

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

05 July 2022

Report Title	Levelling Up Communities (Final Report, June 2022)
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Elected Member Lead	Cllr Zoe McGhee Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Working Group chair

List of Appendices

Appendix 1:

Levelling Up in North Northamptonshire (Final Report, June 2022)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present the Final Report of the Levelling Up Scrutiny Review Working Group for consideration and approval by Scrutiny Commission and to consider next steps to presenting the report and recommendations to the Executive.

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 sought to:
- i. Review and understand the underlying data and report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”
 - ii. Engage with and explore the views of people within those neighbourhoods to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - iii. Engage with and explore the views of partner agencies and voluntary and charitable organisations to understand the challenges and opportunities

- iv. Understand and learn from the Big Local programme in Kingswood, identifying both good practice and challenges that can help shape future proposals
 - v. 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 Attached as appendix 1, is the final report of the Levelling Up Scrutiny Review Working Group
- 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 in order 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)	15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed)
Saturday 11 December 2021	Queensway (Wellingborough)	

- 2.8 The scrutiny review group also agreed that the next meetings of the group would be themed and publicly open meetings, as follows:

Meeting	Theme
11 January 2022	Anti-social behaviour and knife crime
26 January 2022	Education, exclusion, skills and employment
08 March 2022	Opportunities of future funding
03 May 2022	Impact of the environment on our communities

- 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. 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 was explored, in order to see if the data could be recreated, in order to understand if any other wards would be deemed as close to being left behind, but was not possible without knowing the various weightings used across the different data points used within the original "Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge" (2019) report.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission:

- a) Note the work undertaken by, and on behalf of, the Scrutiny Working Group as instructed by Scrutiny Commission
- b) Consider, discuss and provide feedback on the “Levelling Up North Northamptonshire” (June 2022) report, attached as Appendix 1
- c) Consider endorsing the priority recommendations set out in the report as a potential framework to develop a “Levelling Up plan” as a recommendation for consideration when the report is presented to the Executive
- d) Consider any further recommendations that the Scrutiny Commission would want to present to the Executive for consideration alongside the report
- e) Discuss and agree next steps for progression of the report through the council’s governance functions

3.2 Reason for recommendations are as follows:

- The levelling up agenda is a key priority for exploration on behalf of the Scrutiny Commission
- Presenting the final report to the Scrutiny Commission concludes the scrutiny review in line with the original scope as set out by the Scrutiny Commission
- To ensure that the next steps required to progress the report through the council’s governance structure are agreed

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 sought to:
- vi. Review and understand the underlying data and report relating to areas highlighted as “left behind”
 - vii. Engage with and explore the views of people within those neighbourhoods to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - viii. Engage with and explore the views of partner agencies and voluntary and charitable organisations to understand the challenges and opportunities
 - ix. Understand and learn from the Big Local programme in Kingswood, identifying both good practice and challenges that can help shape future proposals
 - x. Make recommendations to council around a potential plan
- 4.4 This was intended to be done by 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.”

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The levelling up agenda is important to residents and to the council as a priority. The main focus of the scrutiny review is as follows:
- i. This review aims to tackle issues of direct relevance to local people;
 - ii. Aims to involve engaging with a wide range of people, drawing them together and building consensus around developing levelling up plans
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. This review aims to deliver a positive impact on the geographical areas identified as “left behind” and on associated population indicators and performance
 - v. 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 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 following formal meetings of the group should be themed and held in public. 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 was explored, in order to see if the data could be recreated, in order to understand if any other wards would be deemed as close to being left behind, but was not possible without knowing the various weightings used across the different data points used within the original “Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge” (2019) report.
- 5.8 The themes agreed for the four further meetings of the scrutiny review group held in public were:

Meeting	Theme
11 January 2022	Anti-social behaviour and knife crime
26 January 2022	Education, exclusion, skills and employment
08 March 2022	Opportunities of future funding
03 May 2022	Impact of the environment on our communities

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1 The majority of the work undertaken was completed within existing resources, with some additional materials required for use in the workshop sessions, and therefore additional budget was not required to undertake the scrutiny review.

6.1.2 The review did hear about two government launched initiatives; The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling-Up Fund, however there were very specific criteria required to be met and it was recognised that the scrutiny review had been scoped prior to the announcements of the two national funding sources.

6.1.3 The scrutiny review working group did note that there were lots of excellent ideas for future projects, but that support may be required by groups and individuals to enable those potential projects to be developed sufficiently enough in order to give them the best chance of being included in future funding bids.

6.1.4 Whilst the scrutiny review is now concluded, the role of Scrutiny Commission is not to allocate or reallocate resources, however Scrutiny Commission can make recommendations for the Executive to consider. Whilst the Levelling Up Scrutiny review has no direct financial implications, there may eventually be financial commitments required in order to enable officers to deliver again any recommendations that are accepted by the Executive; however this would be built into the council's budget setting process.

6.1.5 Throughout the scrutiny review, the finite resources of the council were recognised as a constraint and those involved in the sessions were also keen to understand how the outcomes could be delivered in partnership with other statutory organisations, the voluntary sector, community groups and through exploring fund-raising approaches that may enable groups to generate funds to address priorities within their communities.

6.2 Legal

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

6.3 Risk

6.4 There are no significant risks associated with this report

6.5 Consultation

6.5.1 The scrutiny review involved a number of community-based walks, workshops and themed public meetings as part of the commitment to ensure that communities and other stakeholders were able to be involved in the piece of scrutiny.

6.6 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.6.1 This scrutiny review will contribute to the overall scrutiny agenda.
- 6.6.2 This update report will be considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its next meeting on 05 July 2022.

6.7 Climate Impact

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

6.8 Community Impact

- 6.8.1 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.
- 6.8.2 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](https://www.parliament.uk/all-party-parliamentary-group/pubs-reports/2019-2020/2019-2020/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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/blank-scrutiny-scoping-document)