

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Scrutiny Member Reference Group – views to Cabinet

1.1 The cross Place and People Scrutiny Committees' Member Reference Group (MRG) met on 11 September 2025 and agreed the following comments to be put to Cabinet for its consideration of 'Devolution: Consent to the establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex' on 21 October 2025.

1.2 The MRG expressed its support for Cabinet agreeing to consent to the laying of the Statutory Instrument that would establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex, recognising the potential benefits for East Sussex residents, including access to a long-term mayoral investment fund.

1.3 The MRG expressed concerns regarding the pace at which the MCCA is being established, particularly the requirement to develop a Local Assurance Framework by the end of October, and the need for greater support and clarity from Government.

1.4 The MRG noted the importance of robust scrutiny arrangements for the MCCA to ensure accountability of the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, and appointed commissioners.

1.5 The MRG noted the absence of a recall mechanism for the Mayor once they had been elected and supported exploring the possibility of including recall provisions similar to those that apply to Members of Parliament as part of the governance arrangements for the MCCA.

1.6 The MRG expressed the need for further clarity from Government on how the remuneration, employment terms and allowances of the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, and commissioners would be determined.

Responses to issues raised

2.1 Following the MRG further clarification was sought from Government on the issues raised at the MRG meeting. Government have confirmed the following:

2.2 Allowances paid to Commissioners have to be in accordance with a scheme that has been agreed by the MCCA. Agreement of such a scheme will be by majority vote (including the Mayor). The Bill's intention is that the MCCA may only pay allowances in accordance with the scheme and not otherwise. The Mayor may determine the salary for commissioners, to be approved by a scheme made by the MCCA. The Government has the option to set out further information in guidance around appropriate pay and procedures.

2.3 In relation to the termination of appointments of commissioners, the Government has confirmed that the policy intention is that when a commissioner's appointment ceases due to an Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation that has been accepted by the MCCA, the appointment is terminated automatically. The relevant Government Department is working to ensure the legislation fulfils the policy intention.

2.4 In relation to whether there were plans to introduce safeguard provisions for Mayors that are comparable to those allowing for the recall of Members of Parliament, the Government has responded to say that there aren't any. Their view is that there is already a comprehensive system of accountability for Mayors, and they are working with the sector to

understand how accountability and scrutiny for Mayoral Strategic Authorities can be strengthened even further.