

Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

Foreword

Scrutiny Members have dedicated significant effort in the past year, ensuring that overview and scrutiny play a vital role in shaping a Council we can all take pride in. This Westmorland & Furness (W&F) Scrutiny Annual Report showcases their work and the positive impact it has made.

I would like to express my gratitude to all Scrutiny Members for their dedication and enthusiasm in holding decision-makers accountable for service design and delivery, ultimately striving for the best outcomes for our communities.

Beyond oversight, Scrutiny Members have actively contributed to strategy and policy development, using their expertise to enhance and shape new ideas, services, and programs for the Council.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees continue to develop strong relationships with Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, working collaboratively to address key issues and opportunities affecting the Council and our communities. We look forward to strengthening these relationships further, implementing the newly agreed Scrutiny Protocol in the coming year.

Effective leadership is essential for overview and scrutiny to function successfully and add value. I extend my appreciation to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs for their commitment to providing constructive challenge to the Council Cabinet and service providers. A special thank you to my Vice-Chair, Cllr Vicky Hughes, for her valuable insight and support.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to all Councillors who have contributed over the past year, in particular those who have led on Scrutiny activity. I would also like to thank the officers from every Directorate who have taken part in Scrutiny. You and your contribution is valued and makes a difference.

Cllr Beverly Morgan

Chair, W&F Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Westmorland & Furness Annual Scrutiny Report

This report details the work of the Westmorland & Furness Overview and Scrutiny Committees between April 2024 and March 2025. Within the report the Chair of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has provided a brief overview of the committees' ambitions and focus for the year.

It also highlights activity that demonstrates the positive impact of scrutiny in improving outcomes for our communities; as well as how we can continue to contribute to effective strategy development and decision-making in the future.

Overview and Scrutiny

Public scrutiny is the way in which the decision makers in the Westmorland & Furness area 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. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides constructive challenge to improve decision-making and support effective delivery.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Westmorland & Furness Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has overall strategic responsibility for the Overview and Scrutiny function. To support this Westmorland & Furness has additional Committees that focus on outcomes and services for specific service areas.

In addition, some of the Westmorland & Furness Committees scrutinise and oversee partner functions, such as the NHS and the Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Scrutiny Committees and Panels:

- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Adults Scrutiny Overview and Committee
- Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – includes both Westmorland & Furness and Cumberland Councillors
- Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Panel – Hosted on behalf of Westmorland & Furness and Cumberland Councils.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees roles and responsibilities

Westmorland and Furness Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Three of the key roles for Scrutiny are policy review, policy development and scrutiny of decisions and performance. In relation to these, Overview and Scrutiny Committees 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 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate Committees and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.

Health Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and scrutiny of health services in the Westmorland & Furness area is conducted by the Adults and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee:

- Discharge the functions conferred on the Authority by Section 244 of the National Health Service Act 2006 on matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Westmorland & Furness.
- Make reports and recommendations on matters relating to the health service in Westmorland & Furness to local NHS bodies and to the Council (including the health and wellbeing of Westmorland & Furness' population).
- Act as consultee as required by the relevant regulations in respect of those matters on which local NHS bodies must consult the Authority.
- Consider and respond to referrals from the Cumbria Health Watch on health matters under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as amended by the Social Care Act 2012.
- Undertake and arrange joint health scrutiny arrangements where necessary to support effective consultation with NHS bodies or local health service providers on any proposal for a substantial development of or variation in health services

Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Panel

The role of the Panel is to scrutinise and support the work of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) in their engagement with the public, setting policing and fire and rescue service priorities and holding the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer to account.

The Panel scrutinises the delivery of the Commissioner's Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2025-29 and the Commissioner's budget. The Panel's other statutory functions include:

- Annual scrutiny of the Commissioner's Council Tax Precept proposals for the Police Service, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner;
- Holding Confirmation Hearings on the appointment of a new Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer and senior officer positions within the Commissioner's office;
- Handling complaints made about the conduct of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner;
- Reviews and scrutinises the Commissioner's annual report; and
- Reviews and scrutinises the Commissioner's decisions and actions.

Scrutiny Chairs' Reflections

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This year has been a busy year for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny. Following a series of workshops in the summer involving Scrutiny Members, Cabinet, Non-Executive Members and Senior Officers we developed, approved and implemented our Scrutiny Protocol as a joint agreement to support the working arrangements between Cabinet and our Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The purpose of the workshops was to reflect on the first year of scrutiny, to discuss challenges and opportunities, to consider best practice in effective scrutiny, to engage Locality Boards, and to set a sound foundation for the year ahead so that scrutiny can make a difference. We identified and built on good practice from our sovereign councils but also recognised that we are new, with new ways of working and that our Scrutiny Protocol takes into account how we as Westmorland and Furness Council want our scrutiny function to operate for the benefit of our services and residents.

We have continued to challenge the accepted ways of working and act as champions of improvement and transformation. We also continue to recognise and highlight good practice where we see it, and identify where there are financial, social, economic and environmental benefits for our council and residents.

This year gave us our first call-in of an executive decision taken by Cabinet. It was a learning experience for everyone involved, and it has prompted the need for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to oversee the development of a clear call-in procedure so that all Members and officers are aware of the procedures and there are no gaps in the process.

Highlights for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee this year include:

- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Budget Processes
- Performance Monitoring
- Council Tax Discretionary Relief
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Foundational Strategies

Next year our focus will be on embedding the Scrutiny Protocol and using it to make our work programmes tighter and more focused. This will create more flexibility to engage town and parish councils, partner organisations and members of the public as part of our information gathering. We will also strengthen our links with Audit and Governance agreeing how we can work together better. Cllr Beverly Morgan Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Beverly Morgan

Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Westmorland and Furness Council's Adults Health Overview and Scrutiny

Committee continues to develop and improve its remit, ensuring the Council's policies and services respond to and support the well-being of all our communities and the effectiveness of service delivery.

With a large and diverse footprint, Westmorland & Furness Council takes in two Integrated Care Boards – Lancashire & South Cumbria and North East & North Cumbria. The Health and Wellbeing Board has identifies proactive ways of working together through engagement as Chair I have joined their development programme to look for collaborative opportunity and challenge. To be the best we can be.

Westmorland and Furness Council's adult health and social care system is not alone in its complexity – understanding the who, what, and the how helps committee members to identify and examine where significant pressures are and in turn enables us to encourage improvement through active questioning, discussion and feedback between us and partners.

With a new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and our own Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we are an ambitious council – for ourselves and residents. A campaign to support individuals to become smoke free by 2030 is one seemingly small yet hugely impactful example of our commitment to support public well-being.

The Council's Adult Social Care services promotes and encourages independence and well-being, and we anticipate hearing regularly from directors of services to the committee. The Council has received notice of inspection from the Care Quality Commission and have been updated and informed about readiness for this process. The work programme is a living document, sensitive to review, requests and invitations relating to service commission and delivery. With much to scrutinise, we strive to operate succinctly and thoroughly as a critical friend through constructive dialogue with partners, stakeholders and our own internal operations - recently holding an extraordinary meeting (November '24), as a direct response to planned changes to provision and operation of local health services by the NHS, and representatives and directors attended to answer questions directly to members of the committee.

Cllr Dyan Jones

Chair, Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Throughout 2024, the Children, Young People, and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has held four meetings focused on improving outcomes for children, young people, and families within Westmorland & Furness.

Our key areas of focus included:

'Ambition for Every Child' Strategy & Plan, where Members identified gaps in the initial framework, including mental health support, digital inclusion, early intervention, youth empowerment, diversity & inclusion, and private sector partnerships. These were incorporated into future versions of the strategy.

Special Educational Needs (SEND) – The Committee emphasised the urgent need for improvements in the development of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Mental Health Support – A commissioned review resulted in significant recommendations to improve the coordination and delivery of mental health support for children. This has led to a number of tangible actions being driven by a small task and finish group which includes Public Health, Family Help, Learning Improvement Service, Educational Psychology and Virtual School. In response to the initial mapping completed earlier in the year there are ongoing works to understand the needs of schools further and ensure information provided across various sources is current and consistent.

Draft Education Sufficiency Strategy – Members raised concerns over insufficient data, stressing its importance in making future decisions on balancing community needs, education quality, and financial sustainability.

Local Authority Children's Services Inspection – The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on the Council's action plan following a recent inspection. The Committee provided oversight of the action plan developed to address the issues identified in the inspection but was also pleased and reassured by the positive feedback provided in the inspection report.

Through these discussions, the Committee has played a vital role in shaping policies and ensuring that children and families receive better, more effective support across key service areas

Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

As the Council continues to establish itself, the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee has played a vital role in shaping and supporting the development of strategies and plans across a wide range of council services. It has also closely monitored the early implementation of key initiatives to ensure their effectiveness.

Acting as a critical friend, the Committee has worked alongside Cabinet Members and officers to develop strategies and policies focused on the environment, our communities, and universal council services – such as the Cumbria Local Nature Strategy, the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, Housing Strategies, the Street Lighting Policy, and the Council's new Community Power Strategy.

The Committee has also chosen to review the delivery of key strategies, such as the implementation of the Community Power Strategy, Highways Asset Management Strategy and the Council's decarbonisation plans for its estate—providing feedback to Cabinet Members and officers on performance and future direction.

Additionally, the Committee has the responsibility to oversee the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership, ensuring effective measures are in place to enhance safety across our area.

All of which has led me to be greatly impressed by the diligence and commitment of Scrutiny Members in reviewing such a broad spectrum of services and initiatives, ensuring that the Council and its partners deliver effectively for our communities.

Looking ahead, with additional scrutiny resources now secured, the Committee will work closely with our communities and partners to conduct a series of in-depth reviews, focusing on the issues that matter most to our area — amplifying local voices and driving meaningful change.

Cllr Eamonn Hennessey

Chair, Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Over the past 12 months, we continued to develop a forward work programme of activities and decisions for review and other actions taken by the Joint Executive Committee.

The Committee scrutinised the disbandment of the Local Enterprise Partnership and considered the implications for businesses and apprenticeships in Cumbria, together with what would be a fit for purpose replacement. Important disaggregation issues scrutinised this year included the Adults Urgent Care Team, considering targets as well as other factors such as a reliance on agency staff and the potential for increased costs on a service that is already at stretching point.

We scrutinised a report from the Resilience Manager for the Joint Emergency Management and Resilience (JEMR) Team. It highlighted the joint working the team had undertaken over the last 16 years, with both councils having emergency plans in place and work being done on a pan Cumbria level. It also noted the testing undertaken each month in responding to a variety of emergencies with training being completed and lessons identified.

We were to learn that an exact cost of Local Government Reorganisation was difficult to provide however, £18.92m had been contributed by the legacy councils of which there was £1.046m left with much more disaggregation still to be made.

Other areas the Committee has covered over the last year include:

- Family Group Conferencing Service
- Finance – Core Financial Systems
- Apprenticeship Service
- Finance – School's Finance Team
- County ICT, Human Resources Occupational Health Service, Payroll and HR Administration Service.

Looking to next year, we will consider disaggregation of services further. Many long term services including Active Cumbria, Active Travel, Adoption, Adult Learning, Archive Service, Children's Emergency Duty Team, Emergency Planning and Resilience, Fostering, Public Libraries Back Office & Stock Management, and Library Services for Schools (LSS), County Records Management, Residential and Edge of Care Homes and Waste Disposal have yet to be decided.

We are committed to getting the best outcomes from the decisions made by the Joint Executive Committee and holding them to account. We have a good wealth of experienced councillors who are not afraid to challenge and seek reassurance on whether the Functions and Services are operating in accordance with the Service Strategies, including the budgets and any implementation plans for disaggregation and continuing service provision.

We will as a committee identify barriers to progress, best practice and possible improvements. We will continue to hold the Joint Executive Committee to account by

providing critical challenge to ensure that it provides the high-level strategic direction for the implementation of the Service Strategies.

Cllr Mark Rudhall

Chair, Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Panel

The Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Panel (PFCCP) is a joint panel hosted by Westmorland & Furness Council comprising of Councillors from Cumberland Council, Westmorland & Furness Council, and two independent members.

The panel's role is to scrutinise and support the work of the Cumbria Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). It meets at least four times a year, carrying out a wide range of activity that contributes to the delivery of a safe and secure Cumbria.

Following the May 2024 elections, the Panel welcomed a new PFCC who subsequently developed and published their combined Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2025-29. The Panel provided feedback during the development phase before formally considering the Plan at our October 2024 meeting in accordance with our statutory duties under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The new PFCC undertook a review of the accountability and scrutiny structures of their Office. As part of seeking assurance on the PFCC's activities, the Panel asked to look at these and provided observations and feedback on particular elements of the structure, including the PFCC's Public Accountability Conference and how this could be made more accessible to the public. We also received agreement that future annual reports of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (OPFCC) scrutiny committees could be shared with our Panel to ensure any issues raised by their internal scrutiny committees were understood by the PFCCP in our role as critical friend.

Over the summer, a subgroup of the PFCCP completed a comprehensive recruitment exercise for a new co-opted independent member to be appointed to the Panel for a four-year term. The subgroup's recommendation to appoint Fiona Musgrave was approved at our October 2024 meeting and she had already made a valuable contribution to our meetings.

In addition to our regular oversight and monitoring of budgets for Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the OPFCC, in January we endorsed the PFCC's precept proposals for provision of these services. In January we also conducted a Confirmation Hearing for the new Chief Fire Officer, Paul Hancock.

During the year we looked in detail at the Cumbria Pathways Programme, a service commissioned directly by the PFCC. Looking forward to the next year, we will be reviewing commissioned services further in light of the priorities set out in the new Police, Fire and Crime Plan and the PFCC's recent review of commissioned services.

Cllr Bill McEwan

Chair, Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Scrutiny Highlights

Agreeing a Protocol between Scrutiny and Cabinet

During this reporting year a Scrutiny Protocol for Westmorland and Furness Council was developed and adopted.

A series of workshops took place across April and May involving Members from Scrutiny, Cabinet, Non Executive Members and Senior Officers. The purpose of these workshops was to reflect on the first year of scrutiny at the Council, to discuss challenges and opportunities, to consider best practice in effective scrutiny, to contribute to a new Scrutiny Protocol and to set a sound foundation for the year ahead so that scrutiny can make a difference for the people of the area.

The Protocol outlines the working relationship between the Cabinet (Executive) and Overview & Scrutiny Committees (O&S) within the Westmorland and Furness Council. It aims to ensure an effective, collaborative, and transparent scrutiny process that improves decision-making and public services.

The protocol defines key principles, emphasising the importance of a non-political, evidence-based approach that challenges decision-makers constructively. It establishes the roles and responsibilities of O&S committees, Cabinet Members, and officers, ensuring mutual understanding and accountability.

Scrutiny committees are tasked with monitoring performance, reviewing policies, and engaging the public, while the Cabinet is responsible for considering and responding to scrutiny recommendations. The document details work programming, information sharing, meeting structures, and decision-review mechanisms, including pre- and post-decision scrutiny, call-ins, and Councillor Call for Action.

By fostering effective communication, trust, and respect, the protocol seeks to enhance governance, encourage public participation, and drive service improvements across the council.

Broadening input into Scrutiny

A key part of the protocol highlights the need to develop input into the Scrutiny work programme across a range of stakeholders, it states specifically that: Items will be proactively sought via Locality Boards, with a standing Locality Board agenda item 'scrutiny referral and feedback' for Members to suggest overview and scrutiny topics; and overview and scrutiny of the decisions and focus of Locality Boards.

The Locality Boards have all agreed to this approach and have already identified a number of topics for referral to Scrutiny, Work is underway on engaging Town and Parish Councils in a similar way, and this will continue over a range of stakeholders in coming months.

Communities & Environment Overview & Scrutiny 'Call In'

The Committee recommended that the Cabinet reconsider its decision on relocating the Ulverston Library to Coronation Hall due to concerns about the consultation process, it made the following recommendations:

- **Improve Stakeholder Engagement:** Conduct further engagement with key stakeholders to ensure a more inclusive consultation process.
- **Explore Additional Funding & Support:** Hold formal discussions on securing additional funding and support for the service delivery model.
- **Develop a Consultation Framework:** Review the consultation process to establish a standardized approach for future council consultations.

The scrutiny committee found that the original consultation was not fully transparent, as consultees were directed toward a single preferred option without adequate explanation of why other options were disregarded. These recommendations aim to improve decision-making transparency, stakeholder involvement, and accountability in council decisions.

A key outcome of the Call in has been the work to develop a Westmorland & Furness Community Engagement Framework.

The emerging Engagement Framework which is being developed in conjunction with Scrutiny Members outlines a structured approach for effective engagement. It emphasises principles such as transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. The framework will include key components such as stakeholder identification, communication strategies, and feedback mechanisms. Also highlighting best practices for ensuring meaningful engagement and continuous improvement.

Health & Adults Overview and Scrutiny – extraordinary meeting regarding bed reconfigurations at University of Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust

The decision to hold a special meeting of the Committee reflected the concerns of committee members and other local community representatives, about the planned reconfiguration of wards and beds, and the public and stakeholder engagement undertaken by Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and University Hospitals Morecambe Bay NHS Trust.

The meeting provided an opportunity for committee members to ask questions and for NHS representatives to provide further detail behind the plans and their approach to public engagement so far.

The committee agreed three key recommendations:

- That the trust works together with the committee to put better measures in place to communicate future changes to the committee, and ultimately the public.
- That the timeframe for the reconfiguration be reconsidered to allow additional engagement with the public on the proposals.
- Details of the mitigations planned around the changes to ward 5 at Furness General Hospital highlighted in the Equality Impact Assessment be made public and communicated clearly to the committee.

This was seen as a productive meeting about an issue of real public concern, it provided a space for an open discussion and for committee members to speak directly to and constructively challenge local NHS senior managers.

The Committee emphasised the importance of open dialogue and will continue to encourage the NHS to broaden their consultation to include the public who will be impacted directly by proposals, as the NHS negotiates the complex choices they need to make.

Scrutiny Development Plan

The Scrutiny Development Plan sets out key initiatives to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and public engagement of scrutiny activities within the council.

The plan aims to strengthen governance, encourage accountability, and improve decision-making through better scrutiny processes.

Quality Scrutiny

Delivered in 24/25:

- Agreed the W&F Scrutiny/ Executive Protocol
- Established linked between Locality Boards and Scrutiny
- Established officer and Member links with National and regional networks: Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and North West Employers Strategic Scrutiny group

Focus for 25/26:

- Reflective review of scrutiny activities
- Strengthen coordination between Scrutiny and Audit committees
- Improve long-term planning of the Scrutiny Work Programme
- Establish a Work Programme prioritisation Framework

Supporting Members and officers

Delivered in 24/25:

- Combined scrutiny work programme shared and discussed monthly with cabinet, Corporate Management Team and Directorate Management Teams.

Focus for 25/26:

- Provide training for Senior Leadership and officers
- Develop a scrutiny e-learning package

Public Voice

Delivered in 24/25:

- Voice of public and groups sought to support scrutiny items, included contacting interest groups for a water quality item and inclusion of the town

Focus for 25/26:

- Enhance public participation in scrutiny meeting and reviews
- Nagge local third-sector groups in setting work programmes

Public profile

Delivered in 24/25:

- Scrutiny Annual Report produced
- Scrutiny webpage created

Focus for 25/26:

- Launch a quarterly scrutiny bulletin
- Increase media engagement

Scrutiny's Engagement in Strategic Planning

Scrutiny Members received a presentation from the Director of Resources (151 Officer) on the Council's 2024/25 Strategic and Budget Planning process and consultation, which outlined the current position and the proposals for delivery of a balanced budget for 2024/25 at their meeting on 20 January 2025. Scrutiny Members discussed the proposals and provided feedback which was considered by Cabinet on 11 February 2025 when forming their Budget Proposal recommendations to Full Council.

CfGS Annual Conference – Bold Governance and Courageous Scrutiny

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chair and Scrutiny Officers attended the CfGS conference to engage with colleagues on their approach to Scrutiny and reflect on the challenges and opportunities faced across the sector. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) Annual Conference brought together a community of delegates, speakers, and facilitators to explore the evolving landscape of local government and democracy. The event featured thought-provoking sessions, workshops, and discussions, all centred on the theme of seizing the opportunity for transformation.

Key Themes & Takeaways:

- **A Defining Moment for Local Government:** The sector is undergoing fundamental reshaping, not just through cost-cutting or small reforms but through major devolution and transformation agendas.
- **Structural Changes Ahead:** Many councils will be replaced, new mayoral elections will be held, and service delivery models will evolve significantly.
- **The Role of Governance & Scrutiny:** There is an urgent need to rethink local democracy, define new relationships between the state and the people, and ensure effective scrutiny of new institutions.

The Chair and Vice Chair of W&F Corporate Overview & Scrutiny were able to provide delegates with their experiences of delivering effective Scrutiny through the Local Government Reorganisation process, which was of significant interest. They were also able to gather significant insights on the challenges and opportunities of effective Scrutiny within Combined Authorities, which will help inform the Council's approach in the coming year.

Looking Ahead

All Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are dedicated to providing an impactful overview and scrutiny function to ensure effective services for all communities within the Westmorland & Furness area.

In early 2025 the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny recommended to Cabinet and CMT that additional funding be allocated to increase capacity to meet the organisation's needs in respect of the scrutiny function. This would be to increase the effective support to scrutiny to a reasonable benchmark. Cabinet considered and agreed the recommendation and approved the resources to appoint two additional Policy & Scrutiny Project Officers to support the Scrutiny Function. These additional posts will be appointed to by early Summer 2025.

The focus of this additional capacity will be on the delivery of the principles set out in the Scrutiny Protocol and the actions in the development plan, as well as supporting Scrutiny Members to undertake in depth Scrutiny Reviews which are often the best mechanism to demonstrate meaningful impact.

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