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Meeting: Scrutiny Commission

Date: Tuesday 23rd November, 2021

Time: 7.00 pm


Venue: Council Chamber, Cedar Drive, Thrapston, NN14 4LZ

To Members of the Scrutiny Commission:

Councillors Wendy Brackenbury (Chair), Kevin Watt (Vice Chair), Matt Binley, Robin Carter, John Currall, Mark Dearing, Jim Hakewill, Philip Irwin, John McGhee, Elliot Prentice, Simon Rielly, Geoff Shacklock and Lee Wilkes

Substitutes:

Councillors Lyn Buckingham, Peter McEwan and Sarah Tubbs

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<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer Monday 15 November 2021</p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Committee Administrator: Louise Tyers - Democratic Services

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ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Requests to address the meeting must be received by 5pm two clear working days before the meeting. Statements must relate to matters detailed on the meeting agenda. You will have a maximum of three minutes in which to make your statement and you will make it at the start of the agenda item	5pm Thursday 18 November
Member Agenda Statements	Requests to address the meeting must be received by 5pm two clear working days before the meeting. Statements must relate to matters detailed on the meeting agenda. You will have a maximum of three minutes in which to make your statement and you will make it at the start of the agenda item	5pm Thursday 18 November

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Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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Scrutiny Commission

At 7:00pm on Tuesday 24 August 2021

Held in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby

Present:

Councillor Wendy Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Matt Binley

Councillor Philip Irwin

Councillor Simon Rielly

Councillor Robin Carter

Councillor John McGhee

Councillor Lee Wilkes

In attendance:

Councillor Anne Lee

7. Apologies for non-attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors John Currall, Mark Dearing, Jim Hakewill, Elliot Prentice, Geoff Shacklock and Kevin Watt.

8. Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Notification of requests to address the meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

11. Scrutiny Review in to Levelling Up Communities

The Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing presented the report which provided the Scrutiny Commission with an initial scoping document to set the terms of the scrutiny review proposed in the Council motion on 28 July 2021.

At Full Council on 28 July, a motion was moved by Councillor Zoe McGhee and seconded by Councillor Lee. During the debate on the motion, an amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Binley and seconded by Councillor Lawal and agreed as:

"North Northamptonshire Council notes that Kingswood in Corby, Avondale Grange in Kettering and Queensway in Wellingborough are among the

neighbourhoods identified across the country by an All-Party Parliamentary Group as 'left behind'. This motion calls for the Scrutiny Commission to review the underlying data and associated report relating to areas highlighted as "left behind". Working with our communities and partners to propose an approach on the way forward, including learning from the Big Local Programme in Kingswood, in order to develop a plan on how we can level up - as per the government's levelling up agenda - those left behind neighbourhoods here in North Northamptonshire in an appropriate and agreed timeframe. This may involve specifically targeting health inequalities, youth unemployment and new skills, and improving housing in these areas."

During the debate on the report, Members considered the scoping document in detail. All Members welcomed the proposed review and felt that the scoping document set out a solid foundation to take this work forward. It was felt that with regards to the timeframe of the review, there may be different targets for different objectives as some may be able to be achieved more quickly. This would not be a short-term review and short, medium and long-term strategies may be needed. It was acknowledged that there were already pockets of good practice, but open and honest discussions were needed about when things had not happened or were not successful. Working with local people would be key to this review and the need to build partnerships would be important. A key aspect of the review would be to visit the three neighbourhoods mentioned in the report to look at the issues such as the local environment, however these visits would need to be at realistic times of the day e.g. in the evening. The Council was seen as the catalyst for this review, but local people needed to be enabled to take ownership. It was suggested that the first meeting of the Group should look at the scoping document in detail to help identify the appropriate resources needed for the review. The Group would provide an update on the progress of the review to each meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Scrutiny Commission agrees to establish a Task and Finish Group consisting of 7 elected members, from which there will be at least one member from each of the wards which cover the neighbourhoods mentioned in the Scoping Document.
- (ii) the Scrutiny Commission will seek nominations to the Task and Finish Group from all non-executive members, with the final membership of the Group determined by the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission.
- (iii) the Chair of the Task and Finish Group will be determined by the members of the Group.
- (iv) the Task and Finish Group will determine any additional membership of the Group from appropriate stakeholders.

12. Update on Work Planning

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which provided an update on the proposed Scrutiny Conference and on the Scrutiny Panels to be convened by the Scrutiny Commission.

Both the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee had agreed to hold a Scrutiny Conference to facilitate the drafting of a workplan. The Conference would be facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and would now be held on Saturday 9 October. Since the Commission's last meeting, two items had been proposed to be included in the scrutiny workplan and the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee would also be focussing on the budget process in the coming months. The delay in the Conference would not impact upon the important work of scrutiny for this year and if agreed these pieces of work would be commenced before the Conference.

It was agreed by Council in May 2021 that a review would be commenced into Outside Bodies and the appointments made to them on behalf of the Council. Work has been undertaken since then to under the Outside Bodies previously appointed to by the predecessor councils and the nature of the appointments to them. It is now proposed that a politically balanced Scrutiny Panel is established to review the list of Outside Bodies and determine whether the Council should make/continue to make an appointment to those bodies. The findings of the Panel would be reported to the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission who would notify the Leader of the Council so that he may appoint to Key Strategic Partnerships and the Monitoring Officer so that she may seek nominations for the remaining Outside Bodies. If more nominations are received than allocated places and agreement cannot be reached by members as to who should be appointed, then the Council will be presented with options for approval at their meeting in September 2021.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the establishment of a Scrutiny Panel to undertake a review of Outside Bodies.
- (ii) To approve the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Panel.

13. Executive Forward Plan – August to November 2021

The Scrutiny Commission received the Executive Forward Plan which showed the key and significant decisions the Executive would be making over the next few months.

RESOLVED to note the Executive Forward Plan.

14. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Chair

Date

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION 23 November 2021

Report Title	Review of the Planning Service
Report Author	Rob Harbour, Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration Rob.harbour@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Member	Cllr David Brackenbury Executive Member for Growth & Regeneration

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update members on the work that has been and continues to be undertaken to review the Planning service within North Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In April 2021, North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) became the new local planning authority for the area of North Northamptonshire. This brought together the four former district and borough planning services along with the former County Council's Minerals & Waste Planning Service.
- 2.2 In order to deliver a single, harmonised Planning service and ensure that NNC is capable of delivering high-quality services for the future, a review of the Planning service is being undertaken. Work on the review started in January 2020 under the Future Northants programme and will continue for some time to come, as there is a longer term ambition to deliver transformation of the Planning service through a restructuring of the planning teams and the digitalisation of many of the operational systems within the planning process. This report describes the main elements of work that have been undertaken through the review to date, as well as those it is proposed to carry out in the future.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission:
- a) Note the content of the report and consider the role that Scrutiny might play in the review of Planning services as outlined in this report.

- 3.2 *(Reason for Recommendation: To ensure that the Scrutiny Commission has the opportunity to review and add value to the proposed work identified to progress towards a harmonised and high performing Planning service)*

4. Report Background

Background:

- 4.1 On 1 April 2021, NNC became the new local authority for North Northamptonshire and in doing so, took over the statutory function of the local planning authority (LPA) across the area.
- 4.2 This reorganisation of local government necessitated the merging of the four former district and borough LPA's (the Borough Council of Wellingborough, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council and Kettering Borough Council) to form a single local planning authority as NNC. In addition to this, the former Northamptonshire County Council's (NCC) Minerals and Waste Planning service has also been incorporated into NNC's Planning service, although it continues to operate across the whole of Northamptonshire county providing the service to West Northamptonshire Council under the 'lead authority' model.
- 4.3 Work to prepare NNC for its role as the LPA commenced in January 2020 through the Future Northants programme and continues now, working towards the completion of the transformation of the Planning service for North Northamptonshire. It is estimated that this transformation work is unlikely to be concluded until some point during the 2024/25 municipal year, as there are both short-term and longer-term projects that will need to be undertaken.

Work undertaken before 1 April 2021:

- 4.4 A considerable amount of work was undertaken by the North Northamptonshire Chief Planning Officer group, which fed into the Future Northants programme. The focus of this work was to ensure that the planning function would be in a position to operate safely and legally when the transition to NNC occurred. Items of work included for example:
- Collection of baseline data across all former LPA's
 - Development of options for a new planning committee structure
 - Drafting of a Scheme of Delegation for the Planning service
 - Drafting of a harmonised Planning Enforcement Policy
 - Drafting of a harmonised Planning Committee Right to Speak proposal
 - Drafting of proposals for the harmonisation of non-statutory fees and charges
 - Drafting of harmonised privacy notices
 - Design of front-end webpages for the new NNC website
 - Comparison of existing website information and alignment where possible
 - Ensuring new procedures were in place for transactions with third party organisations (i.e. Planning Inspectorate, Planning Portal, statutory consultees etc)

- 4.5 As a result of this preparatory work, by the time NNC came into being, the planning committee structure, Scheme of Delegation, Planning Enforcement Policy and Planning Committee Right to Speak scheme had been approved by North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority. Furthermore, the work undertaken to harmonise some of the key back-office processes ensured that NNC was able to operate a safe and legal Planning service from Day 1.

Work undertaken between 1 April 2021 and present day:

- 4.6 It is recognised that having an ability to operate safely and legally is only the first step on the journey towards becoming the fully integrated and high performing planning service that NNC aspires to deliver. It is also evident that NNC has inherited significant disparities between the capacity available across each of the area planning teams and that the performance of the teams and their working practices also varies. Further work is therefore required to bring together the former planning teams to ensure that they operate in a consistent manner and can deliver similar levels of performance.
- 4.7 In order to continue the journey and in addition to business as usual, further work has been completed since the 1 April, which includes:
- Delivery of Member training by the Planning Advisory Service for all Members appointed to sit on the Council's planning committees
 - Implementation of the new planning committee structure
 - Close working between officers and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the planning committees to engender a consistent approach to the operation of planning committees (including the first review meeting to consider what has worked well and where further improvements can be made)
 - Appointment of interim Tier 4 lead officers covering Planning Management & Enforcement (Martyn Swann) and Planning Policy (Simon Richardson)
 - Development of a Planning Protocol (being considered by the Democracy & Standards Committee on the 16 November)
 - Development of a Planning Site Visit Protocol (being considered by the Democracy & Standards Committee on the 16 November)
 - A Review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation by the Constitutional Working Group
 - Development of a draft work programme for the Planning Policy service
 - Agreeing an Inter Authority Agreement for the Minerals & Waste Planning service to operate in a lead authority role
 - Further harmonisation of non-statutory planning fees and charges
 - Development of a harmonised Planning Performance Agreement template
 - Audit of S106 monitoring and management (now at draft report stage)
 - Business analysis work to understand the work demands across each of the area planning teams and to identify the resource requirements for each team to enable a consistent approach and quality of service across all teams
 - Review of risk strategy for the service
 - Review of key performance indicators for the Development Management, Minerals and Waste Planning and the Planning Policy service areas

Future work:

4.8 There remains much work to do over the next 2 – 3 years in order to fully develop a harmonised Planning service that can deliver consistently high-quality services for North Northamptonshire.

4.9 Apart from continuing to review and refine current operational practices and committee procedures, there are a number of specific tasks to undertake, which are outlined below:

4.10 Restructure of the Planning Service

4.10.1 This work is already in progress and is phased. The first phase of which is focussed on establishing a managerial structure for the Planning service (Tiers 4 and 5) and undertaking the business analysis work that will help to inform the potential team structures (Tier 6 and below) for each of the area development management planning teams.

4.10.2 Phase two will focus on establishing area planning teams that are suitably resourced to reflect the work demands expected to be placed upon each team.

4.11 Planning Enforcement

4.11.1 It is recognised that the planning enforcement capacity inherited from the former district and borough authorities is inadequate and that the resources currently available to NNC are unable to deliver an agile and effective enforcement service.

4.11.2 An early piece of work undertaken through the review was to ensure that NNC had a single, harmonised Planning Enforcement Policy, which as mentioned in 4.5 above, was agreed and in place before the 1 April this year.

4.11.3 A further piece of work and a key priority of the restructuring of the Planning service is to provide a significantly upscaled planning enforcement service. The intention is not only to increase the capacity of the team, but also to improve the effective use of that capacity by creating a single North Northants-wide team that can be deployed in an agile way across the area to meet the demands upon this service.

4.12 S106 Management

4.12.1 It is known that there is wide variation in the inherited processes for managing S106 agreements across North Northamptonshire. Not all area planning teams currently have responsibility for agreements, as for example, in Corby S106 management has historically been undertaken through the former council's Legal service. There is also variation across the area teams in the amount of capacity available for undertaking S106 management.

4.12.2 Another priority outcome of the restructuring of the Planning service is therefore to create a single North Northants S106 team. This team should have an appropriate level of capacity to effectively manage S106 agreements and maintain a database of up-to-date records. This will ensure that developer

contributions are collected at the right time, are distributed according to the agreements and that the use of these monies is monitored to ensure they accord with the agreement and is spent within the agreed time periods. The team should also have the capacity to respond to S106 related enquiries and produce and publish statutory information when necessary, such as the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement.

- 4.12.3 An audit of S106 management has recently been undertaken and the resulting audit report is currently being prepared. It is anticipated that the report will make a number of recommendations that will help to inform and guide the work required in order to establish the S106 team and to develop a harmonised set of procedures for the management of the agreements.

4.13 Planning Policy Service

- 4.13.1 The Planning Policy service does not suffer from the same ICT constraints as the Planning Management service (discussed further in 4.15 below) and it is therefore an easier task to bring together officers from the former districts and boroughs to form a single North Northants Planning Policy team. This process is already underway and also incorporates staff from the former North Northamptonshire Joint Planning & Delivery Unit.

- 4.13.2 Further work will be undertaken through the restructuring of the Planning service to ensure that adequate resource is available within the service to progress key pieces of planning policy work, such as the development of a new North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (currently known as the Joint Core Strategy), input into the OxCam Arc Spatial Framework, the development of other policy documents such as a Gypsy & Traveller Site Allocations policy, as well as being able to offer support to the growing number of neighbourhood plans that are under development.

4.14 Website

- 4.14.1 Work was undertaken prior to the 1 April to develop a new set of front-end web pages for the Planning service and to ensure that the information contained on the existing former authority websites was aligned wherever possible.
- 4.14.2 Further work is however necessary in order to migrate to a single set of web pages that contain up to date, appropriate content which will help to meet the online needs of customers and other users of the Planning service. The development of the website should improve the customer's ability to access public planning information and complete transactions online wherever possible. By doing so, this work will help to improve public access to information and the speed of service.

4.15 Digitalisation and ICT System Transformation

- 4.15.1 A key transformation project that it is anticipated will deliver improvements to the processing of planning applications, driving better performance and increasing the cost effectiveness of the service is the digitalisation of the planning system and rationalisation of back-office IT systems.

- 4.15.2 At the current time, each area planning team along with the Minerals & Waste Planning service all operate individual planning IT systems that are self-contained and do not speak to each other. Although the same software is used in several of the area teams, the way in which each team has historically used the software varies and all planning data is held in separate databases in each team. This constrains the way in which the development management teams can collaborate and how staff could be used more flexibly across North Northamptonshire.
- 4.15.3 In addition to this, government made clear through their Planning White Paper 'Planning for the Future', published in August 2020, that LPA's should take steps to increase the digitalisation of the planning system. This was a proposal supported by the former North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee in its response to the consultation.
- 4.15.4 This transformation project therefore intends to investigate new digital technology and the IT products currently on the market, with a view to procuring a single planning back office system for use by all development management teams across North Northants. And along with this, introducing technology that enables the digitalisation of the planning system wherever possible (such as the receipt and validation of planning applications).
- 4.15.5 This project will require significant input from the Transformation, ICT, Building Control, Local Land Charges and Procurement services, and therefore needs to be incorporated into the corporate transformation programme, to ensure support and input can be provided as and when required.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The issue that Members should consider is which elements of the ongoing review of the Planning service the Scrutiny Commission wish to be involved in.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The review of the Planning service structure must be completed within an existing budget envelope. This will be challenging as there is significant demand upon the service and an expectation that a number of new posts will be created from within the budget, such as Tier 4 roles and additional Planning Enforcement Officers. It is however important to recognise the overarching budget position of the Council and therefore the proposals that are developed for the Planning service should avoid creating additional budget pressures wherever possible.
- 6.1.2 The longer-term digitalisation and ICT transformation project will require financial investment. This will need to be assessed through market testing and the development of a business case to establish that the perceived benefits of the project are deliverable and will result in longer-term savings, making the project an invest to save proposal.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 The Planning service has a number of statutory obligations that it must fulfil. A failure of the LPA to follow due process and make timely and sound planning decisions might not only lead to an appeal of a decision but may also result in Judicial Review.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 Planning is a statutory function of the Council and must operate to performance levels set by government for the speed and quality of decision making. This is monitored through statutory returns. Failure of the LPA to achieve the necessary performance standards risks the Planning service being 'designated' and placed in special measures. Where this occurs, the LPA loses the power to determine all planning applications, as applicants can choose to have their applications determined by the Planning Inspectorate instead of the LPA.
- 6.3.2 Should the Council fail to operate an effective Planning service, there is not only a risk of reputational damage to the Authority, but also an increased risk of appeals against decisions and where the Council is judged to have acted unreasonably a further risk of cost awards.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 Consultation is a regular feature of the review of Planning services, including consultation with Members of the Shadow Authority regarding the proposed planning committee structure and Scheme of Delegation for planning that was put in place before the 1 April 2021. Consultation has recently been undertaken with the Council's Constitutional Working Group on the draft Planning Protocol and Planning Site Visit Protocol. Further consultation will also be required with staff, the HR service and trade unions in relation to proposals for the future structure of the Planning service.

6.5 Climate Impact

- 6.5.1 The provision of a high-quality Planning service can make a positive contribution towards climate/environmental impact through the development and introduction of climate/environmental planning policies and through ensuring that robust environmental and ecological assessments are made of planning proposals when they are submitted to the Council.

6.6 Community Impact

- 6.6.1 The Planning service impacts upon local communities through the planning policies it develops that influence how and where growth occurs across North Northamptonshire, as well as through the decisions it makes on planning applications that determine whether development proposals can be built, which include assessments of what impact a development might have on a local area.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 No background papers

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION

23 November 2021

Report Title	Levelling Up Communities update report	
Report Author	David Watts Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing david.watts@northnorthants.gov.uk	
Elected Member Lead	Cllr Zoe McGhee, Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Working Group chair	
Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
North MO		
North S151		
Other Director/SME		

List of Appendices

Appendix A:

Presentation to the Scrutiny Review Group – “Levelling Up” (09 November 2021)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide the Scrutiny Commission with an update on progress to date with the “Levelling up communities Scrutiny Review”.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 An amended motion at Full Council on 28 July 2021 called for the Scrutiny Commission to review the underlying data and associated report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”.
- 2.2 Kingswood in Corby, Avondale Grange in Kettering, and Queensway in Wellingborough are among the neighbourhoods identified across the country as ‘left behind’.
- 2.3 The scrutiny review is seeking to:
- Review and understand the underlying data and report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”
 - Engage with and explore the views of people within those neighbourhoods to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - Engage with and explore the views of partner agencies and voluntary and charitable organisations to understand the challenges and opportunities

- Understand and learn from the Big Local programme in Kingswood, identifying both good practice and challenges that can help shape future proposals
 - Make recommendations to council around a potential plan
- 2.4 Working with our communities and partners to propose an approach on the way forward, including learning from the Big Local Programme in Kingswood, in order to develop a plan on how we can level up - as per the government's levelling up agenda - those left behind neighbourhoods here in North Northamptonshire in an appropriate and agreed timeframe. This may involve specifically targeting health inequalities, youth unemployment and new skills, and improving housing in these areas."
- 2.5 To date there have been two Levelling up Scrutiny Review meetings, 06 October 2021, and 09 November 2021.
- 2.6 At the first meeting the scrutiny review group appointed the chair of the Scrutiny Review Group, Cllr Zoe McGhee, reviewed the Terms of Reference and Scoping Document to shape the different methods that would be used to explore the area of scrutiny.
- 2.7 At the second meeting, it was agreed that each community-based session would take place on consecutive weekends as follows:

Date	Area	Session content
Saturday 27 November 2021	Avondale Grange (Kettering)	13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working
Saturday 04 December 2021	Kingswood & Hazel Leys (Corby)	
Saturday 11 December 2021	Queensway (Wellingborough)	15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed)

- 2.8 The scrutiny review group also agreed that the next formal meetings of the group should be themed as follows:

Meeting	Theme
December 2021	Anti-social behaviour and knife crime
January 2022	Exclusion from education, skills, and employment
February 2022	The themes for the February and March meetings will be agreed by the scrutiny review group based on the other themes identified within the three community sessions taking place in November and December.
March 2022	

- 2.9 The scrutiny review group also received a presentation that provided a precis of the background reports from the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (**Appendix A**). There was some discussion about needing a more granular detail of the underlying data to understand which themes are more prevalent in each of the three areas. This will be explored as part of the review.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission:

- a) Receive an update and note the progress of the Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Working Group (SRWG)
- b) Provide comments or suggestions for consideration by the (SRWG) as it moves forward with its planned engagement over the coming months
- c) Note that the (SRWG) intend to compile an interim progress report following its community engagement sessions in November and December, and identify any early suggestions or ideas that may benefit from early progression or consideration

3.2 Reason for recommendations are as follows:

- The levelling up agenda is a key priority for exploration on behalf of the Scrutiny Commission
- To provide assurance to the Scrutiny Commission on progress to date and plans for continued progression of the scrutiny review
- To provide assurance that wherever any early suggestions are identified that there is a mechanism to raise those through an interim report prior to the conclusion of the full scrutiny review

4. Report Background

- 4.1 An amended motion at Full Council on 28 July 2021 called for the Scrutiny Commission to review the underlying data and associated report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”.
- 4.2 Kingswood in Corby, Avondale Grange in Kettering, and Queensway in Wellingborough are among the neighbourhoods identified across the country as ‘left behind’.
- 4.3 The scrutiny review is seeking to:
- Review and understand the underlying data and report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”
 - Engage with and explore the views of people within those neighbourhoods to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - Engage with and explore the views of partner agencies and voluntary and charitable organisations to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - Understand and learn from the Big Local programme in Kingswood, identifying both good practice and challenges that can help shape future proposals
 - Make recommendations to council around a potential plan
- 4.4 Working with our communities and partners to propose an approach on the way forward, including learning from the Big Local Programme in Kingswood, to develop a plan on how we can level up - as per the government’s levelling up agenda - those left behind neighbourhoods here in North Northamptonshire in an appropriate and agreed timeframe. This may involve specifically targeting health inequalities, youth unemployment and new skills, and improving housing in these areas.”

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The levelling up agenda is important to residents and to the council as a priority. The focus of the scrutiny review is as follows:
- This review aims to tackle issues of direct relevance to local people.
 - Aims to involve engaging with a wide range of people, drawing them together and building consensus around developing levelling up plans
 - Will consider how approaches can challenge the accepted ways of doing things and acting as a champion for developing a culture of improvement in multiple areas.
 - This review aims to deliver a positive impact on the geographical areas identified as “left behind” and on associated population indicators and performance
 - Arriving at clear conclusions to deliver tangible outcome improvements through clear recommendations to develop a Levelling Up plan
- 5.2 Due to the focussed nature of a scrutiny review it is important to have a clear scope and understand the limitations. At this point the scrutiny review is focussed on the three areas identified in the Left behind communities’ reports

referenced as background papers. However, it is important to recognise that any insights gathered through the scrutiny review could apply to other wards and areas across North Northamptonshire.

- 5.3 To date there have been two Levelling up Scrutiny Review meetings. The first meeting took place on 06 October 2021, appointed the chair of the Scrutiny Review Group, Cllr Zoe McGhee, and reviewed the Terms of Reference and Scoping Document in order to shape the different methods that would be used to explore the area of scrutiny.
- 5.4 The working group were keen that sessions would take place in those communities affected and should include spending time looking around those areas and talking to local people about their experiences.
- 5.5 The second meeting took place on 09 November 2021. It was agreed that each community-based session would take place on consecutive weekends as follows:

Date	Area	Session content
Saturday 27 November 2021	Avondale Grange (Kettering)	13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working
Saturday 04 December 2021	Kingswood & Hazel Leys (Corby)	15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed)
Saturday 11 December 2021	Queensway (Wellingborough)	

- 5.6 In addition, the scrutiny review group agreed that the next formal meetings of the group should be themed. It was felt beneficial to agree the focus of the December and January meetings in order to plan and allow time to invite people/professionals/organisations that may give evidence to the scrutiny review and give them an idea of the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) that will be explored at those meetings.
- 5.7 The scrutiny review group also received a presentation that provided a precis of the background reports from the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing. There was some discussion about needing a more granular detail of the underlying data to understand which themes are more prevalent in each of the three areas. This will be explored as part of the review.
- 5.8 The themes agreed for the formal meetings by the scrutiny review group are identified as follows:

Meeting	Theme
December 2021	Anti-social behaviour and knife crime
January 2022	Exclusion from education, skills, and employment
February 2022	The themes for the February and March meetings will be agreed by the scrutiny review group based on the other themes identified within the three community sessions taking place in November and December.
March 2022	

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 At this point no budget has been required to facilitate the work to date, however the following identifies some of the resources that will be required through officer time:
- Lead officers identified to support in coordinating activity including site visits and developing and administering surveys
 - Consideration for external independent support to facilitate engagement sessions
 - Literature review – potentially support from public health with analysing data, the report and associated literature to advise the scrutiny review
- 6.1.2 The review will seek to identify any potential funding opportunities that may be available locally, regionally, or nationally to support the levelling up agenda.
- 6.1.3 Whilst not yet concluded, there may eventually be financial commitments required to deliver recommendations that are identified within the scrutiny review.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this update report.

6.3 Risk

- 6.4 The main risks are insufficient resources to support the review appropriately (people) and the risk of creep in the scope of the review.
- 6.5 At this point the risks have not yet materialised, however the scrutiny review group will continue to monitor the risks and where necessary escalate them to the Scrutiny Commission should there be a risk to the deliverability of the review in its entirety.

6.6 Consultation

- 6.6.1 The next phase of the review intends to undertake engagement sessions in the three Left Behind Neighbourhoods as part of its evidence gathering as follows:

Saturday 27 November 2021	Avondale Grange (Kettering)	13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working
Saturday 04 December 2021	Kingswood & Hazel Leys (Corby)	
Saturday 11 December 2021	Queensway (Wellingborough)	15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed)

- 6.6.2 In addition, the themes of future meetings will ensure wider engagement with key stakeholders giving evidence to the scrutiny review against those themes as follows:

December 2021	Anti-social behaviour and knife crime
January 2022	Exclusion from education, skills, and employment
February 2022	The themes for the February and March meetings will be agreed by the scrutiny review group based on the other themes identified within the three community sessions taking place in November and December.
March 2022	

6.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.7.1 This scrutiny review will contribute to the overall scrutiny agenda.
- 6.7.2 This update report will be considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its next meeting on 23 November 2021.

6.8 Climate Impact

- 6.8.1 There are no direct impacts because of the work to date. However, future recommendations from the review may consider and recommend environmental changes that could positively benefit those communities.

6.9 Community Impact

- 6.9.1 This scrutiny review is expected to positively impact on raising awareness and advising the council on approaches it may consider in taking to address the challenge of left behind communities.
- 6.9.2 Any proposals that subsequently are brought forward by the council would require Equality Impact Assessments that will provide a greater understanding of the impacts on local communities.

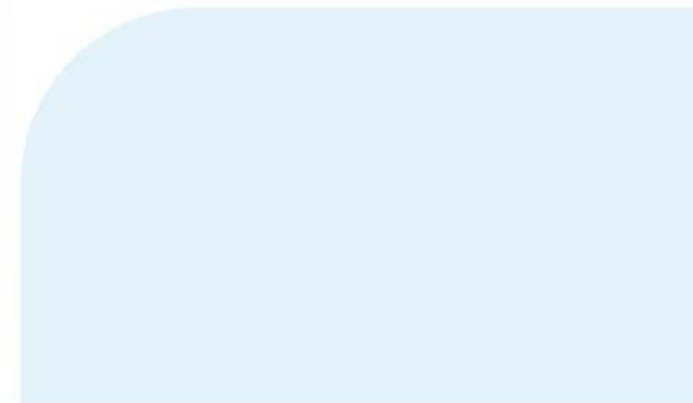
7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The following background papers are relevant to this update report:
- 7.1.1 Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – full report
[local_trust_ocsi_left_behind_research_august_2019.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/local-trust-ocsi-left-behind-research-august-2019.pdf)
- 7.1.2 Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – summary report
[Local-Trust-Left-Behind-Report-Executive-Summary-December-2019.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/Local-Trust-Left-Behind-Report-Executive-Summary-December-2019.pdf)
- 7.1.3 Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2020) – interim data set
[Left-Behind-Areas-IMD-2019-REVISED-SLIDE-DECK-with-revised-unemployment-slide-Read-Only-copy.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/Left-Behind-Areas-IMD-2019-REVISED-SLIDE-DECK-with-revised-unemployment-slide-Read-Only-copy.pdf)

- 7.1.4 [The All Party Parliamentary Group publishes our report on the strength of community and charitable giving in 'Left behind' neighbourhoods - OCSI](#)
- 7.1.5 Scrutiny Review in to Levelling Up Communities (24 August 2021)
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2211/Scrutiny%20Review%20in%20to%20Levelling%20Up%20Communities.pdf>
- 7.2 Scrutiny Review – Levelling Up Communities scoping document (24 August 2021)
[Blank Scrutiny Scoping Document \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Levelling up

Scrutiny review



David Watts

Executive Director for Adults,
Communities and Wellbeing

09 November 2021

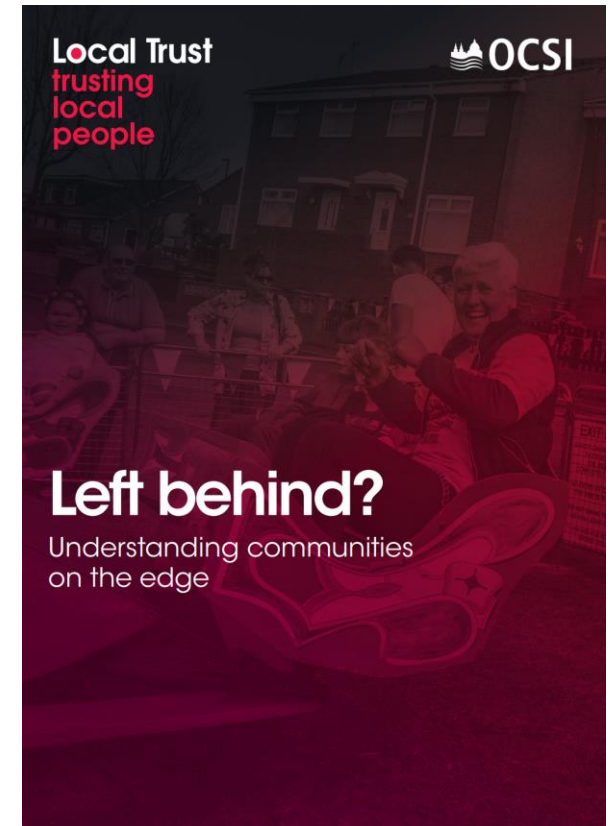
The background

Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – full report
[local_trust_ocsi_left_behind_research_august_2019.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/local-trust-ocsi-left-behind-research-august-2019.pdf)

Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – summary report
[Local-Trust-Left-Behind-Report-Executive-Summary-December-2019.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/local-trust-left-behind-report-executive-summary-december-2019.pdf)

Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2020) – interim data set
[Left-Behind-Areas-IMD-2019-REVISED-SLIDE-DECK-with-revised-unemployment-slide-Read-Only-copy.pdf \(localtrust.org.uk\)](https://localtrust.org.uk/left-behind-areas-imd-2019-revised-slide-deck-with-revised-unemployment-slide-read-only-copy.pdf)

[The All Party Parliamentary Group publishes our report on the strength of community and charitable giving in 'Left behind' neighbourhoods - OCSI](#)



Community Needs Index

- The index covers 19 indicators, across three domains;
- **Civic Assets:** Measures the presence of key community, civic, educational and cultural assets in close proximity of the area. These include pubs, libraries, green space, community centres, swimming pools – facilities that provide things to do often, at no or little cost, which are important to how positive a community feels about its area.
- **Connectedness:** Measures the connectivity to key services, digital infrastructure, isolation and strength of the local jobs market. It looks at whether residents have access to key services, such as health services, within a reasonable travel distance. It considers how good public transport and digital infrastructure are and how strong the local job market is.
- **Active and Engaged Community:** Measures the levels of third sector civic and community activity and barriers to participation and engagement. It shows whether charities are active in the area and whether people appear to be engaged in the broader civic life of their community.

Community Needs Index

Indicators: Civic Assets

Density of community space assets

Density of educational assets

Density of sport and leisure assets

Density of cultural assets

Green assets: a) density of green assets

Green assets: b) area of public green space

Green assets: c) parks and open space/ landscape and natural heritage assets

Community Needs Index

Indicators: Connectedness

Jobs density in the travel to- work area

Travel time to key services by public transport/ walking

Households with no car

Broadband speeds

People living alone



Community Needs Index

Indicators: An engaged community

Voter turnout at local elections

Registered charities per head

Big Lottery funding per head

Grant funding per head from major grant funders

SME lending by banks

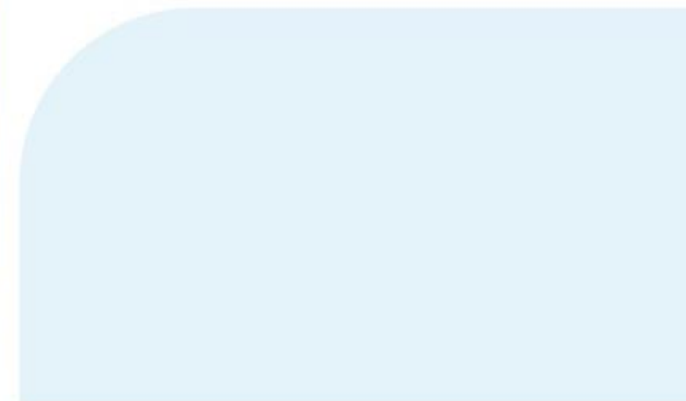
Arts Council funding

Self-reported measures of community and civic participation



Levelling up

APPG published OCSI report on the strength of community and charitable giving in 'Left behind' neighbourhoods



Civic Assets - LBNs have a lower density of community spaces, cultural, educational, leisure and green assets than other deprived areas and England

- 72.9% of LBNs have less community space assets in their local neighbourhoods per person than the national average with the lowest density in Manor House in Hartlepool.
- 77.8% of LBNs have a lower density of educational assets than the England average – Sheppey East in Swale and Knottingley in Wakefield have the lowest density of educational assets of all LBNs.
- 77% of LBNs have less sport and leisure assets per person than nationally, with the lowest rates in Talavera in Northampton.
- Three LBNs record no green space assets in their local areas – these are in Bolton, North West Leicestershire and Middlesbrough.
- Four LBNs are amongst the areas with the lowest density of community or cultural assets on three or more of these measures: Brightmet (Bolton), Norton South (Halton), Sheppey East (Swale) and Yarmouth North (Great Yarmouth).

The third sector - LBNs are less than half as likely to have a registered charity in their local area than the average across England as a whole.

- 97% of all LBNs have a lower rate of charities per 100,000 population than nationally.
- LBNs are also less likely to have other third sector organisations operating in their local areas including mutual societies, co-operative societies, community benefit societies and former industrial and provident societies groups. 92% of LBNs have a lower proportion of Mutual Societies registered locally than the national average – while 63 LBNs have no co-operative groups operating in their local area
- LBNs received fewer grants per 10,000 population than other deprived areas and England – though coastal LBNs (including Nelson in Great Yarmouth and Pier in Tendring) typically received the highest levels of grants funding per head.
- There were relatively fewer grants issued by charitable foundations in response to COVID-19 in LBNs than in other deprived areas and England, as well as fewer Mutual Aid groups set up specifically in response to the pandemic.

Community Participation in ‘Left behind’ neighbourhoods -

LBNs perform less well than the England average on measures of social connectivity, though broadly in line with the average across other deprived areas.

- However, LBNs perform particularly poorly on measures exploring the extent of civic engagement and participation – with lower levels across all identified measures than the average in other deprived areas and England as a whole – 97% of LBNs have lower levels of civic engagement than the national average and 98% have lower rates of volunteering.
- Voter turnout is lower than the national average in 92% of LBNs, with the six LBNs with the lowest levels of voter turnout all found in Kingston upon Hull.
- LBNs have a lower predicted strength of local social relationships than nationally, with 70.2% of all LBNs with lower scores on this measure than the average across England as a whole.
- Adults in LBNs are less likely to be physically active than those in other deprived areas or nationally – with 97.2% of LBNs seeing a lower proportion of adults engaging in 150 minutes of moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) physical activity than the national average.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 23rd November 2021

Report Title	Approval of Workplan
Report Authors	Adele.wylie@northnorthamptonshire.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Work Plan 2021-23

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1. For Scrutiny members to consider the draft workplan attached at Appendix A and approve the content.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Scrutiny members of both the Scrutiny Commission and Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed that work-planning was key to an effective scrutiny function and agreed that a Scrutiny Conference be organised to facilitate the drafting of a workplan.

2.2 A Scrutiny Conference was attended by Scrutiny members on 9th October 2021 where they identified key areas that they wanted to scrutinise. Since the Conference, members have developed more detailed proposals in relation to the identified areas and a draft workplan has been drafted as a result of the proposals.

2.3 This report attaches the workplan and asks members to provide comments and approve should they be satisfied with its contents.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission;

3.1 Note that the workplan attached at Appendix A has been drafted as a result of;

- 3.1.1 Members identification of topics at the Scrutiny Conference
- 3.1.2. Members prioritisation of topics at the Scrutiny Conference
- 3.1.3 Members considering the long list of topics and providing further detail about what they wanted to scrutinise that would have an impact

3.2. Provide comments about whether the topics have been categorised correctly to have the most impact

3.3 Provide comments about whether suggested dates for when items included in the Workplan are satisfactory

3.4 Subject to comments, approve the workplan attached at Appendix A

3.5 Note that the workplan is a living document and shall be reviewed at each Scrutiny Commission meeting.

4 Report Background

The Scrutiny Commission agreed to adopt a two-stage approach to work planning. This consisted of information gathering and discovery followed by identification of topics and a prioritisation exercise.

In May 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued statutory guidance which councils “must have regard to when it is exercising their functions”. Accordingly, this Council should commit to upholding the Guidance and working towards effective scrutiny for the benefit of North Northamptonshire.

At previous Committee meetings, members agreed to hold the first Scrutiny Conference for North Northamptonshire Council. Members were keen to engage with stakeholders and identify issues on a cross party basis that would form the basis of a workplan for the upcoming year. Members agreed that the event would be open to all scrutiny members and substitutes and would be facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

The Statutory Guidance states that “Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal”.

There are several inputs that should be considered in building an effective workplan. These are members ideas, community concerns, Corporate Plan, Portfolio Holders and discussions about their individual portfolio objectives, Officers and Forward plan. It is also important to get input from partner organisations.

4.1 Prior to the Conference

A survey was drafted to understand the important issues that North Northamptonshire wanted scrutiny to include in their Workplan. The survey was open from Monday 13 September 2021 to midnight on Sunday 26 September 2021. It was sent to contacts within the Council database which included stakeholders, partners and staff. It was also regularly pushed out on the website and social media. The majority of responses were received from those people working or living in North Northamptonshire.

Local and national issues were identified, and the key issues are identified below.

Local:

- Housing growth
- Social care
- Planning and enforcement
- Drugs and anti-social behaviour
- Housing and homelessness
- Public transport
- Incineration
- Parking
- Roads and highways infrastructure

National:

- Health care
- Social care
- Climate change
- Drugs and crime
- Housing and homelessness
- Highways

The survey was also sent by the Scrutiny Chairs to all North Northamptonshire Council members to ensure that there was engagement with a wide range of elected members; this included the Executive.

The results of the survey were presented at the Scrutiny Conference to assist members in identifying key topics to include in the workplan.

It is noted that around 50% of respondents were either “not aware” or did not provide a substantive response to if they were aware of what the scrutiny function is. The Scrutiny Chairs are keen therefore that greater promotion of scrutiny is undertaken, particularly considering that scrutiny should be a public facing function.

4.2 Conference agenda- Information gathering and discovery

The Conference was broken into two sections which focussed initially on information gathering, knowledge and discovery followed by interactive work on identifying key issues and prioritisation. Essential information that should be considered when developing a workplan was presented by Ian Parry from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, who facilitated the event.

It is a vital element of promoting an excellent scrutiny function that there is “regular engagement between the Executive and Scrutiny”. The Scrutiny Chairs were keen for the Leader to attend the Conference and his attendance for this section of the event was welcomed to show his support for an effective and impactful scrutiny function. The Council wants to ensure that it has an open and transparent culture with strong governance at its heart and critical friend challenge of the Executive will be key to this.

It is important that this positive relationship continues, and Scrutiny members should consider developing an Executive/Scrutiny Protocol in the coming months to support an effective relationship and to provide a framework for disagreement and debate

which is a healthy part of the scrutiny function. In addition, it is important that the nature and extent of individual Executive member's participation in any agenda items brought before Committee or working groups/panel relevant to their portfolio are clarified to make sure that they are held to account. The Scrutiny Chairs will be seeking scrutiny members views on how this is undertaken in the coming months.

As part of information gathering, the Chief Executive presented the draft Corporate Plan to members. The Corporate Plan is due to be considered by the Executive on 18th November 2021 and Council on 2nd December 2021. This will provide the strategic framework for the Council and sets out the Council's focus and aims until 2024. Members noted that the Corporate Plan is important in developing the Workplan.

As is outlined above, the results of the public survey were also presented to members for consideration and provided members with stakeholder's views on what they should scrutinise throughout the year.

4.3 Conference agenda- identification of topics and prioritisation

Following the initial information discovery phase of the Conference, Members were asked to identify key issues that they considered were important for Scrutiny to include on their workplan. This was an interactive and collaborative session and members were asked to align the proposed topics to the draft Corporate Plan priorities. Once topics were identified, members were asked to work in Groups to prioritise them.

Members were provided with a range of ways that they could prioritise topics and they agreed the way that they wanted to score and prioritise identified topics. A simple scoring methodology was used and enabled constructive debate. Following the Conference, all scores were collated, which allowed a long list of topics in rank order to be developed.

Following conclusion of the Conference, a long list of topics was collated and sent to all Scrutiny members. Many of the topics identified were generic and wide ranging. It was therefore important to narrow them down and understand what outcome members wanted to get from scrutinising them. Members have provided further details which have been used to collate the workplan.

5 Issues and Choices

The draft workplan is attached at Appendix A. The format of the proposed workplan has been reviewed by the Scrutiny Chairs and was also presented to members at the Conference. The workplan consists of three different tables.

5.1 Topics

- These are in depth reviews which will be dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits and will be considered in a Panel/Task and Finish environment. A scoping exercise would be undertaken

with scrutiny members prior to commencement of the review with clear objectives identified.

5.2 One off items/ Recurring Items

- These will be dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Committee.
- There will be some items that will be recurring such as performance, budget forecasts, review of Forward Plan, etc.
- There will be some items that will be one off items on a topic that members are particularly interested in scrutinising, but they do not warrant a full review. These topics have been identified from the long list proposed by members

5.3 Pending Items

- These will consist of items suggested to be added to the workplan, but which haven't yet been considered in detail. It is proposed that where a member suggests that an item is added to the scrutiny workplan or future agenda within Committee that it is added to this section. The Scrutiny Chairs can then decide what action to take so that any items added are properly thought out in terms of value, duplication and resource.

It was recommended by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny that as the Committees will meet 6 times per year and aim to have more focused, in depth and high impact scrutiny, it is likely that they will need only 12 topics to scrutinise in Committee. These should be split between a limited number of task and finish/scrutiny hearings/spotlight events and "one off items".

Topic work as identified within the workplan will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and be manageable within the resource base of the Council and agreed with the Chair of the Scrutiny Commission. There is already one Task and Finish established to scrutinise the levelling up agenda and those areas identified as left behind. A Panel to review Outside Bodies has also already completed its work. It is recommended that no more than two task and finish/scrutiny hearings/spotlight events can be accommodated at any one time and therefore although a number are identified within the workplan, it will be important for members to prioritise and allocate suggested timings to them.

Guidance was also provided that members should select 9 topics throughout the year. This would leave a remainder of 3 additional areas that might arise out of later discussions. The workplan should be fluid and adaptable to changing circumstances and this would provide that flexibility.

Suggesting "topic work" is.

- Knife Crime
- S.106 Agreements
- Levelling Up
- Asset Rationalisation and Use

Suggested one-off items are.

- Children's Trust Introduction to Governance and Performance
- Climate Change- implementation of Action Plan

- Integrated Care System
- Homelessness, including Registered Social Landlords
- Public Transport, including bus services & strategy and rail services
- Major highway capital works and how they are prioritised for implementation within existing budgets.
- Review of the delivery of the Bus Services Improvement Plan and outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership
- Review of performance of the new highways contract providers following the first year of service.
- Performance of Special Educational Needs “SEND”

It will be important that when members are suggesting items for inclusion on future agendas or for inclusion in the workplan that they consider the wider impact of the Workplan and whether items need to be re-prioritised to allow another item to be reviewed. Therefore, it is suggested that where items are suggested within a Committee that they are added to the “Pending Items” list to allow the Scrutiny Chairs to determine the impact on the workplan and scrutiny.

Members should also note that there are some topics that can be dealt with outside of committee and there are some issues which perhaps do not need scrutiny, such as questions from the community. Officers will explore over the coming months an appropriate mechanism such as an online folder system to manage these enquiries and the ability of members to “work offline” to give them assurance and report back to Committee if required.

The workplan at Appendix A shows where items proposed and prioritised by members have been categorised and has some timings. Members should however consider whether they have been categorised as they would like and when items should be considered. Once the workplan has been agreed, a Forward Plan for the upcoming year for both Committees will also be developed and sent to members so that they can easily identify when they will be scrutinising topics.

5.4 Finance and Resources Committee

It is vital to have sufficient scrutiny capacity to focus on the budget process and medium-term finance plan. There are also other challenges for scrutiny such as the capital programme, treasury management and any external investments or commercial arrangements. The relevant work programme will need to ensure that it is properly integrated with the process.

The workplan includes one off items that the Committee will regularly consider, such as budget monitoring and performance of some corporate services. It also identifies the important role that the Committee will have in the budget setting process. At the last Committee, members agreed to a budget process which would enable scrutiny prior to the proposed 2022/2023 budget being considered by Council.

Members should note that the constitutional remit of the Committee is however limited to these items and therefore whilst members of the Committee shall be invited to become members of in-depth reviews, the Committee does not have the authority

to set them up. One off items to the Committee will therefore be rare unless specifically in relation to financial/performance matters.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

The Scrutiny Panels will be supported by Democratic Services. With any scrutiny work there will be a resource impact from an officer perspective. Scrutiny may make recommendations that will have financial implications and these will be identified on a case by case basis.

6.2 Legal

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a requirement to have a an overview and scrutiny committee.

The principal power of a scrutiny committee is to influence the policies and decisions made by the council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. The scrutiny committee is not decision making but has the power to gather evidence and make recommendations based upon its findings.

6.3 Risk

Failure to ensure an effective scrutiny function can lead to governance not being as robust.

Failure to workplan would not be in line with statutory guidance and may lead to resources being allocated to matters which do not have an impact on the organisation and North Northamptonshire

6.4 Consultation

The Chair of the Scrutiny Commission and the Chair of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee has been consulted on the proposals.

6.5 Climate Impact

None.

6.6 Community Impact

The proposals would have a positive community effect and would allow involvement and transparency in the scrutiny function.

7 Background Papers

None.

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Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/2023

The Scrutiny Work Programme outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months/year by or on behalf of the Council's Scrutiny function and any Panels/Task and Finish Groups convened for review work.

Topics added to the work programme will have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of North Northamptonshire residents. It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work programme so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with as and when they arise.

Numerous sources of information can help to inform topic selection, including:

- Concerns that have been raised by the public/stakeholders (whether they are Council service specific or wider national/local issues)
- Issues relating to Councils outcomes, objectives and priorities
- Consultations and interviews
- Underperformance
- Executive recommendations about the pertinent issues that are emerging and any opportunities or threats on the horizon
- Central government priority changes
- Forward Plan
- Budgetary analysis

Scrutiny should always link back to the Council Corporate Plan so that it is scrutinising whether the Council is meeting its strategic aims.

Scrutiny should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best possible work programme for Scrutiny. This means looking at the sources of information that may help and using them to choose the right topics. A Scrutiny Conference was attended by Scrutiny members to develop this workplan where they reviewed information to inform the workplan and then prioritised the topics.

Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics. A common pitfall for Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to 'add value' to the work of the Council or the wellbeing of the community. As such the selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Scrutiny as such processes can ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community. It is not possible to include every topic suggested as Scrutiny has limited time and resources and therefore workplans need to be manageable.

SCRUTINY REVIEWS

These are dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits.

There should be a limited number of reviews considered annually and review topics may be changed throughout the year as topical issues arise. Once considered, these issues will be subject to further development and scoping. Should there not be sufficient capacity to cover items which are brought to the attention of Scrutiny they could instead be addressed through a “one-off” item at a scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Suggested Topics	Officer and Member and Chair	Date Commenced	Date to be Completed	Notes	Date added to the Workplan
Levelling Up	David Watts Cllr Zoe McGhee				
Outside Bodies	Adele Wylie		CLOSED		
Knife Crime				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine knife crime and the associated risks factors present before serious knife crime takes place. 	
Section 106 Monitoring	George Candler Rob Harbour Cllr David Brackenbury	Suggest the work to scope out the review starts once the internal review/audit of S.106 has concluded (likely to be December 2021).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether S106 monies are being fully utilised. Whether members have access to S106 information for their wards. Identify where S106 money was not effectively used. Review how effective the S106 policies have been in each area Understand where and why there have been slippages against the programme and; 	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a consistent and combined S106 methodology looking at new legislative requirements of the Council, i.e. biodiversity, carbon offsetting, building in green initiatives. • To provide recommendations on procedures to ensure that S106 money is always put to good use in time, before entitlement lapses. • To provide recommendations on recording of S106 spend that is transparent and accessible. 	
Asset Rationalisation and Use Page 45	George Candler Jonathan Waterworth Cllr Graham Lawman	January/February 2022		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Council's assets and ensure they are being utilised appropriately. • Develop methodologies around the use and cost of assets against the value those assets bring to the community. • Understand how cost efficient the councils buildings are. • To provide recommendations on the commercial use of our assets and opportunities. • To understand whether buildings should be rationalised. 	

ONE OFF ITEMS/ ANNUAL ITEMS/RECURRING ITEMS

These are dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Committee. The following are suggestions for when particular items may be scheduled.

There will be some items that will be recurring at each meeting or annually. There will also be some items that will be one off items on a topic that members are particularly interested in scrutinising but they do not warrant a full review.

Suggested Topics	Committee/ Commission	Format	Meeting Date	Notes	Date added to the Workplan	Recurring Item
Annual Budget Process	F&R Committee	Report followed by T&F Groups	2 nd November 2021 Budget sessions to take place during January and feedback provided to the Executive for their meeting on 10 th February 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the annual budget process and agree to T&F Groups to scrutinise budget proposals. 		Annual
Scrutiny Annual Report	Commission Finance and Resources	Report	29 March 2022 for Commission and 5 April 2022 (to be reported to April Council) Chairs to sign off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report detailing the work of the Scrutiny Committee over the previous 12 months. 		Annual
Crime and Disorder	Scrutiny Commission	Report and Presentation	25 January 2022	<u>Crime and Anti-social behaviour, including knife crime and county lines</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a better understanding of the issues and how they are being addressed, including reducing knife crime and associated violence and 		Annual

				<p>drug related crime and safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide crime figures to councillors per ward, split the current figures that are combined for violent crime and sexual offences. • Map out how many police officers are actually on duty at any time and check whether it is enough for the workload. • Determine if a quarterly, time limited (Zoom or in person) meeting with police teams to ask questions could be delivered. • Understand if a multi-agency approach to youth provision could work building and enhancing on the good work of the community sector, using asset-based community modelling. • Understand the impact of austerity on prevention and diversion activity, amplified more recently by growing concerns over local youth anti-social behaviour. 		
Children's Trust	Scrutiny Commission (all invited)	Presentation	25 January 2022	<p>Introductory Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between the Trust and Council. • The governance, improvement plan. • How is the funding for the Trust decided and divided? 		Recurring invitation three times per year

Children's Trust Finance Scrutiny- Mid Year Review	F&R Committee	Report/Presentation	August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed review of finance of Children's Trust (additional to usual budget monitoring). 		Annual Recurring invitation three times per year
Children's Trust	Scrutiny Commission	Report/presentation	May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance and inspection readiness. 		Recurring invitation three times per year
Levelling Up Review Interim Report (Part One)	Scrutiny Commission	Report	November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation to Executive/Council. To provide initial recommendations to feed into the budget review process. 		One-off
Budget Monitoring	Finance and Resources Committee	Report	Each Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake budget monitoring. 		Each meeting
Outside Bodies Closure Report	Scrutiny Commission	Report	November 2021			One-off
Performance Reports	Scrutiny Commission/Finance and Resources (corporate services)	Report	Each Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To scrutinise performance of services using performance data. 		Each Meeting
Review of Executive Forward Plan	Scrutiny Commission/Finance and Resources	Document	Each Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review upcoming matters and determine if there are any matters which require scrutiny input. 		Each meeting

Property Annual Report	Scrutiny Commission	Document	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To annually review property (note to review Manchester Scrutiny report). 		Annual
Climate Change	Scrutiny Commission	Document	Place to confirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinising the implementation of the Climate Action Plan and whether it is progressing adequately. 		One-off
Health Scrutiny (ICS)	Scrutiny Commission	Report/Presentation	January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intergrated Care System. What it is and how will it impact upon North Northamptonshire. Understanding Scrutiny's role in the future. 		Annual
Homelessness, including registered social landlords	Scrutiny Commission	Report/Presentation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand how NNC are supporting homeless people. To review the Council's knowledge of hidden demand including sofa surfing, domestic violence, marital breakdown, mental health. To understand if a collaborative approach with partners is being utilised and if so if it provides ideas for solutions to help families needing temporary accommodation. Find ways to expand Supporting Tenancies to help tenants who face crisis. Review the rough sleeper's initiative after it has had the opportunity to embed and show results. 		One-off

Public Transport, including bus services & strategy and rail services				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of progress against the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Understand about how the Council is working towards an integrated transport solution. Understand how rural isolation and accessibility to work and education is being addressed to enable travel to work and education. 		One-off
Highways and Transport	Scrutiny Commission		March/April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny session on major highway capital works and how they are prioritised for implementation within existing budgets. 		Recurring
Highways and Transport	Scrutiny Commission		September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the delivery of the Bus Services Improvement Plan and outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership. 		Recurring
Highways and Transport	Scrutiny Commission		September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of performance of the new highways contract providers following the first year of service. 		Recurring
Performance of Special Educational Needs "SEND"				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of performance of Special Educational Needs (SEND). 		One-off

PENDING ITEMS

These items are awaiting further discussion or additional research before being added to the work programme

Suggested Topics	Committee/Commission	Suggested by	Notes

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North
Northamptonshire
Council

North Northamptonshire Council

1 OCTOBER 2021 TO 31 JANUARY 2022

Published by: Democratic Services

Leader of North Northamptonshire Council: Councillor Jason Smithers

INTRODUCTION

This is the North Northamptonshire Council's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days notice of the Council's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and "exempt decisions" which the Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four month period. The Plan is updated on a rolling monthly basis.

The Members of the Executive are:	
Councillor Jason Smithers	Leader of North Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Helen Howell	Deputy Leader of North Northamptonshire Council Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Helen Harrison	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Scott Edwards	Children, Families, Education and Skills
Councillor Harriet Pentland	Climate and Green Environment
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Finance and Transformation
Councillor David Brackenbury	Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Graham Lawman	Highways, Travel and Assets
Councillor Andy Mercer	Housing and Community
Councillor David Howes	Rural Communities and Localism

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will normally be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Council's Monitoring Officer considers that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The authority has decided that a Key Decision is one which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the authority incurring expenditure of which is, or the making of savings which are, significant; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the authority."

The Council has decided that significant expenditure or savings are those amounting to above £500,000.

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes North Northamptonshire Council will also have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

At times it may be necessary for the North Northamptonshire Council to give consideration to items where the public may be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Council's [Constitution](#). This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Paragraph 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 provides for members of the public to make representations to the Council on why an exempt item should be considered in public, rather than in private. Persons wishing to make such representations and/or obtain further details in respect of any issues referred to in the Plan should contact the undermentioned officer.

The Monitoring Officer may also include in the Forward Plan references to such other decisions, which are to be taken by the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committee or officers as they consider appropriate. These will be those decisions that are considered to be significant or sufficiently important and/or sensitive so that it is reasonable for a member of the public to expect it to be recorded and published.

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with Ben Smith, Democratic Services.

Please email: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

November

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Finance	
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Capital Outturn 2020-21/Capital Monitoring 2021-22	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Outturn 2020-21	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Treasury Half Yearly Monitoring Report	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Finance	
Budget Strategy/Role of Scrutiny	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Review of Dry Waste Recycling Contract	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Proposed amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant and Alfred Street Junior Schools	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Children's' Services	

Destination Nene Valley	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Food Safety Service Plan 2021-2023 and Food and Feed Standards Plan 2021-2023	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP)	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing Policies	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Housing Policies - Tenancy Policy & Tenancy Agreement and Aids & Adaptations Policy	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Procurement of a Revenue & Benefits ICT System	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Treescape Fund	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Corby Town Investment Plan - Programme of Projects	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23	Executive	Yes	No		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director – Finance	
Extension of current contract for the Processing and Treatment of Waste Wood	Executive	Yes	Fully exempt		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	

Future provision of the services currently delivered by Wellingborough Norse	Executive	Yes	Fully exempt		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Shaftesbury Street Property Purchases	Executive	Yes	Fully exempt		18 Nov 2021	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	

December

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Finance	
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Finance	
Community Asset Transfer Policy	Executive	Yes	No		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Asset of Community Value Policy	Executive	Yes	No		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Local Economic Recovery and Growth	Executive	Yes	No		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Place and Economy	
Council Housing Development - former Grange Methodist Church Site, Kettering	Executive	Yes	No Part exempt		16 Dec 2021	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	

January

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		13 Jan 2022	Executive Director - Finance	
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		13 Jan 2022	Executive Director - Finance	

February

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		10 Feb 2022	Executive Director - Finance	

Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		10 Feb 2022	Executive Director - Finance	
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March

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Tree Strategy and Policy	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022		
Pollinator Strategy	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022		
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022		
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022		

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