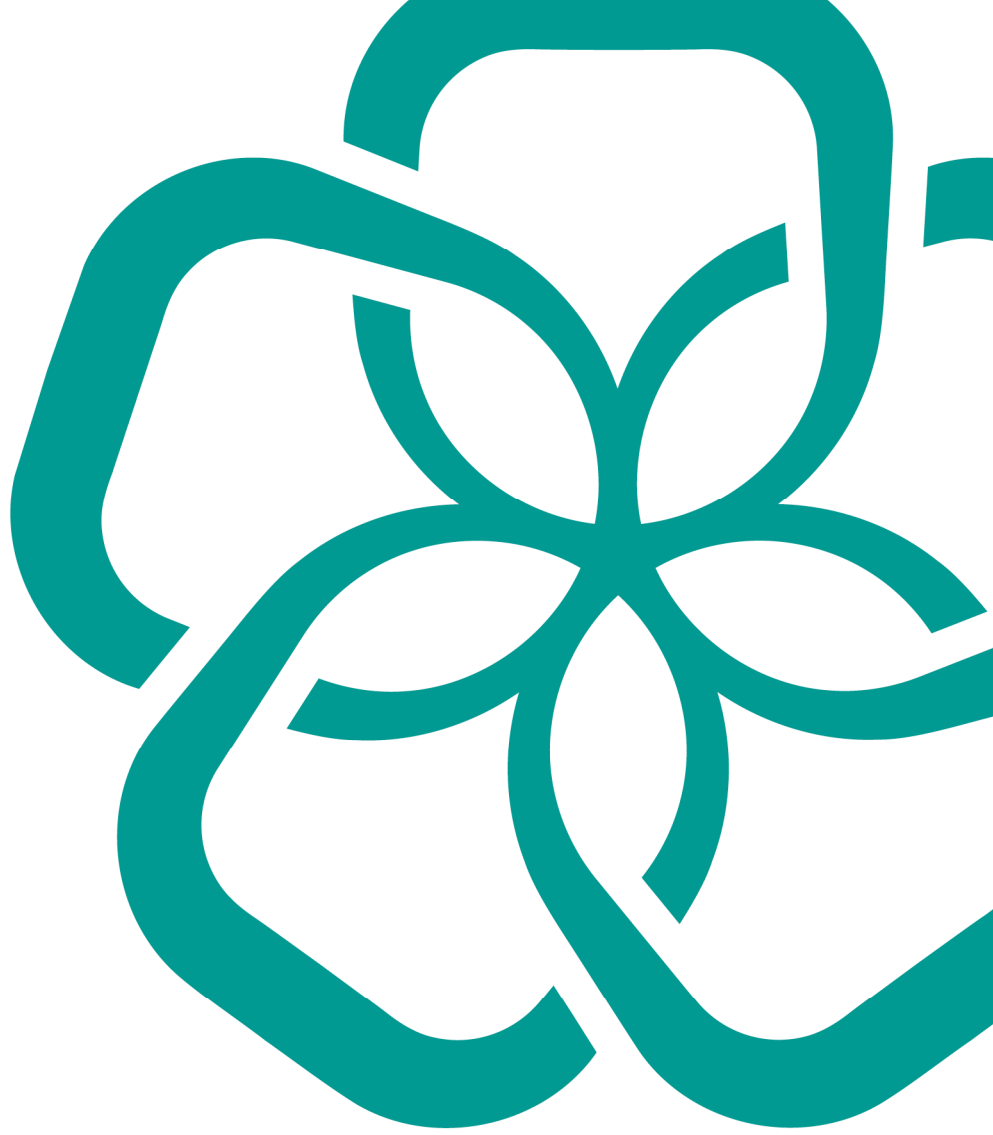




West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire



Contents

<i>20240301 Agenda doc public pack - Corporate Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>20240301 Agenda frontsheet - Corporate Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>20240301 Item 8 Cyber Security - Corporate Scrutiny Committee</i>	<i>41</i>



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CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MEETING TO BE HELD AT 9.00 AM ON FRIDAY, 1 MARCH 2024
IN CONFERENCE ROOM 1/2, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50
WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS, LS1 2DE**

A G E N D A

Please note that this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Combined Authority's internet site. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. Generally, the public seating areas will not be filmed; however, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Governance Services on 0113 251 7220.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To note apologies and confirm **the quorum of 11 members is met.**

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

3. POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To highlight Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 8 which officers have identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.

2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers' recommendation in respect of the above information as set out in paragraph 7.1 of Agenda Item 8.

3. If the recommendation is accepted, to formally pass the following resolution:-

RESOLVED – That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 8 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption

outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2024

(Pages 1 - 6)

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND UPDATE

6. SCRUTINY PROTOCOL REVIEW

Report to follow

7. LEVEL 4 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

(Pages 7 - 18)

8. CYBER SECURITY

(Pages 19 - 26)

9. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages 27 - 36)

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - 8 MARCH (PM)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BGM', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Chief Executive
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2024 IN CONFERENCE ROOMS
1/2, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS, LS1
2DE.**

Present:

Barry Anderson (Chair)	Leeds City Council
Brenda Monteith (Deputy Chair)	Calderdale Council
Alan Griffiths	Bradford Council
David Nunns	Bradford Council
Aneela Ahmed (Sub)	Bradford Council
Mike Barnes	Calderdale Council
Jane Dawson	Leeds City Council
Tony Hames (Sub)	Wakefield Council
Richard Forster	Wakefield Council
Betty Rhodes	Wakefield Council
Andrew Waller	City of York Council

In attendance:

Ben Still	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Sarah Eaton	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Caroline Allen	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Khaled Berroum	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

21. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Wray, Rahat Khan, Jo Lawson, Susan Lee- Richards, Samantha Harvey, Ralph Berry and Moses Crook.

Councillors Tony Hames and Aneela Ahmed substituted for Councillors Samantha Harvey and Ralph Berry respectively.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate with 11 members present (out of 11 needed for quorum).

22. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

23. Possible exclusion of the press and public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

24. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2023 to be approved.

25. Chair's comments and update

The Chair confirmed that Mayor's Questions was postponed from this meeting until 8 March due to the Mayor's availability and an additional meeting on the 1 March will now take place to cover the original agenda items planned for the 8 March meeting.

Resolved: That the Chair's verbal update be noted.

26. Level 4 Devolution

The Director for Strategy, Communications and Intelligence presented a report summarising the additional powers, flexibilities and functions available to the CA through the Level 4 Devolution Framework, alongside timescales for the CA to submit an application and the process for implementing the Government's Scrutiny Protocol.

Questions and discussion centred around the following main headings:

Funding and autonomy

- A single settlement "Trailblazer" deal, with additional funding and greater spending autonomy which Greater Manchester and West Midlands have secured, was not offered to any new authorities in this round and the government is still reviewing how elements of the deal will work in those two areas.
- The Level 4 Devolution offer is a stepping stone to a Trailblazer deal and whilst not providing any additional funding it does give the CA the ability to consolidate funding into two pots, based on source to allow for flexibility in moving funding between previously 'ringfenced' funds from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Department of Transport (DfT).
- Level 4 Devolution also removes the current requirement for "Gateway Reviews" by the government for Gainshare funding for those authorities which have already been through them.
- Many local authorities are currently in financial difficulty and the Mayor intends to mention this within the letter to government noting that local authorities' capacity to deliver directly impacts the CA's ability to deliver, as many of its schemes and programmes are delivered by local authority partners.
- The government has recently published a Funding Simplification Doctrine, covering all local authorities, which intends to simplify – similarly to combined authorities – how local authorities can spend capital funding. E.g. future funding will be added to existing funding

streams rather than a new one which would usually be ringfenced and governed and monitored differently.

- As Level 4 Devolution comes with no additional funding, any additional powers or functions the CA would receive would need to be delivered through existing resources and budgets – which would need to be reviewed when the new devolution deal is finalised.
- The consolidation of different funding streams into pots however would allow for greater efficiency in deploying funds, including to support delivery and administration, which would be a significant benefit to the area.

Timeline, approvals and consultation

- The Mayor and Leaders agreed at the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee held on 18 January 2024 to submit a letter expressing interest in Level 4 Devolution to the government, by the 31 January 2024 deadline. The letter would be circulated to scrutiny members in due course.
- Subject to approval by the Secretary of State, the CA would then enter into negotiations with government on the details of the deal.
- The CA and all constituent councils would then need to discuss and approve the deal before it is formally approved – as was the case in 2020/21.
- If any particular council does not agree with any particular element of the new powers, then the CA would proceed without that element as part of the final agreement.
- It is expected, but not guaranteed, that any announcements will be made around Budget time in early March before the pre-election period begins.
- There is no statutory requirement at this stage to consult with the public and no formal plans to do so although elements of the Deal could require consultation at the next stage of the process..
- Members reported not being briefed or consulted on the L4 devolution framework and its details within their own councils. It is important that the Combined Authority and the partner authorities' brief members since approval from each council and most members is needed for any new devolution deal to be agreed.
- The CA has confirmed with the government that it does meet the eligible criteria for Level 4 devolution – as a current 'Level 3 institution' – and the Chief Operating Officer is responsible within the CA to ensure it remains so.
- Readiness conditions for an area are based on the eligibility of the combined authority and not the constituent authorities within it. If a constituent authority within a CA area filed a Section 114 notice, the CA would still be eligible as has been the case in the West Midlands where the CA is on the "Trailblazer" path while Birmingham Council filed a Section 114.

Powers from local authorities to the Combined Authority:

- Currently, the government has said that the additional powers around Transport and Employment and Skills on offer must be taken in full –

“all or nothing”. A number of Transport functions currently set out within the Framework are delivered by local authorities.

- Despite this, the CA is still negotiating the details as the government have not yet clarified exactly how some of the new powers would be exercised e.g. taxi licensing, pavement parking enforcement.
- The CA’s position is that it is not seeking to take on any function of local authorities in the region and that devolution is power devolved from central government to local areas – rather than from local authorities to combined authorities.
- Any role the CA is likely to have in the future on areas that the local authorities currently have statutory responsibility for, such as public health, would not impact on the local authority role in delivering functions at a locality level.
- The CA and five local authorities are currently refreshing and further developing the “principles of partnership working” to ensure that the partnership of six continue working efficiently together in any eventuality, regarding new powers.
- One of the principles concerns ‘sovereignty’ with agreement that the CA will not progress in a way that reduces the ‘sovereignty’ of the constituent authorities.
- On housing and land, there are no proposals within the Level 4 Devolution Framework to give the CA spatial planning powers. This element reflects what West Yorkshire does already, i.e. a ‘Strategic Place Partnership’ with Homes England chaired by the Mayor.
- Responsibility for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure is not mentioned but the CA has funded EV charging facilities in different areas, is possibly expecting further funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and has drafted a Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Strategy which demonstrates a case for a common regional approach and coordination.
- On Public Health, the CA would not have the statutory responsibility that Councils discharge through their Directors of Public Health. The CA would instead adopt and further develop the Health in all Policies approach, in considering public health issues where it was relevant to existing CA functions and strategies e.g. employment, traffic pollution and housing quality.
- The CA currently has an Associate Director of Public Health, seconded from the Integrated Care Board (ICB), to oversee much of this work. A note on this area of work would be circulated to members.

Scrutiny Protocol

- At the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2023, a working group was established to engage in a member-led review of the Scrutiny Protocol and make recommendations to the CA on implementation and compliance.
- The CA needs to write to the Secretary of State to confirm and explain the implementation of the Scrutiny Protocol within a year of any L4 devolution agreement.
- The working group is due to meet on 29 January and 16 February 2024, with a final report returning to Corporate Scrutiny Committee on

the 1 March 2024 before being considered by the CA later in March – which has the final decision on any governance matters, including scrutiny arrangements. Allowance levels are set by independent remuneration panels (IRPs).

- The Deputy Director for Legal, Governance and Compliance is the responsible officer within the CA for governance and scrutiny arrangements.

Resolved:

- i) That the report and the Committee's feedback be noted.
- ii) That further information on the Combined Authority's role in EV charging and public health, the Scrutiny Protocol working group's terms of reference, the Level 4 Devolution letter be circulated to Members.
- iii) That a future item on the Combined Authority's role in public health strategy be considered, with the Associate Director for Public Health in attendance.

27. Work Programme

Resolved:

- i) That the work programme be noted.
- ii) That the new date and time for the next meeting on 1 March at 9.00 am – 11.00 am be noted.

28. Date of the next meeting – 1 March 2024

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Report to:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	1 March 2024
Subject:	Level 4 Devolution Update
Director:	Sarah Eaton, Director of Strategy, Communications and Intelligence
Author:	Alice Padbury, Strategic Policy Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the next steps for West Yorkshire accessing the Level 4 Devolution Framework.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1. On 19 January 2024, Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered a report setting out West Yorkshire's position on accessing the Level 4 Devolution Framework. This report provides an update on the current position.
- 2.2. A full outline of the opportunity provided by Level 4 Devolution, including the powers and flexibilities available through the Framework, is set out in the 19 January 2024 Corporate Scrutiny Paper and subsequent paper to the Combined Authority on 1 February 2024. These are provided as background documents for completeness.

West Yorkshire Level 4 Submission

- 2.3. Since the Government's publication of the Level 4 Devolution Framework in November 2023, the Combined Authority and five local authorities have been working closely, and at pace, to understand and consider the opportunities that the Level 4 Framework presents for West Yorkshire. This includes exploring the opportunities to strengthen partnership working, enhance delivery and use the freedoms and flexibilities available to better work towards our collective objectives for the region, as set out in the West Yorkshire Plan.
- 2.4. Following discussions between the Mayor and Local Authority leaders, and approval from the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee on 18 January 2024 to proceed, an initial application seeking access to all of the opportunities available through the Framework was submitted to Government.

- 2.5. The initial application took the form of a letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.
- 2.6. This initial submission of a letter of application to the Secretary of State does not constitute an irrevocable step and does not form part of the statutory process. However, it signals an intent to engage with Government and proceed with the Level 4 Framework, subject to further development work between the West Yorkshire partnership and Government. The legislative processes for the different aspects of the application would need to be worked through in progressing this, as part of which all statutory requirements, including the need for individual consents on whether to accept new powers, would take place.
- 2.7. Following submission of the West Yorkshire application letter, the decision lies with the Secretary of State as to whether to progress the West Yorkshire Level 4 application. The Secretary of State will consider the application in the round, including the elements of the Level 4 Framework applied for, considerations of the Combined Authority's previous delivery record and whether outlined readiness conditions have been met. A response will be received via correspondence once a decision has been made on whether to proceed.
- 2.8. One of the key readiness conditions is the implementation of the Scrutiny Protocol, which was published alongside the Level 4 Framework. Work is ongoing to understand the implications of the Scrutiny Protocol on existing Scrutiny arrangements at the Combined Authority, as laid out in Scrutiny Protocol Review Report (item 6), also being discussed at this meeting.

Next Steps

- 2.9. The next steps for accessing Level 4 Devolution are as follows:
 - Consideration and ratification of the initial application will be carried out by each Constituent Council.
 - Consideration will be taken by the Secretary of State on whether to accept West Yorkshire's application. If accepted, further discussions will commence with Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities, and individual government departments to develop detailed proposals for each policy area. In particular, this will include consideration of whether consultation or statutory changes are required to implement individual elements of the Framework.
 - Consider recommendations from the Scrutiny Working Group on implementation of the Scrutiny Protocol (see item 6).

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report, however further flexibilities made available through accessing Level 4 Devolution will support the Combined Authority's 2038 Net-Zero goal and other climate and environment priorities.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report, however accessing the opportunities afforded through the Level 4 of the Devolution Framework will enable the Combined Authority to achieve its priorities around inclusive growth.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. The EDI implications of Level 4 Devolution will be properly scrutinised, monitored and mitigated as required through the undertaking of an Equality Impact Assessment. This will remain a live document which will be used to closely monitor EDI implications throughout the implementation process.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. If the decision is taken to proceed with Level 4 Devolution, this will result in financial implications for the Combined Authority, including the move towards a Department Levelling Up Housing and Communities single settlement.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. Although there are no direct legal implications at this stage, statutory processes will need to be followed as appropriate to progressing different elements of the framework. This will become clearer upon advice from government as the process progresses.
- 7.2. Officers of the Combined Authority and partner councils are working collaboratively in assessing and taking forward any legal and statutory elements of this process.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1. No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee notes the report and next steps.

11. Background Documents

11.1.1. [Level 4 Devolution – 01 February 2024 Combined Authority Paper](#)

11.1.2. [Level 4 Devolution - 19 January 2024 Corporate Scrutiny Paper](#)

11.1.3. [Government Technical paper on Level 4 devolution framework](#)

11.1.4. [Scrutiny Protocol](#)

12. Appendices

12.1.1. Appendix 1 – West Yorkshire L4 Devolution Letter to DLUHC

Mayor Tracy Brabin

West Yorkshire Combined Authority
40-50 Wellington Street
Leeds
LS1 2DE

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities
By Email

30 January 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to present West Yorkshire Combined Authority's application for Level 4 Devolution. Although this does not meet the full ambition that we have for deeper devolution in West Yorkshire, we are pleased to take this step towards full trailblazer devolution with Government.

This latest step is vital in ensuring that future devolution for West Yorkshire meets our ambitions for inclusive growth, reflecting the size and diversity of authorities within the region, and the need to balance our uniqueness of place with our single functional economic area.

We are perfectly positioned to be the key driver of economic growth for the North of England and beyond and as one of the largest Mayoral Combined Authorities in the country, also responsible for the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner, we have a strong track record of partnership working to deliver our ambitions and shared programme of objectives.

Over the last eight years, we have evolved – moving from a Combined Authority working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), delivering the largest Growth Deal in the country, totalling in excess of half a billion pounds - to agreeing a historic Devolution Deal and being led by our directly elected mayor. Our success can be seen in the wide range of transport, economic development, housing and net zero programmes and schemes benefiting local people, businesses and places across West Yorkshire that have been delivered during this time.

Our success to date, coupled with our ambitious plans for the future in respect of mass transit, bus reform, skills and employment, demonstrates our ambition, long-term commitment and appetite for delivery whilst also creating the certainty and confidence that we will continue to develop and deliver pipelines of transformational, locally determined schemes for West Yorkshire well into the future.

This success is underpinned by robust governance, based around the principles of accountability and transparency. Our governance was reviewed and further strengthened in 2021 following our initial devolution deal, to ensure a robust committee structure and scrutiny approach was in place covering the breadth of the Combined Authority's work.

Our ambition, knowledge and collective expertise, together with our recognised track record is why West Yorkshire is a trusted national partner and as such we can confirm that we meet the eligibility criteria for Level 4 Devolution. We are also therefore pleased to confirm that:

- The elements of the Level 4 Framework, for which we are applying, are included at Appendix 1 to this letter.
- Where that element of the Framework requires new powers and functions, we will follow the procedures as set out in legislation for conferring these to a Combined Authority. We understand that this includes the requirement for public consultation.
- We would like to understand the Government's position on the inclusion of strategic planning powers and the strategic infrastructure tariff, two elements of our 2020 Deal which were not included in the Order laid before Parliament. We understood at the time that these powers would be conferred as soon as planning reforms were completed but as yet, these have not been forthcoming.
- We have identified an initial set of Technical Adjustments to Historic Statutes and Guidance, included at Appendix 2 to this letter, which we would like to explore further with Government and take forward as part of our Level 4 Devolution Deal.
- We understand that the speed at which commitments are implemented will depend on our ability to demonstrate we have met the readiness conditions Government has specified for each policy.
- We are committed to implementing the requirements of the Scrutiny Protocol by the end of June 2024 and reporting on progress within 12 months of the Levelling Up Secretary confirming Government's agreement to proceed.

Our application is subject to ratification of the deal by all partners and the statutory requirements referred to within this document, including the consent of all councils affected and parliamentary approval of the secondary legislation implementing the provisions of the Deal.

In progressing with a Level 4 Deal for West Yorkshire, we would also like to have further conversations with Government about the timescales outlined in the Level 4 Technical Guidance, particularly with respect to those policy areas which are linked to work currently underway on Trailblazer Deals in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands. We believe these timescales should be brought forward and confirmed at the earliest opportunity, not least because we are already progressing a number of these locally and will be to add value to discussions and work currently underway.

In addition, we would like to see the final year of the Brownfield Housing Fund programme devolved to the Combined Authority. This would allow us to respond to more opportunities to bring forward housing by removing the national constraints on scope and time.

As you are aware in May 2023, we signed off our bold [West Yorkshire Plan](#), which sets out our vision to be a place that works for all, an engine room of ideas where anyone can make a home. Our plan is underpinned by five ambitious missions, which will drive our work to 2040.

We recognise the value of working together and the benefits this brings. We know that we cannot realise our vision and missions in isolation and will continue to work in partnership with local partners and Government to deliver.

As a Mayoral Combined Authority, we are ideally placed to address the challenges our communities face and are committed to working in partnership with wider stakeholders across the region. For example, our strong working relationship with our Integrated Care Board partners to address wider system challenges specifically in respect to health put us in a strong position to lead the design and delivery of initiatives such as the WorkWell programme which closely aligns with our ambitions for Level 4 Devolution.

However, to enable West Yorkshire to realise its full potential and to enable our missions to be achieved, we will require more than is currently on the table. We will therefore be seeking to discuss the further powers, funding, freedoms and flexibilities for West Yorkshire we would want to see in place as soon as possible beyond this current offer.

Our wider propositions, include:

- Certainty, stability and **fairness in Local Government Funding**
- Further **devolution** of funding and powers, to include:
 - A **single settlement**
 - Support to continue delivery of the **integrated transport system** West Yorkshire needs including:
 - Revenue funding for buses

- Assurance of the Government's continued commitment to Mass Transit in West Yorkshire.
- Delivering strategic rail infrastructure to connect West Yorkshire.
- **Full devolution of all adult employment, skills and careers funding**
- Long-term flexible **devolved funding and powers for net zero**
- Long-term sustainable funding to ensure continued **support to businesses.**

We have detailed plans which sit behind our application and proposition and are happy to host you again in West Yorkshire to highlight our priorities for the region and discuss how we can work together for a better future.

We look forward to hearing back from you regarding this application and working with you to create a West Yorkshire that works for all.

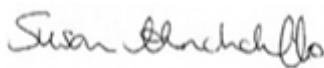
Kind regards,



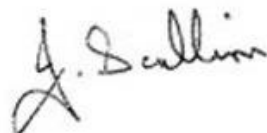
Mayor Tracy Brabin
West Yorkshire Combined Authority



Cllr James Lewis
Leader, Leeds City Council



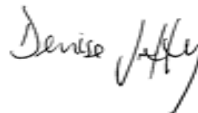
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe
Leader, City of Bradford
Metropolitan District Council



Cllr Jane Scullion
Leader, Calderdale Council



Cllr Cathy Scott
Leader, Kirklees Council



Cllr Denise Jeffery
Leader, Wakefield Council

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Elements of the Framework Applied For by West Yorkshire

Appendix 2 – Suggested Technical Adjustments to Historic Statutes or

Guidance – January 2024

Appendix 1 – Elements of the Level 4 Devolution Framework Applied for by West Yorkshire

Funding Simplification
Funding simplification
Removal of Gainshare Gateway Reviews
General Power of Competence
Skills & Employment
<i>Skills and Employment package – application for all elements.</i>
Housing & Land
Affordable Homes Programme
Housing quality
Mayoral development orders
Compulsory purchase powers
Public sector land
Resilience and contingency planning
Transport
<i>Transport package, with a focus on single settlement.</i>
Net zero, climate change and natural capital
Devolution of net zero funding pilot including buildings retrofit
Clean heat
Strategic energy system planning
Networks
Climate change and natural capital
Innovation, trade and investment
Trade and investment
Business support
Export
Partnership working
Innovation
Culture
Public Health
Health services
Technical adjustments to historic statutes or guidance
Access to powers previously devolved elsewhere

Appendix 2 - Suggested Technical Adjustments to Historic Statutes or Guidance January 2024

Technical Adjustments and Level 3 Standardisation

The following are an initial outline of suggested Technical Adjustments to Historic Statutes or Guidance that we would wish to explore with Government as part of our Level 4 Devolution Deal application.

This list is not exhaustive and as we progress through negotiations we would welcome the opportunity to identify additional adjustments.

1. Use of the Mayoral precept to support and pay for functions aligned to the wider general power of competence, for example bus franchising.
2. Change in responsibility for approval of roundabouts: This request would pass the powers of approval for roundabouts from the Secretary of State to West Yorkshire Combined Authority/Local Authorities.
3. The Office of Mayor and Local Authority Leaders (and potentially wider Local Authority Members) to attract a pension: Currently, the Mayor and Local Authority Leaders cannot access a pension. This is in contrast to other similar high-office political roles such as Police and Crime Commissioners.

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Report to:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	1 March 2024
Subject:	Cyber Security
Director:	Alan Reiss, Chief Operating Officer
Author:	Ian Towner, Cyber Security Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Scrutiny Committee with details on West Yorkshire Combined Authority's current position regarding cyber security detailing the relevant elements of the MCA Digital Programme.
- 1.2 Further analysis is provided in the exempt **Appendix 1**.

2. Information

Current Threats

- 1.3 The Cyber Security threats faced by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority are significant and the risk is rated as VERY HIGH on the organisation's corporate risk register. This is due to the significant number of attacks that are occurring daily against organisations in general, as well as the Combined Authority's association with the United Kingdom Government and the current geopolitical climate.

MCA Digital Programme

- 1.4 The MCA Digital Programme, which commenced in Autumn 2021, built on the previous Corporate Technology Programme (CTP) and includes some outstanding elements which were not completed as well as several projects that address both cyber security and resilience risks.
- 1.5 The MCA Digital project has several projects that are still in progress, and these will further improve the overall security of the organisation. The ongoing projects are:
- 1.6 **Security Operations Centre** - ICT Services have procured a managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) service provided by Scottish managed services organisation BrightSolid. This service will provide 24/7/365 security monitoring of all the organisations systems, looking for suspicious or anomalous activity which could indicate a threat, investigating and neutralising these quickly. Most cyber-

attacks occur outside of business hours so this service will provide a very important detection capability. Work has started to onboard the organisation's systems and allow BrightSolid to tune their detection alerts, it is expected that the basic service will go live in April 2024, with the full implication to follow soon after.

- 1.7 **Disaster Recovery** - A procurement has recently started to obtain a partner to work with the organisation to deliver further disaster recovery solutions which covers all critical services and ensures a documented and tested recovery plan is in place should a major incident occur that requires it. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end Q2 2024.
- 1.8 **Software Allowlisting** - As part of the Cyber Treatment Plan, it was recommended that the Combined Authority should implement a software allowlisting solution to only permit trusted software to run on the organisation's laptops. This is a strong defence against cyber-attacks as it prevents malware and other malicious software from running. This work is expected to start Q1 2024.
- 1.9 **Patching and Vulnerability Management** - A procurement has been started to obtain a partner to provide additional skills and resources to ICT Services to enable the remediation of vulnerabilities and the automation of system patching. The objective is to put in place a sustainable patching and vulnerability management foundation and processes to ensure vulnerabilities are manageable and remediated within the timeframes required by the Government's Cyber Essentials programme. It anticipated that this work will be completed by the end Q1 2024.
- 1.10 **Cyber Essentials Plus (CE+)** - Cyber Essential Plus accreditation is a UK Government and National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) certification scheme which demonstrates a minimum level of protection in cyber security. The Combined Authority previously held the accreditation however due to resourcing issues this accreditation lapsed. To obtain the accreditation the organisation must have in place patching and vulnerability management processes that meet the strict requirements set by the Cyber Essentials scheme. This requirement will be achieved through the procurement of a partner as detailed in 2.10. It is anticipated that the organisation will be in a suitable position to obtain Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation by the end Q2 2024.

Further analysis is provided in the exempt Appendix 1

Cyber Security Workstreams

- 1.11 Other risks identified and managed as part of business as usual (BAU) processes include:
- 1.12 **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) solution** - The solution in place allows all staff to use their own devices to access corporate resources (SharePoint, email,

OneDrive etc). This presents a risk to both data leakage/loss and an increased risk of staff credentials being compromised due to using devices not managed and secured by the Combined Authority. A technical review is in progress to assess options to better secure both data and credentials when using BYOD as well as the assessment of risks associated with the use of BYOD which will inform proposed policy changes.

- 1.13 **Privileged Access Management** - The Cyber Treatment Plan, penetration testing reports and other audits have highlighted issues with ICT Services administration accounts having excessive permissions.
- 1.14 **Password Management** - The Combined Authority has embraced Windows Hello for Business (WHfB) which provides a very secure way to sign into the organisation's laptops, however passwords are still required and the strength of these has been questioned through penetration testing. The ICT Password Policy is in the process of being amended to improve the strength of passwords through the increase in length and using software to detect and prevent staff choosing weaker passwords.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 1.15 The development of publicly available AI systems such as ChatGPT has generated a lot of interest and concern about how these systems could transform information management and society in general. The use of AI will clearly bring opportunities to organisations, but they also present threats, and due to the fast pace of change it is difficult to predict the true impact of either.
- 1.16 In the short-term AI will mainly affect the security of organisation by allowing attackers the ability to generate more convincing phishing emails and websites, building on an already successful method for obtaining credentials and propagating malware. AI will lower the barrier for novice cyber criminals and will make social engineering and reconnaissance easier. Sophisticated use of AI will, in the short-term, remain the preserve of nation state actors who have the funding and training to develop more advanced threats.
- 1.17 While cyber criminals will embrace AI, the same technology is being used to develop software that will make detection and prevention of cyber-attacks more automated and therefore more responsive to the increasing threat. Microsoft is leading the development of AI powered solutions with their Co-Pilot branded services such as Security Co-pilot. As the Combined Authority has deployed the full stack of Microsoft security solutions and the BrightSolid Security Operations Centre (SOC) also utilises Microsoft security toolsets, we are in a good position to benefit from advances in this area.
- 1.18 The business benefits of AI are already being seen with the implementation of Co-pilot in the Microsoft Edge browser, allowing anyone to use AI to generate text and

images as well as providing computer code samples which can be useful to IT workers. There is no doubt that this evolution provides exciting possibilities but there are risks, AI is not infallible and can provide inaccurate information. As an example, code generation by AI can be useful to help a less experienced developer to find a solution to a problem, however the code must be verified and understood to ensure it does what is expected, and it would be dangerous to rely on AI at this stage to generate code or text without errors or omissions.

1.19 ICT Services is investigating ways in which to leverage the advances in AI to help the organisation deliver services in the most efficient way possible. AI is a powerful technology that needs to be better understood before it can be deployed. With the AI building blocks of Cloud computing and its new data platform in place, the Combined Authority is in a strong position to develop AI goals, understand its potential impact on staff roles, establish how it could be used to aid organisation decision making and define how AI opportunities can be harnessed in an ethical manner.

1.20 An external consultancy will be engaged towards the end of 2024 to help define a three-year ICT strategy, including the following AI specific recommendations:

- AI principles, criteria for when the technology should be used.
- Lessons to be learned from what similar organisations are doing in this area.
- The Combined Authority service areas that would benefit the most from AI and what form implementation should take.
- AI governance and management of risks.
- An AI implementation roadmap.
- Whether there is the potential for advising regional businesses in this area and if yes how this could be approached.

Summary

1.21 In summary, the threats to the organisation are at an all-time high and these threats are not likely to reduce. Although a lot of work has been undertaken to improve the security posture of the organisation, there remain significant weaknesses and vulnerabilities which must be remediated, as a priority, to minimise the risk of a successful Cyber-attack. This work has the focus of a dedicated Cyber Security Manager who is responsible for ensuring the work is prioritised and the correct action is taken.

Further analysis is provided in the exempt Appendix 1

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The information contained in **Appendix 1** is exempt under **paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972** as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Combined Authority. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of **Appendix 1** as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, as publication could prejudice the financial or business affairs of the Authority.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the report and provides any comment or feedback.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cyber Security EXEMPT

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Report to:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	1 March 2024
Subject:	Work Programme 2023/24
Director:	Alan Reiss, Chief Operating Officer
Author:	Katie Wright, Scrutiny Support Officer

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To note the current Work Programme.
- 1.2 To consider any additional agenda items, formal referrals to scrutiny, reviews, call in, and any other tasks, issues or matters the Committee resolves to undertake or consider further.

2. Information

Work Programme 2023/24

- 2.1 The Work Programme is set at the beginning of the year and considered at each meeting where it can be amended and changed as the year progresses. It outlines the work the Committee has agreed to undertake, investigate, and focus on in the municipal year (June 2023 – June 2024) within the resources, remit, and powers available.
- 2.2 The Work Programme was decided over the summer following an initial work planning meeting between Members in July, and subsequent discussions between the Scrutiny Chairs, Scrutiny Members, scrutiny officers and the lead directors and officers for each committee. During discussions, amongst other things, they considered:
 - The Committee's remit and terms of reference
 - Combined Authority's main strategic priorities and the Mayors Pledges
 - The committee's work last year and what should be rolled over
 - Major ongoing and upcoming challenges for West Yorkshire residents
 - Members' areas of expertise and interests
 - The number of meetings: three, excluding Mayors Question Time, each being two hours long
- 2.3 The joint work programme (as of the date of publication), including the other two scrutiny committees, is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Referrals to scrutiny

- 2.4 Under Scrutiny Standing Order 7, any CA Scrutiny Member, any Combined Authority Member, or any elected Member of a West Yorkshire council (or the City of York Council) may formally refer a matter to a scrutiny committee for consideration. The referral must be in writing to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The relevant scrutiny committee must then consider and discuss the referral and respond to the referrer explaining whether or not it will consider the matter further and why.
- 2.5 There are no formal referrals for this committee to consider at this meeting.

Key decisions and call in

- 2.6 Scrutiny members may call in any decision of the Mayor, Combined Authority, a decision-making committee, and any key decisions taken by an officer (with the exception of urgent decisions). Key decisions are defined as any decision incurring a financial cost or saving of £1 million or more, or a decision likely to have a significant effect on two or more wards.
- 2.7 Decision-makers (both committees and officers) have two days to publish notice of a decision, at which point scrutiny members have five working days to decide whether to call in the decision, delaying its implementation while it is under scrutiny.
- 2.8 Any five members of a scrutiny Committee – including at least one member from two different constituent councils (West Yorkshire) – may call-in a decision by notifying the Statutory Scrutiny Officer in writing by 4.00 pm on the fifth working day following publication of a decision notice. The relevant scrutiny chair must then decide whether to delay the implementation of the decision, and the committee has 14 days to meet, scrutinise the decision and make any recommendations.
- 2.9 Further information is set out in Scrutiny Standing Order 14.
- 2.10 The latest key decisions and forward plans of key decisions are published and available for viewing on the [key decisions section of the Combined Authority's website](#).

Changes in membership

- 2.11 Since the last meeting, Cllr Jo Lawson has stepped down from the Committee leaving a Kirklees Labour vacancy which is yet to be filled.

Actions for the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

- 2.12 As outlined in Scrutiny Standing Order 17, the statutory scrutiny officer provides support to a scrutiny committee's work programme and all scrutiny members in exercising their scrutiny duties and fulfilling their objectives.

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5. Equality and Diversity Implications

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6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes or amends the Work Programme and forward plan.

11. Background Documents

[Scrutiny Standing Orders](#)

[Key Decisions Forward Plan \(as of this month\)](#)

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Joint Scrutiny Work Programme (as of the date of publication)

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Scrutiny Work Programmes 2023/24

Summary of main topics and meeting dates

Committee	Main topic areas	Meetings
Corporate	- Corporate performance monitoring - Budget, finances and resources (incl staff capacity) 'Deeper devolution' - Decision making and governance - Projects: ICS, Wellington House refurbishment, MCA Digital Programme, Procurement and social value	22 September 2023 24 November 2023 19 January 2024 (Mayors Questions) 8 March 2024 (PM)
Transport & Infrastructure	- Bus franchising and service improvement (incl BSIP+) - Mass Transit - Strategy, policy and Local Transport Plan 4 pre-scrutiny - Performance monitoring of transport network, bus services, passenger experience and transport projects - Affordable Housing (achievement of mayoral pledge) - Projects: Flexi Bus	29 September 2023 1 December 2023 (Mayors Questions) 26 January 2024 15 March 2024
Economy	- Economic outlook/data - Economic strategy development: strategic challenges, current / future challenges - Adult Education Budget and adult learning - School engagement, apprenticeships and youth learning - Approach to business support and investment, including culture / creative industries - Economics services performance/outputs monitoring	15 September 2023 17 November 2023 12 January 2024 1 March 2024 8 March 2024 (PM) (Mayors Questions)

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Sub-topics/focuses	Date
Strategic focus and performance monitoring	- How is performance monitored – how does the process work? (Who monitors it? What data is collected and how is it presented?) - Logic and assumptions behind deciding the actual KPI/target/objective numbers; evidence based, need based, capacity based? Is it 'arbitrary'? - Focus on long term progression 'journey of delivery' for greater context – past KPIs, current, future. - What impact is the CA actually making? What 'levers' does it actually have? Is there proof of 'additionality'? - Strategic alignments: Region-first thinking, avoiding local parochialism; Levelling up within WY vs Leeds centricity (inclusion in KPIs and performance monitoring of it?); Competition between districts and in district priorities (especially in bidding)?	22 September 2023
Budget and resources (including staff capacity)	<u>Budget and finances:</u> - Usual budget monitoring and pre-scrutiny. - Gainshare spending + Gateway Review 2023/2024. - Reserves policy/level – Audit's view of risks and viability. - Corporate borrowing – possibility, rules, amount. - Revenue raising and additional sources of funding. - Use of past data to contextualise current budget against past budgets and future projected budgets. <u>Staff capacity:</u> - Does the organisation have the staff to deliver? Pressures between efficiency savings (e.g. vacancy management, lower pay awards in competitive market) and delivery capacity. - Recruitment and retention challenges in local government – what are the areas of concern, what can be done, where can the five authorities work together (e.g. pooling resources). - Progress and changes since the last staff survey analysis (and historic context).	24 November 2023 (+ Gateway Review as separate item) 19 January 2024 (workshop after committee meeting)
Deeper devolution	- Current status of promised powers that have not yet been devolved e.g. planning. (Autumn update?) - Future expected further devolution, including 'single settlement' funding model.	19 January 2024
Decision making and governance.	- Governance rules and structure etc. - How are decisions made – from the origin point (inception) of an idea (or need) to policy/service development, to scrutiny/discussion, to decision, to monitoring delivery, to evaluation.	22 September 2023 (Assurance Framework)

	• Role of members and level of control and influence over process. • Role of officers and internal decision-making structures – when do officers decide, when do members decide. • How each stage is communicated to stakeholders (members, public) and how they are involved. • The Assurance Framework and role of PAT in project decisions/management/scrutiny/evaluation etc. • Scrutiny system.	element and project decision-making) TBC – other elements, possibly after/alongside deeper devolution item.
Project: Integrated Corporate System (ICS)	Update on progress since last year.	TBC – when the system is live
Project: Wellington House refurbishment	Post-project Evaluations report.	TBC – when evaluations report is complete. Chair to advise.
Project: MCA Digital Programme	Briefing on project and progress.	1 March 2023, as part of Cyber Security
Project: Procurement and social value	Update from last year: methodology, risks, real value.	TBC – Chair to receive briefing and suggest way forward
Scrutiny Protocol	Review of government's newly published Scrutiny Protocol, which WYCA must be compliant with to receive additional powers and funding through Level 4 Devolution. Review will assess WYCA's current compliance level and recommend changes to a) be compliant and b) improve scrutiny in general.	Working Group report to 1 March meeting

33

Transport & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Sub-topics/focuses	Date
Bus reform and improvement	Overview of long-term bus reform plans (Franchising) and short-term efforts to improve bus services in the meantime (BSIP, etc) Long term reforms – Bus franchising: • Background and update on bus franchising and upcoming consultation (<i>to be approved at 28 Sept CA meeting, held the day before TSC</i>) Short term improvements – BSIP update and performance: • Update/changes in BSIP since 2021/22 (<i>when the committee last looked at it</i>)	22 September 2023 – Overview, background and update (ahead of bus franchising consultation) 26 January 2024 – Further update on franchising consultation and BSIP

	• Most updated quarterly report and KPIs – including update on RTI accuracy (<i>considered by committee last Sept</i>). • Bus network performance and passenger experience data Areas of interest: - Current bus service / operator performance issues - Effects of service cuts and possible solutions - Public engagement, customer service quality re complaints, consultations and service changes	TBC – look at consultation report and results around March 2024 final approval
Mass Transit	Overview of the background to the Mass Transit scheme, level of funding, short term and long-term timelines, main challenges and risk assessment, legal questions, type of transit systems being considered and how future proof it is, public consultation, and multi-modal connectivity.	26 January 2024 Any further update based on timelines
Overview and Monitoring – transport services and projects/schemes	• KPI, projects, objectives – performance and achievement. • Understand transport schemes, funding/bidding, strategic and ROI criteria, impact assessments on non-transport areas.	29 September 2023 – buses/passenger experience
Strategy/policy and Local Transport Plan 4	• Decarbonisation (and government assessment toolkit) • Behaviour Change and Active Travel (including bikes, e-bikes/e-scooters, and motorbikes) • Freight and waterways as a resource • Current and future transport trends; the pandemic and beyond (bus/rail footfall, homeworking positives vs rise in deliveries) • Infrastructure, energy and sustainability challenges and opportunities of future proof transport system (electricity demand vs sources, lithium dependency and mining, effect on other industries and sectors)] • Pollution, health and clean air zones	15 March 2024 (LTP4 consultation in Summer 2024, for adoption in 2025)
Housing	• Achievement of 'affordable' and 'sustainable' targets • Challenges and solutions (target vs need in region) • Available funding and what it is being spent on	1 December 2023, at MQT 15 March 2024
Projects: Flexi Bus	Review July Transport Cttee report and reason for non-viability and early termination, and circumstances of decision	Workshop for working group, 26 January 2024 (PM)

Economy Scrutiny Committee

Topic	Sub-topics/focuses	Dates
Economic outlook and strategic challenges	<u>Current situation/data:</u> • Latest data and economic outlook since last year e.g. economic figures, inflation, cost of living effects • Any comparisons with neighbouring regions with overlapping economic footprints e.g. NY and GM. <u>Current/persistent challenges:</u> • Continuing post-pandemic challenges: effects on town centres / hospitality businesses and plans to deal with this (e.g. shopfront grants, cultural exhibitions, IT/study areas); changes in work habits and effects of people being able to work remotely on local economies and other areas. • Persistent economic challenges: NEETs, people 'missing' from data, part time work trends, over-50s/retirees returning to work, green sector/skills growth and preparation, manufacturing in need of support, inter-regional imbalances in economic growth/jobs within WY, and retention of talent within WY. <u>New/Future challenges:</u> • AI, automation, green/decarbonisation (+ any other disruptions?) which have accelerated recently and their potential consequences on the regional economy, businesses and jobs. • Are we prepared for these challenges? Can we get ahead of other MCAs/areas and position ourselves as leaders in these emerging markets? • Potential conflict between productivity/growth/tech advancement vs job creation/community/place/diversity considerations. <u>Economic Strategy update:</u> • How we are addressing the above challenges through the economic strategy + current thinking/progress + timeline for finalisation and adoption	15 September 2023 – intro and main discussion 8 March 2024 – update on economic strategy
Adult Education Budget, Schools and Training Providers	• Update on last year's AEB performance and this year's spending and outputs. • School engagement and young people opportunities and apprenticeships • Apprenticeships and non-university career routes	17 November 2023
Business investment and outcomes (including culture + creative industries) and	<u>Business investment:</u> • How we are investing in businesses and generating outcomes <u>Culture and creative industries:</u>	8 March 2024

performance monitoring/outputs/funding	• A mayoral objective, an increasing percentage of the region's economy and upcoming/recent city of culture events (in Bradford and Leeds) <u>Performance monitoring and KPIs</u> • Monitoring achievement of economy targets/KPIs from the corporate plan. • "Follow the money": where is funding coming from, how is it spent, what are the revenue opportunities. • Inter-regional levelling up, avoidance of Leeds-centricity, ensuring certain areas/towns are not forgotten, place-based element of targets/KPIs e.g. number of jobs/houses/businesses supported in different districts	
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Minutes from all scrutiny committee meetings 2023/24:

Economy:

15 September 2023- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=228&MId=1342&Ver=4>

17 November 2023- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=228&MId=1343&Ver=4>

12 January 2024- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=228&MId=1344&Ver=4>

Corporate:

22 September 2023- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=226&MId=1346&Ver=4>

24 November 2023- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=226&MId=1347&Ver=4>

19 January 2024- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=226&MId=1348&Ver=4>

Transport:

29 September 23- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=227&MId=1338&Ver=4>

1 December 2023- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=227&MId=1339&Ver=4>

26 January 2024- <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=227&MId=1340&Ver=4>



West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING TO BE HELD AT 9.00 AM ON FRIDAY, 1 MARCH 2024
IN CONFERENCE ROOM 1/2, WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50
WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS, LS1 2DE

A G E N D A

Please note that this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Combined Authority's internet site. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. Generally, the public seating areas will not be filmed; however, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Governance Services on 0113 251 7220.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To note apologies and confirm the quorum of 11 members is met.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

3. POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To highlight Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 8 which officers have identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.

2. To consider whether or not to accept the officers' recommendation in respect of the above information as set out in paragraph 7.1 of Agenda Item 8.

3. If the recommendation is accepted, to formally pass the following resolution:-

RESOLVED – That in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 1 to Agenda Item 8 on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption

outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2024

(Pages 1 - 6)

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND UPDATE

6. SCRUTINY PROTOCOL REVIEW

Report to follow

7. LEVEL 4 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

(Pages 7 - 18)

8. CYBER SECURITY

(Pages 19 - 26)

9. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages 27 - 36)

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - 8 MARCH (PM)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BGM', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Chief Executive
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**



Report to:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	1 March 2024
Subject:	Cyber Security
Director:	Alan Reiss, Chief Operating Officer
Author:	Ian Towner, Cyber Security Manager

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Scrutiny Committee with details on West Yorkshire Combined Authority's current position regarding cyber security detailing the relevant elements of the MCA Digital Programme.
- 1.2 Further analysis is provided in the exempt **Appendix 1**.

2. Information

Current Threats

- 1.3 The Cyber Security threats faced by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority are significant and the risk is rated as VERY HIGH on the organisation's corporate risk register. This is due to the significant number of attacks that are occurring daily against organisations in general, as well as the Combined Authority's association with the United Kingdom Government and the current geopolitical climate.

MCA Digital Programme

- 1.4 The MCA Digital Programme, which commenced in Autumn 2021, built on the previous Corporate Technology Programme (CTP) and includes some outstanding elements which were not completed as well as several projects that address both cyber security and resilience risks.
- 1.5 The MCA Digital project has several projects that are still in progress, and these will further improve the overall security of the organisation. The ongoing projects are:
- 1.6 **Security Operations Centre** - ICT Services have procured a managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) service provided by Scottish managed services organisation BrightSolid. This service will provide 24/7/365 security monitoring of all the organisations systems, looking for suspicious or anomalous activity which could indicate a threat, investigating and neutralising these quickly. Most cyber-

attacks occur outside of business hours so this service will provide a very important detection capability. Work has started to onboard the organisation's systems and allow BrightSolid to tune their detection alerts, it is expected that the basic service will go live in April 2024, with the full implication to follow soon after.

- 1.7 **Disaster Recovery** - A procurement has recently started to obtain a partner to work with the organisation to deliver further disaster recovery solutions which covers all critical services and ensures a documented and tested recovery plan is in place should a major incident occur that requires it. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end Q2 2024.
- 1.8 **Software Allowlisting** - As part of the Cyber Treatment Plan, it was recommended that the Combined Authority should implement a software allowlisting solution to only permit trusted software to run on the organisation's laptops. This is a strong defence against cyber-attacks as it prevents malware and other malicious software from running. This work is expected to start Q1 2024.
- 1.9 **Patching and Vulnerability Management** - A procurement has been started to obtain a partner to provide additional skills and resources to ICT Services to enable the remediation of vulnerabilities and the automation of system patching. The objective is to put in place a sustainable patching and vulnerability management foundation and processes to ensure vulnerabilities are manageable and remediated within the timeframes required by the Government's Cyber Essentials programme. It anticipated that this work will be completed by the end Q1 2024.
- 1.10 **Cyber Essentials Plus (CE+)** - Cyber Essential Plus accreditation is a UK Government and National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) certification scheme which demonstrates a minimum level of protection in cyber security. The Combined Authority previously held the accreditation however due to resourcing issues this accreditation lapsed. To obtain the accreditation the organisation must have in place patching and vulnerability management processes that meet the strict requirements set by the Cyber Essentials scheme. This requirement will be achieved through the procurement of a partner as detailed in 2.10. It is anticipated that the organisation will be in a suitable position to obtain Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation by the end Q2 2024.

Further analysis is provided in the exempt Appendix 1

Cyber Security Workstreams

- 1.11 Other risks identified and managed as part of business as usual (BAU) processes include:
- 1.12 **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) solution** - The solution in place allows all staff to use their own devices to access corporate resources (SharePoint, email,

OneDrive etc). This presents a risk to both data leakage/loss and an increased risk of staff credentials being compromised due to using devices not managed and secured by the Combined Authority. A technical review is in progress to assess options to better secure both data and credentials when using BYOD as well as the assessment of risks associated with the use of BYOD which will inform proposed policy changes.

- 1.13 **Privileged Access Management** - The Cyber Treatment Plan, penetration testing reports and other audits have highlighted issues with ICT Services administration accounts having excessive permissions.
- 1.14 **Password Management** - The Combined Authority has embraced Windows Hello for Business (WHfB) which provides a very secure way to sign into the organisation's laptops, however passwords are still required and the strength of these has been questioned through penetration testing. The ICT Password Policy is in the process of being amended to improve the strength of passwords through the increase in length and using software to detect and prevent staff choosing weaker passwords.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 1.15 The development of publicly available AI systems such as ChatGPT has generated a lot of interest and concern about how these systems could transform information management and society in general. The use of AI will clearly bring opportunities to organisations, but they also present threats, and due to the fast pace of change it is difficult to predict the true impact of either.
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1.20 An external consultancy will be engaged towards the end of 2024 to help define a three-year ICT strategy, including the following AI specific recommendations:

- AI principles, criteria for when the technology should be used.
- Lessons to be learned from what similar organisations are doing in this area.
- The Combined Authority service areas that would benefit the most from AI and what form implementation should take.
- AI governance and management of risks.
- An AI implementation roadmap.
- Whether there is the potential for advising regional businesses in this area and if yes how this could be approached.

Summary

1.21 In summary, the threats to the organisation are at an all-time high and these threats are not likely to reduce. Although a lot of work has been undertaken to improve the security posture of the organisation, there remain significant weaknesses and vulnerabilities which must be remediated, as a priority, to minimise the risk of a successful Cyber-attack. This work has the focus of a dedicated Cyber Security Manager who is responsible for ensuring the work is prioritised and the correct action is taken.

Further analysis is provided in the exempt Appendix 1

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 There are no climate emergency implications directly arising from this report.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

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8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the report and provides any comment or feedback.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Cyber Security EXEMPT