Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14th June 2022

Levelling Up approach for Warwickshire

1.   Recommendation(s)

That the Committee considers and comments on the proposed approach to Levelling Up in Warwickshire ahead of its consideration by Cabinet.

2.   Executive Summary

2.1   On 2 February 2022 the Government published the Levelling Up White Paper. The White Paper outlines the Government's strategy to "spread opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the country" by 2030, through twelve national missions. The 12 missions are attached at Appendix 1. This will also include stronger oversight of local government on performance against these missions.

2.2   On 10 May 2022 the Queen's speech set out the Government's agenda for the 2022-23 Parliamentary session. The Government committed to empowering local leaders to implement levelling up initiatives in their area through an upcoming Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

2.3   The Council Plan approved by full Council in February 2022 includes a commitment to the Levelling Up agenda and to understanding what that means for Warwickshire. Specifically, the Council Plan recognised the Council's unique role to convene partners to shape and deliver the long-term levelling up mission for Warwickshire. It committed to develop, with partners, a countywide approach to levelling up, with the aim of publishing this by July 2022.

2.4   Reports to Cabinet in March and May 2022 set out the Council's overall direction on and proposed approach to Levelling Up with the intention of Levelling Up for Warwickshire being further considered by the Cabinet in July.

2.5   The aim is to create a reference point for the Levelling Up agenda, complementing existing work and highlighting specific challenges and opportunities in the county. The approach will:

- **Translate** the national Levelling Up missions and policy for Warwickshire
- **Complement** the organisational plans and strategies of all partners
- **Influence** current and future strategies
- **Recognise and build on the power** of all our partnerships, networks, and forums

- **Inform** our future collective work on other strategic issues linked to the missions (such as climate change and inequalities)
- **Share** our commitment to Levelling Up with our communities

2.6   The approach to Levelling Up for Warwickshire will be presented to Cabinet for approval in July 2022. This is an emerging are of national policy and the approach will therefore seek to be flexible and respond to refinement and changes as they arise.

2.7   This report therefore seeks to provide an outline of the emerging approach. This will be supplemented by tailored content presented to the meeting of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report seeks members' views on the Levelling Up approach as relevant to the remit of the Committee. Officers will present to the Committee and the accompanying slide deck will be made available to members and published alongside the other public papers for the Committee.

3.   Financial Implications

3.1   There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, there are likely to be longer-term financial impacts of our approach to Levelling Up as we prioritise cohorts and areas of need. These will need to be accommodated within existing budgets and/or factored into budget setting as part of our future MTFS planning.

4.   Environmental Implications

4.1   Environmental Sustainability and net zero is not one of the twelve Levelling Up missions but remains a key local and national priority. The Government's Net Zero strategy: Build Back Greener, published in October 2022, sets out policies to enable the UK to meet its net zero target by 2050. The Council's emerging Sustainable Futures strategy, currently in development and due for Cabinet consideration in October 2022, will need to take into account the Levelling Up agenda. There may also be future environmental implications as the County continues to make contributions to the national Net Zero strategy along with our own net zero ambitions both for the County as a place, and the County Council as an organisation.

5.   Supporting Information

5.1   The Levelling Up White Paper set out twelve missions, with accompanying metrics and outcomes to be achieved by 2030 covering:

- Living Standards
- Research & Development
- Transport Infrastructure
- Health
- Well-being
- Pride in Place

- Digital Connectivity
- Education
- Skills

- Housing
- Crime
- Local Leadership

The diagram below maps the 12 missions to our Council Plan Areas of Focus. There is a considerable degree of overlap between the 12 missions and the Areas of Focus in our Council Plan and equally there is overlap between the remits of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the missions, and our Areas of Focus. Appendix 2 sets this out in more detail and highlights those areas (missions, Areas of Focus, and emerging themes) of most relevant to the remit of this Committee.
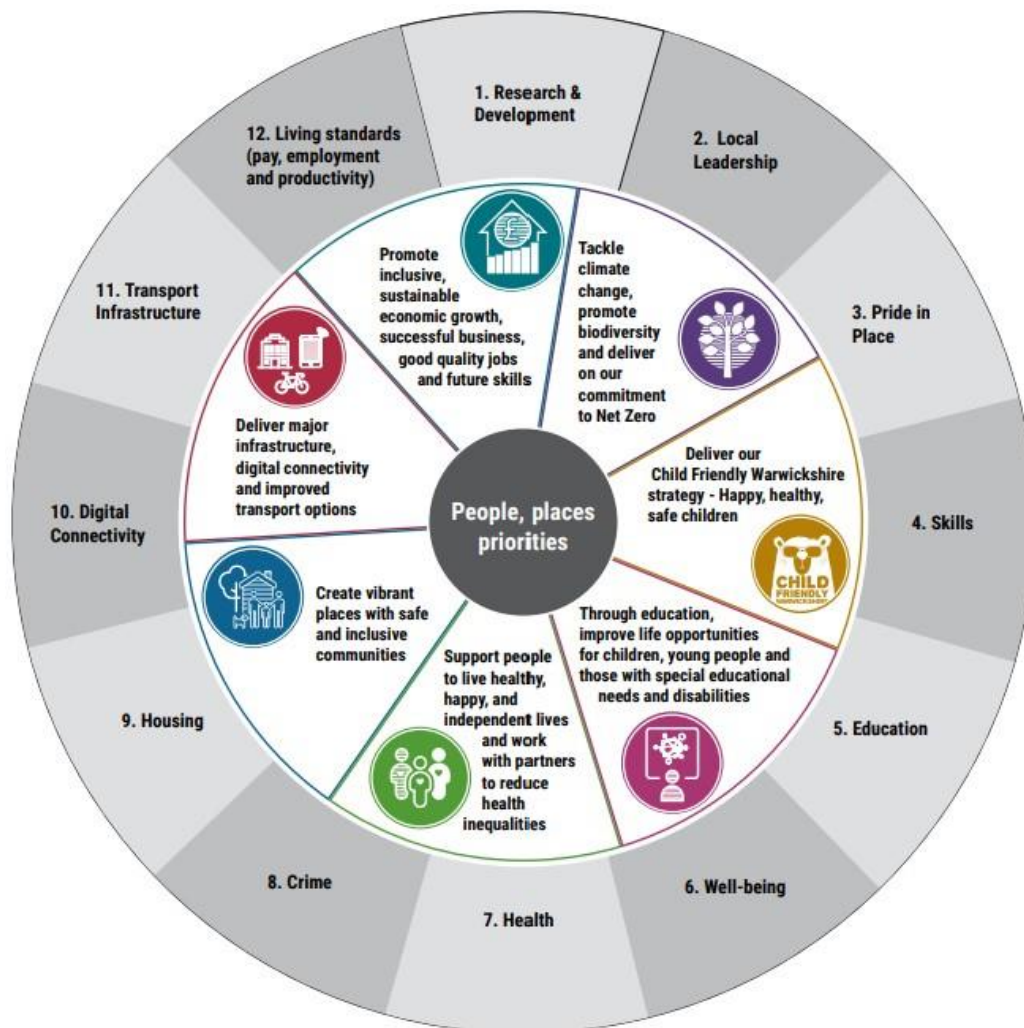
5.2   Our Levelling Up approach will seek to deliver against these missions and will influence a number of connected Council, strategies. Those most relevant to the remit of this Committee are also contained in Appendix 2.

5.3   There has been engagement with a range of stakeholders to date and further engagement will continue over coming weeks. During May 2022 we engaged with residents through the Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel to better

understand what Levelling Up means for our residents and have used this feedback to inform our overall approach. In addition, we have:

- Used the Voice of Warwickshire to gain residents' views, with over 450 responses
- Met with all districts and borough councils individually and together
- Held an engagement session with wider stakeholders covering Higher Education, Health, the Voluntary & Community Sector and Local Government
- Met with the chairs of the Warwickshire Youth Council
- Engaged key WCC officers and leads
- Planned to engage with the Town and Parish Councils through our forthcoming reference group and with Clerks at the invitation of WALC

5.4   Using this information alongside the ongoing engagement with our partners and stakeholders, our working definition for Levelling up in Warwickshire is anchored around:

- **Increasing opportunity and social mobility -** ensuring the success you enjoy in life is less dependent on where you live, your background and who your parents are by:
  - o spreading opportunity and embedding aspiration;
  - o fulfilling people's potential in life; and
  - o building inclusive economic growth to ensure valued, well-paid and high-quality jobs.
- **Reducing disparities -** addressing gaps and inequalities in:
  - o standards of living;
  - o health, happiness and well-being;
  - o educational attainment;
  - o access to good, affordable housing; and
  - o connectivity (transport and digital)
- **Building community power -** Increasing pride in the place you live in, and unleashing the potential of communities by increasing your voice and influence over your places.
- **Creating sustainable futures -** ensuring climate change and adaptation a central part of levelling up so future generations can live in a sustainable county with good opportunities and quality of life, including standards of living.

5.5   The key features of our overall approach to Levelling Up are reflected in the following principles which underpin our approach to Levelling Up and which complement the Council Plan:

- **A joint mission**: we will bring together our partners from across Warwickshire's public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work together on levelling up. We will work closely with Government and

regional bodies so that Warwickshire benefits from opportunities to do more locally and deliver on wider national and regional agendas.

- **A long-term approach**: addressing disparities and increasing social mobility will take decades. As there are no quick fixes, our approach will commit to making sustainable progress on long-term issues
- **Addressing root causes**: we will use data, insight and partnerships to tackle the root causes of complex issues, rather than the symptoms.
- **Data-driven**; we will use data to track our long-term trajectory and progress, using national benchmarks wherever possible. We will learn and evolve our approach.
- **Strengths-based as well as tackling need (not levelling down)**: we will build on the strengths of individuals, communities, places and interest groups to improve quality of life for them. Our approach will not hold back other places or groups where things are better
- **Targeted and tailored to communities of place and of interest**: based on data and insight, we will target the communities of place and communities of interest that need most support. Building on their strengths, we will help them build the capacity to improve things in the long-term, tailoring our approaches to local circumstances.

5.6 Core to the Levelling Up agenda is the need to prioritise effort and activity to where it is most needed. In Warwickshire this will be mean focusing particular attention on specific places and groups of people as determined by robust evidence, while enabling other places and communities to address local levelling up imperatives through more community powered approaches.

5.7 We are also using robust, credible data at a variety of geographical levels to determine where our interventions can have the biggest impact. Specifically, we will use the following frameworks:

- The Indices of Deprivation – this is the recognised, nationally-published dataset that enables us to analyse inequalities and need at a local level across a range of domains.

- The 12 Levelling Up Missions – as set out in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper.

These frameworks will be supplemented by additional national and local intelligence, including:

- Office of National Statistics Health Index
- Experian Financial Resilience dataset
- WCC Performance Framework
- State of Warwickshire 2022 Report
- Warwickshire place-based JSNA
- Voice of Warwickshire residents' panel survey results
- Warwickshire Poverty Dashboard

5.8   The Community Powered Warwickshire (CPW) programme is also a key lever for the Levelling Up approach and will be central to delivering our vision; supporting communities experiencing the most inequality to develop and capitalise on their latent community power whilst building upon existing communities who have community power in abundance. Using CPW will ensure that communities and the wider voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector are an integrated part of our approach to Levelling Up for Warwickshire.

6.   Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1   The Committee is asked to inform both the shape and content of the approach as part of the engagement with all Overview & Scrutiny Committees:

Resources and Fire & Rescue OSC	8 June 2022
Children & Young People OSC	14 June 2022
Adult Social Care and Health OSC	22 June 2022
Communities OSC	22 June 2022
Cabinet Approval	14 July 2022

6.2   Following approval of the Levelling Up approach the Committee will be able to consider how it wishes to track progress on Levelling Up through the consideration of the related strategies, elements of the Integrated Delivery Plan, and the new Performance Management Framework as are relevant to its remit.

Appendices
1.   The 12 Levelling Up missions – extract from the Government White Paper (Feb 22)
2.   Levelling Up approach – relevant missions, strategies, and areas of work

Background Papers

1. Levelling Up and Devolution for Warwickshire – Cabinet 12th May 2022
2. The State of Warwickshire 2022 Report

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a - of county wide relevance
Other members: None