

# Context and Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

Information pack for CPCA  
Overview & Scrutiny  
Committee Members



Overview  
&  
Scrutiny

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

## CPCA Improvement Framework

Good governance adds value. Improving and enabling good governance at the Combined Authority is a key focus of the Improvement Framework.

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.

Getting Overview & Scrutiny right is therefore key to efficient delivery and the success of the Improvement Framework.

### Information Pack Content

This information pack is provided to Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members to help inform and focus the workshop that will take place on 13 June on how to deliver Overview & Scrutiny at CPCA.

The Pack contains the following:

1. Workshop Agenda
2. Introduction to new CPCA Governance
3. Understanding Combined Authority Scrutiny
4. Scrutiny Core Roles
5. Proposed approach to delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny
6. Alternative Options & comparison information
7. Future Developments

## Workshop

On 13 June, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will hold an online workshop to consider delivery options for the Overview & Scrutiny function.

This follows on from the 20 March considerations at the OSC which requested options be reconsidered in the new municipal year alongside examples from other MCAs.

Options are set out in the pack with a pros/cons table to support considerations.

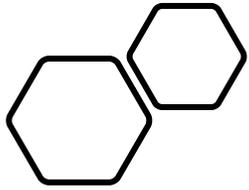


# Overview & Scrutiny Workshop Agenda

The Overview & Scrutiny workshop will operate as follows:

1. Chair introductions
2. New Combined Authority Governance Overview
3. Understanding Combined Authority Scrutiny
4. Scrutiny Core Roles
  - The core roles for O&S
  - Strategic Accountability & Performance Review – Demonstration of Performance Dashboard
  - Decision-Making Input and Accountability – Forward Plan/ Business Plan use
  - Accountability – Mayoral Question Time/ Portfolio Leads
  - Strategic/ Major Projects – Demonstration of Dashboard
5. Proposed option for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny
6. Alternative options for consideration
7. Future Developments





# **Improvement Framework: Introduction to new CPCA governance**

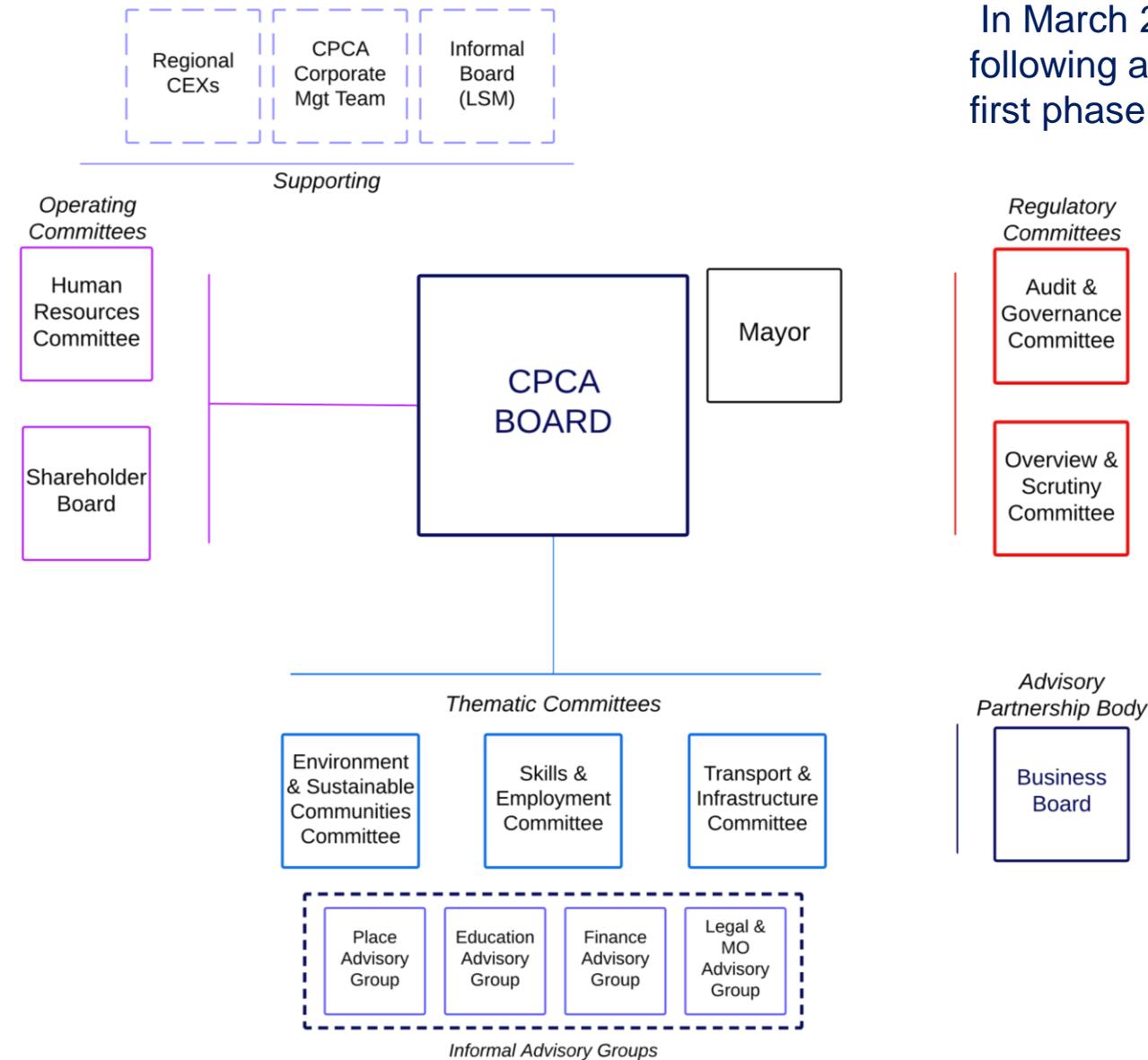


## Introduction to new CPCA governance

In March 2023, the CPCA Board approved new governance arrangements following a significant period of engagement and development through the first phase of the improvement framework.

The new arrangements delivered the following:

- Amended CPCA Board functions and responsibilities to provide strategic focus
- New Business Board role and functions to become an advisory and partnership business engagement body
- New Thematic Committee structure
- New Thematic Committee terms of reference aligned to the CPCA Corporate Plan
- New Delegations to Thematic Committees
- Repurposed terms of reference for Leaders Strategy Meeting (informal Board)
- Supporting '2-way' Officer Advisory Groups
- Repurposed Human Resources Committee with Terms of Reference
- New cadence in Meeting Calendar for 23/24



### CPCA Governance: What was the reason for changes?

The changes reflect the identified key drivers that emerged during the review of governance process and the requirements set out in the first phase of the Improvement Plan.

Those key drivers being the need to ensure that the CPCA Governance Arrangements.....

- Drive alignment with the Corporate Plan
- Create strategic focus for CPCA Board
- Empower Thematic Committees through delegations and role clarity
- Reduce burden of business on Leaders to support strategic focus
- Provide clarity on how to support Mayoral Ambitions
- Drive new values through governance (and informal governance)
- Provide forum for sustainability and place
- Drive improvements in ways of working



## Improvement Framework: Understanding the new CPCA governance

### CPCA Governance: What do the changes mean for Decision-Making?

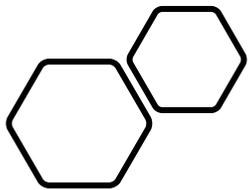
- ❑ The changes ensure that the Board is focused on being a strategic body, it maintains responsibility for approving all strategy, strategic objectives, and vision alongside functions set out in the Order that must remain at Board. This will provide focus at Board level.
- ❑ The Thematic Committees have the responsibility of developing strategy, engaging partners to develop approaches to delivering the strategic objectives. They then recommend strategy to Board.
- ❑ A key change is that Thematic Committees are now empowered to deliver strategy, taking the implementation decisions required.
- ❑ They have also been empowered with the ability to approve projects that have been identified within the MTFP.
- ❑ Changes in Membership mean Thematic Committees are led by relevant Portfolio Lead so Mayor can attend in Mayoral capacity and Portfolio Leads can drive Corporate Plan delivery and be held to account for their portfolio
- ❑ The Business Board will provide business advice to all of the CPCA structure and lead on the achieving good growth priority area, additionally it will appoint 2 members to each Thematic Committee to strengthen these roles

Set strategic objectives	CPCA Board
Approve strategy	CPCA Board
Develop strategy proposals	Thematic Committees
Implement strategy	Thematic Committees
Operational & delivery oversight	Thematic Committees
Strategic level scrutiny	Overview & Scrutiny

The changes within the governance framework are focused on ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities in alignment with delivering the CPCA Corporate Plan.

The role and responsibility alignment is set out in this table.





# **Improvement Framework: Understanding Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny**



# Overview & Scrutiny

## Understanding Combined Authority Scrutiny

The way that O&S operates at CPCA must reflect the context in which Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny should operate which is distinct from that of Local Authority Scrutiny that Members will be more use to.

The Centre for Governance & Scrutiny guidance on Combined Authority Scrutiny states:

*Scrutiny in combined authorities is distinct to that in local authorities.  
Although legal powers and modes of operation are superficially similar, the demands of Mayoral  
Combined Authority (MCA) operations must lead to a significantly different approach*

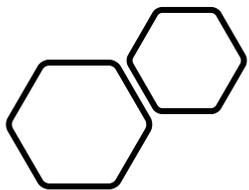
The distinct context being that focus and activity at a Combined Authority level should be strategic given the strategic nature of being of a Combined Authority. **This should be at the forefront when considering options on how best to deliver Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny.**

The key differences between Combined Authority (CA) and Local Authority (LA) scrutiny, highlighted by CfGS, are:

- CA scrutiny has tended to be more strategic, focusing on the long-term investment issues that are the primary object of CAs work
- The scope of CAs work is, overall, more limited – LA scrutiny involves oversight of a very wide range of service issues;
- The ‘sense of place’ is arguably weaker at CA level, this can impact on a committees’ ability to operate collectively;
- The nature of financial / budget scrutiny is different – at the CA it is less about the finances of the org;
- Partnership is a bigger focus at CA level

These differences should be considered when seeking to determine how best to deliver CA Scrutiny.





# **Improvement Framework: Core Roles for Overview & Scrutiny**



## Core Roles for Overview & Scrutiny



The creation of new governance arrangements (aligned to the Corporate Plan with supporting mechanisms in place - clear roles and responsibilities for Board/ Thematic Committees supported by the laying of clear foundations through the Corporate Plan) will help the Overview & Scrutiny function establish its role and drive its core roles moving forward through key building blocks such as :

- The clarity on strategic direction through the Corporate Plan with an aligned Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) creates the definition and data required to hold the Board to account in delivering its strategic objectives and the required budget
- The Clarity on Mayoral Ambitions creates the basis for holding the Mayor to account on delivering their manifesto
- The role of the Mayor, Portfolio Leads and Thematic Committees creates the basis for holding individuals to account
- Directorate Business Plans in support of the Corporate Plan, performance dashboards and major project dashboards provide the basis for performance scrutiny and identification of policy gaps
- The strategic focus role of Board will allow O&S to focus on pre-scrutiny of strategic decision-making supported by the clarity around the call-in function

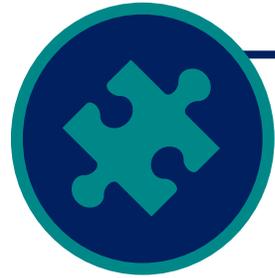
These governance building blocks create the opportunity to deliver core scrutiny roles as follows:

### Decision-Making Accountability

More informed Forward Plan and annual business plans will create opportunity to identify upcoming strategic decisions that would benefit from early scrutiny input. Changes to constitution set out principles of decision-making that make it clearer to consider if a decision may benefit from call-in.



## The core roles for Overview & Scrutiny



### Strategic Performance Scrutiny

The Corporate Plan sets out corporate priorities, supported by key performance indicators which OSC can review and hold the Board to account on delivering. An aligned MTFP creates opportunity for OSC to examine ability of the budget to deliver the corporate plan.

### Mayoral Accountability

Published Mayoral Ambitions provide platform for holding the Mayor to account on delivery of their priorities. Corporate Plan also creates opportunity to hold Mayor to account as the Chair of the CA Board in delivering corporate objectives.

These building blocks provide Overview & Scrutiny with an opportunity to add value to the entire ecosystem of the Combined Authority, seeking to make a real difference in 4 key areas within the Combined Authority as follows:

**Accountability** – Ensuring decision-making is effective, aligned to strategic objectives and not taken in isolation

**Performance** – review and oversight of performance against strategic targets and key indicators

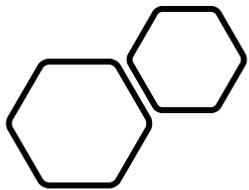
**Policy** – early involvement in decision-making and detailed review of performance can identify areas for policy development or existing policy gaps

**Cross-Cutting issues of significant concern** - there will be issues which cut across a range of portfolios and across the CA and other organisation's' responsibilities as well as areas of significant regional public concern where scrutiny review is required

At the workshop officers will provide further information and demonstrate tools that will be available to OSC that will help them undertake core roles as follows:

- Strategic Accountability & Performance Review – Demonstration of Performance Dashboard
- Decision-Making Input and Accountability – Forward Plan use
- Accountability – Mayoral Question Time/ Portfolio Leads
- Strategic/ Major Projects – Demonstration of Dashboard





# **Improvement Framework:** **Proposed option for delivering Overview & Scrutiny at CPCA**

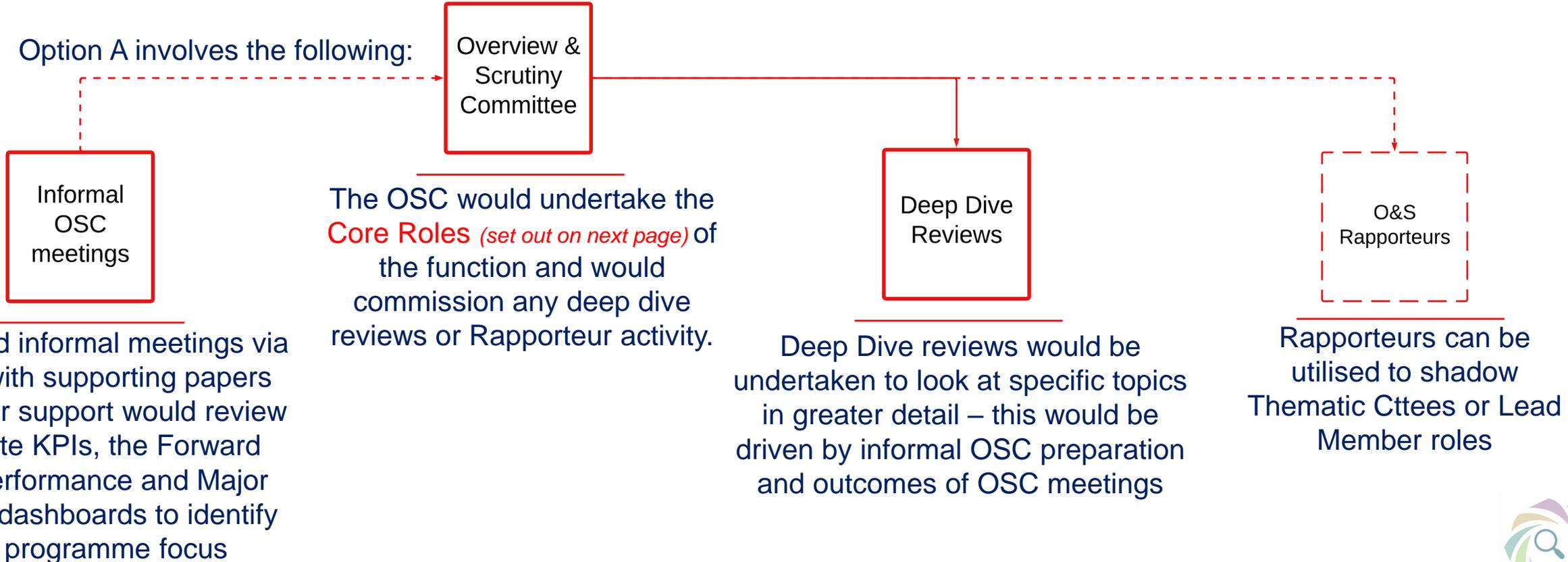


## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

### **A** Option A: Strategic Focus Committee, supported by informal planning meetings and commissioning of Deep Dive Reviews

Option A is the proposed option for delivery of the Overview & Scrutiny function at CPCA. It builds upon the existing OSC and seeks to incorporate the key roles set out in this information pack, the distinct context of Combined Authority O&S and utilisation of the tools that will be available to the Committee.

Option A involves the following:



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



### Option A: Strategic Focus Committee, supported by informal planning meetings and commissioning of Deep Dive Reviews

The Core Roles proposed to be undertaken by the Committee would be as follows:

- Strategic Performance Review of Corporate Plan KPIs
- Holding Mayor and Portfolio Holders to account for the delivery of priority area objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and Directorate Plans
- Holding Mayor to account for delivery of Mayoral Priorities
- Pre-Scrutiny of Board decision-making (*utilising extended Forward Plan to identify upcoming decisions to examine in advance of decision being developed and taken*)
- Utilising Call-In power if decisions have not been taken in accordance with the new principles of decision-making set out in the Constitution
- Policy review when approached to undertake or if gap/ issue identified through performance review and decision-making accountability
- Focused meetings on cross-cutting matters and/or issues of significant concern
- Focused budget scrutiny on MTFP alignment/ delivery and consultation (*although this could be undertaken by commissioned deep dive review*)



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

### Option A: Strategic Focus Committee, supported by informal planning meetings and commissioning of Deep Dive Reviews

The proposal involves the OSC seeking to establish its own identify of consideration (that should impact report/ project development at the CA) through the adoption of a regional OSC key principle. This principle would drive how the OSC would consider performance information and decisions at the CA, it is proposed that the key principle be

‘to examine all decision-making through the lens of integrated decision-making, to drive out silo approaches and ensure CPCA strategy is not operating in isolation, considers wider impact across corporate plan priority areas, and considers future devolution opportunities and benefits.’

### Ways of working

The OSC could operate through the following ways of working:

- Mayoral Question Time (*focus on progress in delivering on the Mayoral Ambitions and challenge on Strategic Objectives in role as Chair of the CPCA Board*)
- Portfolio Lead/ Thematic Committee Chair(s)/ Business Board Q&As
- Deep Dive focused topic reviews undertaken by small group of Members (*opportunity to engage relevant committees within Constituent Authorities in review*)
- Rapporteur review of areas of focus identified by the Committee or shadowing of Portfolio Leads/ Thematic Committees
- Leads could be appointed to keep watching brief on each Thematic Committee/Priority Area within the Corporate Plan
- Estimated 6-8 meetings per year to reflect Board with additional MQTs – would require similar number of informal meetings in support
- Informal meetings process to identify Committee focus and Key Lines of Enquiry with the Scrutiny Officer



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



### Option A: Strategic Focus Committee, supported by informal planning meetings and commissioning of Deep Dive Reviews

#### Deep Dive Reviews

- ❑ Dealing with high profile/ significant topics in a compelling and relevant way would provide one way to engage, and keep engaged, scrutiny members.
- ❑ Topics would include matters of regional significance or public concern and/or significant performance/ policy concerns or opportunities.
- ❑ Deep Dives also offer an opportunity to engage wider Constituent Authority scrutiny committee membership in addition to that of the OSC.

The OSC would undertake the core roles within its annual activity with Deep Dive reviews undertaken by small groups of OSC Members to examine key matters in more depth.

Option A is the preferred option put forward by CPCA Officers who believe it can provide the framework for the delivery and development of regional Combined Authority scrutiny.

#### Pros & Cons

- + Seeks to deliver identified core roles for Scrutiny
- + Takes account of distinct nature of Combined Authority Scrutiny
- + Provides clear focus for Committee meetings with supporting focus driven by informal Committee preparation

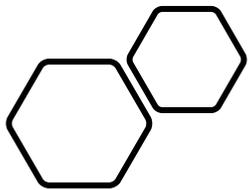
- + Seeks to utilise new performance tools and provide additional oversight of major projects
- + Builds upon Rapporteur approach already in place but with more distinct purpose and focus
- Requires additional commitment from OSC Membership



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

**A** Option A could operate a work programme similar to this draft example:

	19 June	24 July	18 September	27 November	29 January	18 March
<b>Strategic Priority Area Review</b>		<b>Achieving Good Growth</b> Economic Growth Implementation Plan	<b>Increased Connectivity</b> Strategic approach to Bus Services-Franchising	<b>Enabling Resilient Communities</b> Climate Change		<b>Skills &amp; Employment</b> Delivery of Lifelong learning and workforce skills
<b>Decision Scrutiny</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on upcoming issues for decision at Board or Thematic Committees as identified through review of Forward Plan in informal OSC, seeking to be engaged as early as possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Standard item to review and comment on Board Agenda Items/ Decisions for each CPCA Board Meeting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rapporteur role to highlight Thematic Committee upcoming decisions (as early as possible) that may require OSC review</li> </ul>					
<b>Strategic Performance</b>	<b>Corporate Plan</b> Review of strategic performance against strategic KPIs	<b>Achieving Good Growth</b> Review progress of KPIs + Deliverables	<b>Increased Connectivity</b> Review progress of KPIs + Deliverables	<b>Enabling Resilient Communities</b> Review progress of KPIs + Deliverables	<b>Corporate Plan</b> Review of strategic performance against strategic KPIs	<b>Skills &amp; Employment</b> Review progress of KPIs + Deliverables
<b>Corporate Performance topics</b>	Focus on strategic performance issue as identified as requiring OSC attention through informal OSC meeting review of Corporate Performance Dashboard					
<b>Major Projects</b>	Focus on Major Projects review and challenge as identified as requiring attention through informal OSC meeting review of Major Projects Dashboard					
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Mayor/ CEX</b> How Corporate Plan/ Business Plans will deliver?	<b>Mayor QT</b> Mayoral Ambitions Review	<b>Chair T&amp;I Committee</b> Review Priority Area + Cttee activity	<b>Chair E&amp;SC Committee</b> Review Priority Area + Cttee activity	<b>Mayor QT</b> Corporate Plan + Mayoral Ambitions Review	<b>Chair S&amp;E Committee</b> Review Priority Area + Cttee activity
<b>Budget Scrutiny Deep Dive</b>		<b>Budget Scrutiny:</b> MTFP & Budget Prep	<b>Budget Scrutiny:</b> Review developing budget proposals and consider issues	<b>Budget Consultation</b> Review of proposed consultation plans	<b>Draft Budget</b> Review of consultation results - proposed budget	
<b>Deep Dives</b>	Deep Dives commissioned by OSC when significant issue of performance/ partnership/ regional/ corporate plan delivery concern is identified through OSC activity					
<b>Rapporteur Activity</b>	Rapporteurs assigned to shadow Thematic Committees/ Business Board OR Portfolio Lead Members and report back on opportunities for policy review and development					



# **Improvement Framework: Alternative options for delivering Overview & Scrutiny at CPCA**



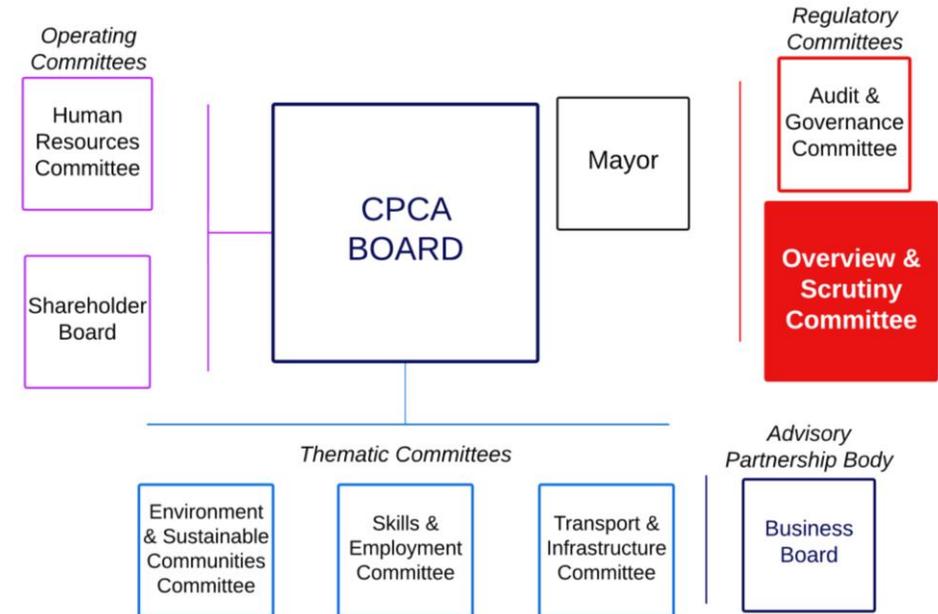
## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



### Option B: Enhanced Status Quo

Option B is for the Overview & Scrutiny arrangements to remain structurally as they currently are, utilising Rapporteurs to lead on items of focus, but also adapting practices to the new governance arrangements to better utilise data, strategy, plans and roles within the CPCA.

- Core Activity to be delivered in-year would be based around the core roles set out in Option A
- Rapporteur review of areas of focus identified by the Committee
- Leads could be appointed to keep watching brief on each Thematic Committee/Priority Area within the Corporate Plan
- Would require OSC Members to proactively review dashboards, forward plan etc outside of the meeting (under coordination of Chair)



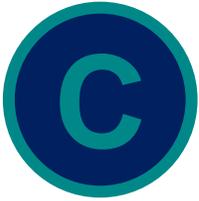
### Pros & Cons

-  Seeks to deliver identified core roles for Scrutiny
-  Takes account of distinct nature of Combined Authority Scrutiny
-  Could lack specific focus that would be driven by informal Committee preparation set out in Option A

-  Seeks to utilise new performance tools and provide additional oversight of major projects
-  No Deep Dive option for issues of concern, more limited scope of scrutiny through Rapporteurs than Option A Rapporteur + deep dives
-  Requires additional commitment from OSC Membership



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



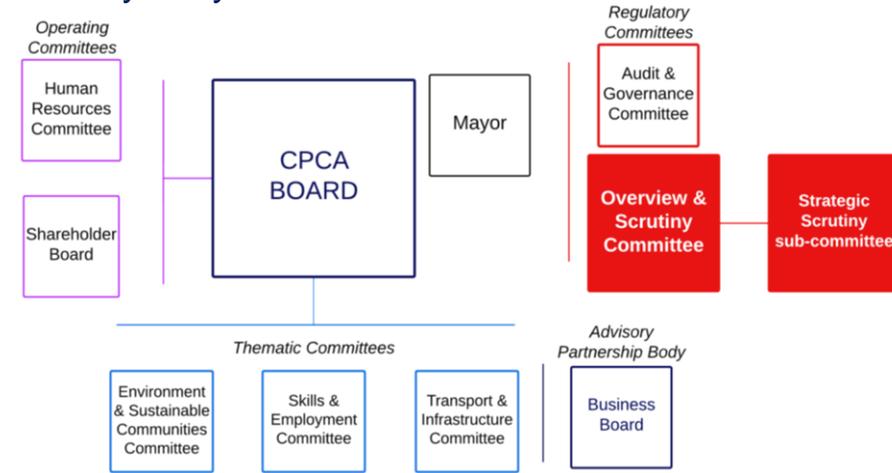
### Option C: Strategic Focus with Sub-Committee

Option C builds on the core activity set out in Option A but includes a formal additional scrutiny body rather than an informal meeting of the OSC, that being through a sub-committee.

#### Scrutiny Sub-Committee Purpose

The purpose of the sub-committee would be to formally bring together a core group of scrutineers in order to undertake the functions of the informal OSC meeting set out in Option A with the addition of:

- ❑ Keep watching brief on each Thematic Committee and/or Priority Area within the Corporate Plan and identify matters to refer to the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee for more detailed review (role as no Rapporteurs or Deep Dives)
- ❑ Review financial reporting against MTFP to identify financial matters to refer to the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee for more detailed review (role as no separate approach to Budget Scrutiny)
- ❑ Engage Constituent Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committees to identify any regional matters of concern or opportunities for review by CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



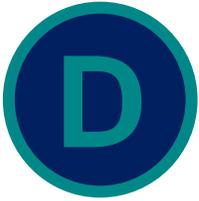
Under such an option it is proposed that the Sub-Committee membership consist of the OSC Chair plus a scrutineer to represent each of the 4 priority areas within the Corporate Plan.

#### Pros & Cons

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Seeks to deliver identified core roles for Scrutiny</li> <li> Takes account of distinct nature of Combined Authority Scrutiny</li> <li> Sub-Committee identifies items for focus at OSC meetings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Seeks to utilise new performance tools and provide additional oversight of major projects</li> <li> No Deep Dive or Rapporteur functionality</li> <li> Requires additional commitment from OSC Membership</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> No separate focus on budget scrutiny</li> <li> Creates additional formal meeting of OSC through sub-committee</li> </ul> |
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## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

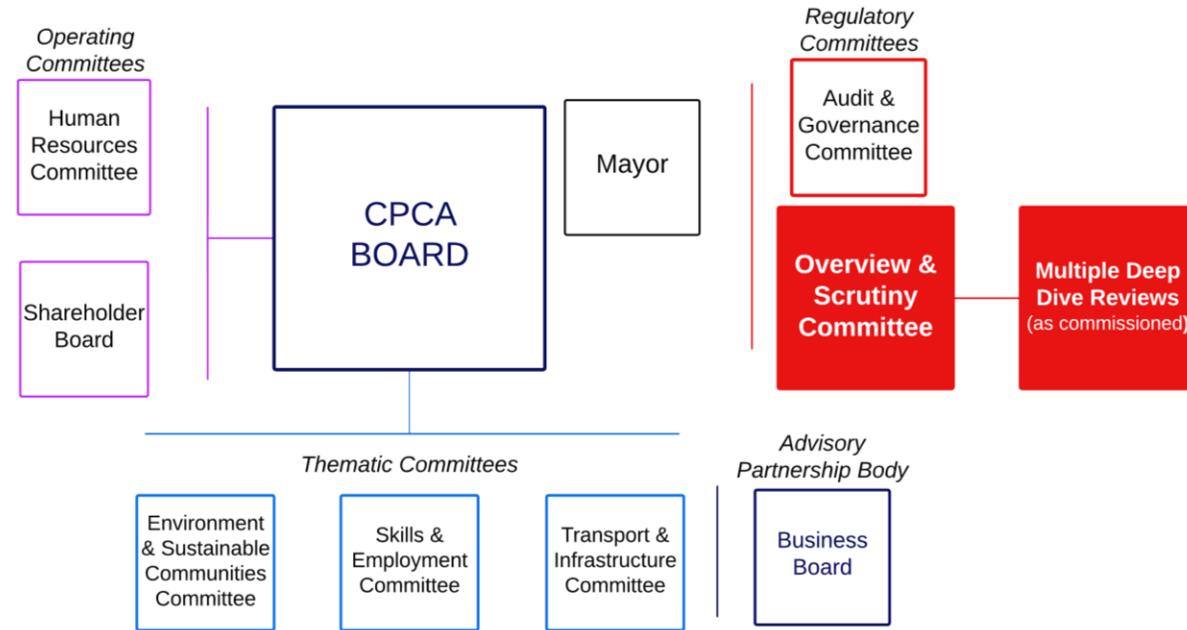


### Option D: Strategic Focus with Deep Dive Reviews

Option D involves having a single Overview & Scrutiny Committee that focuses on core strategic agenda items, supported by the commissioning of Deep Dive reviews through task & finish groups to look at matters of significant concern. This is a slimmed down version of the preferred Option A that does not involve the informal OSC role and continuing with Rapporteurs.

**Deep Dive Reviews** - Topics would include matters of regional significance or public concern and/or significant performance/ policy concerns or opportunities.

The O&S Committee would undertake the annual activity with Deep Dive reviews undertaken by small groups of OSC Members to examine key matters in more depth.



### Pros & Cons



Seeks to deliver identified core roles for Scrutiny



Seeks to utilise new performance tools and provide additional oversight of major projects



Could lack specific focus that would be driven by informal Committee preparation set out in Option A



More limited scope of scrutiny through Rapporteurs than Option A Rapporteur + deep dives



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny



### Option E: Multiple Overview & Scrutiny Committees

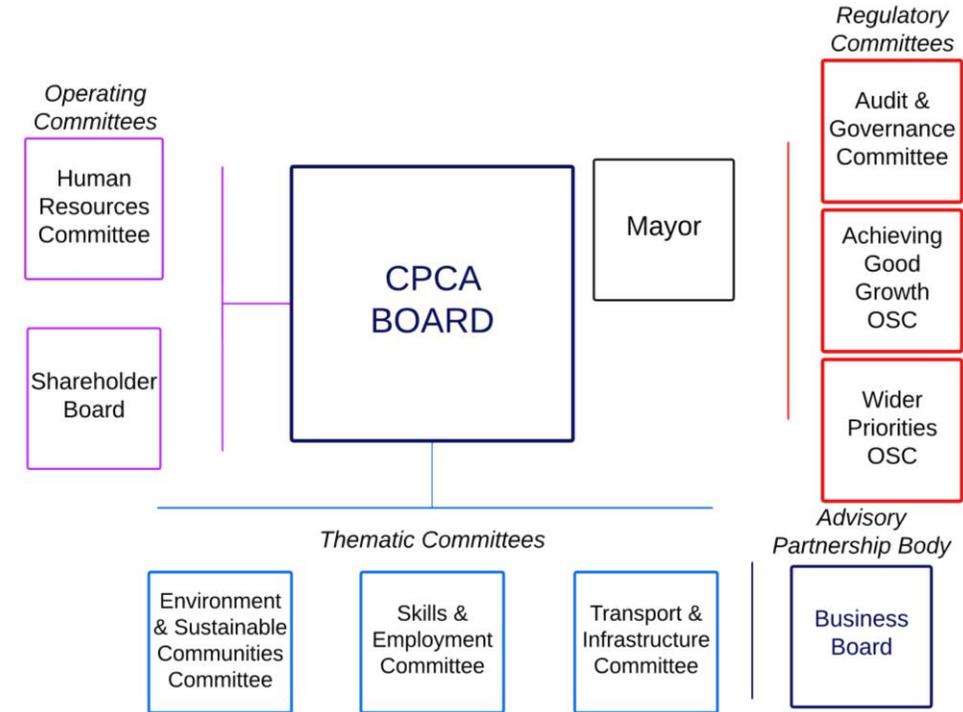
Option E is based around having multiple Overview & Scrutiny Committees in order to create more focus on specific areas of Combined Authority business and key regional matters.

Such an option would build upon the core annual activity set out in Option A but with a Thematic focus.

Given that Achieving Good Growth is the priority focus for the Combined Authority this would be a clear area of focus for an OSC.

The other priority areas set out in the Corporate Plan could form the focus of another committee or multiple committees

It would be for the OSC to decide on specific focus under such an option and to consider the implications of additional Committees such as additional membership, meetings and burden of business on Overview and Scrutiny Members.



### Pros & Cons



Seeks to deliver identified core roles for Scrutiny



Would provide specific focus on multiple Corporate Plan priority areas



Could lack specific focus within meetings from preparation work that would be driven by informal Committee preparation set out in Option A



Seeks to utilise new performance tools and provide additional oversight of major projects



No Rapporteur + deep dives



Requires more O&S Membership and commitment and is out of alignment with CPCA Board direction for no additional committees within the governance structure



## Options for delivering CPCA Overview & Scrutiny

### Other MCA approaches to Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Below are details of wider OSC approaches taken at other MCAs that may help inform considerations at the 13 June workshop:

#### West Yorkshire MCA

WYCA has 3 OSCs focused on review or scrutiny of any decision made, or other action taken, in connection with any Non-Mayoral Function or Mayoral General Function of the Combined Authority.

This is undertaken through 3 Committees as follows:



#### Others

- North of Tyne CA has 1 OSC
- Tees Valley CA has 1 OSC
- West of England CA has 1 OSC
- West Midlands CA has 2 OSCs and a Transport O&S sub-committee

#### Greater Manchester MCA

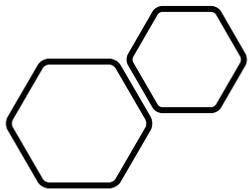
GMCA has recently changed its approach to Overview & Scrutiny, moving from the multiple committee option to having a single OSC that can commission deep dive reviews. This came into play in 2022 following consideration of a report commissioned by GMCA and undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), to carry out a review of the effectiveness and impact of its current approach to overview and scrutiny. This report can be accessed here: [4 Final GMCA scrutiny report 2022.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

#### Liverpool City Region MCA

Liverpool City Region has a single OSC, its role is to:-

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan





# Overview & Scrutiny: Future Developments



## Future Developments

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OSC Members should be aware of the **English Devolution Accountability Framework (EDAF)** and work led by DLUHC to develop a Scrutiny Protocol. The accountability system set out in EDAF seeks to act as a safeguard against unethical behaviour, inadequate performance and poor value for money for the local taxpayer by placing a focus on transparency and scrutiny in Combined Authorities.

A key part of EDAF is the development of a Scrutiny Protocol which seeks to:

- Provide new standards for holding institutions to account
- Ensure institutions have a sustained culture of scrutiny
- Ensure that membership is prized and competed for

EDAF can be accessed via this link: [English Devolution Accountability Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/english-devolution-accountability-framework)

The **Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill** also contains relevant sections for Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny. The Bill is going through the Parliamentary process and continues to be developed, at present conversations are taking place regarding duties and powers of OSCs and inclusion of an enabling power for the payment of allowances to Combined Authority scrutiny members.

