
**Issues of Importance:
The scrutiny role of the
London Assembly**

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Executive Summary

- The small range of responsibilities of the Greater London Authority permit the London Assembly to take a close interest in the work of two of its functional bodies, the London Development Agency and Transport for London. Scrutiny of the other two functional bodies, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the Metropolitan Police Authority, has been almost non-existent, reflecting political tensions which are abetted by the presence of Assembly members on their boards.
- The Assembly currently (before the 2004 election) uses a range of standing subject committees to carry out scrutiny. This is its third committee system: it is not obliged to use any particular structure, and the structure may change again following the 2004 election.
- Much of the Assembly's scrutiny work falls into the category of 'external scrutiny' and hence can only influence, not command, the behaviour of other organisations. Links between the Assembly and Mayor to achieve a joint approach in this regard have been limited so far: occasional joint scrutinies or joint report launches have taken place.
- The Assembly's statutory ability to investigate "issues of importance to London" has permitted a diverse range of subjects of reports. This has also encouraged chairs, committees and scrutiny officers to use an innovative range of scrutiny methods, including websites, site visits, reporters, and consultation.
- The Assembly's four-strong media team is kept closely involved in the selection of subjects of scrutiny reports and advises committees on potential media interest. This staffing resource helps the Assembly gain far wider coverage for scrutiny than might otherwise be the case.
- Many Assembly scrutiny processes follow the 'classical scrutiny' model developed in the House of Commons: written evidence, followed by oral evidence, deliberations, and the production of a report. However, London Assembly reports are shorter and punchier than traditional Commons select committee reports.
- As at other tiers of government, respondents indicated that questions in evidence sessions were often prefaced by position statements and were often over-long: these were thought to be particularly ineffective where committees sought to put a witness under pressure.
- Reports, and recommendations, were sometimes finalised by e-mail communication rather than in committee meetings. This occasionally led to very long delays in publication due to members being unable to agree on the content of reports.
- The scrutiny officer team maintains a grid of scrutinies, indicating planned and previous publication dates, and a list of the impacts that scrutiny reports have had. Part of the GLA business plan relates to performance targets for the scrutiny committees.



Foreword

1. This briefing forms part of the Constitution Unit's research into effective scrutiny. The research is taking place from 2002–2004, and will examine the practice of scrutiny at all levels of government: national, devolved, regional and local. This briefing is the fifth output of the project (see Appendix 3 for details of other outputs).

2. The briefing outlines and analyses the practice of scrutiny in the London Assembly. The first term of the Assembly was analysed (May 2000 to June 2004).¹ However, the Assembly changed its scrutiny system twice in its first two years of operation.² The first two committee systems were very different from the third (which has lasted from March 2002 to June 2004). In particular, under the second system it was standard practice to convene an ad hoc committee for each new scrutiny enquiry. The third system, with eight standing committees, resembles scrutiny committees in other tiers of government far more. The Greater London Authority Act, however, does not mandate any particular committee system—indeed, it does not prescribe that any specific committees must be set up by the Assembly (unlike the Scotland and Government of Wales Acts).

3. The Assembly's committee remits are set by its Standing Orders. We studied the work of the 'subject committees', omitting the Business Management and Appointments Committee and Audit. We focused on seven case study committee enquiry reports (see Table 2). Appendix 1 provides a classification of all the reports produced in the Assembly's first term. Our case study enquiries were chosen to cover a range of the types of report identified by our classification.

4. Research took place through studying the final reports of each enquiry. Where available, verbatim transcripts of hearings were studied, as were meeting minutes. Finally, some 20 interviews with members, scrutiny officers,³ officials and witnesses who had been involved with the case study enquiries were carried out. Non-attributed quotes from the respondents are used in the analysis below.

5. The briefing begins by proposing a classification of scrutiny enquiries. This is intended not as a set of hard boundaries, but as a tool for analysing the balance of type of review carried out by committees. The briefing then examines each of the elements of conducting an enquiry, roughly in the order in which they take place. For each element, the briefing sets out the procedures observed in the case study enquiries, then analyses the rationale for those procedures, both independently and using respondents' assessment of them. Bulleted recommendations are then listed for the successful practice of each element of scrutiny.

6. We would like to thank all of the officers and elected members of the London Assembly and in other bodies who took the time to be interviewed on a topic which, in most cases, was not at the head of their list of concerns. In particular we would like to thank Richard Horsman, director of the London Assembly secretariat, and the scrutiny officers at the London Assembly, without whom the project would not have been possible. Responsibility for the contents of this report remains ours alone.

¹ The May 2004 elections to the GLA were delayed until June to coincide with elections to the European Parliament, which run on a five-year cycle instead of the GLA's four years.

² See Lucinda Maer and Mark Sandford, *The development of scrutiny in the UK: a review of procedures and practice*, Constitution Unit, London, 2004, pp 13–15, available at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/files/devt_scrutiny_uk.pdf, for details of the changes made at this time and the rationales behind them.

³ In the London Assembly, the term 'scrutiny officers' is used to refer to staff who manage the process of a scrutiny enquiry, arranging agendas, witnesses, suggesting questions and drafting final reports—what would be called a 'clerk' in the Westminster or devolved assembly context.



Introduction

7. The Greater London Authority Act passed through Parliament in 1999 to set up the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA consists of an executive Mayor, elected by the Supplementary Vote system (SV), and a 25-member Assembly, elected through the Additional Member system. 14 of the Assembly members hold first-past-the-post constituency seats, and 11 are elected on a London-wide ‘top-up’ basis.

8. The separation of the political executive from the ‘back-bench’ members in the GLA was a new departure in British local or regional government. In 1999–2000 there were expectations that many or most English and Welsh local authorities would follow London and establish executive mayoralties, as permitted under the Local Government Act 2000. In the event only eleven did so. The regional assemblies currently being proposed by the Government will also not follow this pattern, having a more conventional cabinet government structure. The GLA’s structure will remain unusual in the UK context for some time, and it may therefore provide answers to questions about the effectiveness of formally splitting the executive and back-bench responsibilities, as against combining them as in most of local government.

9. The first elections to the GLA were held on 4 May 2000. Ken Livingstone, the Labour former leader of the Greater London Council and Labour MP, was elected as an independent mayor, beating the official Labour Party candidate, Frank Dobson. Livingstone subsequently rejoined the Labour Party on 6 January 2004. The Assembly elections returned 9 Labour, 9 Conservative, 4 Liberal Democrat and 3 Green Assembly members. All of the constituency seats were won by Labour or the Conservatives.

10. The vast majority of executive powers in the GLA are held by the Mayor. The Mayor appoints the board members of four ‘functional bodies’ which carry out the majority of his executive responsibilities. These are Transport for London (TfL); the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA); the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA); and the London Development Agency (LDA). The Mayor must also draw up eight strategy documents setting wide-ranging goals for policy in London.

These are listed in the far right column of Table 1. The Spatial Development Strategy (renamed the London Plan) is of particular importance as it has statutory force on the London boroughs.

11. The Assembly has very few executive powers. It has a role in setting the GLA budget: it can reject the Mayor’s budget proposals with a two-thirds majority (17 out of 25 members). It approves staff appointments in the GLA. Also, members of the Assembly must be appointed to two of the functional bodies—LFEPA and MPA. This creates a confusion between Assembly members having an executive role in the management of those two bodies, and the fact that, as Assembly members, they are expected to scrutinise the functional bodies generally.

12. The concept of an elected body which solely carried out ‘scrutiny’ was new in 1999–2000, and the Assembly has therefore had considerable latitude to define the term. The GLA Act requires the Assembly to hold the Mayor to account and to examine “issues of importance to Londoners”. This latter requirement occurs in section 59 (2) (e) of the Act: it is in effect an enabling clause, allowing the Assembly to spread its coverage of subjects very widely. Table 1 demonstrates that many of the Assembly’s scrutiny committees deal with subjects over which the Mayor himself has no power.

13. The Assembly also scrutinises the Mayor through Mayor’s Question Time, a public event which must take place 10 times per year. Committees also invite senior executives from the functional bodies to give evidence about their work.



The work of London Assembly committees

14. The Greater London Authority Act 1999 did not prescribe most of the remits of the Assembly scrutiny committees. The Budget Committee is of importance to the Assembly in that the Assembly's strongest (and really its only) sanction against the Mayor is to reject his budget by a two-thirds majority.

15. Table 1 indicates the committee structure used by the London Assembly since March 2002.⁴ It does not include details of any scrutiny of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). Members are appointed to their boards according to the proportionality of the Assembly.⁵

In other words, Assembly members have an executive role. There has so far been no move to scrutinise the work of these bodies—the Public Services Committee, which would be the obvious home of such a scrutiny, has not taken a lead on the subject. Any such scrutiny would likely be hedged around with political sensitivities within the party groups on the Assembly, though with political will it should be possible to design a means for such a scrutiny to take place.

16. Table 1 also demonstrates a disproportional allocation of committee chairs in the Assembly. Liberal Democrats hold three chairships, despite having only four Assembly

Table 1: Committees of the London Assembly

Committee	Chair	Dep	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Mayoral powers	Strategy documents
Budget	LD	L	3	3	2	1	—	—
Culture Sport & Tourism	L	C	2	2	1	1		Culture
Economic & Social Development	LD	C	2	2	1	1	London Development Agency	Economic Development
Environment	L	C	2	2	1	1		Air Quality Ambient Noise Biodiversity Waste Management
Health	C	L	2	2	1	1		
Planning	C	LD [†]	2	2	1	1	Spatial development	London Plan
Public Services	C	L	2	2	1	1		
Transport	LD	L	3	3	2	1	Transport for London	Transport
Other permanent committees								
Audit	C	-	1	1	1	1		
Business Management & Appointments	LD	L	3	3	2	1		

[†]For 2002–03, the chair of the Transport Committee was Labour and the vice-chair Liberal Democrat.

⁴ See Maer and Sandford (2004) for an account of the previous two systems and the changeover process to the third.

⁵ On each board Assembly members collectively have a majority of one over other board members who must be appointed from elsewhere.

members. The Green Party, with three members, do not hold any scrutiny chairs or deputy chairs: a proportional allocation would award them at least one chair and deputy chair of a scrutiny committee. The disproportionality can be partly traced to a Lib Dem-Labour deal after the 2000 election. Unlike in the devolved assemblies, there is no obligation in the Act or in Standing Orders to award chairs or deputy chairs proportionately.

17. The London Assembly scrutiny team numbers 13, covering 8 committees. In addition there are 8 committee services officers, providing administrative backup and assistance on scrutinies. The Assembly has a good level of resource per committee compared to most local authorities but is some way behind the devolved assemblies.⁶ Its resources and capacity are tiny in comparison to those available to the Mayor. Hence the Assembly needs to focus its resources at the points of maximum potential impact; use any available means of extending the time available to them to scrutinise; and to use the full range of means of influence, besides formal meetings and hearings.

Other forms of scrutiny

18. The scrutiny role of the Assembly does not take place solely through the scrutiny committees. A Mayor's Question Time (MQT) is held every month, where the full Assembly has the opportunity to question the Mayor over a 2–3 hour period on recent performance and future plans. Information obtained through the scrutiny process which may be relevant to MQT may be brought to members' attention by scrutiny officers, and members may then use the information to interrogate the Mayor.

19. The links between MQT and the committee scrutiny process are varied. Scrutiny officers have attended MQT and examined transcripts, and occasionally have suggested possible scrutiny topics deriving from pieces of information which came to light in MQT.

20. However, both MQT and plenary Assembly sessions are regarded by members as the party political arenas of the Assembly. Respondents indicated that questions to the Mayor, and

contributions to debate, are far more partisan than in committee sessions. One member suggested that committee members should organise their contributions to plenary more systematically where matters relevant to that committee were being discussed, but felt that party politics prevented this from happening. Plenary Assembly sessions could be used more to present a united Assembly view on Mayoral policies. Party politics will always make this a difficult balance to achieve, but it should be possible to resolve that the Mayor should think again on certain issues, even if there is no agreement in the Assembly on what his policy should be.

The Mayor's institutional links to scrutiny

21. The institutional structure of the GLA allows the Assembly very little coercive power over the Mayor. The ability to reject the budget, by a two-thirds majority, is the only sanction available to it. Assembly support, likewise, is not of substantial practical value to enable the Mayor to deliver his programme, other than being useful at a public relations level. The Assembly can offer the Mayor few financial or organisational incentives to agree with it.

22. It is possible that different political arithmetic on the Assembly could enhance the importance of the 'two-thirds power' in the second term of the GLA. If the Labour Party were unable to vote the budget through via (the remaining) one-third of the seats, the Assembly collectively might be in a far stronger negotiating position over policy. But this would not give the Assembly regular influence over day-to-day decision-making. The Assembly cannot reverse a decision of the Mayor. Like select committees in the House of Commons, it must achieve impacts through powerful argument, evidence and influence—in particular through media attention.

23. The existence of an independent Mayor for most of the first term of the GLA has strongly coloured its experience. The effects should become clearer following the 2004 election, when a party candidate is likely to win. An independent mayor is likely to face less party

⁶ The devolved assemblies have, on average, around four staff for each subject committee, including research specialists and administrators.

pressure to actively co-operate with the assembly generally.

24. A number of the issues and policy areas in which the Assembly has an interest are also outside the control of the Mayor. The Mayor must write strategies which he has no power or money to enforce in a number of policy fields. The odd constitutional settlement of the GLA in this regard has been discussed elsewhere.⁷

25. This means that the Assembly has produced many reports which fall into the category of 'external scrutiny'. They make recommendations to organisations outside the GLA's purview, and as such can be difficult to enforce. Most participants in the scrutiny process perceived a clear divide between scrutiny of the 'GLA family' (the Mayor and the functional bodies) and scrutiny concerning external matters. It is rare for external scrutiny to be perceived as a process which is aimed at helping the Mayor influence external matters: dialogue between the Mayor and the Assembly in this regard has been limited up till now. The Mayor himself has occasionally shared the Assembly's platform at a scrutiny launch, where he has agreed with the conclusions of an external report.

26. One way of strengthening external scrutiny reports would be for the Assembly to work jointly with the Mayor on producing conclusions, lobbying external organisations and bending the policy of the organisations within the 'GLA family' (i.e. the functional bodies). This has happened so far on one scrutiny process (Access to Primary Care), where mayoral representatives and Assembly members both sat on the scrutiny committee.⁸ However, there has been no wider move by either the Mayor or the Assembly to adopt a partnership approach in this regard.

27. Many Assembly members also sit as London borough councillors. This has implications for the time they are able to spend on London Assembly business. Three Assembly members are working peers in the House of Lords, and still others find their positions on the

MPA or the LFEPA take up substantial amounts of time—a problem that does not appear to have been anticipated by the GLA's creators. The chairs of these bodies, and other Assembly members who chair Mayoral task groups, have tended to be less active in scrutiny than their colleagues.

28. Those members who are able to give time and attention to the scrutiny process have many ideas: the Assembly has produced over 70 reports in its first term, which is a large output for such a small representative body. Notably, none of the party group leaders have secured the chairship of a scrutiny committee: this may indicate that scrutiny is perceived as a second-order activity after the more regular business of party debate.

29. Membership of the Assembly's committees is decided by the political parties. There has been a limited amount of turnover in membership so far.⁹ This has advantages for preserving the collective memory of committees: even though the present committee structure is only two years old, some committees (especially transport) find themselves frequently returning to subjects, and members are able to draw on their past experience within the committee.

Recommendations

- Assembly Standing Orders should require that political proportionality on the Assembly is taken into account when allocating committee chairships. The Assembly is not an old-style local authority, where chairing committees represented power. In particular, minority parties (such as the Green Party) should be entitled to chairships of subject committees should they wish to take them up and should the political arithmetic justify it.
- A more systematic approach to external scrutiny could be considered, where the Mayor and the Assembly might work together on a scrutiny and later lobby jointly for action outside the GLA based on the scrutiny's conclusions. *Access to Primary*

⁷ See Greer and Sandford (2003), Travers (2004)

⁸ This committee had to be officially constituted as an advisory committee.

⁹ Four of the 'top-up' seats, in the London-wide constituency via the Additional Member system, have changed hands during the first term (two Labour, one Liberal Democrat, one Green). When a top-up member resigns, he or she is replaced by the next member on the party list (submitted at the time of the 2000 election), without a by-election.

Care demonstrated the potential of this approach.

Classifying committee reports

30. There is no agreed typology of scrutiny committee work either in the GLA or other tiers of government, though there is an acknowledgement that there are different kinds of work a committee can do:

“The two obvious forms are scrutinising the activities of some body and judging its performance against those activities.... And on the other hand one which looks at the possibilities for future policy development, more outward looking scrutiny. And there are various hybrids on the outskirts of those.”

31. In *Scrutiny under Devolution* we attempted a classification of committee reports in the devolved assemblies. This typology was not intended as a group of hard and fast categories, but as a means to identifying the range of work that committees can carry out. We have attempted to produce a similar classification for the London Assembly in Appendix 1.

32. Table 2 shows our case study enquiries and the classification that we have applied to them. We have attempted to apply the typology developed in *Scrutiny under Devolution* to scrutiny in the Assembly: the main difference is the existence in the Assembly of the category of ‘issues of importance to Londoners’. This derives from section 59 (2) (e) of the GLA Act, which states that “the powers of the Assembly include in particular power to investigate, and prepare reports about...any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Greater London”.

33. We have deliberately chosen reports which were completed towards the end of the first term of the GLA. This is to avoid using reports which were begun under the previous committee system (running from 2001–02), on which most enquiries were carried out by small, specially-convened committees.

34. The list of scrutiny reports in Appendix 1 indicates that the Assembly returns to similar subjects on many occasions. This tends to occur with ‘internal scrutiny’, of the functional bodies or of Mayoral decisions. It is inevitable, for instance, that congestion charging would be scrutinised three to four times in the first term, as an entirely new and untried policy of national interest.

Table 2: Case Study Enquiries

Name of Report	Publication Date	Type of Report [see Box 1 for explanation]	Internal/ eXternal
2004-05 Budget	March 2004	Budget	I
Access to Primary Care	April 2003	Strategy (LI)	X
Draft Cultural Strategy	April 2003	Mayoral strategy	I
Chancery Lane	June 2003	Event enquiry	I
GP Recruitment	July 2003	Strategy (LI)	X
Thames Foreshore and Path	August 2003	Policy proposal (LI)	X
New Year's Eve	December 2002	Event enquiry	I

Box 1: A typology of scrutiny

- **Strategic policy review:** these are large-scale forward-looking reviews into widely-drawn policy areas. Often they cut across traditional policy subjects. By their nature, these reviews normally examine recent policy and practice as well as looking forward.
- **Forward policy proposal:** these focus on smaller-scale issues or policies, under development by the Mayor or by outside bodies. These may be inspired by proposed or draft legislation.
- **Event enquiry:** These are backward-looking reviews of one-off events. The 'disaster review' comes into this category. These reviews are rarer than may be thought, though they often offer good press coverage due to their topical quality.

In each of these categories, we have also subdivided into 'internal' and 'external' scrutiny. This distinction is clearly made within the Assembly, and affects quite strongly the approach taken to each scrutiny process.

Planning work and selecting topics

Setting the workplan

35. Following the reorganisation of the scrutiny function in mid-2002, a very systematic approach to scrutiny has been put in place in the Assembly. A Scrutiny Business Plan has been established, giving each committee a target of producing at least two reports a year. So far this target has been easily exceeded. Quarterly reports on progress towards targets in the plan are made to the Business Management and Appointments Committee (BMAC). The secretariat also maintains a matrix listing committees and their forthcoming reports, thus ensuring that reports are not all published and launched at the same time.

36. The quarterly reports to BMAC include details of how the scrutiny process contributes to the GLA's statutory requirement to promote equality. Each scrutiny process is 'equality-proofed' to ensure that it either contributes to or does not detract from this duty. The reports also give details of the impacts resulting from the scrutiny process (discussed later).

37. A unique aspect of the Assembly's planning of scrutiny is the involvement of the Media Relations team at almost all stages of the process. The press and media team are co-located with the scrutiny officers within City Hall. They will be consulted on likely timings of report launches, and may hold reports back if two with good media potential are targeted for publication in the same week. The media team will also advise at the scoping stage on the likely media consequences of different approaches to a subject—although committees do not automatically take their advice if it cuts across committee priorities. The potential for good media hooks can be factored in to the report early:

“An important part of scrutiny is media coverage. You need to get the media involved right from early on if you want to have greater impact.”

38. Evidence from other tiers of government indicates that external scrutiny must be handled differently, as its success depends on building relationships with those scrutinised—who are rarely under any obligation to attend scrutiny

sessions. But the distinction filters through, in London, to the conduct of meetings:

“There's a different flavour in London—when it's officials from the [GLA] group, everyone's polite and [they] try to give as good an account as they can, but members might be tempted to give them a bit of a hard time on occasion.”

39. Issues of importance to Londoners are prioritised more by some committees than others. The Transport and Economic Development committees, being concerned to monitor the executive powers of the agencies in their remit, have less time to cover external issues. These committees also tend to be more subject to the pressure of events than committees dealing with external issues such as health and the environment. Issues such as the Chancery Lane derailment, for instance, are extremely topical and demand a quick response from the Assembly. This often leads to a quick report, with a few witnesses only, at perhaps one or two evidence sessions, together with background research by scrutiny officers. Releasing the report when the issue is still topical is vital, to ensure that the Assembly influences public debate.

40. The committees also carry out a number of very short-term scrutinies, which may or may not lead to a published report. These 'scrutinies' may consist merely of a questioning session with a Mayoral adviser for one hour, for instance. Monitoring of this kind, which is not part of a wider enquiry, is uncommon in the devolved assemblies, but it is practised much more by local authorities. An important part of the committees' role is to keep in touch with developments in their area.

41. Alternatively, very short reports may be produced following single-meeting scrutinies. Two of our case studies, *A Damp Squib* and the scrutiny of the Thames foreshore and path, fall into this category. The former was convened rapidly in response to the Mayor's failure to provide any entertainment in central London on New Year's Eve 2002. The report was critical of a lack of forward planning by the Mayor and his advisers, in particular in the light of similar difficulties the previous year. A single evidence

session was held and a short and punchy report produced. Because of time restrictions, this type of report is less easily produced by committees which have functional bodies to scrutinise. This method is popular when a committee seeks to hold the Mayor to account over a particular issue:

“Some of the stuff looking at what the Mayor does is probably more likely to be short and sharp—some information’s come to light, members are unhappy about it, and they want to make their views clear to the Mayor.”

42. Each scrutiny committee meets fortnightly whilst the Assembly is in session, though where oral evidence sessions are being planned more frequent meetings are sometimes held. At the beginning of each year some slots for scrutiny meetings are left empty, so that the timetable can deal with sudden events. These slots are not always filled, but most respondents indicated that most committees (some more than others) have a heavy workload and do not often cancel meetings for want of business.

43. The origin of topics in the scrutiny forward plan is largely internal to the Assembly. Members—predominantly chairs—and officers will suggest topics, which are approved annually. Constituency issues can occasionally become the subject of scrutinies: flooding was an example of this. The committee chairs are very influential in the forward work plan of the committee. There are few formal mechanisms for co-ordinating with any work that London boroughs may be doing, or for obtaining formal stakeholder input from, for instance, the London Civic Forum:

“Some consult very widely and come up with some quite interesting topics as a result. Others—the ones monitoring the GLA group—it’s slightly different. You’ve got some fairly obvious topics to look at—driven by events and major spending plans.”

“One of the advantages of having an assembly with [only] 25 members is that there is more than enough work to go around, and this has meant that it has been relatively easy to get a piece of scrutiny done which you have an interest in. If we were a larger body it would be harder.... An appropriate thing would be to look at long

lists and the pluses and minuses and the political potential and benefits which come out of those. We have rather short-cut that by going for member preferences.”

44. The Standing Orders of the Assembly do not oblige committees to carry out regular or short-term business in the manner of the devolved assemblies. Committees in those bodies must regularly scrutinise non-departmental public bodies and secondary legislation (amongst other things), which can often crowd out attempts to establish their own agenda. The London Assembly must scrutinise strategies (but chooses to do this through subject committees), and under section 42 (1) of the GLA Act the Mayor must consult the Assembly on all statutory strategies. But these responsibilities still leave the Assembly’s committees very free by comparison to devolved and national institutions.

45. The Budget committee, whose workload revolves around the annual budget cycle, is an exception to the above point. It invites all of the functional bodies per quarter to present a monitoring report, and the Transport and Economic Development committees also take quarterly reports from their respective functional bodies. As implied in the quote above, those committees have executive bodies to monitor, and thus have less time to undertake scrutinies into issues of importance to Londoners.

46. The requirement on the Assembly to investigate issues of importance to Londoners functions as a statutory entitlement to look into any subject. Interview indicated that this aim—which is also a means for the Assembly to make itself accountable, legitimate and relevant to the electorate—was taken seriously by members and officers alike:

“A major constraint is identifying an issue that affects all 32 London boroughs, rather than homing in on one aspect of health that affects one borough.”

47. Each committee has a scrutiny officer, who will draw up terms of reference and a timetable in dialogue with the committee chair for each subject that has been agreed. Respondents indicated that the shape of any given enquiry—the number of evidence sessions, type of evidence invited etc.—was not subject to a clear rationale—“an art rather than a science”, as one

put it. The scrutiny manager and chair have almost total discretion to shape the enquiry as they see fit. Ordinary members of the committee are not consulted in detail at the planning stage: they have an opportunity to input when the plan has been drafted.

48. Latterly, scrutiny officers have presumed in favour of terms of reference covering smaller, manageable topics. Evidence-taking for most scrutiny processes does not last for more than 4–5 sessions. Similarly, very few of the Assembly’s scrutiny reports are 100–page tomes on the House of Commons model. The report into Access to Primary Care was unusually long, but partly this was because “health professionals did the scoping, instead of scrutiny professionals...[but] the people within the scrutiny team who could have said ‘this is too broad’ could not have known because they didn’t have the health knowledge.”

49. The shortness of the scrutiny processes reflects pressures on time. Scrutiny committees could always do more than they have time to do, which means that their reports can never be exhaustive contributions to a subject:

“It’s a bit like sketching against a masterpiece oil painting.... You have to do a fairly fleeting scrutiny and pick your targets within it. I think that is probably the nature of the political process.”

50. Informal links to boroughs exist: many Assembly members are also borough councillors (some leaders, some back-benchers) and a few ad hoc committees have recently been established between the Assembly and the Association of London Government (representing the boroughs). Under the GLA Act the status of joint committees can only be advisory to the Assembly. The Review of London Governance (beginning in February 2004) is one example; a scrutiny into the London Ambulance Service (relating to the health scrutiny role of the London boroughs and the work of the Assembly’s Health Committee) is another.

51. Respondents indicated that it was relatively rare for the Mayor, or members of his team, to express strong opinions about the choice of a particular subject or approach by the Assembly. There was no evidence of attempted interference with the committees’ job or discretion. This was even true of the joint scrutiny, *Access to Primary*

Care: one Mayoral adviser sat on the joint committee but did not attempt to dominate proceedings or drive the Mayor’s viewpoint through discussions. Some respondents indicated that the Mayor is occasionally irritated at the conclusions of scrutiny reports, but this does not appear to have translated into any attempt to interfere with the process.

52. Similarly, the problem of ‘executive pre-emption’ which we encountered at other tiers—where executive-side officers review policy at the same time as a scrutiny committee and hence upstage the committee’s opportunity to influence policy—appears to be more or less absent from the GLA. The fact that the Mayor’s office and functional bodies are much smaller, both absolutely and in proportion to the Assembly committees’ resources, than at other tiers of government may be a contributory factor. It is easier for the Transport Committee, for instance, to monitor the whole of Transport for London’s work than the range of transport powers of the Scottish Parliament.

Strategies

53. Scrutiny of the eight Mayoral strategies is mandated in the GLA Act. Although the strategies represent the Mayor’s only formal influence over several policy areas, evidence indicates that they are not regarded as particularly significant either by the Mayor or Assembly members. The draft Cultural Strategy was scrutinised very quickly due to long delays on the Mayor’s side in producing the draft. Many of the strategies have taken most of the first term to be produced (partly due to onerous consultation procedures) and have been scrutinised in draft before their final publication. One respondent suggested:

“People talk about mayoral strategies a lot. The London Plan’s extremely important, because the boroughs have to follow it.... Some of the other strategies, to be honest,.. they’re aspirational, they don’t really mean very much. You can have a discussion around them, views around the table, but when it comes to it there aren’t a lot of powers to promote the strategies.... I don’t think they should be a focus.”

54. With the re-election of the current Mayor, the strategies will play a less prominent role in the second term of the GLA. Emphasis will shift to scrutinising the delivery of the strategies. The

Cultural Strategy, for instance, can then become a baseline for the Mayor's cultural activities, by which his funding decisions will be benchmarked:

“Another reason why our focus has changed is because in the first couple of years we were very busy scrutinising the Mayor’s developing strategies.... Now that is out of the way we can be more outward looking in our approach.”

55. The Mayor has tended to link recommendations within strategy documents to executive powers within the GLA family whenever possible. This is reflected in the approach of the Assembly to scrutiny of issues of importance to Londoners:

“Normally, if you can, you raise an issue which will impact on the strategy. You don’t want it to be completely outside [the Mayor’s power]—you want to do something where you can make recommendations within the GLA family.”

56. The Assembly will also occasionally hold seminars on potential future policy issues—a recent example being a seminar on trams in London. This has affinities with the reports which we classify as ‘forward policy proposals’. The aim is to bring together elected representatives and a range of experts, and to produce a discussion paper which may influence the forward planning of an agency or agencies.

MPA and LFEPA

57. Scrutiny of the MPA and the LFEPA takes place only to a very limited degree. Senior officers and the chair are invited to the Assembly’s investigation into the Mayor’s budget, and may give their views on the Mayor’s spending plans. They will occasionally be invited back as part of the budget monitoring process. However, no scrutiny has yet taken place on an issue falling within their remits. This seems an extraordinary omission for bodies which spend £2.6 billion and £300 million respectively. The Public Services Committee, which came into being with the third committee structure in March 2002, was created partly with the aim of remedying this, but it has so far failed to do so.

58. Respondents indicated that both the MPA and LFEPA are run like old-style (i.e. pre-Local

Government Act 2000) local authorities, with London Assembly members sitting not only as board members but on a variety of committees. This follows from the way the bodies are set up in the GLA Act. Where Assembly members have committee positions within these two authorities and similar committee positions within the London Assembly (for instance, relating to budgetary matters), lines of accountability are blurred. The chairs of MPA and LFEPA in particular are heavily involved and well-informed of the state of each organisation, and some respondents regarded this itself as an adequate form of scrutiny.

Recommendations

- Annual scrutiny plans could be more closely co-ordinated with issues of interest to the Association of London Government. The development of the London Scrutiny Officers’ network and the associated network of members facilitates this. It has already begun with scrutiny of issues such as the Ambulance Service.
- Committees concerned with external matters could establish regular monitoring sessions with non-departmental public bodies—for example, the Culture Committee could review the London region of the Arts Council and Sport England, and the Environment Committee could examine the Environment Agency. These agencies cannot be compelled to attend sessions examining their annual reports, but they already co-operate with subject-based scrutinies.
- Committees should, in the second term, bear the aspirations of Mayoral strategies in mind when scoping scrutinies. In Regional Chambers, scrutiny processes often focus on discrete parts of regional economic strategies: the Assembly could enhance the value of the strategies by subjecting them to similar rigour in London.

Methods of investigation

59. At other tiers of government, we have observed a style of carrying out enquiries which we termed ‘classical scrutiny’.¹⁰ This essentially derives its methods from practice in the House of Commons’s select committees, which date back to 1979 in their present form. Written evidence is invited through writing to a list of standard consultees, held by the scrutiny secretariat. Oral evidence hearings, in a formal setting, are then held with a sub-set of those contributing written evidence. The enquiry will end with an oral evidence session with ministers, and a detailed report and long list of recommendations will be produced.

60. Local authorities and the devolved assemblies have been anxious to try to move away from classical scrutiny. Methods used have included more informal meetings, site visits, background research by scrutiny officers, opinion polling, and use of the Internet. The London Assembly has tried all of these, though written and oral evidence is still used in the vast majority of enquiries. Consultees on Assembly scrutiny enquiries are monitored for their contribution to diversity, as part of the GLA’s statutory requirement to promote equalities.

61. Members and officers stressed the importance of taking evidence from the ‘key players’. On the majority of enquiries it was seen as vital that large organisations, both public and private, had the opportunity to present evidence. Committee meetings are quite often organised around the availability of senior officers from organisations regarded as vital to the process. Most respondents suggested that (certainly by the end of the first term) it was well known in each committee who the key players were. Mayoral advisers, if not the Mayor himself, were frequently invited to scrutiny sessions, especially those concerning strategies and functional bodies. On a few occasions mayoral advisers have been subject to the Assembly’s power of summons to attend.

62. Although the timetabling of the evidentiary hearings—the substantive part of a scrutiny process—is strict and effective, evidence indicates that delays have occurred on many

scrutinies between the first draft of the report and publication. On some occasions this has reduced the topicality of reports. Much of this relates to party political tensions.

63. Officer initiatives in scrutiny methodology appear more common in the London Assembly than elsewhere. This is not a way of saying that officers drive the process, but that members appear willing to try new methods at officers’ suggestion. One member suggested that the officers were willing to bring members back should committee discussions drift away from the subject of the meeting, and that this was not regarded as improper.

64. The requirement to have regard to the ‘interests of Londoners’ appears to give officers greater latitude for innovation than is the case elsewhere. For instance, on a scrutiny carried out into football stadiums in London, the scrutiny officer set up an e-mail address and invited comments to it via fanzine chat-rooms. On the scrutiny into the cultural strategy, a shortage of time led to a decision to concentrate on a few aspects of the cultural strategy, such as a perceived lack of emphasis on sport. This influenced the evidence that was invited. On the enquiry into Chancery Lane, the officer drew together a considerable amount of relevant published research and monitored the progress of the parallel enquiries into the incident by London Underground and the Health and Safety Executive. He also attended the House of Commons Transport Select Committee enquiry into the issue, and exchanged information with its clerks.

65. The Chancery Lane enquiry was unusual in that its terms of reference were constrained by the existence of the Health and Safety Executive’s enquiry and London Underground’s internal investigation. The committee were aware that they would be unable to obtain information from either of these enquiries before they were complete, so it decided to concentrate on the experience of the members of the public involved in the derailment. London Underground senior management, trade unions and six eye-witnesses were invited to oral evidence sessions

¹⁰ See Mark Sandford and Lucinda Maer, *Scrutiny under Devolution: Committees in the Scottish Parliament, Northern Ireland Assembly and National Assembly for Wales*, Constitution Unit, London, 2003.

with the committee, and valuable new information was obtained about events as a result. The committee uncovered several disparities between official London Underground accounts of events, the views of trade unions, and the experience of the witnesses.

66. A few Assembly scrutinies have been structured in a different way to the standard form. The enquiry into Access to Primary Care is advertised as a 'joint scrutiny' with the Mayor. The committee consisted of four Assembly members and four mayoral appointees. This appears an intuitive path to follow for external scrutiny, where both the Mayor and the Assembly have an interest in lobbying for a particular outcome. However, this appears to have taken place only in an ad hoc manner so far.

Gathering information

67. The manner in which written evidence is invited depends upon whether an enquiry's emphasis is on public and/or stakeholder involvement or on obtaining reliable information. Most enquiries by the Assembly can be a mixture of both. Interest groups and public agencies relevant to the subject of the enquiry are normally routinely invited to submit evidence: the scrutiny officers' team holds a database of some 3000 organisations. On some occasions specific written questions or issues may be sent to these witnesses.

68. On some enquiries—the culture strategy was a particular example—this procedure creates problems. Many of the agencies contacted will have been consulted by the Mayor when drawing up the strategy, and will be consulted again on the final document. Some see limited appeal in responding yet again to the Assembly committee enquiry. This may be an intrinsic problem of a government with such wide consultation requirements.

39. Time pressures mean that innovative methods of gathering information are more frequently used in London than in other scrutiny bodies. Committees meet once every two weeks, and may be forced to apply a large body of written evidence in a concentrated oral session. This leads to procedures such as the following:

“We got the TfL person in who wrote the strategy, but prior to that we contacted all of

the other groups who were interested in [the subject], to find out what their views were, and we used their views on the draft strategy to question TfL—do you see any problems with this, do you foresee resource allocation issues here. So the poor guy who turned up, he got hit—he was expecting a gentle session with members but in effect what he got was a concentrated set of public meetings with interest groups.”

70. The scrutiny into the draft Cultural Strategy had to be carried out extremely quickly due to late publication of the strategy. The Culture Committee decided to concentrate on a small number of substantive issues instead of scrutinising the entirety of the strategy:

“Rather than take it apart and look at it as a total strategy, [the idea] was really to pick certain elements.. Partly they were picked on their importance to London, so we picked the South Bank Centre because it's a major cultural institution, and partly on members' perceptions—for example, that sport wasn't being addressed as much as it should be.”

71. Visits to particular sites are used relatively infrequently. Diary clashes for committee members mean that they can be very difficult to organise. On the Access to Primary Care report, the committee visited a GP surgery in Bromley-by-Bow (where one of the co-opted committee members worked). The surgery was newly-built and was seen as an example of what could be achieved in a deprived area. The visit was organised by one of the Mayor's representatives on the committee, who was himself a GP at the surgery. The surgery was located in a disused church, alongside a crèche and a training facility. The visit was written up, complete with pictures, as an appendix to the final report.

72. The Transport committee, meanwhile, has carried out visits to Paris and New York to take a general look at the metropolitan travel systems. The Health Committee has travelled to Scandinavia. On other scrutinies, visits are less appropriate, and on others time pressures prevent them from happening.

Rapporteurs

73. One rapporteur's report has so far been carried out in the Assembly. John Biggs, a Labour

assembly member, carried out a scrutiny of the Thames foreshore and path. This was done under the auspices of the Planning and Spatial Development committee. The subject was of particular interest to the rapporteur, and the committee voted to permit him to take the lead on a short enquiry.

74. The rapporteur was responsible for inviting written evidence and organising a single oral evidence session, and for the writing up of the report. At the oral evidence session, however, all of the committee members had an opportunity to question witnesses. The rapporteur took the chair (the normal incumbent was a Conservative Assembly member) for the part of the session in which the witnesses were examined. The final report was approved by the committee. It has not, however, returned to the subject.

75. This rapporteur's report does not appear to have acted as a pilot for the more frequent use of reporters. One other rapporteur's report—on London Weighting—was carried out in 2002, with Meg Hillier, a Labour Assembly member, as rapporteur. This took place under the second committee structure, meaning that the rapporteur reported to the full Assembly. However, the Assembly has been considering making more use of rapporteurs, and it is possible that this may inform any changes to the committee structure following the June 2004 election.

Special advisers

76. Special advisers have been only rarely used in the Assembly. In contrast to practice in the House of Commons and the devolved assemblies, special advisers are used only for specific technical matters. The use of special advice tends to take the form of consultancy contracts rather than the attachment of a specialist to the committee for the duration of an enquiry. This is linked to the fact that time restrictions dictate that most enquiries are relatively short: it is unusual for one to last for more than five sessions. The Assembly also suffered from the problem that "everyone who was a possible candidate for being an advisor had already been approached by the Mayor".

77. The Health Committee used two special advisers on the joint scrutiny into Access to Primary Care. The advisers only attended some of the scrutiny sessions, concentrating on

evaluating the questions that had been drawn up by the clerks and the committee. The committee used a third adviser as an 'expert proofreader' at the stage of producing the draft report: this person was hired to ensure that the committee had not been misled by witnesses, and that it was not making unworkable recommendations. The Transport Committee has used one particular consultant on a regular basis, but has moved from taking direct advice and reports from this person to using him as a facilitator (for instance, using his contacts to expose the committee to the views of a range of experts).

78. In the first year of the Assembly's existence substantial use was made of firms of consultants, as only a very small scrutiny officer team existed. Some disquiet had existed at the wide-ranging reports produced by consultants at this time. It was felt that they did not take political realities into account in the unfamiliar constitutional structure of the GLA: "they were supposed to reflect the views of a four-party committee and produce recommendations that can be implemented, and [which] aren't just confined to the technical aspects". It appears that the pendulum has swung the other way, to a presumption against using outside help unless it is necessary. The consultancy budget has shrunk each year since 2000–01.

79. Other officers have taken interesting initiatives with regard to grassroots involvement with the scrutiny process. Because of this imperative, there is perhaps less emphasis in the London Assembly on bringing heavyweight knowledge to bear on the Mayor's team, and more on using the 'moral resource' of the views of Londoners as a tool of policy influence. One respondent specifically stated that she did not want to become an expert in her committee's field, but to take a generalist's point of view on the issues under discussion. The Assembly has no separate research department. Besides this, the majority of Assembly scrutinies take place over a period of only two to three months—a very tight timescale for any research to be commissioned and done.

80. The turnover of members on the current committee system has been relatively low. This helps to maintain a collective memory for the committees, which is particularly useful as some committees continually return to the same subjects. For instance, four scrutinies on congestion charging have been carried out in the

first term of the Assembly. Members are more easily able to connect current enquiries with previous ones and bring their accumulated knowledge to bear.

Recommendations

- The strict timetabling of scrutiny processes is commendable. However, stricter processes are required for drafting and signing off scrutiny reports.
- Interesting officer initiatives have taken place in methodology in the Assembly, which should be discussed in scrutiny officer networks.
- Although there is no room here to discuss the constitutional oddities of MPA and LFEPA, it would seem valid for the Public Services committee to attempt to scrutinise specifics of their work. This could take place through a joint process, with MPA or LFEPA board members sitting alongside Assembly members who were not board members. This would not be ideal but would improve on the current position, where both organisations seem to be considered out of bounds.
- Visits to specific sites are a valuable way of enhancing committee understanding of issues—and also of promoting the Assembly’s profile with ordinary Londoners. They must be carefully timetabled at the start of a scrutiny process.
- Commissioned research may be particularly helpful in external scrutinies, where the Assembly is freer to advance a systematic policy approach. Scrutinies within the GLA family naturally rely more upon the ‘primary evidence’ of the activities of the Mayor and the functional bodies themselves.

Oral evidence

Methods of gathering oral evidence

81. All of the enquiries studied took some form of oral evidence. The majority was taken in the form of hearings: witnesses were invited to appear before the Committee and were questioned. This is a part of the ‘classical scrutiny’ model used by Westminster committees.

82. As with other tiers of government, taking evidence from the ‘key players’—public bodies, professional organisations, campaign groups—was perceived as a priority in the London Assembly. But many respondents also emphasised the need to take evidence from ordinary people. The word ‘Londoners’ was used very frequently in this context—respondents appeared to take seriously the requirement to look at ‘issues of importance to Londoners’. Those invited to give oral evidence were in most cases a sub-set of those who had given written evidence.

83. Interviews did not indicate that the Assembly had ever experienced problems with potential witnesses refusing to attend sessions. The Assembly can compel staff of the functional bodies or the GLA to attend, and the power of summons has been used on a few occasions on Mayoral advisers. On one occasion central government civil servants refused to attend, claiming (correctly) that they were accountable to central government. However, on other occasions civil servants have attended to outline Government views on issues.

84. Most oral evidence sessions are themed, so that three to six witnesses will be seen by the committee on a similar topic. A balance must be drawn between enabling the maximum amount of evidence to be taken on board and overloading members:

“I have a general rule that meetings shouldn’t last more than an hour and a half. If there are a lot of witnesses we can go to two hours. The committee members are actually individually quite committed, but partly because they know that the meeting will last an hour and a half—if they turn up prepared and briefed we will get through the business in that time.”

85. Alternative models of oral evidence can be divided into two types.

- A range of methods drawn from public consultation and participation may be used: for instance, focus groups, informal discussions, or citizens’ jury-type events.
- The committee, or committee members, may travel to relevant organisations and 1) discuss issues informally or be shown the work of those organisations, or 2) hold formal or semi-formal hearings in the organisation’s building: this may encourage members of traditionally excluded groups to be more forthcoming in giving evidence to the committee.

86. Visits are not used on all enquiries. They are regarded as an addition to the scrutiny process rather than a formative part of it—one respondent stated:

“They’re a bit like the royal progress. If you go to a hospital, or a GP clinic, to see what’s actually happening, they know you’re coming and they’re prepared for you to arrive.... But it does put it in perspective.”

Questions in oral evidence sessions

87. Questions can be divided into two types: interrogative and informative. Interrogative questions are asked when members are seeking information which the witnesses would not readily give to them: sometimes, the non-availability of this information is the justification for the enquiry taking place.

88. Procedures for drafting questions are similar to those at other tiers of government. Suggested questions will be drafted for the members by the scrutiny officers, on the basis of the evidence available. Gaps or contradictions in the evidence are addressed by the questions. The areas of questioning, though not usually the precise questions, are circulated in advance to the witnesses, to give them an opportunity to prepare. This is done both with witnesses from the GLA family and from external bodies. Good questions were described by one respondent as:

“drawn out of the research, well-founded in the research, and...successful in delivering

important, useful, interesting information. The fact that it does that means that it is certain to encourage further debate.”

89. Normally a half-hour pre-meeting will be held before a formal evidence session. The chair will allocate the questions to individual members at this point. Members are free to bring their own questions, drafted by party researchers. As most of the committees have either six or nine members, it is rarely difficult for a member to be heard, and no respondents had complaints in this regard.

90. As with other tiers of government, respondents were critical of the quality of questions asked in oral evidence sessions. Respondents overwhelmingly felt that short questions were the most effective means of putting witnesses under pressure. Criticisms centred upon the tendency to make statements in committee instead of asking questions:

“[When I read the transcripts, I thought] how much waffle, you can have a member asking a question over a page of text. I’m sorry, but that’s not a question. You might want to add a bit of context, but the best exchanges when you read it cold are one sentence, one sentence, one sentence.”

“There is a tendency for members to ask very long questions, and long questions are not effective if you are seeking to put a person under pressure.... A long question...gives the respondent longer to think of the answer—and they’ll waffle their way out of trouble.... It runs across party, I’m sorry to say.”

“Most of the people sitting on that committee are from a local government background and are not very tolerant of the idea of one person continuing to probe with a series of questions. [In] local government..., it’s more a case of one long question where you make your point, it’s more of a speech than a question, just tag on ‘would you agree’ at the end.”

91. Interrogative questions, eliciting information from witnesses which would not be readily revealed, were more common in scrutiny sessions looking at internal matters—either Mayoral responsibilities or the functional bodies. Informative questions—inviting witnesses to

expand on their statements and give the committee the benefit of their knowledge—were commoner in external scrutinies, investigations which were primarily fact-finding and unconcerned to apportion blame.

92. Respondents also suggested that it was relatively rare for Assembly scrutinies to put witnesses on the spot, using interrogative questions. With external bodies, the Assembly needs to build up a good relationship with them in order to maintain their co-operation. It is readier to use interrogative questions when it is facing functional bodies, or the Mayor’s team. This was also far more common in Mayor’s Question Time, and was only really used in one of the rare event enquiries carried out by the Assembly. One respondent suggested that the scrutiny process, as a result, was:

“much more friendly—and as a consequence perhaps even more rigorous. I don’t think people should arrive in trepidation. They should see it as a positive process for improving services in London—or a process by which major weaknesses can be exposed and addressed. It shouldn’t be a threatening experience.”

93. Another respondent indicated that the questioning process could be quite frustrating in the initial years of the Assembly, but that the functional bodies had become more accustomed to the need to account for their actions:

“I took the view that TfL was such a closed book that I might as well put the boot into them, because they weren’t going to tell me anything willingly anyway,. Since then, things have mellowed a bit and we have come to trust each other. Clearly, if you bite the hand that could feed you, it won’t, so there does need to be a gentlemanly relationship if you are going to get people to come back to you.... [If] you are dead set on being adversarial and going for headlines, that won’t get you very far under the surface.”

94. The questions are presented to members with a short paragraph explaining the background to the question and its base in the evidence already available to the committee. This allows members who have not had time to read briefings or evidence to contribute during the

committee session. The process of drafting these questions takes account of the fact that each of the party groups will equip their members with analyses and questions of their own. Each party has approximately one researcher per elected member, and in the larger party groups some of the researchers will specialise and the group as a whole will use their briefings. Scrutiny officers must bear these factors in mind:

“What I’ve found members don’t like is if you come up with a list of 36 questions which you then say, ask these. It looks like they’re not in control.... They see only six questions...[and they think that] we can get on to our own questions.... You try to structure the questions so that you know [that] the answers.... will suggest obvious follow-ups.”

95. The Budget Committee hears from a set list of respondents during the annual scrutiny of the budget. These will include the chair and senior officers, or chief financial officers, of each of the functional bodies. The Mayor attends to answer questions both as chair of Transport for London and as Mayor (hence responsible for City Hall’s budget). The committee will also take evidence from various groups, such as the ALG and business representatives, on their response to the budget whilst they are responding to the Mayor’s consultation on it.

96. The Assembly will also have early access to the proposed budgets for the MPA and LFEPA, due to the presence of its members on their boards.

Recommendations

- The demands of limited time mean that evidence sessions are effectively managed: witnesses are grouped by theme, and sessions rarely last for more than three hours.
- Short questions are almost always more effective at eliciting information, even where informative and not interrogative questions are appropriate. Basic information can be obtained through written submissions, whilst oral evidence sessions are best used to follow up more focused points.
- Visits could be carried out by committees on a more systematic basis. They are very useful, both for reconnecting the institution

with its electorate, and for enhancing the Assembly’s own legitimacy and visibility.



Report drafting, publication and follow-up

97. The majority of enquiries which we studied followed the format used at Westminster, of publishing a report together with a set of recommendations. However, the London Assembly's reports were mostly considerably shorter than the average select committee report. Few exceed forty pages, with some being only some 6–8 pages long. They are produced in colour, are easy to read, and explain the purpose of the scrutiny process, giving considerable detail in appendices of how the report was produced.

98. The report is drafted by the scrutiny officer, on the basis of the evidence presented to the committee. The Assembly has a standard template for reports: the recommendations must be laid out in a summary at the end of the report, together with references to appendices and evidence received.

99. Many committees do not hold formal deliberation sessions, where the report is read paragraph by paragraph and agreed. This process often takes place by e-mail, with the chair and scrutiny officer co-ordinating redrafting. Members will suggest the reworking of particular sections and sentences and this will be approved by the chair. Committees which function like this will hold an extra meeting, or a bilateral between the chair and another member, to resolve significant disagreements. Formal votes during deliberation are extremely rare.

100. A letter is written after three months to every organisation affected by a scrutiny report to ask for their reaction: if a recommendation is directed specifically at them, any correspondence can be more easily focused. On one committee, each of the recommendations is produced with a note stating which organisations they are intended for. This does not appear to be standard practice across the committees, but is extremely useful for following recommendations up at a later date. One scrutiny officer suggested that, where possible, recommendations were directed at 'GLA group' bodies:

"The tendency is where there is no real connection [i.e. external matters], basically a lot of recommendations are on the Mayor, LDA or TfL as groups which you can monitor the progress [of].... On other issues

a lot of the time it's...we want more money. Full stop. Not 'recommendation—the Mayor should plead the case because of this.'"

101. Recommendations to external bodies do occasionally have an impact. Three of the recommendations to the General Medical Council under the GP Recruitment report, which related to the difficulties experienced by refugee doctors in gaining work in the UK, were accepted. This may have happened because this was a national issue at the time, and the GMC may have been considering it for some time, but it is also likely that a published report from a democratic body helped to speed the process along. One respondent suggested that committees needed to:

"make sure you know who you're recommending it to, what precisely you're recommending, is it manageable and what the cost potentially is. And by when. You can't just say, the Mayor should give money to [four different areas] and if you add it all up it is nonsense. [If we recommend to government], well 'government' is a big organisation, so which bit? No-one will take responsibility unless it's narrowed down."

102. Respondents suggested that, although there was evidence of impact by Assembly reports, the subjects of the reports themselves were only rarely followed up. With the exception of extremely hot topics such as congestion charging, few committees have returned to a subject a year after producing a report (for example) and investigated whether their recommendations have been put into practice and whether changes have occurred as a result. Recommendations are monitored by scrutiny officers: there are few pressures from members to re-examine subjects which have been reported upon:

"Members don't like going over old ground, but it's most appreciated by the people who've been involved in scrutinies—they've given up their time and effort to come, we produce a report, and they never hear from us again. Unless maybe three years later when we want to do it again, and they say 'why? It didn't benefit us last time.'"

103. Occasionally, draft reports are shared with witnesses or outside bodies by the Assembly, in order to weed out any misunderstandings. This is also a common practice within local government.

Party politics

104. Party politics do not play a very strong role in the evidence sessions or normal committee meetings within the Assembly's scrutiny process. Party political disagreements are focused on the agreement of recommendations. There are two influential points here. Firstly, it is rare for Assembly committees to hold formal deliberation sessions, reading draft reports paragraph by paragraph. Reports tend to be finalised by e-mail contact between clerk, chair and members. This can lead to delays of several weeks whilst members discuss recommendations.

105. Secondly, the Assembly has to make draft reports publicly available when they are discussed at committee meetings. This may mean that a draft report is seized upon by the 'outside world' before it has been approved, and at a point when it may still be subject to considerable amendment. This is a conundrum to which the devolved assemblies are not subject.

106. Party issues surface most commonly on issues over which the Mayor has executive power. Congestion charging, for instance, is opposed by the Conservatives, and this party position inevitably colours scrutinies which touch on it. But the majority of the questions asked, and subjects debated, are devoid of party politics. Party politics surfaces most commonly on issues over which the Mayor has executive power. Similarly, the budget process, which is pivotal to the work of the Assembly, is tinged with party politics:

"We will have our stock of questions which the other side won't know about, and what you tend to do is try to work those in when we come to the appropriate stage...[but] there's been a couple of occasions when, because of the media agenda, it's much easier to sabotage the order so that you get in first, otherwise you don't get the headlines."

Media coverage

107. Strong attempts are made to obtain good press coverage for committee reports. Because of the formal weakness of the Assembly's position, media and public pressure are of immense importance in ensuring reaction to reports' recommendations—whether from the Mayor or from external bodies:

"The media side of things is actually the Assembly's greatest strength. In terms of power to do things, if we send the Mayor a report saying we don't agree with this collectively...he doesn't have to do it unless there's a huge outcry outside this building as well."

108. The press team prioritise reports, or aspects of reports, which are likely to be of interest to newspapers because of their subject. Hence, the report into the Chancery Lane derailment obtained vast press coverage (being a topic of national interest). A specific issues report on the Mayor's draft Cultural Strategy—*theatre ticket promotions*—was emphasised. The media team is involved at the point at which scrutinies are commissioned, and the media relations team may informally suggest topics to officers and members.

109. The approach to the media, and the media's interest, can be explained by three factors—"subject, focus and freshness". The subject of a scrutiny can often be identified as a possible "media hit" in advance. This may be strengthened or weakened according to the specific focus of the report that comes out of the scrutiny process. Linked to this, 'freshness' essentially relates to topicality. The intrinsic interest of the press in a subject varies over time—for instance, congestion charging is not as newsworthy now that the charging system is in place. Care is taken not to launch several scrutiny reports at once, and the Assembly may agree with the media team to hold back a report for a few weeks in order not to over-burden editors or to coincide with a relevant story.

110. National, regional and local newspapers, and regional radio and television, are targeted by the press team. Subjects of more marginal interest are targeted towards specialist magazines and journals:

“Possibly you can get more in the news because the Mayor’s involved. If a report is critical of the Mayor, that will get you coverage. But a scrutiny of the draft Ambient Noise strategy [for instance] is not really going to go further than a couple of public health magazines.”

111. Committee chairs have been able to build up expertise on their committee subjects through the press strategy. The chair has almost exclusive command of the media coverage available for a report, though as one member said “the press will go to other members of the committee whether I want them to or not”. The media line is agreed between the press team, the scrutiny team and the members: the aim is to take a line reflecting “what really matters to Londoners most”.

112. National coverage of the Assembly’s scrutinies has been strong. The report into Chancery Lane achieved coverage on all of the national broadsheet newspapers—in part reflecting the continuing national salience of London Underground. One respondent said:

“The real value of the Assembly is its ability to expose. Access to media and Londoners...has a tendency to concentrate the mind of the professions.”

113. A Scrutiny Bulletin is also produced, for public consumption, and made available on the website. So far three bulletins have been produced over two years. Details of scrutinies undertaken are broken down by committee, and the bulletins list the priorities of the committees and the impact they have had on the subjects scrutinised.

Impact of reports

114. Committees cannot require any action from the Mayor or from external bodies. In the last instance, committee recommendations depend on the relevant executive agency for action. Committees’ power is moral and political rather than legally enforceable. Most important to this power is the cross-party support of the committee. The Assembly has been largely able

to maintain consensus: so far one minority report has been produced.¹¹

115. Members’ other commitments can cause delays in the production and publication of reports, though this has not been severely detrimental so far. Unusually, in the Assembly formal agreement of the report takes place after it has been launched. This avoids a delay of several days between formal agreement and launch, during which time the Mayor would have an opportunity to pre-empt or rebut the conclusion of a report.

116. We referred earlier to increasing political disagreements over reports’ recommendations. A large build-up of unpublished reports occurred in the run-up to the June 2004 elections. In the event almost all of these were published during April or early May.

117. The quarterly reports by the scrutiny officers’ team to BMAC record any measurable impacts from the scrutiny process. These vary in their significance. The impact of a report may simply consist of a commitment to follow up the issues in the following year, or record that the report was launched to representatives of some significant organisations. On other occasions, changes in policy by other organisations have been noted, as direct or indirect results of the scrutiny report. This is a difficult process, as one respondent suggested:

“I’m pretty sure that there are some pieces of scrutiny which we have done which have positively influenced policy making within TfL, for example, but I think it would be the last thing on earth for them actually to stand up and admit that. You can be a bit of an unsung hero.”

118. Impact of reports, as at other tiers of government, depends on the topicality of the subject and the relevant executive’s willingness to take action. The report on GP Recruitment had a considerable impact due to the existence of a pressing policy problem (GP shortages) and various potential solutions (recruitment of doctors from other countries, re-registering doctors with non-UK qualifications) which met bureaucratic obstructions. Similarly, the report

¹¹ One scrutiny report has had to be abandoned due to insurmountable disagreements between the political parties.

on the Chancery Lane derailment dealt with some very specific issues around the aftermath of the accident; training for LU staff, aftercare of passengers involved, ticket refunds. Events following a subsequent derailment at Camden Town indicated that the Committee's recommendations had been taken on board.

Recommendations

- Reports should make clear to which organisations scrutiny recommendations are directed. This facilitates the Assembly following up the recommendations after a period of three or six months.
- Committees should attempt to use deliberation sessions, where reports are read through paragraph by paragraph, as a matter of course. This is particularly important on issues where party political differences exist. This should go some way to avoiding long disagreements between parties on the content of reports, which may have to wait several weeks to be resolved outside the committee room. Delaying publication of a report may lessen its impact.
- Recommendations should be focused and realistic, so that they can be monitored by the Assembly. There is no incentive for the Mayor or outside organisations to try to put into practice aspirational recommendations, or ones which require huge spending or reversal of central government policy.
- It may be appropriate in some instances to discuss recommendations on external scrutinies with the Mayor. Where both Mayor and Assembly are trying to influence external bodies, a co-ordinated approach could be beneficial.
- The press impact of Assembly reports is extremely impressive compared with most other tiers of government, managing to catch the imagination of national news on a number of occasions.

Recommendations

The following lists reproduce the recommendations from the main sections of the briefing. They are re-arranged here according to which scrutiny ‘actors’ they are directed at.

Committees collectively or chairs

- Visits could be carried out by committees on a more systematic basis. They are very useful, both for reconnecting the institution with its electorate, and for enhancing the Assembly’s own legitimacy and visibility.
- It may be appropriate in some instances to discuss recommendations on external scrutinies with the Mayor. Where both Mayor and Assembly are trying to influence external bodies, a co-ordinated approach can only be beneficial.
- Recommendations should be focused and realistic, so that they can be monitored by the Assembly. There is no incentive for the Mayor or outside organisations to try to put into practice aspirational recommendations, or ones which require huge spending or reversal of central government policy.
- Committees should attempt to use deliberation sessions, where reports are read through paragraph by paragraph, as a matter of course. This is particularly important on issues where party political differences exist. This should go some way to avoiding long disagreements between parties on the content of reports, which may have to wait several weeks to be resolved outside the committee room. Delaying publication of a report may lessen its impact.
- Although there is no room here to discuss the constitutional oddities of MPA and LFEPA, it would seem valid for the Public Services committee to attempt to scrutinise specifics of their work. This could take place through a joint process, with MPA or LFEPA board members sitting alongside Assembly members who were not board members. This would not be ideal but would improve on the current position, where both organisations seem to be considered out of bounds.
- Committees should, in the second term, bear the aspirations of Mayoral strategies in mind when scoping scrutinies. In

Regional Chambers, scrutiny processes often focus on discrete parts of regional economic strategies: the Assembly could enhance the process of delivering the strategies by subjecting them to similar rigour in London.

- A stronger relationship between data available to the MPA and LFEPA board members and Assembly committees—particularly the Public Services Committee—would be desirable. However, achieving this in the current statutory situation may be problematic.
- Committees concerned with external matters could establish regular monitoring sessions with non-departmental public bodies—for example, the Culture Committee could review the London region of the Arts Council and Sport England, and the Environment Committee could examine the Environment Agency. These agencies cannot be compelled to attend sessions examining their annual reports, but they already co-operate with subject-based scrutinies.

Scrutiny officers

- The demands of limited time mean that evidence sessions are effectively managed: witnesses are grouped by theme, and sessions rarely last for more than three hours.
- The press impact of Assembly reports is extremely impressive compared with most other tiers of government, managing to catch the imagination of national news on a number of occasions.
- Reports should make clear to which organisations scrutiny recommendations are directed. This facilitates the Assembly following up the recommendations after a period of three or six months.
- Commissioned research may be particularly helpful in external scrutinies, where the Assembly is freer to advance a systematic policy approach. Scrutinies within the GLA family naturally rely more upon the ‘primary evidence’ of the activities of the Mayor and the functional bodies themselves.
- Interesting officer initiatives have taken place in methodology in the Assembly,

which should be discussed in scrutiny officer networks.

- Annual scrutiny plans could be more closely co-ordinated with issues of interest to the Association of London Government. The development of the London Scrutiny Officers' network and the associated network of members facilitates this. It has already begun with scrutiny of issues such as the Ambulance Service.

Members

- Short questions are almost always more effective at eliciting information, even where informative and not interrogative questions are inappropriate. Basic information can be obtained through written submissions, whilst oral evidence sessions are best used to follow up more focused points.
- Visits to specific sites are a valuable way of enhancing committee understanding of issues—and also of promoting the Assembly's profile with ordinary Londoners. They must be carefully timetabled at the start of a scrutiny process.
- Assembly Standing Orders should require that political proportionality on the Assembly is taken into account when allocating committee chairships. The Assembly is not an old-style local authority, where chairing committees represented power. In particular, minority parties (such as the Green Party) should be entitled to chairships of subject committees should they wish to take them up and should the political arithmetic justify it.
- A more systematic approach to external scrutiny could be considered, where the Mayor and the Assembly might work together on a scrutiny and later lobby jointly for action outside the GLA based on the scrutiny's conclusions. *Access to Primary Care* demonstrated the potential of this approach.

Appendix 1: London Assembly scrutiny classification

This table lists all of the scrutiny reports carried out by the London Assembly under the third system of scrutiny (i.e. since the second reorganisation of March 2002). The reports are listed by committee. The purpose of this table is to give an indication of the range and frequency of different types of scrutiny carried out by the Assembly.

The categories used in this table are (with number of reports in each category):

Mayoral Strategy: a scrutiny of a mayoral strategy (whether statutory or non-statutory). We have also included the 2012 Olympic Bid in this category because, although it is not formally a 'strategy', it is one of the most significant policy initiatives undertaken by the Mayor. (12)

External Strategy: a strategic policy review of external issues (16)

Policy Proposal: a focused examination of a particular policy. The majority of these relate to external matters. (11)

Event Enquiry: a backward look at policy which has already been executed. (7)

Budget: the work of the Budget Committee (5)

Name	Date	Committee	Type
Report on the Mayor's Budget Proposals for 2003/04	January 2003	Budget	Budget
Review of GLA Procurement	May 2003	Budget	Budget
Public Interest, Private Profit: Transport for London's Contract with Capita for the Congestion Charging Scheme	October 2003	Budget	Event enquiry
Issues for the Mayor's Consultation Budget 2004/05	November 2003	Budget	Budget
Response to the Mayor's Consultation Budget for 2004/05	January 2004	Budget	Budget
Transport budget plans for 2004-05	February 2004	Budget	Budget
Response to the Mayor's Draft Children and Young People's Strategy (ad hoc committee)	August 2003	Children & Young People	Mayoral strategy
A Damp Squib: the Mayor's plans for New Year's Eve	December 2002	Culture	Event enquiry
London's Bid for the 2012 Olympic Games	January 2003	Culture	Mayoral strategy
Whatever gets you through the night: 24-hour licensing in London	January 2003	Culture	Policy proposal
Scrutiny of the Mayor's draft Culture Strategy	April 2003	Culture	Mayoral strategy
Away from Home-Scrutiny of London's Football Stadiums	June 2003	Culture	External strategy
Picture Perfect? A London Assembly report into the capital's cinemas	October 2003	Culture	External strategy

Name	Date	Committee	Type
A Sporting Chance: Improving opportunities for young Londoners	November 2003	Culture	External strategy
Bidding for the 2012 Olympic Games: A contribution from the London Assembly	November 2003	Culture	Mayoral strategy
Breaking down the barriers-the impact of current funding and co-ordination arrangements at grass roots level	July 2003	Economic Development	External strategy
E-Government in London	July 2003	Economic Development	External strategy
Applying the London Premium	November 2003	Economic Development	External strategy
Scrutiny of the Mayor's Revised Economic Development Strategy	December 2003	Economic Development	Mayoral strategy
No Room for Complacency	March 2004	Economic Development	External strategy
Social Enterprises	April 2004	Economic Development	External strategy
Inward Investment	April 2004	Economic Development	Mayoral policy proposal
Regeneration, Competitiveness and Sustainable Development	April 2004	Economic Development	Mayoral policy proposal
Financing the Future	April 2004	Economic Development	Policy proposal
Scrutiny of the Mayor's Draft Energy Strategy	October 2002	Environment	Mayoral strategy
Scrutiny of the Mayor's Draft Noise Strategy	November 2002	Environment	Mayoral strategy
Flooding in London	December 2002	Environment	Event enquiry
Response to the Public Consultation Draft of the Municipal Waste Management Strategy	December 2002	Environment	Mayoral strategy
Power in Partnership-Response to the Public Consultation Draft of the Mayor's Energy Strategy	May 2003	Environment	Mayoral strategy
EU Directives affecting waste electrical and electronic equipment	February 2004	Environment	External strategy
Raising the Standard	February 2004	Environment	Mayoral policy proposal
Young London speaks	February 2004	Environment	Policy proposal
Implementing the Municipal Waste Management Strategy	April 2004	Environment	Mayoral strategy
Protecting the City Environment	April 2004	Environment	External strategy
Smoking in Public Spaces	April 2002	Health	External strategy

Name	Date	Committee	Type
Infant immunisation	January 2003	Health	Policy proposal
Access to Primary Care (joint with Mayor)	April 2003	Health	External strategy
GP Recruitment and Retention: the Crisis in London	July 2003	Health	External strategy
Tuberculosis in London	November 2003	Health	External strategy
Should Fluoride be added to London's Water?	November 2003	Health	Policy proposal
Living with the virus	March 2004	Health	External strategy
The London Ambulance Service (joint scrutiny with ALG)	May 2004	Health	External strategy
Behind Closed Doors: Scrutiny of the Mayor's Planning Decisions	June 2002	Planning	Event enquiry
Behind the London Plan: The response of the London Assembly to the Mayor's draft London Plan	November 2002	Planning	Mayoral strategy
Access to the Thames-scrutiny of the Thames Foreshore and Path (reporter)	August 2003	Planning	Policy proposal
London in its Regional Setting	January 2004	Planning	External strategy
Designs on London	April 2004	Planning	External strategy
Reaching Out-Is the Mayor Listening?	May 2002	Public Services	Event enquiry
Elections and Electorate Engagement	May 2002	Public Services	External strategy
The future of Mail Rail	April 2003	Public Services	Policy proposal
London's Water Supply	November 2003	Public Services	External strategy
The power cut in London on 28 August 2003	February 2004	Public Services	Event enquiry
Post Office Closures in London	April 2004	Public Services	External strategy
Access Denied? Parking in Central London for people with mobility problems	July 2002	Transport	External strategy
Congestion Charging: the public concerns behind the politics	December 2002	Transport	Policy proposal
Mind the Gap-between what Londoners want and what Londoners get.	January 2003	Transport	Policy proposal
Getting the Public On Board	April 2003	Transport	Mayoral strategy
An Accident Waiting to Happen? (Chancery Lane)	June 2003	Transport	Event enquiry

Name	Date	Committee	Type
Aviation Consultation Response-the Transport Committee's response to the Government's consultation on air transport in the south-east	July 2003	Transport	Policy proposal
Building bridges? London Assembly response to the Thames Gateway Bridge consultation	October 2003	Transport	Policy proposal
Access Improved	November 2003	Transport	External strategy
Congestion Charging-Westward Expansion?	December 2003	Transport	Policy proposal
Congestion Charging: A First Review	February 2004	Transport	Event enquiry
London's got the hump	April 2004	Transport	Policy proposal

Appendix 2: London Assembly members, 2000–04

This table lists members of the Assembly, and their positions within the GLA family, as at May 2004.

Name	Party	Functional Bodies	Committee Membership	Other commitments
Tony Arbour	Con	MPA	Transport Planning and Spatial Development Standards	Leader of Richmond-Upon-Thames Council
Jennette Arnold	Lab	MPA	Economic and Social Development Budget	Chair: Cultural Strategy Group
Richard Barnes	Con	MPA (Deputy Chair)	Health Standards	Councillor, Hillingdon Member (non-executive) of the North West London Strategic Health Authority
John Biggs	Lab	MPA LFEPA	Transport (Deputy Chair) Economic and Social Development Budget	
Angie Bray	Con	LFEPA	Culture Sport and Tourism (Deputy Chair) Economic and Social Development	
Brian Coleman	Con	LFEPA (deputy chair)	Culture Sport and Tourism Environment BMAC	Conservative Group, Barnet Council
Len Duvall	Lab		Budget Committee (deputy chair) Culture Sport and Tourism Business Management and Appointments Planning	Chair, London Health Commission Chair, Review of London Governance
Roger Evans	Con	LFEPA	Transport Environment (deputy chair) BMAC	
Lynne Featherstone	LD	MPA LFEPA	Transport (Chair) Health Mayor's Advisory Cabinet	Councillor, Haringey
Nicky Gavron	Lab	MPA	Mayor's Advisory Cabinet	Observer on the Transport for London Board

Name	Party	Functional Bodies	Committee Membership	Other commitments
Sally Hamwee	LD		Budget Committee (Chair) Planning (Deputy Chair) BMAC Standards Transport	Member of the House of Lords
Toby Harris	Lab	MPA (Chair)	BMAC Standards	Executive of the LGA Executive of the Association of Police Authorities Member of the House of Lords
Samantha Heath	Lab	LFEPA	Environment (Chair) Transport BMAC (deputy chair)	Member of the London Sustainable Development Commission
Meg Hillier	Lab		Culture, Sport and Tourism (chair) Health (deputy chair) Public Services	
Elizabeth Howlett	Con	MPA	Health (chair) Public Services	Councillor, Wandsworth Borough Member, Mayor's Cultural Strategy Group Member, London Health Commission
Darren Johnson	Green		BMAC Environment Economic and Social Development Budget Audit	Councillor, Lewisham
Diana Johnson	Lab	MPA	Health Environment Public Services Committee (deputy chair)	Non-Executive Director at Tower Hamlets PCT
Jenny Jones	Green	MPA	Transport Public Services DEPUTY MAYOR	Mayor's Road Safety Ambassador

Name	Party	Functional Bodies	Committee Membership	Other commitments
Noel Lynch	Green	LFEPA MPA	Culture, Sport and Tourism Planning and Spatial Development Health Standards (chair)	
Bob Neill	Con		Planning and Spatial Development (chair) Budget	
Eric Ollershaw	Con	MPA	Economic and Social Development (deputy chair) Budget Transport BMAC	Councillor, Hackney
Andrew Pelling	Con	LDA	Transport Public Services (chair) Budget (deputy chair) Audit Panel (chair)	Councillor, Croydon
Valerie Shawcross	Lab	LFEPA (Chair)	Transport Planning and Spatial Development Audit Panel Mayor's Advisory Cabinet	
Graham Tope	LD	MPA	Public Services Environment Business Management and Appointments Audit Panel Mayor's Advisory Cabinet	Leader of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform group on the Committee of the Regions Member of House of Lords
Mike Tuffrey	LD	LFEPA	Culture Sport and Tourism Economic and Social Development (Chair) Budget	



Appendix 3: Other outputs from Effective Scrutiny

Mark Sandford and Lucinda Maer, *Old Habits Die Hard? Overview and scrutiny in local government*, February 2004, 57pp, £10.00.

Lucinda Maer and Mark Sandford, *The Development of Scrutiny in the UK; an overview of procedures and practice*, January 2004, 58pp, Available on line.

Mark Sandford and Lucinda Maer, *Scrutiny under devolution: committees in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, November 2003, 51pp, £8.00.

Mark Sandford and Lucinda Maer, *Annotated Bibliography of Effective Scrutiny*, Available on line (pdf)

Mark Sandford and Lucinda Maer, *Effective Scrutiny in the Devolved Institutions*, ESRC Devolution Programme Briefing No. 6, February 2004, 6pp.

Lucinda Maer and Mark Sandford, *Select Committees under Scrutiny*, June 2004, 43pp, £10.00.

