



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

*Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing &
Communities*
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

The Lord Houchen of High Levin
Mayor, Tees Valley Combined Authority

7 March 2024

Dear Ben,

On 29 January I wrote to you regarding the findings and publication of the independent review, into the South Tees Development Corporation (STDC) and Teesworks Joint Venture (TJV) which you had requested. Many thanks for your initial response to the review's recommendations, which I received on 28 February.

I am encouraged to hear that TVCA, STDC and TJV are working collaboratively to engage with the recommendations and work out how best to implement them in the context of one of the most complex brownfield regeneration schemes. I am also pleased to see you gain agreement for this course of action from your five local authorities. It is clear from your initial response that you are committed to develop and implement an action plan which covers each of the recommendations of the review in order to ensure governance and accountability arrangements are strong and transparent and that scrutiny is robust. I appreciate the plan is in its early stages and that some detail remains to be developed before implementation can start in earnest.

Given the complexity of the governance arrangements and the wide-ranging scope of the recommendations, I would like to receive a further report from you in six-months' time updating me on your detailed proposals for the recommendations, progress in implementing these, and the impact of these plans. Improvement takes time, and where the recommendations related to cultural change especially it is important that sufficient time is given for you to develop these and for change to take effect.

To provide further support and oversight, I am pleased to note that you have asked the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide workshops to senior officers and your cabinet and that you will invite the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to review the scrutiny arrangements. I would like to encourage you to make fuller use of such independent support and peer challenge for example, as you develop the detailed action plan and on its implementation; authorities embarking on such transformation and improvement programmes usually value such independent support in the development, implementation and monitoring of plans. I would also welcome you sharing updates from the LGA with my officials.

I am grateful to you, your team and your partners for responding with such commitment, and I look forward to receiving both your report on the more detailed action plan, implementation and monitoring of progress and hearing the LGA's thoughts. As ever, I remain grateful for your continued important work regenerating and bringing new jobs to the Tees Valley.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations