

Options – Scrutiny models for a Mayoral Combined Authority

	Option 1 – ‘Consolidation’ Enhanced select committee system	Option 2 – ‘Expansion’ Multiple thematic committees	Option 3 – ‘Innovation’ Two committees divided by function
Summary	A single ‘select’ committee with a wider term of reference, greater operational resources, and significantly enhanced role profiles for scrutiny members and officers to support a more pro-active and strategic approach to scrutiny.	Three co-equal committees each with a focus on the two main functions of the Combined Authority (economic growth and transport authority) and one more generalist to cover all other matters, incl. strategic and corporate issues.	Two co-equal committees operating within a binary system where the overview (monitoring, reactive) and scrutiny (focused, proactive) parts are undertaken separately by different committees, chairs, members and officers.
Number of committees	One (with sub-groups)	Three (Corporate, Economy, Transport – each with their own sub-groups)	Two (Separate Overview and Scrutiny – each with their own sub-groups)
Suggested names	West Yorkshire Select Committee	1. Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2. Economy Scrutiny Committee 3. Transport Scrutiny Committee	1. Overview Committee 2. Scrutiny (OR Select) Committee
No. of meetings¹	Bimonthly – current (6 total) OR Monthly – apart from May, June, and August (9 total)	Bimonthly (6 each, 18 total) OR Monthly – apart from May, June and August (27 total)	Overview, quarterly + mayors meeting (5) Scrutiny, bimonthly (6) OR Both bimonthly or monthly
Number of scrutiny members²	36 (18 members plus 18 substitutes)	108 (54 members plus 54 substitutes; 18 members per committee)	72 (36 members plus 36 substitutes; 18 members per committee)
Number of scrutiny officers³	Minimum of 2 officers <i>With support from governance services</i>	Minimum of 3 officers <i>With support from governance services</i>	Minimum of 3 officers <i>With support from governance services</i>

¹ Since the committee currently meets every two months. Terms of reference currently require it to meet at least 5 times a year, due to SRAs (allowances).

² Based on current precedent of committee size being 18 members (Overview & Scrutiny + Transport). The number could theoretically be cut down further but cannot be too small due to political and geographical balance requirements.

³ This figure depends on the level of depth to each committee, e.g. how many working groups and reviews they intend to make use of as they exponentially created work in addition to committee meetings and workshops.

<p>Role and purpose</p>	<p>A 'big picture' strategic approach to scrutiny of Combined Authority decisions/schemes, the Mayor's plan/performance and any issue of importance to most residents in West Yorkshire – by a single select committee.</p> <p>Committee meetings will focus on 'high-level', 'big picture' and 'strategic' hearings on important topics, mainly featuring questions to relevant stakeholders and experts in attendance, and member reports instead of officer reports.</p> <p>This wider committee will give specific focused responsibilities to informal steering groups to oversee and advise it on certain scrutiny functions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'overview & monitoring' (of overall performance, service delivery and budget) - 'key decisions & projects/schemes' (including pre-decision scrutiny) - 'reviews & inquiries' (including forward plan and recommendation tracking) - 'public/democratic engagement' (engaging with the public and ward councillors) 	<p>A focused and reactive approach where different scrutiny committees each focus on particular functions, services and areas.</p> <p>Each committee still has a responsibility to perform all the other types of scrutiny within their thematic area, including key decisions, conducting reviews, working groups, spokespersons and public engagement etc – and theoretically operate similarly to Option 1.</p> <p>Corporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate services and resources - Budget and finances - Corporate plan and performance (KPIs) - Mayoral & annual corporate plan - Police and crime - Governance and public engagement - Partnership with member councils <p>Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Services (Trade/Investment, Skills, Business support) - Economic Policy & Strategy (SEF, inclusive growth) - Economic schemes (Enterprise Zones etc) - Economic functions (Business rates, AEB, spatial planning) 	<p>Two committees each focusing on the twin aspects of the scrutiny system – 'overview' and 'scrutiny'.</p> <p>This option attempts to reconcile scrutiny performing both the reactive overview role and focused proactive scrutiny reviews and investigations as well.</p> <p>Similarly each committee will be able to appoint working groups to support its work.</p> <p>Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversees the combined authority's and LEP's forward plans and identifies pre-decision scrutiny opportunities - Responsible for call-in of decisions - Keeps an eye on KPI achievement, as well as revenue and capital budget monitoring – and corporate performance - Suggests topics for further scrutiny, managed by the other committee - Questions mayor on overall corporate performance <p>Scrutiny/Select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions mayor on policy and strategy - Undertakes big-picture detailed reviews that conclude in published reports and recommendations
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	<p>Each steering group would be led by a member with appropriate skills and supported by the appropriate officers – such as officers in corporate performance, portfolio management, research/intelligence and communications/engagement.</p> <p>Additional members will be selected as ‘spokespersons’ to lead on certain policy areas and attend advisory panel meetings as observers to ensure that technical and ‘reactive’ small-s scrutiny is taking place in those panels instead of scrutiny duplicating it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic stakeholders (businesses, education sector) <p>Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport Services (Bus stations, subsidised services, travel passes, service information, assets & property) - Transport Policy & Strategy (Transport plan etc) - Transport schemes (projects such as road building) - Transport functions (bus services, key route network) - Transport stakeholders (passengers, transport operators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holds hearings and seeks to involve stakeholders, experts and the public in meetings and reports.
<p>Advantages</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Least disruptive to the existing governance structure and requires the least increase in base resources of the three options – but would still require significant resource. 2. A quality over quantity approach which seeks to focus on improving operational support to scrutiny to improve the effectiveness, profile and reputation of a single committee/chair in a focused way instead of spreading too thinly. 3. Encourages scrutiny to maintain a strategic and big picture regional focus instead of getting caught in reactive or parochial scrutiny – or duplicating what is already 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allows scrutiny to cover more policy/service areas across the three committees in a more focused way than is possible under one generalist committee. 2. More committees may allow for a more reactive approach wherein scrutiny committees can shadow their executive counterparts – Economy & LEP Board / panels, Transport and Transport and Corporate and the Combined Authority. 3. With more committees, scrutiny might get greater chances to scrutinise decisions and plans in greater detail at more appropriate times. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures a more equal balance between equally important scrutiny and overview functions. Allows each committee to focus on each function in greater depth instead of trying to balance all the different functions and focuses as in the past, which did not leave enough time for one or the other at committee meetings. 2. Greater number of scrutiny places available to ward councillors to take part in combined authority scrutiny. 3. Allows members who are strong in one type of scrutiny over the other to specialise and focus on what they are strong on. It takes a different set of skills to scrutinise in detail versus to maintain a strategic overview.

	<p>undertaken by existing advisory panels or local authority counterparts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The increased number of substantive roles for members (spokespersons, steering group leaders) ensures that scrutiny members role is no longer just attending meetings but have further responsibilities and influence on scrutiny and the mayor. 5. Makes scrutiny more of a team effort and creates a greater member-member led interface, than constant reaction to officer activity. 6. Allows for greater support to steering groups which will focus on fulfilling scrutiny functions which have to date been somewhat neglected e.g. call in, key decisions, pre-decision scrutiny of projects. 7. Ensures that much of the overview and 'watchdog' roles of scrutiny are efficiently exercised outside of committee meetings, to allow public meetings to be exercises of public scrutiny such as hearings involving more interface with external stakeholders and experts which allow for a greater 'triangulation' of evidence. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. More focused terms of reference may encourage more focused work programmes, recommendations and follow ups. 5. Allows members to opt for and specialise in certain policy areas. 6. Greater number of scrutiny places available to ward councillors to take part directly in combined authority scrutiny. 7. The greater the number of committees and members the more likely profile and attention scrutiny will get both within and outside the authority. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. May allow for a more structured scrutiny of the mayor – in West Midlands similarly hold two mayoral question times: one that is corporate overview focused, and another that is policy scrutiny focused. 5. Would allow officers with relevant skills to support each committee their different functions. 6. The greater the number of committees and members the more likely profile and attention scrutiny will get both within and outside the authority.
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<p>Disadvantages</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One committee – even meeting monthly – may still not be enough (without further working groups and panels) to cover all the areas and topics that need covering across the entire combined authority. 2. Fewer scrutiny places means fewer opportunities for councillors to be directly involved as members of CA scrutiny. 3. This option would require a formal profiling of scrutiny member/chair roles, suitable training programmes and briefing mechanisms to ensure that members are properly compensated and equipped to take up the enhanced role expected of them. 4. Requires increased investment – a reprofiled statutory scrutiny officer/advisor, additional scrutiny support officers, some support from governance services, training courses, SRAs and additional support from other officer corps (e.g. comms, PMA etc) 5. If not effectively reported in public, reliance on informal steering groups might create precedents wherein some topics are only scrutinised in private. 6. A necessity to pick fewer, big picture topics might be prejudiced 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost – the more committees, the greater the cost to operate them day to day. 2. Authorities might struggle to fill Member places as they currently do to fill the 18 slots available – especially with stricter geographical and political balance requirements in CA scrutiny. 3. Efficiently implementing and supporting a system with more committees requires greater resources in general and will make greater demands on officers already limited time (which they have not been able to dedicate to the one scrutiny committee to date). 4. Keeping members trained, supported and briefed would need at least triple the amount of time and resources – including secretariat and administrative duties. Keeping the bureaucracy going may distract from improving the policy/analysis/advice aspects of scrutiny work. 5. A possibility that the committees may compete with one another for limited resources and media attention or clash on topics of mutual interest or recommendations that might be mutually exclusive. 6. Without an overarching committee to ensure consistency and connectivity, this might lead to silo 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost – the more committees, the greater the cost to operate them day to day. 2. Authorities might struggle to fill Member places as they currently do to fill the 18 slots available – especially with stricter geographical and political balance requirements in CA scrutiny. 3. A possibility that the committees may compete with one another for limited resources and media attention or clash on topics of mutual interest or recommendations that might be mutually exclusive. 4. Without an overarching committee to ensure consistency and connectivity, this might lead to silo working and an overall disjointed strategic picture in terms of scrutiny impact. 5. In practice, the scrutiny side members must consider the overview and overview members must consider scrutiny – this means that both sets of members still need to be briefed on both sides of work. 6. Competition – due to the inherent connection between the overview and scrutiny elements, one committee might be asked to follow a lead set by the other committee, without having had a chance to feed into it. For instance – tracking recommendations is an overview
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	<p>by a need to pick ‘high profile’ topics that receive a lot of media attention instead of high impact topics that might not be as popular but have a greater impact on WY residents.</p>	<p>working and an overall disjointed strategic picture in terms of scrutiny impact.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Furthermore, they could end up either ineffectually shadowing existing committees or outright duplicating the work of the transport committee and the LEP panels which already perform a small-s scrutiny role on these policy areas. 8. Danger that a focus on increasing the number of committees and executing the bureaucratic process may distract from greater efforts to improve the operational efficiency and impact 	<p>task but setting the recommendations in most areas will be a scrutiny review task.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Keeping members trained, supported and briefed would need at least double the amount of time and resources – including secretariat and administrative duties. Keeping the bureaucracy going may distract from improving the policy/analysis/advise aspects of scrutiny work.
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