

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.6

Meeting Date: 08 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.11/21

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides the draft Health and Wellbeing 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:	HWSP 08/04/21
Council:	27/04/21

APPENDIX: Draft general and Health and Wellbeing 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 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

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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.

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel (HWSP)

Chairs Report, Councillor Christine Finlayson (Vice Chair)

I consider it a deep privilege to be a Member and part of what our City Council achieves for the City of Carlisle and its surrounding district and communities.

I would like to pay tribute to Cllr Jack Paton, Chair of Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, who unfortunately has been unwell. Jack was looking forward to having more time due to his retirement to spend in service to the City Council and his constituents. I'm sure it won't be long until he is back in full health and look forward to his return. As Vice Chair, I have led HWSP in Jack's absence, which has been a very positive experience.

The standard and professionalism of Managers and Officers during this very challenging last year has, in my eyes, been exceptional. The Council and its staff have been dedicated in working smoothly for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of Carlisle communities. I can say this from my experience as Vice Chair of HWSP.

Over the past year Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel have received detailed reports on many issues that support health and wellbeing, such as the Sands Leisure Centre Project, Tullie House Museum, housing, homelessness, emergency response and community resilience. All this has been achieved working across political parties with much agreement for the benefit of Carlisle residents.

I look forward to the new Civic Year 2021 and seeing a lot of the plans and projects unfold. I have great confidence these plans will put our great City and Cumbria firmly on the map as an outstanding place to live, work and thrive.

Comment from Councillor Elizabeth Mallinson, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Health and Wellbeing

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