

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 Robin Carter

Councillor Philip Irwin

Councillor John McGhee

Councillor Simon Rielly

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