

# Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Meeting Date: 31 March 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.09/22

**Purpose / Summary:**

This report provides the draft Business and Transformation 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.
- That Members identify items that may be a priority for Scrutiny in 2022-23

**Tracking**

Executive:	<b>Not applicable</b>
Scrutiny:	<b>BTSP 31/03/22</b>
Council:	<b>26/04/22</b>

## 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 consider the final section of this report, "Potential items for Scrutiny in 2022-23", in particular. Do the Panel wish to identify any further suggestions here? Suggestions on possible items to flag:

- Sickness absence and staff wellbeing
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Talkin Tarn Management Arrangements – site visit/ potential for a Task and Finish Group

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Panel consider and comment on the appended draft report.

2.2 That Members identify items that may be a priority for Scrutiny in 2022-23

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

**Appendices  
attached to report:                            Draft general and Business and Transformation  
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 Business and Transformation 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](mailto: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 26<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (BTSP)**

### Chair's Report, Councillor James Bainbridge

Our year in Business and Transformation can be seen in two parts:

The first, whilst still under lockdown restrictions, was observing an enormous period of the unknown in the financial structures of the Council. It should be remembered that whilst the Council worked to keep the show on the road in the pandemic, and succeeded in doing so, it was administering several cycles of grants and support for the second year of the pandemic. In the reports that came to Scrutiny we could see the accountability of the process and the work that was done.

Secondly, we had a number of intensive capital and infrastructure projects whose financial accountability we regularly monitored. With the refurbishment of the Civic Centre ground floor now complete and the Sands Centre nearing completion, it has been refreshing to see project delivery in difficult circumstances being achieved. Our thanks should go to Officers who have kept us informed and updated throughout the year.

Moving into the new civic year there are issues which will carry on. We have continued to keep a close watch on IT Services, given the macro-pressures that are occurring in this sector, and I feel members of the panel have realised and dutifully discharged our fiduciary responsibilities as best we could.

Can I thank Rowan for her assistance in the Scrutiny process and her work in researching and themes and policies in scrutiny, which have assisted the panel in their work, and their task and finish work. As a panel we have worked for the vast majority of the time in unison, but naturally with some areas of disagreement such as with the Old Fire Station tenure and the intended future panel changes. However, I would hope that a casual observer if seeing our differences of opinion would consider that we have been professional in our conduct.

Can I lastly thank Members, both past and present, for their work.

### Comment from Councillor Gareth Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Resources

*<<Comments to be inserted>>*

### Potential items for Scrutiny in 2022 - 23

The following items are topics that Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel have identified are likely to have significance in 2022-23:

- Supporting ICT Performance

*<<Do BTSP wish to identify any further items here?>>*