

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.4

Meeting Date: 12 April 2021

Portfolio: Cross-cutting

Key Decision: No

Within Policy and
Budget Framework

Private/Public Public

Title: Scrutiny Annual Report

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Report Number: OS.12/21

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides the draft Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Section for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

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

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny:	EGSP 12/04/21
Council:	27/04/21

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 2020/21. Each Scrutiny Panel will consider their own sections of the draft report before recommending its acceptance to Council.

2. Recommendations

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

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

Appendices **Draft general and Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel**
attached to report: **sections for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21**

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 Growth Scrutiny Panel sections for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

Introduction

The Annual Report for the Civic Year 2020-21 will reflect on a year of significant change for Scrutiny Panels at Carlisle City Council. The changes for Scrutiny reflect how the City Council as a whole has adapted to remote working and virtual meetings in response to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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 looks to recover and move forward from the Covid-19 pandemic.

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.

Scrutiny Response to Covid-19

During 2020/21 all Panel meetings have taken place in a virtual setting, following guidelines set out in the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Carlisle City Council was quick to respond to the need to deliver virtual committee meetings and we would like to note our achievement in having delivered all planned scrutiny meetings during 2020/21. Panel Members and Officers have worked together to develop a new way of working, adapting and persevering with new IT skills, supporting each other and showing tolerance and humour at the bumps in the road that have sometimes accompanied the shift to virtual meetings.

Maintaining scrutiny activity during the pandemic has been important because:

- Significant decisions with impacts on Carlisle have been made during this time.
- Councillors represent their local communities and their knowledge and perspective are vital to ensuring a robust, democratic response to the crisis and recovery plans that are suitable for local needs.

Scrutiny Chairs have worked closely together to co-ordinate their Panel's activities to ensure a good level of oversight across the City Council's role in Covid-19 response and recovery.

Comment from Leader of the Council, Councillor John Mallinson

<Text to be inserted>

Corporate Peer Challenges, January and November 2020 – implications for Scrutiny

The Carlisle Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in January 2020 was positive and highlighted a number of strengths for the Council. This Peer Challenge focussed on leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience. This Peer Challenge included some comments around the role of scrutiny. Scrutiny Panels, led by their Chairs, have made some steps in beginning to respond to these comments. For example, in recognising that developing robust workplans can help Scrutiny to focus on key strategic issues for Carlisle and making recommendations that will add value to the decision making process.

A further Corporate Peer Challenge, undertaken remotely in November 2020, reviewed the Council's use of existing governance arrangements. There are likely to be further implications of this Peer Challenge for scrutiny panels that can be considered over the coming scrutiny year.

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.

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel (EGSP)

Chairs Report, Councillor Lisa Brown

It has been both a challenge and privilege to Chair the EGSP this past year, one year on since the country went into a National Lockdown. My thanks go to Cllr Mellor as Vice Chair and all the Members and substitutes for their support and attendance, it is very clear that each member wants to see the very best for the City of Carlisle and its residents.

The majority of items coming to the panel this year have been the many key projects for the City across, all promising a bright future for Carlisle if successful, particularly the ambitions for growth in St Cuthbert's Garden Village and Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. It has never been more important that the word "Inclusive" used here is number one priority for the council, we must ensure that all its residents benefit from these deals and projects especially since the Coronavirus pandemic has drastically changed lives over this last year. We must use all the tools available to us to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for each person living in the urban or rural parts of the district.

It is clear to see that the council benefits from some dedicated and experienced members of staff and their ambition for Carlisle is obvious when reading the reports presented to the panel. We have also had some excellent contributions from outside organisations such as the CLEP, Riverside and Carlisle Ambassadors. The panel is keen to see the Ambassadors continue their work promoting the City and was interested to find out what Scrutiny could do to aid that.

Every meeting has been held virtually this year, not something any of us thought we would be doing. It hasn't reduced the quality of the meetings, and every meeting has run effortlessly which is entirely down to the hard work and patience of the staff behind the scenes. On behalf of the panel, I would like to thank them for all their time and effort especially doing it all from home.

Looking towards the new Civic Year, I hope that we start beginning to see work start on the key projects for Carlisle, and that we can start to build a clearer picture of Carlisle as it enters the recovery phase of the pandemic.

Comment from Councillor Paul Nedved, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Housing

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