurances from the government with regard to funding for future years;
- additional costs of the mayoral model of governance for the local tax payers, including a potential introduction of the mayor's council tax precept; and
- the current deal not being a good deal for the region.

Members also commented on other matters such as the following:

- the importance of going ahead with the next steps and being at the negotiation table;
- the importance of having a united front to negotiate further commitment and assurances from the government;
- risks of not going ahead with the next steps, including lost chances, the challenge to achieve balanced budgets, risks to projects, including transport projects, and the potential imposition of a more powerful mayor on the region;
- the lack of likelihood of a better deal from the government;
- the importance that the North East was in a position to decide on its priorities; and
- the importance of going ahead with the consultation.

During the consideration of the report Members also received advice from the Chief Finance Officer on the financial risks associated with the option of not proceeding with the devolution deal.

Members also noted the outcome of the meeting of Gateshead Cabinet who had met earlier this morning.

Members then proceeded to vote on the recommendations set out in the report. By a majority vote of four to three, it was:

RESOLVED – That:

- (i) The report be noted; and
- (ii) Recommendations (2) and (3) be not carried.

44 **ACCESS FUND**

Submitted: A report of the Chief Executive Officer for Transport (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members considered the report which provided an overview of a bid that was being developed for submission to the Access Fund.

RESOLVED - That

(i) the contents of the report be noted; and

(ii) the proposal for submission to the Department for Transport be approved.

45 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

Tuesday, 20 September 2016 at 2pm.