

Scrutiny Outside Body Representative Feedback

Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee

Membership of this committee requires an eye for detail and an ability to translate the dense jargon and acronyms that populate almost all of the reports tabled by officials. I like to think, as a former civil servant (who, I confess, often wrote the very kind of reports I now wade through) I have the necessary skill set. However, it takes a bit of time to find your feet as the committee has a number of very experienced councillors who talk in the same “language” as the officials.

There have been two inextricably linked themes to Committees I have attended: the impact of Covid 19 and NHS recruitment difficulties.

Whilst the reports may be a bit far from a light read, the impressive thing is that senior NHS leaders do attend. So, I have been able to ask questions about Allerdale issues and I have received crisp and easy to follow responses. For example, the challenge a few months ago was the inability to discharge patients from hospital due to there being no social care packages. Also, staff absences due to Covid affected all hospitals. We received, a couple of meetings ago, a report on dental services and how the issue was now the shortage of patients! That is, people were afraid to visit as their perception was the service was closed or unsafe. That led on to discussions on communication and we as councillors could add our local insight and suggestions.

West Cumbria continues to have a serious issue in being able to attract key professionals. I have been able to talk about how Allerdale Borough Council's strategies with town development, sport and culture, all go towards making Allerdale a place where people will want to live and work. It's not all about the lakes and fells.

I now have an enhanced understanding of how the Committee holds the NHS services to account and the ability to listen and talk to senior leaders. As they get to know you, you can see they take note of particular issues and their responses the next time are more focused. Unfortunately I missed a couple of meetings due to family bereavements, one being a loss to pancreatic cancer and the level of care from the hospital was not the highest standard. This personal insight enabled me, without talking about my specific personal experience, to give focused feedback to the Chief Operating Officer, Peter Rooney. I have also been elected as Vice Chair at two of the Committee meetings.

In conclusion, this is an important committee that requires investment in time and I hope to build on my experience in future, for the benefit of people in Allerdale.

Councillor Andy Semple

Cumbria Police and Crime Panel Joint Committee

These meetings are held on a quarterly basis.

I have attended two meetings out of two.

Representing the Council gives me a chance to raise points given to me by fellow councillors and keeps me up to date on what the Office of the PCC is doing.

Because of the time of the year, the first meeting was focused on the recruitment of Police Officers, where the PCC was hopeful to recruit 117 Officers for Cumbria, at the meeting in October 65 have been recruited, but the stalling point was to get them trained and up to speed.

The PCC was hoping to fill some of the vacancies with PCSO Officers as they have been trained, the backfill the number of PCSO's.

Drug Dealing was still rising, County lines were having some success by targeting higher up the food chain rather the small-time dealers.

At the time of the meeting Workington was the 'Crime Capital' but the statistics didn't include Carlisle.

The second meeting I attended was to approve the PCC/Police Budget for 2022/23.

In short I believe representation to the joint committee is essential as it gives a snapshot of what is happening in Cumbria during that quarter, plus the added value of holding the PPC and Cumbria Police to account on various problems that are occurring in Allerdale, and making sure that these are recorded.

Both the PCC and Cumbria police are very impressed with the Workington Hub based in Allerdale House, Workington and holds that as a model of excellence for the rest of Cumbria.

Councillor Alan Smith

West Cumbria Site Stakeholders Group

The group meetings are held four times a year; in February, May, August and November.

For personal reasons I have only attended one meeting which was some time ago now therefore it is difficult to report back on my input in to this group.

I do believe however it is important for us to be part of these external bodies to gain information for future workings and collaboration and I would / will attend if and when I can going forward.

Councillor Tony Markley