
Scrutiny in Combined Authorities

July 2018

GMCA

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

WHAT IS SCRUTINY'S ROLE?

An effective scrutiny function is a key part of the GMCA's decision-making process. The GMCA's scrutiny committees are tasked with:

- reviewing the work and decisions of:
 - the GMCA ,
 - the Mayor (non-Police & Crime Commissioner matters)
 - Decisions delegated to committees by the mayor and the GMCA
 - Key decisions delegated to officers by the mayor and the GMCA
- acting as a critical friend in the development of policy and new work streams
- considering any matter affecting those who live, work, study or run businesses in Greater Manchester

LEGAL CONTEXT

Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016

Combined Authorities must establish an overview and scrutiny committee/s with the power to:

- review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken which are the responsibility of the authority;
- make reports or recommendations to the authority;
- make reports or recommendations to the authority on matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of the area.

And also have:

- the same powers over the decisions and actions taken by the mayor for all those functions other than in the Police and Crime Commissioner role.

Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017

CA's overview and scrutiny committees or sub-committee can:

- require the members (including the mayor, and deputy mayor) or officers of the authority to attend before it to answer questions, and
- invite other persons to attend meetings of the committee.

CHANGES TO SCRUTINY IN MAYORAL GMCA

GM's new arrangements, in place for a year, were designed by back benchers.

They give increased capacity and specialisation to address:

- The increased volume of work flowing through the mayoral GMCA
- And meet new legislative requirements

There are 3 GMCA overview and scrutiny committees:

- Corporate Issues and Reform (GMCA as a corporate entity & public sector reform)
- Economy, Business Growth and Skills
- Housing, Planning and Environment (including transport and regeneration)

(Health Scrutiny remains a Joint Committee of the ten districts)

KEY CHANGES TO SCRUTINY

Each of the GMCA's scrutiny committees:

- Have 15 members (Joint Health Scrutiny has 10) and 13 substitutes who can sub on all three committees
- Are politically balanced (11 Labour, 3 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat)
- Are chaired by a non Labour member (ie different political party to the mayor) - required by legislation.
- Have a quorum of 2/3 ie 10 members – required by legislation
- Meet monthly
- Can establish task and finish groups
- Have the power to call-in a decision that has made but not enacted

WHAT HAS GONE WELL

- 58 back bench members involved in the scrutiny of the GMCA's work
- Substitute pool - it works
- Committees must be engaged upstream of decisions being made – importance of key decision register
- Scrutiny has more teeth than the previous voluntary arrangements.
- Mayoral GMCA has more visibility
- Chairs, deputy chairs and Labour representatives meeting regularly

CHALLENGES

- Too much to do, what does success look like – how should scrutiny focus its efforts?
- Key decisions - can be a distraction
- Greater Manchester Strategy is holistic and doesn't neatly divide between committees - committee chairs meet regularly to discuss committee business
- Respecting Members' workload outside the GMCA