

## SCRUTINY COMMISSION

### 25 January 2022

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| <b>Report Title</b>        | Levelling Up Communities update report  |
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| <b>Elected Member Lead</b> | Cllr Zoe McGhee, Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Working Group chair   |

#### List of Appendices

None

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 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, Windmill ward (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, 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 three Levelling up Scrutiny Review meetings, 06 October 2021, 09 November 2021, 11 January 2022 with a further meeting on 26 January 2022.
- 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<br>27 November 2021 | Avondale Grange<br>(Kettering)    | 13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working |
| Saturday<br>04 December 2021 | Kingswood & Hazel<br>Leys (Corby) |  |
| Saturday<br>11 December 2021 | Queensway<br>(Wellingborough)     | 15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed)                         |

- 2.8 The three walks and community meetings took place as planned, and an interim report is being drafted to summarise the key findings from those sessions. The interim report will then form the basis of the final report of the Scrutiny Review and will be updated to reflect the information gathered at the four themed meetings, and make recommendations to the scrutiny commission to consider, discuss and make recommendations on next steps.
- 2.9 The Scrutiny Review Group agreed that the 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    |  |

- 2.10 A decision was taken in December 2021, jointly between the Chair of the Scrutiny Review and Executive Director of Adults Communities and Wellbeing to postpone the December meeting until January. This was partly due to proximity to the festive period and the impact on reduced attendees, but mainly due to implementation of Plan B in relation to Covid-19.

2.11 The Zoom meeting focused on knife crime and antisocial behaviour and was well attended by a wide range of. Members of the press, The Northants Telegraph and NN Journal, were in attendance and have subsequently reported on the meeting.

### **3. Recommendations**

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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**

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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

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- 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 three 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<br>27 November 2021 | Avondale Grange<br>(Kettering)    | 13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working |
| Saturday<br>04 December 2021 | Kingswood & Hazel<br>Leys (Corby) |  |

|                              |                               |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Saturday<br>11 December 2021 | Queensway<br>(Wellingborough) | 15:30-17:30 - Community meeting/workshop (details & content to be confirmed) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|

- 5.6 The Scrutiny Review Group also 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 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)

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### 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 review intended to undertake engagement sessions in the three Left Behind Neighbourhoods as part of its evidence gathering as follows:

|                              |                                   |  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Saturday<br>27 November 2021 | Avondale Grange<br>(Kettering)    | 13:00-15:00 - Tour of the area to see both areas of concerns and examples of things that are working |
| Saturday<br>04 December 2021 | Kingswood & Hazel<br>Leys (Corby) |  |
| Saturday<br>11 December 2021 | Queensway<br>(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    |  |

6.6.3 A decision was taken in December 2021, jointly between the Chair of the Scrutiny Review and Executive Director of Adults Communities and Wellbeing to postpone the December meeting until January. This was partly due to proximity to the festive period and the impact on reduced attendees, but mainly due to implementation of Plan B in relation to Covid-19. The increasing transmission rates meant that it was necessary to move from the planned face to face community meeting to an online Zoom meeting, requiring further planning to ensure the smooth running of the meeting whilst still enabling good engagement and focus within the session.

6.6.4 The Zoom meeting focused on knife crime and antisocial behaviour and was well attended by a wide range of representatives including senior police officer, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, voluntary sector

organisations, senior school staff and several council officers and councillors, including members of the Executive. Members of the press, The Northants Telegraph and NN Journal, were in attendance and have subsequently reported on the meeting. The report from the Northants Telegraph is available publicly at [Knife crime in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough on agenda as leaders examine how to level-up left behind neighbourhoods | Northamptonshire Telegraph \(northantstelegraph.co.uk\)](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/knife-crime-in-corby-kettering-and-wellingborough-on-agenda-as-leaders-examine-how-to-level-up-left-behind-neighbourhoods/).

6.6.5 The discussions at the meeting were wide ranging, and were steered by the chair using some key lines of enquiry that members of the Scrutiny Review group had developed in advance as follows:

| <b>Member Key Lines of Enquiry</b>   |
|--|
| Members request Information on the third sector/charities that are involved in 'Left Behind Areas' as the third sector have been affected by the cuts during austerity years and this has had a knock-on effect on the services, they are able to deliver. |
| Emphasis be on drugs crime and usage in particular as well as knife crime and anti-social behaviour. From what we have seen it is linked for example some tagging etc. (As in a lot of areas).   |
| What's the demographic of the people convicted of crimes; how many are repeat offenders?   |
| Is there anything that we can learn from 'Off the Street - North Northants Community against knife crime' initiatives and anything that can be implemented in the areas we are looking at?   |
| Perhaps a message to be sent out to secondary school children? Or initiatives that can be taken with children who have been expelled from school?  |
| The issue of school expulsions, and what happens to children who are expelled. Are they followed up and what are the outcomes?   |

## 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 25 January 2022.

## 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**

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- 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>
  - 7.1.6 Scrutiny Review – Levelling Up Communities scoping document (24 August 2021)  
[Blank Scrutiny Scoping Document \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
  - 7.1.7 Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review – Update Report (23 November 2021)  
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s3881/Agenda%20Item%2006%20-%20Levelling%20Up%20Communities%20Update%2023%20November%202021.pdf>