

Report to Sheffield City Region Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	18 July 2019
Subject:	Scrutiny of SCR Thematic Boards
Purpose of the Report:	To inform OSC Members of the role, responsibilities and membership of the SCR Thematic Boards.
The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:	Agree to the proposed model for the scrutiny of SCR Thematic Boards.
Category of Report: Open	
Under the Freedom of Information Act and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, this paper and any appendices will be made available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme.	

Summary:

This paper will enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine the roles, responsibilities and membership of the five thematic boards which were introduced on 1 April 2019.

The five thematic boards are based on the strategic priorities of the Strategic Economic Plan and support decision-making and delivery of the MCA and LEP priorities. The Boards were created after a 2018 review of SCR's governance structure and have delegated authority to make financial decisions on behalf of the MCA. The revised governance structure was agreed by the MCA and LEP in December 2018 and January 2019 respectively.

The five thematic boards have delegated authority which requires consensus from board members for a decision to be made on schemes under £2m, it will fall within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the decisions taken will be of benefit to the residents and businesses of the Sheffield City Region.

1. Introduction/Context

1.1 Role of Thematic Boards

As a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), it is important that the Board's decision-making process is efficient, effective, transparent and provides accountability to residents and businesses. The SCR Executive has, therefore, reviewed its processes, sought feedback from partners and analysed other MCAs arrangements to seek to develop a proposal on which consensus can be achieved.

To revise governance arrangements in the SCR, a set of principles has been developed following feedback from partners. These seek to ensure that the optimum arrangements are established, forming a robust foundation for the decision-making process:

- Achieving an efficient, effective and transparent model for decision making;
- Collaborating to build collective and combined decisions to deliver the outcomes identified in the SEP;
- Providing strong and accountable leadership in setting the agenda and subsequently delivering a defined programme of activity to rigorously realise the outcomes of the SEP; and

- Scrutinising the planned and activity underway to deliver the best outcomes for the SCR and value for money.

Based on these principles the defining features of the proposed revised SCR governances are that:

- The MCA continues to set the overall direction for the Sheffield City Region and act as the accountable body for all funding awarded to the LEP. The LEP will continue to provide thought-leadership on the economy, lead the development of economic policy and champion the SCR private sector.
- The sub structure of the MCA and LEP will retain its thematic focus in the five areas of: business growth; skills and employment; housing, infrastructure and transport.
- Given the stronger model of leadership being proposed, meeting frequency will change from a six weekly to an eight-weekly cycle, allowing more time for work to be progressed. This would be supported by the establishment of urgent delegated decision-making protocols within the constitution to be used by exception, but as required when a decision falls outside of the parameters of the cycle.

1.2 Responsibilities of Thematic Boards

Each Thematic Board has a delegated authority to approve projects with a value of less than £2 million, when a scheme has been accepted into the programme. Decisions made by the Thematic Boards are presented to the MCA Board in a written Delegated Decisions Report. As the delegating body, the MCA has the right to review decisions made by the Thematic Boards.

The responsibilities of the Thematic Boards are to:

- Shape future policy, priorities and programmes for the LEP and MCA Boards to approve;
- Review programme and funding applications of less than £2 million that have been through the SCR appraisal process and decide whether to approve, defer or reject the application;
- Review programme and funding applications of £2 million or more that have been through the SCR appraisal process and make a recommendation to the MCA Board for approval, deferment or rejection of the application;
- Accept grants with a value of less than £2 million; and
- Monitor programme delivery and performance on their thematic area.

The Transport Board also has additional responsibilities. These are:

- Assisting in the development of the transport strategy and strategies for its implementation;
- Overseeing the performance of SYPTE in delivering operational transport services and its capital programme and providing SYPTE with political direction;
- Recommending the capital programme of SYPTE for approval to the MCA; and
- Recommending the revenue budget of SYPTE for approval to the MCA.

1.3 Membership of the Thematic Boards

The members of each Thematic Board (except for the Transport Board) include:

- Two Leaders from the MCA (one from a constituent Local Authority and one from a non-constituent Local Authority);
- A nominated representative for each of the remaining seven Local Authorities;
- A lead Chief Executive from a Local Authority;
- Two private sector LEP Board members; and
- The MCA Head of Paid Service (or their nominated representative).

Given the statutory responsibilities of the MCA as the South Yorkshire transport authority, the Transport Board membership structure comprises:

- The SCR Mayor (Chair);
- A Leader from the MCA of a constituent local authority (Deputy Chair);

- A nominated representative for each of the remaining three constituent local authorities on the MCA Board;
- A representative for the non-constituent local authorities on the MCA Board;
- A lead local Chief Executive;
- A Private Sector LEP Board member;
- The Director General of the SYPTE; and
- The MCA Head of Paid Service (or their nominated representative).

1.4 Thematic Board Decision-Making

Board decisions are made on the basis of consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached the issue is escalated to the MCA or LEP, dependent upon the issue in question. Where this is in relation to the policy fit, delivery of the SEP or strategic alignment of a project using funds allocated to the LEP, the issue is escalated to the LEP Board. Where this relates to LEP Accountable Body functions or MCA investments, the issue is escalated to the MCA Board.

1.5 Thematic Board Meetings

Thematic Boards will routinely meet on an eight-weekly cycle and the SCR Executive Team provides the secretariat. Meetings of the Thematic Boards (except for the Transport Board) are quorate when seven members are present. Transport Board meetings are quorate when two thirds of the members are present.

1.6 Transparency

To comply with the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Access to Information and Audit Committees) Act 2017, the key decisions made at thematic board will be publicised on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions on the Sheffield City Regions website 28 days in advance of the decision being made. The draft and ratified minutes of the thematic board will be published on SCR's website within 10 working days of the meeting take place.

The agenda and the supporting papers associated for each thematic board meeting will be published 5 clear working days in advance of the thematic board meeting. The thematic board meeting will not be held in public or webcast.

1.7 Scrutiny Proposal

MHCLG Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities states that effective overview and scrutiny should be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role. The following process provides evidence that this the case at Sheffield City Region.

OSC Members are already routinely made aware of the revision of the Forward Plan; an automated notification is sent from SCR's modern.gov system to OSC members email inbox each time the Forward Plan of Key Decisions is updated. OSC Members are asked to continue to review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions (as is currently done for key decisions made at Mayoral Combined Authority Board meetings) following the process of:

- OSC member to seek further information from Lead Officer named on the Forward Plan or the Scrutiny Officer.
- If required, OSC member to make a referral to the committee clearly stating the objective(s)/outcomes(s) expected from reviewing the issue at a committee meeting.
- The referral will be considered at an agenda setting meeting and placed on the work programme as appropriate.
- If the item is considered to be urgent, the item will be "called-in" following the SCR Call-In Process.

2. Matters for Consideration

a. Financial

There are no financial implications to consider from this paper.

- b. Legal**
As above.
- c. Risk Management**
There are no risk management issues to consider.
- d. Environmental**
There are no environmental factors to consider.
- e. Equality Impact Assessment**
n/a
- f. Performance Management/Measuring Outcomes**
The Scrutiny Officer monitors referrals made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the source of the referral, for example, from the forward plan or call-in. Monitoring is a continuous process and analysis of the data is published in the OSC Annual Report.
- 3. Consideration of alternative approaches**
This proposal was drafted to ensure:
- compliance with the requirements of MHCLG Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, and
 - efficient use of finite resources, ie, member and officer time as it has circumnavigated the need for a continuous cycle of meetings.
- 4. Issues the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider ...**
As above.
- 5. Recommendations**
1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to adopt the process set out in section 1.7.
 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee request the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are updated to reflect the need to scrutinise decisions made at thematic board meetings.
 3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee request that the SCR Constitution be amended to reflect that scrutiny of the thematic boards are within its remit.
- 6. Appendices/Annexes** None.

The following section is a legal requirement

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Other sources and references: n/a	