

EXECUTIVE

25th August 2022

Report Title	Levelling Up Scrutiny Commission – Levelling Up North Northamptonshire Final Report
Report Author	David Watts - Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Chair of Scrutiny Commission	Cllr Wendy Brackenbury

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Levelling-Up in North Northamptonshire (July 2022)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Final Report of the Levelling Up Scrutiny Review along with feedback from the Scrutiny Commission for consideration by Executive.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 An amended motion at Full Council on 28th July 2021 requested that the Scrutiny Commission 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:

- 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 On completion of the fieldwork, a report, attached as **Appendix A**, titled “Levelling-Up in North Northamptonshire” was drafted, agreed with the working group, and presented to the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 5th July 2022.

2.5 Scrutiny Commission discussed the work undertaken, the final report and the recommendations and agreed how the piece of scrutiny work would be presented back to the Executive

2.6 The final report prepared for the Scrutiny Commission by the Scrutiny Review Working Group was presented to Scrutiny Commission on 5th July 2022. Members of Scrutiny Commission provided feedback and agreed next steps for the report to be presented to the Executive

2.7 Scrutiny Commission noted the priority recommendations set out in the report and agreed that the report should be presented in its current format with any notes from Scrutiny Commission being added to this cover report.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- i) Note the work undertaken by, and on behalf of, the Scrutiny Working Group as instructed by the Scrutiny Commission
- ii) Note and consider the feedback from the Scrutiny Commission regarding the final report
- iii) Discuss and provide feedback on the “Levelling Up North Northamptonshire” (June 2022) report attached as **Appendix A**

- iv) Note the priority recommendations set out in the report as a potential framework to develop a “Levelling Up plan” for the Council
- v) Note the difference between scope and intentions of the Council's Levelling-Up Scrutiny Review and the national programmes of work around the Government's “Levelling Up” agenda
- vi) Consider if the report should be presented to Full Council by the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling-up
- vii) Support the proposal for the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling up to take forward, with officers, the development of the Council's Levelling Up plan.

3.2 Reasons for Recommendations:

- i) The levelling up agenda is both a national and local priority and of importance to council members. The scrutiny review was undertaken because of an amended motion and discussion at Full Council.
- ii) For the Executive to consider the report of Scrutiny Commission and explore ways that the findings can inform and influence local policy and strategy in the delivery of council functions

3.3 Alternative Options Considered: The Council's constitution clearly sets out the scrutiny procedure rules to be followed in reporting back recommendations to either the Executive or Full Council, therefore alternative options to those set out in the Council's constitution have not been considered.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. An amended motion at Full Council on 28th 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:
 - 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 The scrutiny review was intended to be completed by 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 those left behind neighbourhoods in North Northamptonshire. The final report sets out the ways in which communities and stakeholders were involved in the various events and meetings.

4.5 The working group were cognisant of the need to identify priority recommendations to enable Scrutiny Commission and, subsequently, the Executive to understand key areas of focus but were keen that the additional recommendations and ideas were not lost or forgotten about.

4.6 In considering the report through its discussions at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, 5th July 2022, members wished for the following to be included in the covering report for consideration by the Executive:

4.3.1 The Scrutiny Commission welcomed the report and agreed it should be presented to the Executive as written and approved it to go to the Executive in its current format.

4.3.2 It was noted that some of the recommendations were already being dealt with by the Executive. For example, there was now an Executive Member with responsibility for Levelling Up, who was present at the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission to hear the discussions about the report. There had also been some pieces of work undertaken to address some of the areas that lacked adequate lighting.

4.3.3 Charities and the voluntary sector should also be included to work with on community issues and projects along with local businesses. The report shone a light on the voluntary and charity sector; however, it was local businesses who are more likely to have the money.

4.3.4 The emphasis on youth work was supported and it would be good to link into the existing infrastructure. There were excellent organisations already engaged with youth work.

- 4.3.5 The difficulty of some groups accessing small grants and other funding streams was noted. The previous East Northamptonshire Council had a member of staff who was an excellent resource in helping groups find sources of funding and writing bids and a similar post should be considered for North Northamptonshire Council.
- 4.3.6 It was noted that there was a commonality in the issues raised in each of the three neighbourhoods.
- 4.3.7 The outcomes of this review may be an opportunity for the new Town Councils to consider how they are also able to impact on both the priority recommendations, but also some of those recommendations captured within the meetings and workshop feedback and recommendations.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The Executive will need to consider whether to accept and implement the priority recommendations. In doing so it will need to consider how the learning from the Scrutiny Review may influence subsequent policies, strategies, and future funding bids, and whether there is a need, in order to implement the recommendations, to consider making provision within the Council's future budget setting processes to successfully deliver those recommendations.
- 5.2. The Scrutiny Commission recognised that there may be additional costs to the council to implement the recommendations, but also felt there may be circumstances whereby investing in delivering against certain recommendations that there may be a reduction in demand on other services. There could be benefit in further work to undertake cost/benefit exercises to understand both the impact on outcomes for our residents and communities and any financial implications such as costs or return on investment made.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The Executive will agree any further next steps following discussion at the Executive meeting. Whilst there is not a constitutional requirement for Full Council to receive the report, Executive may choose to debate the outcome of the scrutiny review with council members as the amended motion that referred the matter to Scrutiny Commission stemmed from a previous council.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There are no direct funding implications because of the report. However, to implement the recommendations, consideration will need to be given to any

additional costs that may not be able to be met within the council's current agreed budget and in future budget setting arrangements.

- 7.1.2. Both the Scrutiny Review Working Group and Scrutiny Commission recognise that there is a finite resource available to the council. Wider consideration should be given to understanding the role those other organisations, anchor institutions, the voluntary sector, local businesses, and statutory organisations can contribute to delivering against the recommendations, and how combining approaches could also deliver a greater impact against the collective resources of organisations.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the proposals, however if the recommendations are accepted then the legal and governance implications of each recommendation should be considered as implementation plans are designed.
- 7.2.2. The Scrutiny Commission have a constitutional right to prepare a report for submission to the Executive and/or Council. The Chair of the Scrutiny Commission should present the report on behalf of the Committee. There are no minority reports which have been submitted.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The scrutiny review has followed the Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 7.3.2. Relevant links can be made to all elements of the Corporate Plan, however, it may be necessary to consider whether aspects of the corporate plan may need to be amended, at such points when it is periodically reviewed, to reflect any decisions made.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1 There are a series of potential risks in both accepting and implementing the recommendations, but also if a decision were made not to accept those recommendations. These include financial, service delivery, resources to deliver and reputational risks.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. The scrutiny review sought to ensure that stakeholders including councillors, members of the public, statutory partners and voluntary sector organisations were invited be part of the activities undertaken as part of the scrutiny review to

try to ensure there were meaningful opportunities to engage with and influence the findings of the scrutiny review.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- 7.6.1 The final report has been presented and discussed at the Health Wellbeing and Vulnerable People EAP.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

- 7.7.1. Scrutiny Commission has considered the attached report and this cover report presents the findings to the Executive. Feedback from Scrutiny Commission is presented in section 4 of this report).

7.8. Equality Implications

- 7.8.1. There are no direct equality implications because of the Levelling Up North Northamptonshire report as there were no specific protected characteristics that were identified as being disproportionately affected during the scrutiny review.
- 7.8.2. However, if choosing to implement the priority recommendations further work would then be undertaken to understand any specific equality impacts, either positive or negative, that may be identified because of planned changes to services or support. The nine protected characteristics that are afforded protection against less favourable treatment within the Equality Act (2010) that would be considered at that point are:

- Age
- Race
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Religion or Belief
- Disability
- Pregnancy and Maternity

7.9. Climate Impact

- 7.9.1. The Council, having declared a climate change emergency in June 2021, is committed to reducing its climate impact both within its own Council buildings and in working with businesses and the wider community to achieve net zero energy emissions. There are opportunities identified in the report that whilst delivering positive outcomes could also positively contribute to the council's net zero commitment. These relate to environmental improvements that could be made as identified in the recommendations such as street lighting

7.10. Community Impact

- 7.10.1. The scrutiny review aimed to identify opportunities to positively impact on communities that experience greater levels of deprivation and have been considered to have been left behind.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

- 7.11.1. Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council has equal statutory responsibility with the Police to exercise its various functions with 'due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.
- 7.11.2. The scrutiny review did identify opportunities to make improvements within the three areas identified that could potentially positively impact on preventing crime and disorder.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. The following background papers are relevant to this update report:

- i) Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – full report [local_trust_ocsi_left_behind_research_august_2019.pdf](https://localtrust.org.uk/local-trust-ocsi-left-behind-research-august-2019.pdf) (localtrust.org.uk)
- ii) Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge (2019) – summary report [Local-Trust-Left-Behind-Report-Executive-Summary-December-2019.pdf](https://localtrust.org.uk/local-trust-left-behind-report-executive-summary-december-2019.pdf) (localtrust.org.uk)
- iii) 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](https://localtrust.org.uk/left-behind-areas-imd-2019-revised-slide-deck-with-revised-unemployment-slide-read-only-copy.pdf) (localtrust.org.uk)
- iv) [The All-Party Parliamentary Group publishes our report on the strength of community and charitable giving in 'Left behind' neighbourhoods - OCSI](#)
- v) 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>
- vi) Scrutiny Review – Levelling Up Communities scoping document (24 August 2021) [Blank Scrutiny Scoping Document](#) (moderngov.co.uk)