



Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: 14 April 2022
Portfolio: Cross-cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework
Private/Public Public

Title: Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22
Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report Number: OS.13/22

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides the draft Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Section for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Consider and comment on the attached section of the draft report.

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny:	EGSP 14/04/22
Council:	26/04/22

1. Background

1.1 The Constitution: Article 6 – Overview and Scrutiny Committees, 6.03 Specific functions [c] states that:

'Annual report. Overview and scrutiny committees must report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.'

1.2 This report contains this Panel's draft sections for the Annual Scrutiny Report 2021-22. Each Scrutiny Panel will consider their own sections of the draft report before recommending its acceptance to Council.

1.3 Members are asked to note the report contents, prior to it going to Council on 26th April 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Panel note the appended draft report.

Contact Officer: Rowan Jones Email: rowan.jones@carlisle.gov.uk

Appendices attached to report: Draft General and Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel sections for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL -

FINANCE –

EQUALITY – This report raises no explicit issues relating to the public sector Equality Duty.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –

APPENDIX: Draft General and Economic Scrutiny Panel sections for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22

Introduction

Carlisle City Council has three scrutiny panels:

- Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel
- Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel
- Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

Over the course of the year each Panel has run a full and varied workplan, reflecting aspects of the City Council's function that fall within that Panel's remit. Members have looked carefully at their work programmes, working with council officers to ensure that their scrutiny activity is targeted at the most important issues and decisions that are facing the City Council as Carlisle continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, prepares for Local Government Re-organisation in Cumbria and builds upon the many opportunities that are open to us.

What is Scrutiny and why is it important?

Scrutiny is a process to ensure that decisions taken by the Council reflect the needs and priorities of communities in Carlisle. Scrutiny is carried out by Councillors who understand and promote the concerns of the people who elected them, connecting decision makers to local communities.

Council decisions can be made by Council Officers, by the Council's 'Executive' (the political leadership) and by full Council (all Councillors).

Scrutiny Panels are made up of Non-Executive Councillors who work together, across political parties, to understand why decisions are made and how the Council is performing to deliver the best possible outcomes for Carlisle and its people. Scrutiny Panels do not have decision-making powers; their role is to challenge and make recommendations that influence decision makers.

Comment from Leader of the Council, Councillor John Mallinson

<<*Comments to be inserted*>>

Public engagement in Scrutiny

Scrutiny Panels are open to the public to attend at the Civic Centre, when Panels are meeting at a physical location. Panel meetings can be viewed online via the Council's website, whilst virtual meetings are taking place as part of Covid-19 social distancing measures.

Agendas, report and minutes from Scrutiny Panel meetings are available on the City Council website. Members of the public can also submit questions for meetings; these need to be submitted 11 full days before the Panel Meeting.

For more information on these meetings or on how to engage with the Scrutiny process, please contact: scrutiny@carlisle.gov.uk.

Local Government Re-organisation

In May 2023 Carlisle City Council will become part of a new Cumberland Council under Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) in Cumbria. Over this year, 2022-23, a Shadow Cumberland Authority will exist, which will run its own shadow scrutiny arrangements. A unique challenge for Scrutiny Panels at Carlisle in this coming year will be developing a constructive approach to working efficiently in tandem with shadow scrutiny arrangements. Good communication and robust work-planning will be key to this.

Future Scrutiny Arrangements for 2022 – 23

During 2021-22 a cross panel working group was established to consider future scrutiny arrangements for the final year of activity at Carlisle City Council. A proposal has been made for a move to a two-panel system, this will be considered by Council on 26th April 2022.

Scrutiny will be well prepared and in a strong position for its final year of activity at Carlisle City Council, regardless of the outcome on the two-panel decision. During this current year there has been a focus on continuous improvement through a Scrutiny Improvement Plan.

Scrutiny Improvement Plan

A Scrutiny Improvement Plan was developed in response to feedback on scrutiny from two Corporate Peer Challenges that took place in 2020, before the announcement on Local Government Re-organisation. Twelve actions address five recommendations for improvement:

- Provide Scrutiny Chairs with further dedicated support
- Officers working with scrutiny seek and share further learning on different ways of operating scrutiny

- Identify a senior officer champion for scrutiny
- Consider the structure of scrutiny and options for reducing the number of panels
- Have a scrutiny improvement plan in place

Progress against this scrutiny plan has been reported to Scrutiny Chairs at quarterly meetings. At their final meeting of the year in March 2022, Scrutiny Chairs were satisfied that delivery of this plan has been achieved.

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel (EGSP)

Chairs Report, Councillor Lisa Brown

As we have cautiously returned to normal after the pandemic disrupted the first half of last year, it has as always been a pleasure to Chair the EGSP. My thanks go to Cllr Mellor as Vice Chair for stepping in whilst I had a brief period away from duties over Christmas to give birth to my daughter Ellie-Jayne. We had a few changes to Members of the panel this year and I hope that they all felt that they had lots of opportunities to get to grips with responsibilities we have as Scrutiny Members to be a critical friend to the Executive.

With large investment coming into the city, I would like to praise the officers involved in the bids for their hard work and success in the processes. The majority of items coming to the panel are the many key projects for across the City. Our focus has really been to look at these in a new light as we try to ensure Carlisle recovers quickly from the Coronavirus pandemic.

The panel received a report on the draft Economic Strategy. Members explored the scope of the plan and raised many questions on whether it met the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as opportunities for the future and priorities for coming years.

We also focused a lot on Tourism and Events this year. It is vital that we see an increase in visitor numbers post-pandemic and it is pleasing that many events are returning the city centre.

We must use all the tools available to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for each person living in the urban or rural parts of the district. It is clear that the Council benefits from some dedicated and experienced members of staff; their ambition for Carlisle is obvious when reading the reports to the panel.

As Chair I have found great value in the meetings with Senior Management Team to develop our work programme. These meetings have helped focus our agendas and avoid

duplication, making the EGSP work programme efficient and effective and giving Members more time to ask important questions.

The panel has had one extra meeting this year, receiving the Towns Deals business cases before they went to Executive and then Government. Throughout there were many questions on how Local Government reorganisation could affect the Towns Deal. The Panel felt assured that these challenges had already been looked and planned for.

We are in the final year of Carlisle City Council, and at the time of writing scrutiny may look different in a few short weeks. Whichever form next year's panels take we look forward to seeing Carlisle evolve into a blossoming city, attracting more investment to create well paid jobs and a vibrant local economy.

Comment from Councillor Marilyn Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Housing

<<Comments to be inserted>>

Potential items for Scrutiny in 2022 - 23

The following items are topics that Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel have identified that are likely to have significance in 2022-23:

- Continued oversight of major economic development projects and implications of LGR for these
- Engagement with strategic partners such as LEP and Riverside
- Events, tourism, high street vitality