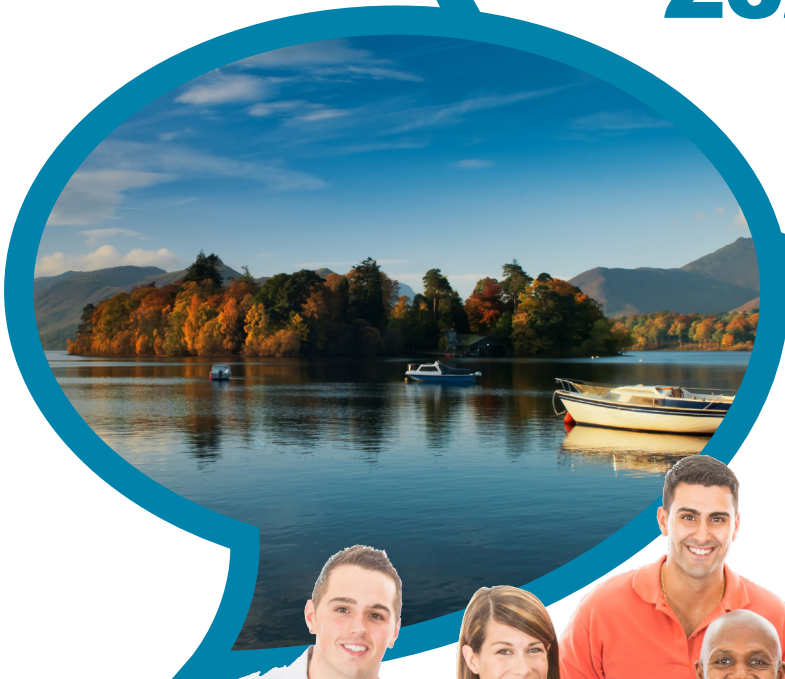


# Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22





## **Chair's Foreword**

### **Councillor Bill Wearing**

I am delighted to present this report describing the work of Scrutiny during 2021 – 2022. It includes a wide range of information about the work Elected Members have undertaken over the past year; and most importantly the impact this has had.

Throughout the year Scrutiny Members continued their vital role in Cumbria County Council by holding decision makers to account; developing and reviewing policy; as well as considering how the Council is delivering on its commitments to the residents of Cumbria.

Scrutiny Advisory Boards and Scrutiny Committees have welcomed the opportunity to work closely with the Cabinet and Senior Officers. The Boards have sought to focus on the critical issues for the Council and provide constructive input in finding ways to improve outcomes for residents.

A warm thank you goes to the Chairs and Vice Chairs as they continue to bring energy and enthusiasm to their roles. Under their leadership, Boards are working together on cross cutting issues; and consistently providing constructive challenge and recommendations for the Cabinet, Executive Directors and Partners. I would also like to note my thanks to my Vice Chair Cllr Mark Wilson for his support over the past year; and the wide range of officers who support all the Boards with particular appreciation for the diligent work and support of the Policy and Scrutiny team led by Clare Killeen.

As we head towards the last year of Cumbria County Council's Scrutiny function, we will continue to strive to ensure improved outcomes for all customers, residents and businesses within Cumbria. In 2022/23 we will also support the Local Government Reorganisation process by sharing information, knowledge and advice with the two new Unitary Authorities that will run services for our community from April 2023.

For further details on Cumbria County Council's Scrutiny boards please visit [www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/scrutiny.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/scrutiny.asp)



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
• Purpose of the report	4
• What is Scrutiny?	4
• What are the different Scrutiny Boards?	4
• What can the Scrutiny Boards do?	4
• Cumbria County Council Overview and Scrutiny 2021/22 in numbers	5
<b>Reflections from the Chairs of Cumbria County Council’s Scrutiny Function</b>	<b>6</b>
• Scrutiny Management Board	6
• Performance Working Group	7
• Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Advisory Board	8
• Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board	9
• Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board	10
• Cumbria Health Scrutiny	11
• Local Enterprise Scrutiny Board	12
<b>Other Scrutiny Bodies</b>	<b>13</b>
• Cumbria Police and Crime Panel	13
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>15</b>
• Case Study One: Water Fluoridation	15
• Case Study Two: Provision of infrastructure to support new developments	16
• Case Study Three: Local Government Reorganisation – Phase 2	17
• Case Study Four: New ways of working	18
<b>Scrutiny’s Engagement in Strategic Planning</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Call-In</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Scrutiny Development</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>20</b>

# Introduction

## Purpose of the report

Cumbria County Council's Annual Scrutiny Report looks at the work programme which was undertaken during the year 2021-22 by the Council's Scrutiny Advisory Boards. Within the report, the Chair of each Scrutiny Advisory Board has provided a brief overview of their role in scrutiny, as well as any key successes.

This Annual Report also outlines case studies that demonstrate the positive impact of scrutiny in improving outcomes for communities within Cumbria. As well as looking to the future and how we can continue to contribute to effective policy and decision-making.

## What is Scrutiny?

Ultimately, public scrutiny is the means by which Cumbria County Council's Cabinet can be held to account so as to protect the public interest and to ensure high-quality public services. Scrutiny acts as a 'critical friend' to policy and decision-makers through careful consideration of the effectiveness of both existing and future policies. With each Scrutiny Board being expected to provide a constructive challenge to improve decision-making.

## What are the different Scrutiny Boards?

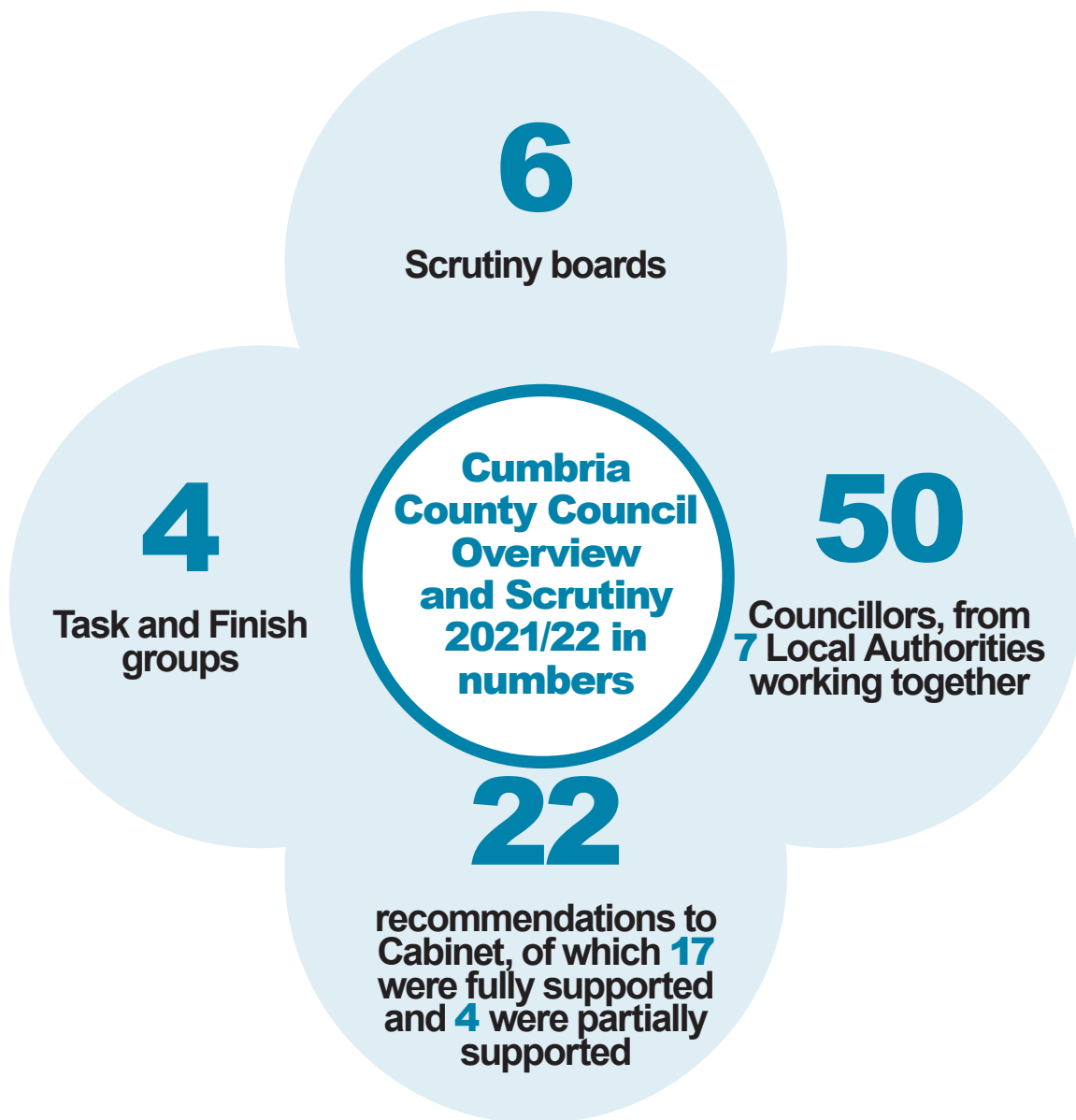
Cumbria County Council's Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) has overall strategic responsibility for the Overview and Scrutiny function. SMB is supported by three main Scrutiny Advisory Boards, and the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee. The respective Boards and Committee scrutinise the Council's functions in relation to outcomes and services within the Board's remit. Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee reviews and scrutinises matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Cumbria. The Scrutiny Boards are:

- Scrutiny Management Board
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board
- Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board
- Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board
- Local Economic Partnership Scrutiny Advisory Board
- Health Scrutiny Committee

## What can the Scrutiny Boards do?

Three of the key roles for Scrutiny are policy review, policy development and scrutiny of decisions and performance. In relation to these, Scrutiny Boards may:

- Review and scrutinise the decisions and performance of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Council Officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
- Assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of its Budget and Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- Review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets, and/or particular service areas;
- Question Members of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Executive Directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with Service Plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives, or projects;
- Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area, and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Board and local people about their activities and performance
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committees and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.



# Reflections from the Chairs of the Council's Scrutiny Function

## Scrutiny Management Board



**Councillor Bill Wearing,  
Chair of Scrutiny Management Board**

The Scrutiny Management Board has completed a substantial programme of work this year focused on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the delivery

of Council services, on the reorganisation of local government in Cumbria, and on improvement of services serving our communities.

Improving the experience of our customers in their communities has been central to the work of the Board over the past year. During the Summer, Board Members reviewed the draft Cumbria Recovery Strategy. This draft Strategy brought together a multi-agency Cumbria approach to support the recovery of communities, businesses and services from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members welcomed the approach set out in the Strategy and highlighted a number of priorities that they viewed as important for delivery of the Strategy. They highlighted the impacts on people's physical and mental health, the shattering of communities and the widening of inequalities, the effects of the pandemic on key workers and the wider workforce, and the need for affordable housing.

The Board also welcomed Improvements in the experiences of the Council's customers when Members explored in detail the progress in delivering the Council's Customer Strategy. The Board has reviewed service redesign and further digitisation in the library service and developments in the registration service leading to better experiences for customers and, in relation to the registration service, significant increases in income.

### Key areas of focus during 2021/22:

- The impact on services of the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery planning
- Customer service and locality working
- New ways of working, ICT services and Absence Management

Board Members were pleased to hear about the improvements secured through the expansion of the Council's Service Centre to include the highways hotline, single points of access services for adult social care support, and some waste-related services. The Board had carried out a Scrutiny Review in 2016/17 in which Members had identified the benefits of the Service Centre model for these types of services, so this progress was particularly welcomed.

It is important to Board Members that these improvements in customer experience are built upon in the future and that designing council services around customers and ensuring everybody who uses them has a good experience continues to be a focus for the future. There are a range of opportunities to do this through increased locality working, close working with the community and voluntary sector, and more automation of services where it is useful.

The focus on locality and community working was also central to the Board's continuing Task and Finish Group work on local government reform. The second phase of this work undertaken this year gathered evidence and made recommendations about what future locality governance and locality working arrangements could work best in Cumbria in the future. The Council's Cabinet supported Scrutiny Members' recommendations, and these will be shared for consideration by the two shadow authorities when they are making decisions about how the two new unitary councils in Cumbria will be designed and operate.

The Fluoridation of Water Supplies Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, commissioned by the Board, has also recently completed its work and reported its findings and recommendations to the Council's Cabinet.



The Board has also continued to review the Council's staff absence levels and the work being undertaken to improve absence management. This issue remains a challenge and has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This issue will remain on the Board's work programme for the coming year.

Members have also, in the past year, had the opportunity to contribute to issues important to the future operation of the Council as we move towards a new phase of the Covid-19 pandemic and look towards local government reorganisation. In September the Board received a comprehensive update on developments in the ICT Service. Improvements to the ICT infrastructure had led to performance improvement and laid strong foundations for future planning. The Board has also been well-engaged in the work to develop and implement new ways of working across the Council.

2022/23 will be the last year before the closure of Cumbria County Council. The Scrutiny Management Board will play a key role in supporting the Council to end well and the effective transition of services.

### Performance Working Group

The Scrutiny Performance Working Group has continued throughout 2021/22 to review progress against the Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Plan through quarterly scrutiny of the Council's corporate performance monitoring reports. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance has been a key feature of the Group's work over the last few months. The Group has focused particularly on adult social care services, children's services and education, and on workforce issues. Over the summer, the Working Group undertook an in-depth review of the impact of the pandemic on performance in critical service areas in relation to education, children's safety, and looked after children.

The Group will closely monitor these areas of performance over the coming months, as well continuing to seek to ensure that the Council's monitoring and management of performance is effective and that we are measuring the things that will make a real difference to our communities.



**Key areas of focus during 2021/22:**

- COVID recovery for children and families
- Early Help and family support
- Child Exploitation
- Schools, education and skills
- Youth Offending

## Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board



**Councillor Phil Dew, Chair of Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board**

With the Council entering its last year before reorganisation it will be a priority to ensure that these services are continuing to meet the needs of children and families, and that the Board contributes to the scrutiny and oversight of the children's system as a whole.

It is with great sadness that the chair of the Board, Cllr. Val Tarbitt passed away in January 2022, and much of the Board's progress has been down to her untiring enthusiasm for the children's agenda and the support she continued to have both from the Board and from the services led by John Readman.

2021/22 has been a busy and successful year for the Children's Board. Given the unprecedented disruption caused by COVID to education and the lives of children in 2020, the Board have been keen to retain a focus on how children and families are responding over the subsequent phases of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the business of running services for children and families continues and the Board has been keen to understand how services are performing across the board from early help to education and social care.

We have been keen to ensure that the SEND improvement journey continues and were encouraged by the news from the annual Ofsted inspector's letter on how children's services was faring in the county.







## Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board



**Councillor Stan Collins, Chair of Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board**

The Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board has provided scrutiny activity through Board meetings and task and finish activity throughout 2021/22 with focus on

- **Cumbria's Bus Service Improvement Plans:** looking at how the National Bus Strategy could rejuvenate local bus services making them more, attractive to use, greener, cheaper for passengers and more reliable. Members were able to provide feedback and influence discussions with operators on issues such as non-paper ticketing.
- **Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service** – The board have continued to receive updates from the Chief Fire Officer to ensure progression of the CFRS Improvement Plan. This has also included performance reporting from the service to the Board.
- **Infrastructure** – The Board undertook task and finish activity regarding the 'Provision of Infrastructure to Support New Development' and developed recommendations that were taken to Cabinet in March 2021 where all recommendations were supported or partially supported. A case study on this activity is included in the annual report
- **Waste** – following the UK exit from the EU there has been a lot of emerging policy regarding the waste industry, the impact on local authorities and gained assurances that CCC would engage with the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership (CSWP) to develop and implement a new Waste Strategy for Cumbria.

### Key areas of focus during 2021/22:

- Highways Asset Management Strategy
- Climate Change
- Response to Covid-19 from Customer and Community Services
- The organisations ability to respond to concurrent events.
- Social and physical infrastructure (including digital infrastructure strategy)

The Board is also having oversight of the action plan that arose from an Independent Planning Review, ensuring that the Council are taking action to improve against recommendations made.

The Board have developed a work programme for 2022/23 where focus will be on the economy, environment and communities. The work programme has been designed to enable scrutiny of Cumbria County Council's commitment and delivery of services to Cumbria's communities.

The Scrutiny Advisory Board will continue to maintain links with other Boards as appropriate to ensure that a whole system view is taken on topics, which will be of particular importance as the Council goes through significant change and transitions into the new authorities for Cumbria. Where appropriate, the Board will do work to support the Local Government Reorganisation process.



**Key areas of focus during 2021/22:**

- Pressures on Adult Social Care Provision
- Adults Vision and Strategy
- Extra Care Housing
- Safeguarding

## Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board



**Councillor Mark Wilson, Chair Adults' Scrutiny Advisory Board**

The Adult's Board has been closely monitoring the mounting pressures on the provision of Adult Social Care across the County. This is a critical time for social care. It has been at the forefront of the response to Covid; at a national level, the Government is proposing significant changes; and locally there are changes to local government and health organisations.

Covid has impacted hugely on social care with devastating impacts on those who receive care and support. The Board and its Members have been focused on understanding these impacts as well the effects on those who deliver care and support and how it has changed the way that services are delivered and is likely to have a long-term impact on the services that are available and the way that people want to access them.

In the light of this challenging context Members have welcomed the opportunity over the last year to contribute at various stages to the emerging Adults Vision and Strategy helping us to inform the people of Cumbria about our aims and intentions for social care.

As you might expect the discussions of the Board are increasingly happening in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. The recent examination of Extra Care Housing provision provided Members with the chance to highlight how the new unitary authorities would have the opportunities to look at barriers which have been faced to expanding provision.

I'm a firm believer in working collaboratively wherever possible, it's about partnerships, organising and delivering care together with partners, services and supports to achieve the best outcomes.

As the Board has always done, we have continued to undertake an in-depth analysis of adult safeguarding activity throughout the pandemic looking at progress against the key areas of performance and the actions planned to strength and consolidate improvements in Adult Safeguarding.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to once again pay tribute to the courageous, creative, determined and resilient staff in the Social Care Sector, the NHS, the Independent Sector and the County Council workforce.



## Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee

### Key areas of focus during 2021/22:

- Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic
- Health and Care Bill
- Access to GP Services
- Stroke Care and Rehabilitation
- NHS Dentistry in North Cumbria



**Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes,  
Chair Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee**

I took the role of Chair of the Committee earlier last year in the midst of a particularly challenging time for the Health & Care System in Cumbria. I'd first like to thank the previous Chair Cllr Claire Driver for her outstanding work in steering the Committee through providing effective Scrutiny during the pandemic.

Over the past year the Committee has understandably focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessitated rapid and unforeseen changes to the provision of health and care services.

We have tried to give oversight of the system response to COVID-19, the Health and Care Systems have obviously been and still are engaged in a significant amount of activity, partners were and are moving fast and acting accordingly.

Legislation is changing NHS structures and requiring NHS, Local Authority and other community organisations to “organise for integration.” Commissioners and providers are expected to work much more closely together to deliver agreed priorities.

The Committee have been paying close attention to how in some areas, providers may take on responsibilities for planning and service design that have previously been undertaken by commissioners. We have and continue to encourage our system leaders to learn the lessons from their response to Covid: shared purpose, local knowledge and partnerships, use of expertise and data.





**Key areas of focus during 2021/22:**

- Economic Impact updates
- EU exit transition support
- Restart, Reboot, Rethink: focussing on implementation updates.
- Labour Supply and Skills



**Councillor Bill Wearing, Chair of LEP Scrutiny Board Committee**

## **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Scrutiny Board**

2021/22 has seen Cumbria County Council continue to host the LEP Scrutiny function with a representative from each District Councils included in the membership of the Board alongside Members of the Scrutiny Management Board. The continued effective and supportive partnership working between the Councils and the LEP has ensured that the Board has been able to provide constructive challenge and support.

The LEP Board meets twice yearly and in 2021/22 the areas of focus were:

- Economic Impact updates
- EU exit transition support
- Restart, Reboot, Rethink: focussing on implementation updates.
- Labour Supply and Skills

The agendas were shaped to ensure that the Scrutiny Board effectively provide scrutiny on LEP activity within a rapidly changing environment, focussing on the recovery from Covid-19 and the UKs exit from the EU, ensuring that the LEP are providing the necessary, appropriate and adequate support for businesses and the economy in Cumbria.

The Board have scrutinised LEP plans at a strategic level, maintaining strong links with the Chief Executive and the Chair of the LEP which continues to add value to the process and enable effective scrutiny.



**Councillor Mike Johnson, Chair of the Cumbria Police and Crime**

## Other Scrutiny Bodies

### Cumbria Police and Crime Panel

I was elected as Chair of Cumbria Police and Crime Panel in July 2021. I and the Board expressed my thanks to the former Chair, Councillor Bill McEwan, for his leadership and commitment to the development and effectiveness of the Panel over the years.

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is a joint committee comprising Members from the County Council, all of the District Councils and independent members. The PCP's role is to scrutinise and support the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC).

The Panel carries out a wide range of activity that contributes to the delivery of a safe and secure Cumbria. The Panel has a number of statutory functions which include annual scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Council Tax Precept proposals, dealing with both compliments and complaints about the PCC, and considering and reporting on the Commissioner's proposed Police and Crime Plan.

Following the re-election of Peter McCall as Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2021, he brought forward his proposed priorities to be included in a new Police and Crime Plan. Following public consultation over the Summer, the Panel considered the draft Police and Crime Plan for the next 4 years in-depth in October.

Panel Members however, expressed concern that there now needs to be a clear and visible focus on performance as delivery progresses, and that local indicators and targets are developed with relevant comparator information from other similar areas or statistical neighbours. It would be helpful to see challenging or 'stretch' targets set in priority areas. Panel Members, therefore, will seek to scrutinise the development of the delivery plan and related targets in early 2022.

#### Key areas of focus during 2021/22:

- New Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025
- Strengthening locality working
- Delivery and performance

Panel Members broadly welcomed the priorities set out in the draft Police and Crime Plan and emphasised the importance of some issues in delivery of the Plan. Panel Members highlighted:

- The importance of early understanding of financial risks in relation to rising inflation levels, and of potential disruption to supply chains;
- The important role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the context of Operation Uplift;
- The approach to funding community-based projects and the opportunity for further integration of approach across public services in the county focused reducing crime and improving outcomes for residents; and,
- A continued focus on the performance of the 101 system.

The Panel will develop its work programme for the coming months to ensure appropriate review of priority elements of delivery of the Plan.

In advance of consideration of the new Police and Crime Plan, the Panel also reviewed the Commissioner's work over 2020/21 through the Commissioner's Annual Report. The Panel welcomed a number of achievements, including the recruitment of additional police officers through the Government Operation Uplift initiative with a focus on increasing police visibility in rural areas; an 18.8% overall reduction in crime over the year; and a series of focus groups held listening to the voice of young people in Cumbria.

Panel Members highlighted some areas for improvement in relation to drug-use and related crimes, the length of time for call to 101 to be answered, and arrangements to support relationships between local police officers and councillors within communities.

In January 2022, the Panel considered the Commissioner's Council Tax precept proposals for 2022/23. The Commissioner's proposal to raise the precept by £9.99 annually for a band D property (a rise of 3.67%) was agreed, without qualification, by the Panel.

The Panel's work during 2022/23 will focus on key crime and community safety issues which are affecting our local communities. The Commissioner's proposal to take over responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services in Cumbria, if progressed, will have a significant impact on the work of the Panel. This is an issue the Panel will engage with over the coming months.



POLICE LINE

DO NOT CROSS

POLICE LINE

DO NOT CROSS

## Case Studies

Whilst Scrutiny is regularly engaged in the overview and challenge it delivers through Advisory Boards and Committees, Members also have the opportunity to share their insight on other issues which may have a particular impact on the Council's strategic or operational approach.

A number of case studies are provided in this report to illustrate the type of work Scrutiny is involved in.



### Case Study One: Water Fluoridation

#### What did Scrutiny do?

In June 2021 Scrutiny Management Board commissioned a task and finish group to look at Fluoridation of Water Supplies in Cumbria. Members were tasked by SMB to investigate the risks and benefits of water fluoridation in relation to:

- The safety of fluoridation of water supplies;
- The effectiveness of fluoridation of water supplies in improving dental health; and,
- The cost effectiveness of the fluoridation of water supplies compared to alternatives.
- To identify alternative methods of delivery of outcomes and their benefits and risks.
- To identify findings and develop recommendations to inform future decision-making in respect of fluoridation of water supplies.

Members combined desktop research with witness sessions and submissions from members of the public and other national bodies. Given the debates for and against water fluoridation, Members agreed to hold two witness sessions to ensure that Members were able to hear a wide range of information and views and a third session with the Director of Public Health to provide professional advice and information to support Members to draw conclusions.

Members concluded that fluoridation of water courses has an overall positive impact on reducing oral disease, but that it should be used in conjunction with other topical methods of adding fluoride. Members were satisfied that on the balance of current scientific evidence the health benefits outweighed the risks and that fluoridation schemes were well within the World Health Organisations recommendations on levels of fluoride in the water supply.

Based on their findings Members recommended that current schemes in Cumbria should remain, but that fluoridation should be combined with topical methods of applying fluoride and that the Director of Public Health should report to Cabinet every 4 years with an update on the scientific health benefits and risks. Cabinet accepted or partly accepted all 3 of the recommendations made.

#### What is the impact for Cumbria?

Water fluoridation schemes have been in place in West Cumbria since the early 1970s. Since then, there has been a debate on the risks and benefits of fluoridation. Scrutiny's findings and recommendations have made a valuable contribution to the analysis of risks and benefits to support future decision-making on fluoridation schemes in Cumbria in improving oral health across the whole population.



## Case Study Two: Provision of infrastructure to support new developments.

### What did Scrutiny do?

In March 2020 the Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board commissioned a Task and Finish Group to look at the Council's approach to planning obligation agreements. It was agreed that the group would explore the implications of new developments in respect of physical and social infrastructure.

### What is the impact for Cumbria?

The group made recommendations to Cabinet and impact has been seen in the following areas:

1. Early engagement with Local Planning Authorities in the development of the local plans
  - Impact: this recommendation was supported and the importance of this recognised to secure contributions for social and physical infrastructure. Early engagement has continued to be strengthened
2. Structures around planning should be explored in order to determine the most effective ways of securing contributions.
  - Impact: this recommendation was partially supported, and the review of planning process and securing of developer contributions has been taken into the programme of work for Local Government Reorganisation.
3. Strengthened dialogue between members and Cumbria County Council's planning response officers may help to identify infrastructure requirements on receipt of a planning application, given Member's knowledge of their communities. This should include training for members and their inclusion in the circulation of planning lists.
  - Impact: steps have been taken to strengthen communication with members to ensure consistency and enabling elected members to be confident they are being communicated with in a timely way. The Flood Development Management Team now attend local committees on a more frequent basis.
4. Planning authorities should be asked not to use conditions which provide loopholes for developers to evade/avoid their obligations.
  - Impact: The County Council has developed a set of standard planning conditions to be used where practicable. Processes have also been developed to improve dialogue where an Local Planning Authority intend to amend recommended conditions to ensure CCCs obligations are being achieved.







## Case Study Three: Local Government Reorganisation – Phase 2

### What did Scrutiny do?

Following the Future of local government in Cumbria – Locality models and structures task and finish activity undertaken in 2020/21, Scrutiny Management Board agreed the scope for a second phase of work following the announcement in July 2021 from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to create two new unitary councils in Cumbria.

The activity focussed on:

- Models for locality working
- The role of the front-line councillor in locality models
- Equality implications of future models

Witness sessions were held to gain insight from other areas on experiences and practice which informed the development of recommendations to Cabinet which included: the ideal characteristics of a locality model, that unparished areas in Cumbria should become parishes to enable effective participation with the system, cross party buy-in to ensure approaches are robust and have longevity and finally the role of the councillor as a facilitator and enabler.

### What is the impact for Cumbria?

Important characteristics of a locality model were identified as:

- Locality Boards with significant devolved decision-making to a local level delegated from the Executive;
- Strong engagement mechanisms such as the Place Standard tool as evidenced through the Kirklees model and as used in some areas of Cumbria currently;
- Inclusion of addressing inequalities as a key principles; and,
- Footprints shaped on community identities.

Cabinet were supportive of the recommendations being made and supportive of the findings of the task and finish activity to inform future design work for the two new Unitary Authorities.

## Local Government Reorganisation

### Delivering Two New Councils for Cumbria





## Case Study Four: New Ways of Working

### What did Scrutiny do?

Scrutiny Members have been at the forefront of influencing and reviewing the Council's new ways of working. Following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Scrutiny Management Board was the first to hold a formal council meeting remotely on Microsoft Teams. Later that year Scrutiny Members recognised that it was important to plan for future ways of working early and completed a task and finish review in early 2021.

The work of the Scrutiny group and their recommendations to the Council's Cabinet have been key in influencing the development of the Council's new ways of working. And Scrutiny Members throughout 2021/22 have continued to review and input into the plans as they have been brought forward.

Scrutiny Members have welcomed the implementation of new working styles, guidance and support tools and can see how their recommendations are being implemented through these.

During 2021/22 Scrutiny Members have also reviewed the infrastructure and support services which will enable new ways of working to work well. They have contributed to the plans for the development of the ICT infrastructure, and to the understanding of how new ways of working can be used to improve service delivery to our customers in their communities.

Scrutiny Members have also been putting new ways of working into practice themselves moving towards more hybrid ways of working. The return of formal scrutiny meetings being held in physical venues across the county ensures that Scrutiny is carried out in public and transparent ways; whilst the increasing ability for Scrutiny Members to do work outside of meetings informally using remote methods enables Scrutiny Members to work more flexibly and in more agile ways – reducing Council expenditure on travel, increasing Members' contribution to carbon reduction, and allowing Scrutiny Members to spend more time working in and with their communities.

### What is the impact for Cumbria?

Scrutiny Members prioritised the issues of wellbeing and mental health as the pandemic continued and in planning for the future. The Council has now introduced new approaches to managing wellbeing, stress and mental health including a comprehensive package of guidance and tools for managers and staff, and a range of channels for staff to seek additional support if they need it.

The Scrutiny review emphasised the importance of the Council fully understanding the needs, views and ideas of staff in respect of how they need and want to work – and how these have changed during and after the pandemic. The Council has commissioned work to enhance the insight and understanding of issues affecting staff, as well as carrying out a comprehensive programme of communication and engagement with staff.

This work should provide the enhanced knowledge and understanding needed to ensure that future ways of working are implemented with the needs of the public, of services, of staff, and of Members at their centre.

Scrutiny Members will continue to review and contribute to these issues over the coming year and seek to ensure their work on the ways of working will inform the design and operation of the two new unitary authorities as they are established in Cumbria over the new few months.

## Scrutiny's Engagement in Strategic Planning

Scrutiny Members engaged with the Council's 2022/23 Strategic and Budget Planning process. A session was held on 24 November 2021 where Members received an introduction from the Deputy Leader of the Council and a presentation from the Director of Finance, outlining the current position and proposed approach. The Director of Finance set out the proposals for delivery of a balanced budget for 2022/23. Members discussed the proposals which informed the Scrutiny response to Cabinet's consultation which the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board presented to Cabinet in January 2022.

Scrutiny made three recommendations:

- That Cabinet puts plans in place to ensure that additional COVID related funding received from the Government is invested in communities to support their recovery from the pandemic, and that Cabinet lobbies the Government where necessary for the freedoms and flexibilities to do this
- That Cabinet considers areas where capital investment in 2022/23 will increase efficiency and reduce further revenue costs when developing and agreeing the Capital programme for 2022/23
- That Cabinet prioritises investment in transport improvements to support communities, reduce barriers they face and unlock economic growth for Cumbria

All three recommendations were accepted by Cabinet at their January 2022 meeting.

## Call In

In October, the Scrutiny Management Board considered a Call-In of the Cabinet decision in respect of a potential claim for Judicial Review against the decision of the Secretary of State in respect of Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria. The Board referred the decision back to Cabinet on the grounds of cost, and concern about the potential for spiralling costs.

The item was discussed further at a Cabinet meeting in October 2021, in which the Cabinet agreed to uphold its decision to issue proceedings for judicial review against the Secretary of State.

## Going Forward: The Scrutiny Development Plan

Members confirmed their commitment to Scrutiny Development at the Scrutiny Management Board meeting in September 2021. With a focus on:

- Promotion - Scrutiny's role and purpose is well communicated and the role of Scrutiny is highly valued in the wider organisation and in the community and with partners.
- Cross Scrutiny Working - Scrutiny committee's work is well coordinated and making best use of resources with a consistent approach to shortlisting topics.
- Scrutiny Support - closer and earlier scrutiny involvement in policy formation and alignment of corporate work programmes is enabled through an integrated model of scrutiny support.

The Scrutiny Development Plan helps to support Members to continue to prioritise the needs of the community throughout all Scrutiny activity. It will also serve as a vehicle within the Local Government Reorganisation process to support the establishment of good Scrutiny functions within the two new Unitary Authorities.

## Contacts

**Clare Killeen**, Strategic Policy & Scrutiny Manager (Officer with overall responsibility for Scrutiny and responsible for Scrutiny Management Board) Email: [Clare.Killeen@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.Killeen@cumbria.gov.uk) T: 07771 913588

**Joel Rasbash**, Strategic Policy & Scrutiny Advisor (Officer responsible for Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board) Email: [Joel.Rasbash@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Joel.Rasbash@cumbria.gov.uk) T: 07825 103565

**David Stephens**, Strategic Policy & Scrutiny Advisor (Officer responsible for Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Adults' Scrutiny Advisory Board) Email: [David.Stephens@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:David.Stephens@cumbria.gov.uk) T: 07900 698361

**Claire Notman**, Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor (Officer responsible for Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board and the Local Enterprise Partnership Scrutiny Board) Email: [Claire.Notman@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Notman@cumbria.gov.uk) T: 07787 284933

For further information on Cumbria County Council's Scrutiny boards please visit [www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/scrutiny.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/scrutiny.asp)



If you require this document in another format  
(eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in  
another language, please telephone

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ  
করে নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息，  
请致电

**Jeigu norétumète gauti šią informaciją savo kalba,  
skambinkite telefonu**

**W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę  
zatelefonować pod numer**

**Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua,  
telefone para o**

**Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen  
numaralı telefonu arayınız**