

COUNTY COUNCIL

Meeting date: 28 April 2022

From: Chair of Scrutiny Management Board

SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents to Council the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 attached as Appendix 1. It also provides Council with an update on the work of Scrutiny and issues and developments that have occurred since the last update to Council in February.**
- 1.2 The report also includes the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 attached as Appendix 2.**

2.0 ISSUES FOR THE COUNCIL

- 2.1 Members are asked to:**
- 2.2 Note the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 attached as Appendix 1;**
- 2.3 Note the recent activity undertaken by Scrutiny set out in this report; and,**
- 2.4 Note the Scrutiny Work Programme attached as Appendix 2.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

- 3.1 In this report the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board would like to present to Council the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1.**
- 3.2 This report presents a summary of Scrutiny's activity and impact over the last year. This year has been extremely busy for Scrutiny Members as they responded to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts, the beginning of the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation, and the ongoing pressures and challenges faced by the Council's services. Alongside this, Members retained a focus on issues which are critically important to residents in communities across Cumbria.**
- 3.3 The reflections from the Chairs of each Scrutiny Board or Committee included in the report demonstrate the range and volume of issues and services that Scrutiny Members have engaged in over the last year. These include:**

- The response to the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery planning;
 - Early help and family support;
 - Child exploitation;
 - Climate change;
 - The county's digital infrastructure;
 - Pressures on adult social care provision;
 - Safeguarding children and adults
 - Health and care reform;
 - Access to GP services;
 - The implementation of the Council's new ways of working; and,
 - Labour supply and skills in the county's economy
- 3.4 The report also includes a number of case studies demonstrating in more detail the impact of Scrutiny on key areas. These have included the second phase of scrutiny work on locality working and the role of the councillor in the context of local government reorganisation. The research, findings and recommendations of this work were welcomed by the Council's Cabinet and will be shared with the two new Shadow Authorities once they are established to inform consideration of future public service design in Cumbria.
- 3.5 Over the last year, Scrutiny Members have made 22 recommendations to Cabinet of which 21 were supported fully or partially.
- 3.6 The Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 will be published on the Council's new Scrutiny webpage at
- 3.7 <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/councildemocracy/scrutiny.asp>.

Scrutiny Board activity

- 3.8 The Scrutiny Management Board met on 1 March 2022 and considered two important issues – the progress made in improving customer service in relation to the Council's Single Point of Access services, and the ongoing work to improve absence management and reduce staff absence levels.
- 3.9 Following a question at the last meeting of full Council and a follow up at the meeting of SMB on 1 March, the Chair of SMB sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of a review of Cabinet and Leader and Committee models of local authority governance.
- 3.10 The Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board met on 28 March 2022 and reviewed a number of critical issues including current adult social care service and workforce pressures, safeguarding adults at risk of abuse and neglect, and the implementation of the Discharge to Assess process which moves assessments of need outside of a hospital setting and into a person's home or a care home.

- 3.11 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board met on 21 February 2022 and considered progress on tackling educational advantage and closing the attainment gap, and delivery of the Cumbria Early Help Strategy. The Board also received an overview of key issues regarding children and families health inequalities and the current and planned approaches to addressing these across the county.
- 3.12 The Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board last met on 10 March 2022 and considered strategic issues facing Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, an update on delivery of the Cumbria Coastal Strategy, and an update on the work of the Council to promote clean and inclusive growth across the county.
- 3.13 Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee met on 22 February 2022 and considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and staff and recruitment issues in both the North Cumbria and South Cumbria health systems, including a particular focus on the impact on conditions unable to be treated due to the pandemic.
- 3.14 The Committee also received a presentation from Eden Youth Council on mental health issues.
- 3.15 The Cumbria and Lancashire Joint Health Scrutiny Committee also met on 15 March 2022 to consider a report by the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust on the Care Quality Commission inspection report and recover support programme, and a report by the Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group on the community hospitals bed base review.
- 3.16 The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Scrutiny Board met on 16 March 2022 and considered the Levelling Up White Paper and its implications for LEPs, an economic overview, the journey to net zero, and the repurposing of the Cumbria Infrastructure Fund.

Scrutiny Task and Finish Activity

- 3.17 In March the Scrutiny Management Board agreed a scope for a Scrutiny Review of Health and Care reforms and their implications in Cumbria. This is due to begin its work shortly and report to the Council's Cabinet and other decision-makers by the end of this year.

Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

- 3.18 The current Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 is attached as Appendix 2. This programme of work will represent the final year of the Council's Scrutiny activity. It retains a focus on the critical issues that matter to residents in communities across the county as well as ensuring a smooth transition for the Council's customers to the two new unitary shadow authorities and gathering knowledge, experience and learning of all Scrutiny Members to share with the new councils and promote effective scrutiny for the future.

Call-Ins

3.19 No call-ins have been received since the last update to Council.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The last year has been one of significant change and challenges for the Council and Scrutiny Members have made a valuable contribution to the Council's policy development and scrutinised delivery and performance effectively. The coming year of 2022/23 will be an even more significant one for the Council and for Scrutiny Members as we aim to end well and support the new authorities to establish effective scrutiny of public services for the future.

Councillor Bill Wearing
Chair – Scrutiny Management Board

12 April 2022

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

REPORT AUTHOR

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