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South Yorkshire Mayoral
Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2024/25



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Background and Executive Summary

Scrutiny Committees have the power to review or scrutinise actions taken, or decisions made by the Combined Authority or the Mayor and make recommendations and reports on issues affecting the authority's area or the area's inhabitants.

Since its establishment the MCA has supported the Overview & Scrutiny Committee ('The Committee') to develop and deliver an effective work plan. In the Chair's Annual report of 2024¹, the Committee agreed to continue to develop and enhance its work planning mechanisms.

Further, the Scrutiny Protocol ('The Protocol'), published in November 2023, sets out non-statutory guidance for how the overview and scrutiny and audit committees hold Authorities with devolved powers and their mayor or directly elected leader to account, which includes the development and delivery of a clear, outcome-driven, and member-led work plan.

The Committee has developed a work plan in collaboration with the MCA Executive Team, taking in to account statutory guidance, the Scrutiny Protocol and best practice across the sector.

Overview of the Work Programming Process

Appointments to Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 4th June

Member induction day – 18th June

O&S Work programming session – 19th June

ELB notification and feedback – 10th July

Committee consideration and approval of workplan – 25th July

¹ <http://bsw-modgov01/documents/g1655/Public%20reports%20pack%2014th-Mar-2024%2014.00%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Scoping and Shortlisting Criteria

A collaborative work planning workshop was delivered in June 2024, with both substantive members and reserve members invited to attend. Members were provided with key corporate documentation and performance information and carried forward the most significant concerns of the previous committee year.

The following principles are provided in Statutory guidance, and resources from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, and were used to support the Committee in topic shortlisting:

Principles for Scrutiny:	Issues are not suitable for Scrutiny when:
Can Scrutiny add value to the work of the MCA? Does it have a strategic focus? Does it reflect public interest? Is the issue a priority? Will it duplicate? (or not) Can impact be measured?	The issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent. The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there). Scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact upon outcomes. The topic is too broad to make a review realistic. New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next 12 months.

Additionally, in March 2024, the Home Secretary passed legislation to transfer Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions for South Yorkshire to the Mayor of South Yorkshire. The PCC is responsible for securing and maintaining an efficient and effective police force, and for holding the Chief Constable to account for the running of the force.

The Police and Crime Panel's role is to scrutinise the actions and decisions of their PCC, providing both support and challenge, acting as a critical friend. As such, scrutinising the delivery of policing and crime functions of the Mayor is outside of the remit of the SYMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Methods of Scrutiny

Statutory guidance provides that overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge to the MCA and the Mayor,
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public,
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role,
- Drive improvement in services.

It is noted that scrutiny in Combined Authorities differs from that in local authorities. Combined authorities focus on long-term strategy; while service delivery is important, it is not as central as it is for local authorities. The approach to overview and scrutiny at an MCA must therefore be different.

Combined authorities are also typically smaller and more streamlined than local authorities, so the nature of officer support for scrutiny will likely differ as well.

During a collaborative work planning workshop, the Committee considered the suite of scrutiny tools available to them and selected issues and methods as appropriate. Tools for scrutiny considered included: work programming, Task and Finish, informal and project-style scrutiny, formal reports to Committee meetings, and Mayoral Scrutiny sessions.

The Committee suggested a smaller number of significant areas for more detailed scrutiny, a move away from high-level status updates which have been delivered in the past. There was agreement that the scale of any ‘Task and Finish’ or project-style scrutiny should reflect the limited capacity of members.

Draft Work Plan 2024/25

The draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan is presented below. It is due for approval at the 25th July Committee meeting and notification to the MCA Board and MCA Executive team thereafter.

The below summarised work plan focuses on the small number of significant topics identified by the Committee as important to South Yorkshires communities, and where it is hoped that real impacts improvements to strategy and services can be delivered.

Nevertheless, the workplan remains flexible enough to accommodate short-term or urgent issues where appropriate during the year.

Issue	Executive Lead	Scope
Bus Reform & Interlinking transport strategies: Fares and the low carbon economy.	Melanie Corcoran	Engagement in confidential pre-MCA Board decision updates and scrutiny Regular updates and knowledge briefings
Community Transport	Melanie Corcoran	Reports and informal knowledge briefings though 'project-style' scrutiny
Performance monitoring: Measuring Social Good in MCA investments	Gareth Sutton	Reports and informal knowledge briefings though 'project-style' scrutiny. Beginning from January 2025.
Active Travel: Metrics and Measuring	Jenny Holmes	Reports and informal knowledge briefings though 'project-style' scrutiny
Doncaster Sheffield Airport	Gareth Sutton	Status update to the Committee

Beds for Babies and Health Inequalities	Clare Monaghan, Andy Gates	Report on delivery and impacts Preceded by written briefing
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Appendix: 2023/24 Committee Work Plan

In 2023/24 the Committee showed a particular interest in the implementation of £2 single bus fares across the region. Alongside this, the committee requested more insights into the impacts of changing fare concessions. Updates on this topic were provided by officers to the Committee at their June and September, and an informal committee briefing on the topic was delivered in November. A final report with full analysis and recommendations was received at the 14 March Committee meeting.

The issues and reports considered by the Committee in 2023/24 is as follows:

1. Introductions to – MCA Governance Review, Place Based Investment Plans, Investment Zone
2. Bus Franchising
3. Tram Ownership
4. Skills & Community Education
5. Active Travel
6. Police and Crime Commissioner Powers
7. £2 Bus Fares and Concessions
8. Local Nature Recovery Strategy
9. Safe Place to Sleep (Beds for Babies)
10. Health Inequalities
11. Community Transport
12. Doncaster Sheffield Airport
13. Mayoral Scrutiny