



House of Commons
Business, Energy and Industrial
Strategy Committee

Post-pandemic economic growth: Levelling up

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to the report*

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Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

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The current staff of the Committee are Bradley Albrow (Second Clerk), Dawn Amey (Committee Operations Manager), Zereena Arshad (Committee Specialist), Gary Calder (Media Officer), Dr Rebecca Davies (Clerk), Beth Dingley (POST Fellow), John Hitchcock (Committee Specialist), Catherine Kisanji (Inquiry Manager Intern), Becky Mawhood (Senior Committee Specialist), Louise Whitley (Senior Committee Specialist), and Sue Wrightman (Committee Operations Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 4494; the Committee's email address is beiscom@parliament.uk.

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Summary

Levelling up—meaning, in our view, the spreading of economic and social opportunities more evenly across the country—is laudable and should be a priority for any Government.

However, whilst recognising the understandable impact the pandemic has had on Government capacity, we are disappointed at how little detail has been put forward to explain what the Government sees levelling up to mean and how it will be delivered.

It has been a year since we launched our inquiry—during which time we have received submissions from the Government, including oral evidence from the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government Ministers, and considered the Queen’s Speech—but we have not received adequate answers to any of our basic questions.

In this context, it is understandably unclear who is responsible for delivering levelling up. We took evidence from powerhouses, regional mayors, city mayors, local councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and Chambers of Commerce, all of whom asked for urgent clarity from the Government.

We are concerned that this lack of definition will result in a failure to deliver meaningful change for people across the country, and that a failure to publish Government priorities and metrics will make it impossible for us to understand what has, or has not, been delivered.

As such, we have made several recommendations to Government, including recommendations to:

- Urgently publish the Levelling Up White Paper, so that we are clear on what the Government defines levelling up to mean and what its priorities are.
- Work with the Office for National Statistics, the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy department and the National Audit Office to agree a set of metrics for the routine reporting of progress in delivering levelling up priorities.
- Establish the functioning of a Cabinet Committee on levelling up, that collaborates with devolved, regional, and local leaders.
- Recognise that inequalities exist across the whole of the UK, including within cities, and that levelling up priorities should therefore not be focussed on only some regions or sub-regions of the UK.
- Ensure that each region in England has the capacity to competitively bid for Government funding, given that some areas in England have a greater capacity to engage with Whitehall than other areas.

The levelling up agenda has been described by the Government as its ‘most important mission’. It is now imperative for Ministers to translate this from a political promise into a deliverable programme for Government. The forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper, which we understand will now include the previously announced Devolution

White Paper, gives the Government the opportunity to be bold and progressive. We look forward to its publication and, in future, engagement with Ministers on their delivery of levelling up.

Introduction

1. On his appointment as Prime Minister in July 2019, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP said in a speech, on the steps of Downing Street, that he would “answer the plea of the forgotten people and the left behind towns” and “level up across Britain” by unleashing the “the productive power not just of London and the South East but of every corner of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland”.¹ Since that speech, levelling up has become a key objective for the Government, and was a major theme of both the 2019 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto and the 2021 Queen’s Speech. In May 2021, Neil O’Brien MP was appointed as Levelling Up Adviser, a Levelling Up Unit shared between Number 10 and the Cabinet Office was established, and a White Paper on levelling up is expected later this year.

Our inquiry

2. On 3 June 2020, we launched a major inquiry into Post Pandemic Economic Growth intended to run for the duration of this Parliament.² The inquiry has multiple strands, the first of which was on industrial policy in the UK, and we published our report on 28 June 2021.³ Immediately after our final evidence session in that inquiry, the Government abolished the Industrial Strategy, and announced the Plan for Growth in its place.⁴ That plan described the levelling up agenda as the Government’s “most important mission”:

tackling geographic disparities; supporting struggling towns to regenerate; ensuring every region and nation of the UK has at least one globally competitive city; and above all, strengthening the Union.⁵

3. We launched our inquiry into levelling up (as the second strand in our Post Pandemic Economic Growth inquiry) in July 2020.⁶ We took evidence from representatives of Local Government and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). We also heard from Rt Hon Andy Burnham, Mayor of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Steve Rotherham, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, as well as other regional and city mayors, regional powerhouses, and Lord Kerslake, who, as Chair of UK2070, had been tasked by the Government to report on regional inequalities. On behalf of the Government, Ministers Paul Scully MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets), and Luke Hall MP, Minister of State (Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government), gave evidence.⁷ We thank all of those who contributed both oral and written evidence to our inquiry.

1 [“Boris Johnson First Speech as Prime Minister”](#) Downing Street press release, 24 July 2019

2 [“Post-Pandemic Economic Growth super-inquiry launched by BEIS Committee”](#) BEIS Committee press release, 3 June 2020

3 BEIS Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Post-pandemic economic growth: Industrial policy in the UK](#), HC 385

4 [“Build Back Better: our plan for growth”](#) HM Treasury press release, 3 March 2021

5 HM Treasury, [Build Back Better: our plan for growth](#), 3 March 2021, page 8

6 Terms of Reference for the inquiry can be found at: [Post-pandemic economic growth: Levelling up - local and regional structures and the delivery of economic growth](#)

7 A full list of witnesses is attached at the end of the report

4. Since we launched the inquiry, political commentators,⁸ fellow Parliamentary Committees⁹ and witnesses to this inquiry¹⁰ have criticised the levelling up agenda. They have commented on both its lack of clear definition and strategic direction, and on the fact that there are therefore no criteria or forms of measurement for evaluating progress or success. This report aims to try to unpack this major policy initiative and explore these criticisms. We assess what levelling up seems to mean, how the Government aims to achieve it, who will deliver and oversee delivery at both a national and local level, how progress towards success will be measured and what a ‘levelled up’ UK might actually look like.

8 For example: [Esther Webber](#), [IFG](#), [Giles Wilkes](#), [Rafael Behr](#), [Isabel Hardman](#), [Sebastian Payne](#), [John Harris](#)
9 Treasury Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2019–21, [Economic impact of coronavirus: the challenges of recovery](#), HC 271; House of Lords, Report of the Public Services Committee, Session 2020–21, [Levelling Up Position Paper](#)
10 UCL ([LRS0001](#)), Core Cities ([LRS0062](#)), Confederation of British Industry ([LRS0017](#))

1 What is Levelling up?

5. Since the Prime Minister identified the need for Britain to ‘level up’ in his speech in Downing Street, there has been widespread discussion of what the concept actually means.¹¹

6. In the Conservative Party Manifesto in 2019, the Prime Minister stated:

We have mapped out a fantastic programme for the years ahead: to unite and level up, spreading opportunity across the whole United Kingdom.¹²

The Manifesto set out various levelling up ambitions, such as infrastructure spending on roads and rail to “connect this country, so that everyone can get a fair share of its future prosperity.”¹³ It highlighted Leeds as “the largest city in Western Europe without a light rail or metro system. And European cities are often more productive than our own in large part because they have better infrastructure.” The Manifesto also focused on the need to develop skills to “improve Britain’s productivity” and to “enable people to fulfil their potential” as well as Science and Research to give people “opportunity and hope”. The Manifesto said that as a result of “getting Brexit done” it would be able “to give new support to people in rural and coastal communities, and for our farming and fishing industries”. The Government also committed to creating ten freeports.¹⁴

7. Levelling up was subsequently a major theme of the May 2021 Queen’s Speech, when the Government confirmed its intention to publish a Levelling Up White Paper,¹⁵ which will also include its long-awaited plans for devolution in England.¹⁶

8. However, despite this focus on levelling up as a central theme in Government discourse, there remains a distinct lack of clarity as to what the Government actually means by levelling up, and subsequently, how the success or otherwise of the Government’s policy aim of levelling up can be assessed and evaluated.¹⁷ In this chapter, we seek to explore what the Government means by the term levelling up, why it is seen as important by the Government, and how the Government aims to deliver its flagship policy.

9. While the Prime Minister has described levelling up as a UK wide policy, many of the sources of funding and policy initiatives are England only, as much of the relevant policy area is devolved. It appears that the Government has opted for two different funding streams on UK wide and devolved competencies. It is not clear how funding for levelling up will be derived for the devolved nations. There has been no agreement with the devolved administrations how funding will be allocated in line with the devolution settlements. As we note in chapter 4, the promised Levelling Up White Paper is set to include proposals for devolution within England. Our report therefore focuses primarily on levelling up as

11 See for example: [“On the level: What does the government mean by levelling up?”](#) CSW, 20 February 2020
[“What is levelling up and how is it going?”](#) BBC Website, 11 May 2021

12 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, [“Get Brexit Done Unleash Britain’s Potential”](#) 2019, introduction pg 2

13 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, [“Get Brexit Done Unleash Britain’s Potential”](#) 2019, introduction

14 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, [“Get Brexit Done Unleash Britain’s Potential”](#) 2019, introduction

15 10 Downing Street: [Queen’s Speech Background Briefing Notes](#), 11 May 2021

16 Q7

17 See for example: [“On the level: What does the government mean by levelling up?”](#) CSW, 20 February 2020;
[“What is levelling up and how is it going?”](#) BBC Website, 11 May 2021; IFG, [If Boris Johnson is serious about ‘levelling up’, he needs to define what it means](#), 11 May 2021

it applies in England. Nonetheless, this lack of clarity around the territorial extent of the levelling up agenda, and the apparent absence of any meaningful strategic engagement with the devolved administrations around the levelling up agenda, amplifies the lack of clarity and focus around this major policy.

10. In the 2021 Queen’s Speech, the Government provided some details both in terms of financial commitments and policy details, which expanded on the Manifesto pledges (see Box 1 below).

Box 1: Levelling up commitments in the Queens Speech 2021

- £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund
- £220 million Community Renewal Fund
- £830 million Future High Streets Fund for 72 areas across England
- 8 Freeports
- 250,000 green jobs across the UK
- £400 million “Strength in Places” Fund
- moving more of government out of Whitehall
- £3.7 billion to build 40 hospitals and recruit 50,000 new nurses in England
- recruiting 20,000 new police officers across England and Wales
- increasing primary school funding to a minimum of £4,000 per pupil and secondaries to a minimum of £5,000 per pupil and boosting investment in schools by £14 billion through to 2023–23—an extra £840 per pupil
- the Lifetime Skills Guarantee as part of the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund
- rolling out T levels, investing £500 million a year
- the North and the Midlands Integrated Rail Plan
- investing £5 billion in buses and cycle routes across England

Source: Source: Queen’s Speech Background Briefing Notes¹⁸

11. However, to date, the Government has provided no overall strategy for the agenda or a vision for what a levelled up UK might look like in the future. Gemma Tatlow, Chief Economist at the Institute for Government (IFG), said in a comment piece of 11 May *If Boris Johnson is serious about levelling up, he needs to define what it means*:

it is very unclear what it [levelling up] means. While there are some political benefits to this vagueness—because it allows the government to convince

swathes of the electorate that they will be the beneficiaries—it cannot be sustained if the prime minister wants to effectively mobilise the state behind this goal.¹⁹

Giles Wilkes, former industrial and economic special adviser to former Prime Minister Rt Hon Theresa May MP, noted that the Government’s use of the phrase levelling up was so widespread that it had become nothing more than a generic term for “make things better”.²⁰ Rafael Behr of the Guardian referred to levelling up as a “rhetorical zeppelin”, which was “floating on the political horizon, carrying no cargo of policy”.²¹

12. This problem of a lack of understanding of the meaning of levelling up seems to extend beyond journalists and political commentators to the general public. A poll by YouGov found that only 33% of people knew what it meant; 24% had heard it but felt unsure of what it meant; 12% had heard of it but had “no idea” what it meant, and 31% had never heard of it at all.²² Potentially more concerning for the Government was research by Public First that found through its focus groups that the term levelling up was confusing to participants and when the meaning was explained to them, [they found it] “mildly irritating”. It found that people did not feel ‘levelled down’ but rather ignored. Equally, participants described the idea that they would suddenly become like London and the South East in four years as “bizarre” with the conclusion of the study being “it’s not what they want, and they don’t think it’s credible”.²³

13. We asked Paul Scully MP, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets, to clarify what the Government meant by levelling up. He said:

It is about making sure we can improve the everyday life and life chances for people in underperforming places around the country.²⁴

It is to look at the long term structural issues that are there, whether it is connectivity, inequalities or productivity, to make sure we can tackle all of these areas, and to raise opportunities around the country that are not able to be realised in certain areas.²⁵

14. The Prime Minister, from the first day of his premiership, identified levelling up as a major focus of Government policy. It was featured in the Conservative Party Manifesto in 2019 and was a central theme of the programme for government, set out in the Queen’s Speech in May 2021. While it is frequently referred to by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet as the central purpose and mission of this Government, it has yet to be defined beyond its aim of ‘improving everyday life and life chances’.

15. Given the Government’s own focus on its levelling up agenda, the lack of clarity around its meaning and how it translates into specific policy initiatives and strategies is stark. As it currently stands, levelling up risks becoming an everything and nothing

19 IFG, [If Boris Johnson is serious about ‘levelling up’, he needs to define what it means](#), 11 May 2021

20 Giles Wilkes, [The Queen’s Speech kicks the tricky decisions away](#), 11 May 2021

21 [“British politics is still drunk on Brexit spirit, and Boris Johnson won’t call time”](#) The Guardian, 16 June 2021

22 YouGov: [Matt Chorley Survey Results 15–16 December 2020](#)

23 Rachel Wolf, [Tests for the delivery of levelling up, and levers with which to deliver it](#), 10 May 2021

24 Q1

25 Q26

policy, not owned by any particular Minister or Department, and without any means in place of evaluating or assessing its impact or efficacy as policy in ‘improving everyday life and life chances’.

2 Why Levelling up?

16. By failing to clearly define levelling up, the Government has also failed to identify the exact problem that requires solving by levelling up. There is an assumption that the Government is seeking to address regional inequality and level up the rest of the country to the perceived successes and attainments of London and the South East.²⁶ However, it is not clear what it is the Government feels the need to level up and where; for example, is it productivity, GDP, health, educational attainment, life expectancy or all of the above? Is it to concentrate funding in northern constituencies or will it also consider poorer neighbourhoods within the South East?

17. Successive post-war governments have all grappled with the problem of regional inequality in the UK.²⁷ The 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto stated:

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has set out an agenda for levelling up every part of the UK—not just investing in our great towns and cities, as well as rural and coastal areas, but giving them far more control of how that investment is made. In the 21st century, we need to get away from the idea that ‘Whitehall knows best’ and that all growth must inevitably start in London. Because we as Conservatives believe you can and must trust people and communities to make the decisions that are right for them.²⁸

The Government provided the following facts to demonstrate the regional inequalities and the need for levelling up in its briefing for the Queen’s Speech (see Box 2).

26 Kevin Hollinrake, [Germany teaches us that levelling up will be a long haul](#), 17 May 2021 “[Northern voices go unheard in flawed Westminster-centric world](#)” The Times, 17 May 2021

27 For example: Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, 1937–1940; Urban Development Corporations 1983; Regional Development Agencies 1998; National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal 2001; Local Enterprise Partnerships 2011; Northern Powerhouse 2014

28 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, “[Get Brexit Done Unleash Britain’s Potential](#)” 2019,

Box 2: 'Key facts' accompanying the Queen's Speech

- The UK's highest productivity region (London) is nearly 60 per cent more productive than its lowest (Wales).
- 50 per cent of the population in London have graduate-level qualifications, compared to 33 per cent of the population in the North East of England.
- Healthy life expectancy in Glasgow, Dundee, Blackpool and Middlesbrough is ten years shorter than affluent local authorities in the South East.
- People in the most deprived fifth of neighbourhoods in England are about 50 per cent more likely to experience crime and antisocial behaviour than those in the richest fifth.
- Between 2007–08 and 2018–19 capital spending on transport in London was around £6,600 per head, more than twice the average in the rest of England (£2,400).
- Close to half of core research funding in England was spent in just three UK regions and sub-regions containing Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

Source: The Queen's Speech 2021 Background Briefing Notes²⁹

18. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in 2016 that the UK had the sixth highest regional economic disparities among 30 OECD countries with comparable data and recorded the fourth largest increase in disparities between 2000 and 2016. The figures for 2019 (latest available) showed that these disparities have continued, with London accounting for 22.7% of UK GDP, and with the South East adding another 14.8%. Therefore, the two areas combined make up 37.5% of UK GDP although they contain only 26.8% of the UK population.³⁰ John Harris, co-creator of the *Anywhere but Westminster* video series told the Lords Public Services Committee on *Levelling up and Public Services*:

The divide between the north, however it is defined, and London and the south-east is wider and bigger than the divide between the old East Germany and the old West Germany.³¹

19. However, this analysis masks differences within regions, from local area to local area and neighbourhood to neighbourhood, for example, of the 100 most deprived boroughs in the country, 12 are in London.³² A House of Commons Library Paper, *How big are regional economic inequalities in the UK?*, found that, when looking at productivity, although many of the most productive local areas in the UK were in London and the M4 corridor, there were also pockets of high productivity areas in other regions, such as the North West. The paper also examined the Department of Work and Pensions detailed survey of household

29 10 Downing Street: [Queen's Speech Background Briefing Notes](#), 11 May 2021

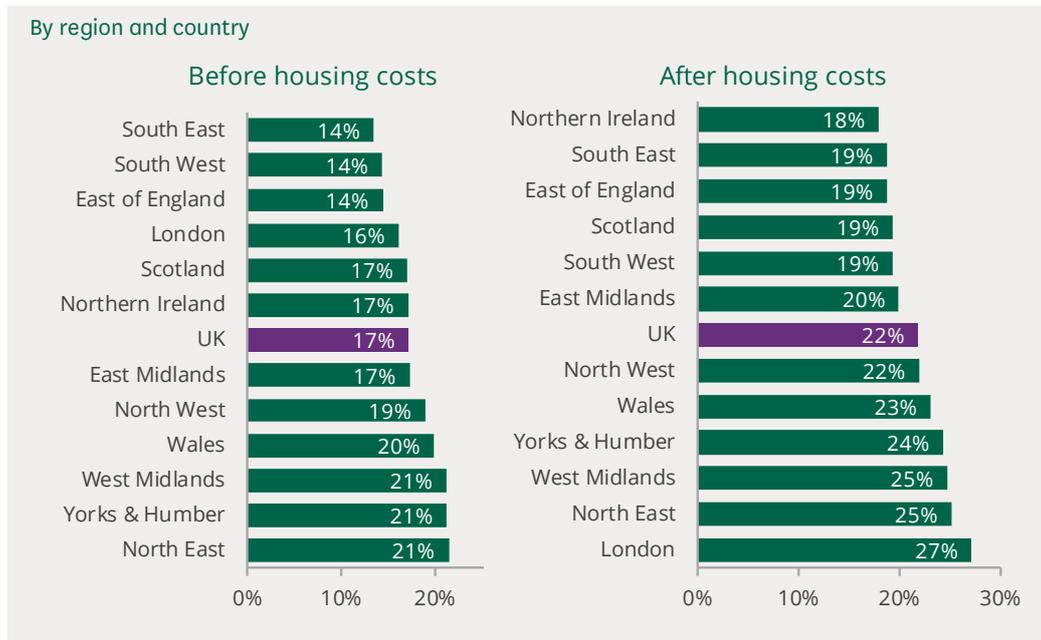
30 ONS, [Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2019](#), 26 May 2021

31 House of Lords Public Services Committee, ["Levelling up" and public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q30

32 Flourish, [100 most deprived local authorities in Great Britain](#), 14 May 2021, ["London is being scapegoated"](#) The Guardian, 30 May 2021

disposable income, and found that before housing costs were factored in, London had the highest median disposable income, however, after housing costs, London dropped to equal fourth highest reflecting the sharply higher housing costs in the capital.³³

Percentage of people in relative low income, 2017/18 to 2019/20



Source: DWP, [Households Below Average Income](#), 2019/20

The UK2070 report identified that although growth had been concentrated in London and the wider South East, this was now creating major pressure on the region impacting on the quality of life with increasing social and environmental costs.³⁴

20. Minister Hall acknowledged past failures and said that while it was clear that “investment and life chances in London and the south-east [...] continue to improve” he noted that other parts of the country had not seen those opportunities.³⁵

21. There is no doubt that geographical inequality is a structural problem in the UK and attempting to address these inequalities should be at the heart of the UK’s plans for economic recovery post-pandemic. These plans should be focused on longer-term goals, rather than just the life span of political cycles, requiring a deeper level of consensus. Whilst we recognise that there are inequalities between regions in the UK, there are also inequalities within regions, with pockets of wealth and pockets of severe deprivation. The levelling up agenda must also seek to tackle inequality within regions, not least in cities that are seen to be well performing.

Effects of Covid-19 on regional inequality

22. There is no doubt that the economic impact of Covid-19 has had an impact on existing regional inequalities within the UK. In its October 2020 “*Levelling up: where*

33 [How big are regional economic inequalities in the UK?](#) House of Commons Library, March 2020 updated to include the latest year data (three-year average 2017/18–2019/20) from DWP, [Households below average income](#), March 2021, table 2.5ts

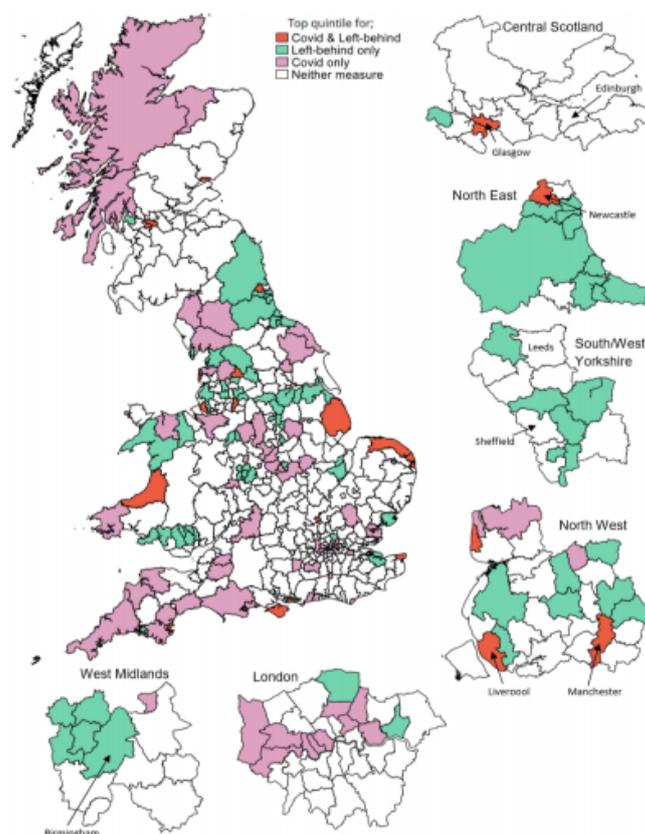
34 UK2070 Commission, [Make No Little Plans: Acting at scale for a fairer and stronger future](#), February 2020, pg 11

35 Q31

and how?” report, the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that the traditionally ‘left-behind’ areas were not those most exposed to the short-term economic impact of Covid-19. There were, however, important exceptions: a number of hospitality and tourism-dependent coastal communities and the centres of some Northern and Scottish cities (such as Liverpool, Glasgow and Dundee) faced the ‘double whammy’ of being both ‘left behind’ and vulnerable to the immediate economic fallout from the pandemic.³⁶ Lord Kerslake, Chair of UK2070, said:

There is no doubt that Covid has not been a leveller. It has impacted on those who are most vulnerable and, therefore, on places where there are large numbers of vulnerable people. We know that we have a very unequal economy in this country.³⁷

Areas economically impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and considered ‘left behind’



[CH7-IFS-Green-Budget-2020-Levelling-up](#)

23. Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, agreed that Covid-19 had “exposed a number of fault-lines that were already there in the system”.³⁸ Rachael Greenwood of the Midlands Engine also said that Covid-19 had “exacerbated some of the challenges that we know we already face as a region” and she gave the example of

36 The IFS have used three measures to assess regional economic impacts of Covid-19 on a local area:

- Proportion of workers who work in sectors that were forced to close during lockdown.
- Proportion of eligible employees ever furloughed.
- Fall in job vacancies

37 Q91

38 Q57

the “digital divide” being a “structural barrier to growth within our economy”.³⁹ Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, identified a need to rebuild an economy that was “more resilient to future shocks” but that reduced the likelihood of future shocks, be they climate, health, economic or social shocks. He recalled:

A friend of mine, a businessman in Bristol, said, “Riots are not good for inward investment.” We have to build our economy back in the right way or it will be a patch-and-mend approach, which will be vulnerable to shocks that inevitably come along in the coming years. That will cost us all lots of time and money.⁴⁰

24. Minister Scully disputed the argument that the pandemic had created new problems. Instead, he argued, it has “put a spotlight on some of them and maybe caused some older problems to come to the forefront”.⁴¹ He suggested that the long-term impact of Covid-19 on those areas would “depend on how persistent the recent changes in business and consumer behaviour turn out to be”.⁴²

25. **The impact of Covid-19 has not been uniform, and the extent of these differences may not be known for some time. *The Government should factor detailed analysis of the impact of Covid-19 into its planning for, and delivery of, the levelling up agenda.***

39 Q115

40 Q144

41 Q40

42 Q40

3 Funding Levelling up

A plan for levelling up

26. The Government's plans for levelling up are wide ranging, and include, for example, large scale infrastructure spending and the obesity strategy (as set out in box 3 below). Although fighting obesity is a very worthy ambition, it is difficult to visualise how this-ties in with the spending of £27 billion on roads or forms part of a coherent strategy and plan for delivery. Former Conservative Industry Secretary, Lord Heseltine, suggested that the Government is:

throwing money indiscriminately at a whole range of projects with very little attempt to co-ordinate the results, and very little attempt to mobilise local strengths, and very little attempt to analyse the competitive challenges we face.⁴³

Box 3 Levelling up: Government Submission to the Inquiry

- We have launched the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund which will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK.
- We will launch the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022 and have supported places with £220 million additional funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund to places prepare.
- To reduce health inequalities, we have launched the obesity strategy and will provide an additional £100m in 21/22 to support people to achieve and maintain their weight.
- We are boosting investment in Further Education and reforming the skills system to better align with employer demand and support productivity growth.
- To improve infrastructure and connectivity, we are making the largest ever investment in motorways and A-roads worth over £27 billion and investing £5bn in Project Gigabit.

Source: BEIS Submission ([LRS0082](#))

27. In its Report, *Economic impact of coronavirus: the challenges of recovery*, published on 8 September 2020, the Treasury Committee recommended that the Government needs to “clarify whether it is planning to close the productivity gap, the income gap, the gap in health outcomes, the gap in educational outcomes or all of these”. It added that the Government “needs to define the strategies it will use to close different imbalances: strategies to close productivity gaps may well be different to those aimed to close income gaps or those gaps in health outcomes”.⁴⁴

28. The Institute for Government (IFG) identified that “being clear about what levelling up means in practice would help the government take its plans from a shopping list of

43 [Government approach to business ‘chaotic’ and ‘incoherent’, says Heseltine](#), BBC Website, 23 June 2021

44 Treasury Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2019–21, [Economic impact of coronavirus: the challenges of recovery](#), HC 271

policies to a coherent strategy”.⁴⁵ Dr Gemma Tetlow, Chief Economist at the IFG, said that if the levelling up agenda is to be more than “just another round of upheaval and reinvention” of regional policies; then, the Prime Minister needed to be clearer about what he was trying to achieve and why existing policies and institutions had failed before.⁴⁶ Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, concluded:

A friend of mine is a senior Army officer. He says, “Make a plan, any plan. Just make a bloody plan.” We do not have one. We have no real coherent national framework with which to work. I do not [know] what we are pointing at, as a country, at the moment, and that undermines our ability to plan.⁴⁷

29. In response to our question seeking clarification of the Government plans to achieve levelling up, the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Luke Hall MP, could not outline the Government’s plan. Instead, he listed a number of different funds.⁴⁸

30. The current available documents on the policy instruments the Government aims to use to level up—the Conservative Party Manifesto, its submission to this inquiry and the 2021 Queen’s Speech—show a wide ranging and disjointed programme of random policies from an obesity strategy, an increase in police officers, to funding on A roads and the creation of Freeports. Although these policies are all very interesting and welcome, it is difficult to see how they all tie together under one over-arching strategy. The cohesion of the whole has not been well described to identify how these fit together. If the Government is serious about levelling up and for it to be a substantive strategy rather than merely a slogan, it must spell out a coherent ‘plan’ as a matter of urgency.

31. We recommend that the promised Levelling Up White Paper sets out a coherent plan for levelling up. This must set out, in detail, a road map and timeline for the delivery of the wide range of policies proposed. Fundamentally, it must set out what problems and issues these policies are designed to address in terms of the levelling up agenda, both, as individual policy initiatives in their own right and collectively in how they fit together as part of the wider strategy to deliver the Government’s ambitious desire and commitment to level up.

Levelling up funds

Level of funding

32. In evidence to us, Minister Scully repeated the Government’s stated ambition of “improving the everyday life and life chances for people in underperforming places around the country”.⁴⁹ The Government identified several sources of funding for levelling up in the Queen’s Speech.

45 IFG, [Taking stock of the Conservative manifesto](#), May 2021, pg 10

46 IFG, [If Boris Johnson is serious about ‘levelling up’, he needs to define what it means](#), 11 May 2021

47 Q134

48 Q20

49 Q1

Box 4: Levelling up (funding) commitments in the Queens Speech 2021

- £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund
- £220 million Community Renewal Fund
- £830 million Future High Streets Fund for 72 areas across England
- £400 million “Strength in Places” Fund
- £3.7 billion to build 40 hospitals and recruit 50,000 new nurses in England
- increasing primary school funding to a minimum of £4,000 per pupil and secondaries to a minimum of £5,000 per pupil and boosting investment in schools by £14 billion through to 2023–23—an extra £840 per pupil
- the Lifetime Skills Guarantee as part of the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund
- rolling out T levels, investing £500 million a year
- investing £5 billion in buses and cycle routes across England

Source: 10 Downing Street: Queen’s Speech Background Briefing Notes, 11 May 2021

33. Minister Hall explained these funds in more detail:

There are a number of different funds. The Levelling Up Fund is one of them, which addresses key physical aspects, town centres, road improvements and others. We have the Community Renewal Fund, which is addressing some of the more resource-based issues and targeting funding towards those deprived communities and ex industrial towns. We have the Community Ownership Fund. We have all the measures we are taking through the local government finance settlement and others.⁵⁰

Minister Hall said of the Levelling Up Fund that it was “designed to deliver projects over the course of this Parliament” and “to really get cracking with levelling up” as people wanted to see tangible change in their communities.⁵¹

34. However, we identified widespread concern that the levels of funding committed to date to deliver the levelling up agenda were nowhere near adequate for the Government to deliver what it has promised. For example, John Harris, co-creator of the *Anywhere but Westminster* video series, told the Lords Public Services Committee inquiry into “*Levelling up*” and *public services* that levelling up seemed to be “more rhetorical than real”. To put it into context, he compared the £4.8 billion of the Levelling Up Fund to the money spent on ‘Test and Trace’⁵² and concluded that “it is chicken feed, really” which made him feel “less than convinced” by the ambition.⁵³

35. Diane Coyle, Bennett Professor of Public Policy at Cambridge University, accused the Government of “tokenism” and said “I am a bit sceptical about to what extent these

50 Q20

51 Q21

52 A [PQ](#) stated that the overall budget for the programme is £22 billion, and the [NAO](#)’s estimate for the lifetime cost of the programme of £22,903 million (as of January 2021).

53 House of Lords Public Services Committee, “[Levelling up](#)” and [public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q30

[funds] will make a difference. The scale of what we need to level up is enormous”.⁵⁴ It has also been questioned whether the funding will come anywhere close to reinstating the funding available to local government pre-austerity. John Harris noted that the “the parlous state of local and city government” undermined the whole notion of levelling up:

Austerity is not over. I could take any one of a number of examples. Leeds City Council is about to cut £87 million from its annual budget. That is the biggest cut that it has ever faced.⁵⁵

36. Civil Service World estimated that in 2011 almost £1 billion was taken out of the Greater Manchester area through austerity.⁵⁶ The UK2070 Report identified that Barnsley was the area that has been hardest hit by austerity in percentage terms, with a 40% reduction in its day-to-day council spending since 2009/10, while Liverpool saw the deepest cuts per resident, with a reduction to council services’ funding of £816 per resident.⁵⁷ Neil McInroy, Chief Executive of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, highlighted that Regional Development Agencies had had a budget of around £2 billion a year for 12 years, which was “a total that is significantly greater than the current government’s Levelling Up Fund”.⁵⁸

37. We challenged the Minister as to whether the allocated or promised funding to date would restore local government budgets to pre-austerity levels. Minister Hall told us:

I could not comment on the total amount that any individual local authority will receive after all the bidding processes are complete, naturally because we are going through assessment processes and it will depend on how successful they are in the course of that. There is clearly significant investment through the funds themselves.⁵⁹

38. Despite its large-scale ambition and promised additional funding, it is unclear whether the levels of funding available to local areas (via levelling up) will equal, never mind exceed, historic levels of UK and EU funding to local government. Given the state of public finances following Covid-19, the Government should be realistic and clear about the scale of its levelling up ambitions.

39. Nor is it clear how levelling up is different to past regional policy and how it will therefore succeed in areas where previous regional policy has failed. Ministers offered no adequate response to this.

Competition for funding

40. The Industrial Strategy Council criticised the Government’s levelling up plans as “centrally controlled funding pots thinly spread across a range of initiatives”, and said that the historical evidence indicated that this was “unlikely to be a recipe for success”.⁶⁰ Andy Haldane, Departing Chief Economist, Bank of England, and Chair of the now abolished

54 “Levelling Up Fund bias in favour of Tory seats ‘pretty blatant’” Financial Times, 5 March 2021

55 House of Lords Public Services Committee, “Levelling up” and public services, 17 March 2021, Q30

56 “On the level: What does the government mean by levelling up?” CSW, 20 February 2020

57 UK2070 Commission, *Make No Little Plans: Acting at scale for a fairer and stronger future*, February 2020, pg 22

58 Neil McInroy, *Governments have been promising to ‘level up’ the UK for 80 years*, 25 May 2021

59 Q23

60 Industrial Strategy Council, *Annual Report*, March 2021

Industrial Strategy Council, added that these central pots of funding “competitively bid for with deals being done with those most able to contribute [...] will most likely leave behind those already least advantaged”.⁶¹

41. Some funding sources under the Government’s levelling up agenda are available to regions based on applications—a form of competitive bids process, for example, the Levelling Up Fund itself, the Towns Fund, and the Community Renewal Fund. Lord Kerslake said to the Committee that funds for levelling up should not be given out by what he referred to as “short-term beauty parades” as it would not work.⁶² Marvin Rees Mayor of Bristol explained:

They put a bunch of money out there and say to us, “Fight for that.” It is a limited pot of money. We are in a zero-sum game with other authorities when we are trying to collaborate across the country. We cannot have that as an approach. That undermines our ability to fund.⁶³

42. The competition for funding has led to criticisms of ‘unfair’ or ‘untransparent’ processes and ultimately to the claims of ‘pork barrel politics’ by some.⁶⁴ The £3.6bn Towns Fund came under criticism from the Public Accounts Committee, which reported that:

The justification offered by ministers for selecting individual towns are vague and based on sweeping assumptions. In some cases, towns were chosen by ministers despite being identified by officials as the very lowest priority (for example, one town selected ranked 535th out of 541 towns).⁶⁵

43. The Financial Times analysis of the Levelling Up Fund found that, in England, 14 areas that were wealthier than average were ranked in the most needy category and all had at least one Conservative MP.⁶⁶ In April 2021, the Good Law Project took the first formal step in legal proceedings against the Government regarding both the Levelling Up and Towns Fund with the sending of a Pre-Action Protocol Letter. It stated:

The effect of the Defendant’s [Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government] unlawful approach is that areas where the Conservative Party has been, or wishes to be, electorally successful feature very highly... [in areas prioritised for funding].⁶⁷

44. Minister Hall when asked about this told the Lords Public Services Committee:

I think that criticism in itself is grounded in politics and politicisation. You might often hear people making a point about an individual place,

61 Policy Exchange, [Making a Success of Levelling up](#), 28 June 2021

62 Q103

63 Q134

64 Good Law Project, [Pork Barrel Politics](#), 5 April 2021 “[Levelling Up Fund bias in favour of Tory seats ‘pretty blatant’](#)” Financial Times, 5 March 2021 Chris Hanretty, Professor of Politics at Royal Holloway, University of London, [The pork barrel politics of the Towns Fund](#), October 2020

65 Public Accounts Committee, Twenty-Fourth Report of Session 2019–21, [Selecting towns for the Towns Fund](#), HC651

66 “[Levelling Up Fund bias in favour of Tory seats ‘pretty blatant’](#)” Financial Times, 5 March 2021

67 Good Law Project, [Pork Barrel Politics](#), 5 April 2021

but you less often hear Opposition Members talking about how Blackpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sunderland or Manchester are on the priority list for all our funds.⁶⁸

He argued that the majority of places that received funding—over 60%—were in opposition-held areas, which he believed helped to improve the Government’s relationship with these towns.⁶⁹

45. The funding available to achieve levelling up is disparate and lacking any overall coherent strategic purpose or focus. Individual departments should be clear on what their contribution to levelling up will be in line with a clear strategy and agenda.

46. Funding for levelling up should be explicitly and directly linked to the identified issues that the Government are seeking to address, with clear metrics on what that money is seeking to deliver. There is an inequality in the capacity of local areas to bid for government funds. Whitehall should have mechanisms or procedures in place to ensure that it is not the most well-resourced authorities who are successful in securing funding. The Government needs to ensure that those without this capacity do not lose out, including ensuring appropriate funding is available for future rounds.

68 House of Lords Public Services Committee, [“Levelling up” and public services](#), 12 April 2021 , Q4

69 House of Lords Public Services Committee, [“Levelling up” and public services](#), 12 April 2021 , Q4

4 Delivering Levelling up

Devolution White Paper and Levelling Up White Paper

47. In its original submission to our wide-ranging Post Pandemic Economic Growth inquiry in September 2020, the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy department noted that:

Devolution will sit at the heart of our plans to level up, rewire our institutions and renew our regional economies post-Covid-19. The [Devolution] White Paper will set out a transformative place-based strategy to boost regional economic performance, and support the recovery in cities, towns and rural areas alongside the Towns Fund and other key programmes.⁷⁰

48. On 4 May 2021, the Government announced its intention to publish a “landmark” Levelling Up White Paper later this year, which would articulate “how bold new policy interventions will improve opportunity and boost livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic”.⁷¹ Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester Combined Authority, hoped that Covid-19 had shone a light on regional inequality and devolution and that described it as a moment when “England grows up a little around devolution and the relationship between Westminster and the rest of the country”.⁷² He suggested that the culture was still one where Westminster held all the power and all the money and the Mayors had “to go on bended knee” and “plead” for some of that money. He stated that if things did not change:

levelling up will be a slogan rather than a thing that really happens, because you cannot level up from Whitehall. You cannot just drop projects on places and call that levelling up.⁷³

49. The White Paper—which will be led by the Prime Minister—will focus on challenges including “improving living standards, growing the private sector and increasing and spreading opportunity”.⁷⁴ Minister Hall confirmed that the Devolution White Paper would now be part of the Levelling Up White Paper and he re-affirmed the Government’s commitment to devolution in England: “we are still hugely committed to the agenda. Local leadership is a hugely important part of the wider levelling up work. It is a vital part”⁷⁵ and that “we have made this clear commitment to decentralise power and to use it as an important tool for levelling up.” He said that the new combined White Paper would “contain new policy proposals” and look very closely at “devolution, local leadership and levelling up”.⁷⁶

70 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (PEG0287)

71 [“Government to publish Levelling Up White Paper”](#) 10 Downing Street Press release, 4 May 2021

72 Q57

73 Q57

74 [“Government to publish Levelling Up White Paper”](#) 10 Downing Street Press release, 4 May 2021

75 Q6

76 Q7

Regional delivery—Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Industrial Strategies

50. The Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge clearly set out the regional structures that the Government currently had at its disposal to deliver levelling up:

- At a sub-national level, there are a suite of powerhouses, engines of growth and arcs, including the Northern Powerhouse, England’s Economic Heartland (the Oxford-Cambridge Arc), the Midlands Engine and the Western Gateway.
- Devolution in England has seen the creation of nine Mayoral Combined Authorities and one non-mayoral Combined Authorities.⁷⁷ Completing the ‘club’ are the Greater London Authority and Cornwall, where a unitary authority has agreed a devolution deal with government.
- There are 38 business-led Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England which play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and job creation, improve infrastructure and raise workforce skills within the local area.
- There is also an ecosystem of structures and organisations whose roles will contribute to the determinants of economic growth. These include more than 135 Clinical Commissioning Groups, eight or nine sub-national transport bodies, and 31 City Deals.
- These structures all sit on top of—or alongside—339 local authorities in England. Of these, 25 are county councils, 188 are district councils, and 126 are single-tier authorities. Of the single-tier authorities, 33 are London boroughs and 36 are metropolitan boroughs.⁷⁸

51. Deloitte has argued that these structures are overlapping and that clarity and consistency across the local and regional government landscape was needed.⁷⁹ The CBI highlighted the challenges these overlaps created for businesses as they found “the number of different bodies, the overlaps within them and the lack of clarity of roles challenging to navigate”.⁸⁰ Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, recognised that it was “a very cluttered landscape”. He asked “if you are an inward investor going into an area, who do you go to? What organisation do you first approach?”⁸¹ He explained “we have a city Mayor, we have a metro Mayor, we have a Lord Mayor of Liverpool and we have five district mayors but we also have parish mayors. There are eleven people with the title “mayor” and we expect people to understand who they should go to”.⁸²

52. Andy Haldane, departing Chief Economist at the Bank of England, said, at a recent Policy Exchange Event, that the “crucial ingredient to levelling up” was to look fundamentally at the process of regional governance and for “a comprehensive investment

77 Updated following the May elections when West Yorkshire elected a Mayor.

78 Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LRS0005](#))

79 Deloitte ([LRS0070](#))

80 Confederation of British Industry ([LRS0017](#))

81 Q82

82 Q84

in the capacity and capability of our anchor institutions in each of the regions”.⁸³ The Midlands Engine told us they had been looking forward to a ‘Devolution and Local Recovery’ White Paper to provide “clarity on local government structures and empowering local and regional organisations”.⁸⁴

53. Regional and local devolution is incoherent and inconsistent across England. In some areas, this can result in duplicative and ineffective outputs. In other areas, this results in communities which feel left behind, without the support or capacity provided by other tiers of local or regional government.

54. The Levelling Up White Paper (incorporating the Devolution White Paper) needs to be bold and progressive. It should clarify which tiers of devolved and local government in England are responsible for delivering which levelling up objectives and then ensure those tiers are adequately resourced to deliver on those objectives, as well as providing fair distribution of those resources across the whole of England.

55. We noted that some regional and local authorities performed better than others, which in some cases was due to the size, institutional capacity or leadership provided within those tiers of government. We recommend that Ministers consider how to report on the effectiveness of different local and regional authorities in contributing to levelling up. Businesses and investors require clarity on who is leading the local levelling up agenda in each economic area in England.

56. The Bennet Institute found, through its body of work, that “for local plans for growth to be truly effective, we believe that there needs to be co-ordination between local and national strategies”.⁸⁵ This previously was to be done as part of the Industrial Strategy through the Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) prepared by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

57. Overall, the evidence we received about local industrial strategies in both this inquiry and our Industrial Policy inquiry was positive.⁸⁶ The Industrial Strategy Council⁸⁷ found that the development of Local Industrial Strategies was mostly seen by local actors as a constructive exercise that had focused minds on agreeing local priorities and achieving common goals. It reported that local stakeholders were supportive of the process of developing Local Industrial Strategies and the role of LEPs in coordinating sub-national economic policy.⁸⁸ Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, said to us that his Local Industrial Strategy was “critical” for his region’s long-term recovery, adding that what was needed was “sustainable, long-term funding from Government” in order to protect and safeguard jobs.⁸⁹

83 <https://policyexchange.org.uk/pxevents/making-a-success-of-levelling-up/>

84 Midlands Engine (LRS0021)

85 Bennett Institute for Public Policy (LRS0005)

86 BEIS Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Post-pandemic economic growth: Industrial policy in the UK](#), HC 385

87 The [Industrial Strategy Council](#) was set up to monitor the Government’s progress on its Industrial Strategy. It has since been disbanded along with the Industrial Strategy

88 Industrial Strategy Council, [Annual Report](#), March 2021

89 Q74

58. We were told by Mark Bretton, head of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) network, in October 2020, that every LEP had a Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) ‘oven ready’. However, despite the fact that these LISs were “underpinning” its approach to the long term as well as to the pandemic,⁹⁰ only seven had been agreed and published.⁹¹

59. There was uncertainty—following the replacement of the Industrial Strategy with the Plan for Growth—on what would happen to the remaining Local Industrial Strategies that had been prepared by the LEPs but not yet published. In correspondence, the Secretary of State said that as part of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government’s levelling up agenda, the Government was working with LEPs and Mayoral Combined Authority to build on “the strong evidence base and the brilliant work done to date by places across the country on the design of Local Industrial Strategies”.⁹² Minister Hall told us that “in the years since the local industrial strategies were produced, the business and economic environment has changed quite significantly” so there was “no longer an expectation or a requirement for those places to produce those strategies in a preferred or prescribed format or timescale”.⁹³ Minister Scully told us:

Rather than having a single local industrial strategy, it is about working out that local economic plan that fits into the plan for growth and our other strategic documents that we have, like the R&D places strategy and, as I say, the 10-point plan.⁹⁴

We also want to make sure they are addressing the new issues that have come out as a result of the crisis, which those industrial strategies were not designed to consider.⁹⁵

60. Kate O’Neill, Director of Policy, Cities and Local Growth Unit, reporting jointly to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, explained that instead of local industrial strategies being produced to co-ordinate with the national industrial strategy there would now be help for local areas to align to the Plan for Growth. She said that there were teams within the Cities and Local Growth Unit, which were based in the regions to build up local relationships to “help local partners work through what sensible local strategies might be”.⁹⁶ These teams were providing the link between the overarching Government strategy, through the plan for growth, and the local areas by helping “signpost them to the relevant funding streams”.⁹⁷

61. **As we highlighted in our recent report on industrial policy, the local industrial and economic insights and intelligence that came from creating Local Industrial Strategies should not be lost. We recommend that the Government provide support and funding through its new regional Cities and Local Growth Unit teams to update and adapt the published and remaining ‘oven ready’ Local Industrial Strategies to incorporate the**

90 Q1

91 Q1

92 [Letter](#) from Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 22 March 2021

93 Q4

94 Q4

95 Q5

96 Q5

97 Q5

post pandemic circumstances and Government’s Plan for Growth. These local strategies can provide the ‘bottom up’ mechanism, for evidence to flow from the regions to the centre, informing the Government’s over-arching strategy on levelling up.

62. *We also recommend that the Cities and Local Growth Unit work with the Office for National Statistics to agree a uniform set of local economic metrics to determine progress in achieving them.*

Central Government

63. In March, Isabel Hardman, Deputy Editor of the Spectator, told the Lords Public Services Committee that in regard to levelling up there was “still a lot of anxiety about personnel in government—who is delivering this and who is the right person in each department to deliver it”.⁹⁸ Sebastian Payne for the Financial Times said similarly that “no one is really responsible for [levelling up] within the structures of government at the moment. Nobody is particularly driving this agenda forward, apart from the Prime Minister.”⁹⁹ He made the point that levelling up could be seen as big a challenge as Brexit because it affected every part of domestic policy. He recounted the personnel employed on that: a Secretary of State, four Ministers, a whole government department and over 500 hundred civil servants in the Department for Exiting the European Union. He suggested that for levelling up there should at least be: a designated levelling-up Minister in the Cabinet Office, junior Ministers in each other government department who have responsibility for that agenda, and a cross-Whitehall committee that meets regularly and is able to co-ordinate policy responses.¹⁰⁰ Lord Kerslake had similar concerns and recommended the need for a Government Minister at senior level in the Cabinet to take the lead on levelling up.¹⁰¹

64. Since this evidence was taken the Government has made a series of announcements on levelling up through the media.

- On 14 April, the Evening Standard reported: “Boris Johnson to revive Tony Blair’s No 10 Delivery Unit to steer levelling up agenda”. It said that the Prime Minister had been meeting Sir Michael Barber, the unit’s original founder and “dubbed the Delivery Tsar during the New Labour era”, to get advice on how to ensure vital objectives were progressed through Whitehall. It would be staffed by 20 officials answering directly to the Prime Minister.¹⁰²
- On 3 May, the Financial Times reported that Neil O’Brien MP had been appointed to “be the PMs chief adviser on “levelling up” to tackle concerns in Whitehall that few knew what the slogan was supposed to mean.”¹⁰³

98 House of Lords Public Services Committee, “[Levelling up” and public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q29

99 House of Lords Public Services Committee, “[Levelling up” and public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q29

100 House of Lords Public Services Committee, “[Levelling up” and public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q32

101 Q91

102 “[Boris Johnson to revive Tony Blair’s No 10 Delivery Unit to steer levelling up agenda](#)”, Evening Standard, 14 April 2021

103 “[Confusion over UK ‘levelling-up’ plan prompts Boris Johnson to hire new adviser](#)”, The Financial Times, 3 May 2021

- On 4 May, a Downing Street Press Notice confirmed Neil O’Brien MP’s appointment and also announced that there would be a new No 10 and Cabinet Office unit to work on the Levelling Up White Paper.¹⁰⁴
- On 11 May, Politico provided more detail that the Cabinet Office/No 10 Levelling Up Unit would be made up of around 15 staff hand-picked from within the civil service. It would report directly to Simon Case, the Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service.¹⁰⁵

Neil O’Brien MP had previously set up a ‘Levelling Up Task Force’ of 41 Conservative backbench MPs in September 2020¹⁰⁶ and authored reports on levelling up on behalf of the Centre Right Think Tank, Onward. He wrote in March 2020:

It is no wonder some parts of the country feel short-changed. For decades we have piled fertilizer on the parts of our economy that are already flourishing while refusing to water the seeds of growth elsewhere.¹⁰⁷

He said that to change trends that had “gone in the wrong direction for decades” it would require “not a few tweaks, but taking a bazooka to the problem”.¹⁰⁸

65. We asked the Ministers how the Delivery Unit and Levelling Up Unit would be working together. Minister Scully told us that the No. 10 Delivery Unit would look “broader than just levelling up” but would cover it as a “key delivery priority”. The Levelling Up Unit, would have the responsibility for delivering the White Paper, “working with the Departments across Government, other parts of the Cabinet Office and No. 10. This will include that delivery unit”.¹⁰⁹ We also asked whether there was a need for a Cabinet Minister responsible for levelling up as suggested by our witnesses. Minister Scully said:

We have a clear level of coordination from the Prime Minister through this unit to make sure that we drive the agenda. I have confidence that the Prime Minister has assembled the right group to complete the task. What you have, under the Prime Minister’s lead, is my Secretary of State (BEIS) and Luke’s Secretary of State (MHCLG) driving the agenda.¹¹⁰

66. There should be a clear direction from No10 on which Department will be responsible for delivering which outcomes and how. We recommend that the Government establish a Cabinet Committee to oversee the co-ordination and delivery of the levelling up agenda across Whitehall, co-ordinating funding allocations and delivery with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Cabinet Committee should engage with local and regional leaders to support the delivery of the agenda.

104 [“Government to publish Levelling Up White Paper”](#) 10 Downing Street Press release, 4 May 2021

105 [“Boris Johnson boosts ‘leveling up’ plan with yet another task force”](#), POLITICO, 11 May 2021

106 Conservative Home, [Neil O’Brien: Introducing the new Levelling Up Taskforce – and its first report on how we can measure progress](#), 7 September 2020

107 Onward, [Launch paper: Levelling Up Growth-enhancing Spending](#), 6 March 2020

108 Onward, [Launch paper: Levelling Up Growth-enhancing Spending](#), 6 March 2020

109 Q16

110 Q14

5 Measuring success

67. It has been constantly repeated throughout this inquiry that, so far, the Government's levelling up agenda lacks clear aims or milestones or any way to measure progress and evaluate outcomes. Lord Kerslake, Chair of the UK2070 inquiry on regional inequality, recommended that as well as needing a clearer definition of levelling up, the Government also had to set targets, "so we can all tell whether they have succeeded".¹¹¹ He added "levelling up is not going to happen overnight, and we need to track our progress constantly".¹¹² The Treasury Committee, in its report, *Economic impact of coronavirus: the challenges of recovery*, suggested there was a risk that levelling up would become an "empty slogan" if the Government did not "produce a strategy underpinning it that defines clear objectives and includes the indicators it will use to gauge success".¹¹³

68. The availability and quality of local data was recognised as an important aspect of this for the Government. The Midlands Engine argued that it was "vital that the Government's approach to regional levelling up is reliant upon the most accurate and compelling data evidence. It is only by comprehending the particular economic strengths and challenges of a region that policy can be successfully targeted, and investment unlock real growth".¹¹⁴ However, Professor Pete Murphy was concerned that there was a problem with the comparisons of available data because "objectives, priorities, structures, processes, outcomes, and boundaries all differ and are changeable over time".¹¹⁵ Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, wanted to put the UN's Sustainable Development Goals¹¹⁶ at "the heart" of the redeveloped economy¹¹⁷ but Lord Kerslake highlighted these were not readily measurable at local level because of the paucity of data.¹¹⁸

69. There have been concerns that until now the Government has been too focused on the inputs to the levelling up agenda, rather than focusing in on what it intends to achieve. For example, in moving around and (re) labelling pots of money as being part of levelling up,¹¹⁹ rather than focusing on measuring and identifying tangible outputs of what that funding is intended to achieve. This has been a common criticism of other Government policies. For example, the Public Accounts Committee report on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund¹²⁰ concluded that the fund was too concerned with measuring the inputs of what was being spent rather than what was achieved with the money, such as the creation of high productivity jobs. The Committee recommended that BEIS should clarify

111 Q92

112 Q96

113 Treasury Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2019–21, [Economic impact of coronavirus: the challenges of recovery](#), HC 271

114 Midlands Engine ([LRS0021](#))

115 Professor Peter Murphy ([LRS0024](#))

116 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. At its core are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve oceans and forests.)

117 Q144

118 Q96

119 IFG, [If Boris Johnson is serious about 'levelling up', he needs to define what it means](#), 11 May 2021

120 The fund, which has invested £1.2bn in 1,600 projects since its launch in 2017, was created to raise the UK's performance in four areas: mobility, clean growth, artificial intelligence and data, and the ageing society.

“what it expects the fund to deliver”, including its impact on jobs and the economy in the short, medium and long term.¹²¹ Meg Hillier MP, the Chair of the Committee, said the problem was “a recurring one for too many programmes across Government”:

they are too focussed on inputs, on ticking boxes and distributing funds, rather than on outcomes. Throwing more taxpayers’ money at the UK’s notorious, long term productivity and opportunity problems, yet again without a clear, integrated plan or measures of proof that it’s working, reinforces the strong and unfortunate impression of ‘government by announcement’. Show us the government by results.¹²²

The Government needs to be awake to the fact that levelling up could come under similar criticisms unless it focusses on clear metrics and milestones for achievement.

70. Deloitte has highlighted the multiple different forms of measurement that could potentially be used to judge the effectiveness of regional and local government and the overall success of the levelling up agenda, which included: GDP contribution, labour market participation, productivity, share of public spending, infrastructure investment (which has been the focus of most government interventions to date) or outcomes in health or education. It explained:

Some will measure the impact on places, others will measure the impact on people. Clarity on which of these provide the benchmarks for success will substantially inform and improve major policy decisions, create tangible goals, target interventions and ensure that progress is measurable.¹²³

71. There have been other reports available to the Government on how it could measure its progress on levelling up:

- i) The UK2070 Commission, chaired by Lord Kerslake, published a report, *Go Big. Go Local. A New Deal for Levelling Up the UK* in October 2020, which proposed that the Government should establish a national outcomes framework. Within this there are both short-term and long-term measures of success;¹²⁴
- ii) In May 2021, the Legatum Institute published a *UK Prosperity Index 2021*; it had been developed to help track progress against levelling up; and¹²⁵
- iii) Neil O’Brien MP and the Levelling Up Task force produced a report *Measuring up for levelling up* in September 2020.¹²⁶

The latter report set three key tests for the Government’s success at levelling up:

- Are the bottom fifth and bottom half of local authorities by earnings growing their earnings more quickly than they have in recent years?

121 [“Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund needs results-focussed ‘overhaul’ to deliver for UK economy and taxpayer”](#) Public Accounts Committee Press Release, 30 April 2021

122 [“Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund needs results-focussed ‘overhaul’ to deliver for UK economy and taxpayer”](#) Public Accounts Committee Press Release, 30 April 2021

123 Deloitte ([LRS0070](#))

124 UK2070, [“Go Big Go Local, A new Deal for Levelling up the UK”](#), October 2020

125 Legatum Institute, [UK Prosperity Index 2021](#), 13 May 2021

126 Onward, [Measuring up for levelling up](#), September 2020

- Are the bottom fifth and bottom half of local authorities with the worst unemployment seeing unemployment rates falling and converging with the national average?
- Are the bottom fifth and bottom half of local authorities with the lowest employment seeing employment rates rising and converging with the national average?

He wrote for Conservative Home: “let’s hold ourselves to account, and set ourselves some ambitious goals. Let’s get earnings growing faster than before in poorer areas. Let’s get unemployment down in the places its worst. They say that “what gets measured gets managed.” So let’s “measure up” our progress on levelling up”.¹²⁷

72. Politico reported that a Whitehall official had said the timing of the next election will depend on “defensible progress” made by the Levelling Up Unit, which was perceived as “key to cementing Conservative gains in traditional Labour-voting areas”. There was some cynicism that the lack of metrics so far on levelling up was because the figures may not look good for the Conservative government at the next election. Bronwyn Maddox of the Institute for Government speculated that:

not only are the manifestations of levelling-up hard to quantify, but where they can be captured in metrics, as in some aspects of health and education, many will have deteriorated since the start of the pandemic.¹²⁸

73. Sebastian Payne of the Financial Times considered: “I wonder how much will actually be done on levelling up between now and the next election, because this Government have only three years to go before the next polling day”.¹²⁹ Rachel Wolf,¹³⁰ co-author of the 2019 Conservative Manifesto (and was an education and innovation adviser at Number 10 during David Cameron’s premiership), identified that regional productivity and innovation were vital in delivering the levelling up agenda. However, she also highlighted the necessity for identifying shorter-term gains to demonstrate achievement towards levelling up, including improvement in high streets; safety/crime; skills and training programmes; and school performance.¹³¹

74. We asked the Ministers how they were measuring their achievements towards levelling up. Minister Scully told us the Government would be:

measuring life chances, measuring inequalities, and measuring connections between areas that have underperformed, have been under connected and are less productive business wise. All of these areas will be measured and judged upon.¹³²

75. When we asked about the exact metrics being used, we were told that government departments were using the provisional priority outcomes and metrics of the Spending

127 Conservative Home, [Neil O’Brien: Introducing the new Levelling Up Taskforce – and its first report on how we can measure progress](#), 7 September 2020

128 IFG, [“The government can be judged against the promises of this Queen’s Speech”](#) 11 May 2021

129 House of Lords Public Services Committee, [“Levelling up” and public services](#), 17 March 2021, Q30

130 Rachel Wolf has also served the current Government as a [Non-Executive Board Member at the DWP](#)

131 Rachel Wolf, [Tests for the delivery of levelling up, and levers with which to deliver it](#), 10 May

132 Q8

Review of 2020,¹³³ which Minister Hall sent us a copy of after the evidence session.¹³⁴ Kate O'Neill, Director of Policy, Cities and Local Growth Unit, said that because it was a “cross cutting theme” multiple departments had metrics published at the Spending Review specifically referencing levelling up and that it was “embedded across all of the relevant Departments’ work”.¹³⁵ For example, Minister Hall told us that for the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government “one clear example of ours that relates to the levelling up agenda is raising productivity and empowering places so that everyone in the country can benefit from levelling up”.¹³⁶

76. Minister Scully identified four priorities in the metrics for BEIS: fighting coronavirus, tackling climate change, unleashing innovation, backing long term growth and that “within each of those four pots, we have metrics that we will be measured on. We will be developing that with the delivery unit and the levelling-up unit”.¹³⁷ We look forward to viewing the metrics when the White Paper is published as Minister Hall promised:

When we come to the White Paper, that will set out bold new policies about improving living standards. We will have clear metrics about how to monitor that. Growing the private sector, spreading opportunity and local leadership, are the key parts of that White Paper.¹³⁸

77. We recommend that the Government should set out what it envisages a ‘levelled up UK’ would look like and agree a set of metrics by which progress towards this vision can be measured. We recommend that the assessments should be based on measurable outcomes linked to short, medium and long-term milestones and goals. We look forward to seeing the work, which has been undertaken by Neil O’Brien MP and the Levelling Up Task Force in this regard, and expect it to be a core element of the promised White Paper.

78. The Government needs to set metrics on levelling up for each Department. Performance against these metrics should be published annually and monitored by the National Audit Office.

133 HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020: Provisional priority outcomes and metrics](#), December 2020

134 [Letter](#) from Minister Hall, 15 June 2021

135 Q17

136 Q7

137 Q36

138 Q14

Conclusions and recommendations

What is Levelling up?

1. The Prime Minister, from the first day of his premiership, identified levelling up as a major focus of Government policy. It was featured in the Conservative Party Manifesto in 2019 and was a central theme of the programme for government, set out in the Queen's Speech in May 2021. While it is frequently referred to by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet as the central purpose and mission of this Government, it has yet to be defined beyond its aim of 'improving everyday life and life chances'. (Paragraph 14)
2. Given the Government's own focus on its levelling up agenda, the lack of clarity around its meaning and how it translates into specific policy initiatives and strategies is stark. As it currently stands, levelling up risks becoming an everything and nothing policy, not owned by any particular Minister or Department, and without any means in place of evaluating or assessing its impact or efficacy as policy in 'improving everyday life and life chances'. (Paragraph 15)

Why Levelling up?

3. There is no doubt that geographical inequality is a structural problem in the UK and attempting to address these inequalities should be at the heart of the UK's plans for economic recovery post-pandemic. These plans should be focused on longer-term goals, rather than just the life span of political cycles, requiring a deeper level of consensus. Whilst we recognise that there are inequalities between regions in the UK, there are also inequalities within regions, with pockets of wealth and pockets of severe deprivation. The levelling up agenda must also seek to tackle inequality within regions, not least in cities that are seen to be well performing. (Paragraph 21)
4. The impact of Covid-19 has not been uniform, and the extent of these differences may not be known for some time. *The Government should factor detailed analysis of the impact of Covid-19 into its planning for, and delivery of, the levelling up agenda.* (Paragraph 25)

Funding Levelling up

5. The current available documents on the policy instruments the Government aims to use to level up—the Conservative Party Manifesto, its submission to this inquiry and the 2021 Queen's Speech—show a wide ranging and disjointed programme of random policies from an obesity strategy, an increase in police officers, to funding on A roads and the creation of Freeports. Although these policies are all very interesting and welcome, it is difficult to see how they all tie together under one over-arching strategy. The cohesion of the whole has not been well described to identify how these fit together. If the Government is serious about levelling up and for it to be a substantive strategy rather than merely a slogan, it must spell out a coherent 'plan' as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 30)

6. *We recommend that the promised Levelling Up White Paper sets out a coherent plan for levelling up. This must set out, in detail, a road map and timeline for the delivery of the wide range of policies proposed. Fundamentally, it must set out what problems and issues these policies are designed to address in terms of the levelling up agenda, both, as individual policy initiatives in their own right and collectively in how they fit together as part of the wider strategy to deliver the Government's ambitious desire and commitment to level up. (Paragraph 31)*
7. Despite its large-scale ambition and promised additional funding, it is unclear whether the levels of funding available to local areas (via levelling up) will equal, never mind exceed, historic levels of UK and EU funding to local government. Given the state of public finances following Covid-19, the Government should be realistic and clear about the scale of its levelling up ambitions. (Paragraph 38)
8. Nor is it clear how levelling up is different to past regional policy and how it will therefore succeed in areas where previous regional policy has failed. Ministers offered no adequate response to this. (Paragraph 39)
9. The funding available to achieve levelling up is disparate and lacking any overall coherent strategic purpose or focus. *Individual departments should be clear on what their contribution to levelling up will be in line with a clear strategy and agenda. (Paragraph 45)*
10. *Funding for levelling up should be explicitly and directly linked to the identified issues that the Government are seeking to address, with clear metrics on what that money is seeking to deliver. There is an inequality in the capacity of local areas to bid for government funds. Whitehall should have mechanisms or procedures in place to ensure that it is not the most well-resourced authorities who are successful in securing funding. The Government needs to ensure that those without this capacity do not lose out, including ensuring appropriate funding is available for future rounds. (Paragraph 46)*

Delivering Levelling up

11. Regional and local devolution is incoherent and inconsistent across England. In some areas, this can result in duplicative and ineffective outputs. In other areas, this results in communities which feel left behind, without the support or capacity provided by other tiers of local or regional government. (Paragraph 53)
12. The Levelling Up White Paper (incorporating the Devolution White Paper) needs to be bold and progressive. *It should clarify which tiers of devolved and local government in England are responsible for delivering which levelling up objectives and then ensure those tiers are adequately resourced to deliver on those objectives, as well as providing fair distribution of those resources across the whole of England. (Paragraph 54)*
13. We noted that some regional and local authorities performed better than others, which in some cases was due to the size, institutional capacity or leadership provided within those tiers of government. *We recommend that Ministers consider how to*

report on the effectiveness of different local and regional authorities in contributing to levelling up. Businesses and investors require clarity on who is leading the local levelling up agenda in each economic area in England. (Paragraph 55)

14. *As we highlighted in our recent report on industrial policy, the local industrial and economic insights and intelligence that came from creating Local Industrial Strategies should not be lost. We recommend that the Government provide support and funding through its new regional Cities and Local Growth Unit teams to update and adapt the published and remaining ‘oven ready’ Local Industrial Strategies to incorporate the post pandemic circumstances and Government’s Plan for Growth. These local strategies can provide the ‘bottom up’ mechanism, for evidence to flow from the regions to the centre, informing the Government’s over-arching strategy on levelling up. (Paragraph 61)*
15. *We also recommend that the Cities and Local Growth Unit work with the Office for National Statistics to agree a uniform set of local economic metrics to determine progress in achieving them. (Paragraph 62)*
16. *There should be a clear direction from No10 on which Department will be responsible for delivering which outcomes and how. We recommend that the Government establish a Cabinet Committee to oversee the co-ordination and delivery of the levelling up agenda across Whitehall, co-ordinating funding allocations and delivery with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Cabinet Committee should engage with local and regional leaders to support the delivery of the agenda. (Paragraph 66)*

Measuring success

17. *We recommend that the Government should set out what it envisages a ‘levelled up UK’ would look like and agree a set of metrics by which progress towards this vision can be measured. We recommend that the assessments should be based on measurable outcomes linked to short, medium and long-term milestones and goals. We look forward to seeing the work, which has been undertaken by Neil O’Brien MP and the Levelling Up Task Force in this regard, and expect it to be a core element of the promised White Paper. (Paragraph 77)*
18. *The Government needs to set metrics on levelling up for each Department. Performance against these metrics should be published annually and monitored by the National Audit Office. (Paragraph 78)*

Formal minutes

Thursday 15 July 2021

Virtual meeting

Members present:

Darren Jones, in the Chair

Alan Brown

Charlotte Nichols

Richard Fuller

Alexander Stafford

Mark Jenkinson

Draft Report (*Post-pandemic economic growth: Levelling up*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 78 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 20 July at 10:00am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Thursday 1 October 2020

Mark Bretton, Chair, THE LEP Network; **Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**, Vice Chair of the City Regions Board, Local Government Association; **Councillor Sue Baxtor**, Chairman, National Association of Local Councils

[Q1–34](#)

Stuart Elford, Chief Executive Officer, Devon Chamber of Commerce; **Louise Bennett OBE DL**, Chief Executive Officer, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce; **Chris Fletcher**, Campaigns Director, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce; **Sandy Needham DL**, Chief Executive Officer, West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

[Q35–56](#)

Thursday 22 October 2020

Rt Hon Andy Burnham, Mayor, Greater Manchester Combined Authority; **Jamie Driscoll**, Mayor, North of Tyne Combined Authority; **Tim Bowles**, Mayor, West of England Combined Authority; **Steve Rotheram**, Mayor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

[Q57–87](#)

Tuesday 24 November 2020

Henri Murison, Director, Northern Powerhouse Partnership; **Katherine Bennett CBE**, Chair, Western Gateway; **The Lord Kerslake**, Chair, UK 2020 Commission; **Rachael Greenwood**, Director, Midlands Engine

[Q88–115](#)

Marvin Rees, Mayor, Bristol City Council; **Sir Peter Soulsby**, Mayor, Leicester City Council; **Andrew Carter**, Chief Executive, Centre for Cities; **Mr Duncan Simpson**, Research Director, Taxpayers' Alliance; **Rokhsana Fiaz**, Mayor, Newham Council

[Q116–144](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2021

Paul Scully MP, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; **Luke Hall MP**, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Kate O'Neill**, Director of Policy, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

[Q1–41](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

LRS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LRS0005](#))
- 2 Bristol City Council ([LRS0042](#))
- 3 British BIDs ([LRS0068](#))
- 4 British Business Bank ([LRS0064](#))
- 5 British Property Federation ([LRS0008](#))
- 6 Business in the Community ([LRS0046](#))
- 7 CBI ([LRS0017](#))
- 8 CIPD ([LRS0058](#))
- 9 Carnegie UK Trust ([LRS0037](#))
- 10 Centre for Ageing Better ([LRS0012](#))
- 11 Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) ([LRS0029](#))
- 12 Chemical Industries Association ([LRS0076](#))
- 13 City of London Corporation ([LRS0079](#))
- 14 Confederation of Passenger Transport ([LRS0002](#))
- 15 Core Cities UK ([LRS0062](#))
- 16 Cornwall Council, Council for the Isles of Scilly and The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LRS0003](#))
- 17 County Council Network ([LRS0078](#))
- 18 Creative Industries Federation ([LRS0016](#))
- 19 Deloitte ([LRS0070](#))
- 20 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy ([LRS0082](#))
- 21 District Council's Network ([LRS0081](#))
- 22 Durham University ([LRS0069](#))
- 23 E.ON ([LRS0026](#))
- 24 Finance & Leasing Association ([LRS0011](#))
- 25 Greater Lincolnshire LEP ([LRS0059](#))
- 26 Greater Manchester Combined Authority ([LRS0060](#))
- 27 Greater Manchester Combined Authority ([LRS0073](#))
- 28 Hampshire County Council ([LRS0061](#))
- 29 Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership ([LRS0031](#))
- 30 Hodgson, Mrs Christine (Chair, Blackpool Pride Place Partnership) ([LRS0030](#))
- 31 Houchen, Ben (Mayor, Tees Valley Combined Authority) ([LRS0080](#))
- 32 Imperial College London ([LRS0019](#))
- 33 Institute of Directors ([LRS0040](#))

- 34 KPMG UK ([LRS0054](#))
- 35 Kent County Council ([LRS0055](#))
- 36 Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) ([LRS0043](#))
- 37 LEP Network ([LRS0071](#))
- 38 Local Government Association ([LRS0009](#))
- 39 M25 Councils ([LRS0050](#))
- 40 Manchester Airports Group ([LRS0065](#))
- 41 Mercia Asset Management ([LRS0035](#))
- 42 Midland Engine ([LRS0021](#))
- 43 Mineral Products Association ([LRS0067](#))
- 44 Murphy, Professor Peter (Nottingham Trent University) ([LRS0024](#))
- 45 New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership ([LRS0052](#))
- 46 Newcastle University ([LRS0006](#))
- 47 North East England Chamber of Commerce ([LRS0045](#))
- 48 North East of England Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC) ([LRS0077](#))
- 49 Nuclear Industry Association ([LRS0057](#))
- 50 Office for National Statistics ([LRS0075](#))
- 51 Ombudsman Services ([LRS0072](#))
- 52 Opportunity South Essex ([LRS0044](#))
- 53 Pact ([LRS0066](#))
- 54 E3G ([LRS0048](#))
- 55 Productivity Insight Network ([LRS0063](#))
- 56 RSPB ([LRS0038](#))
- 57 Rail Delivery Group ([LRS0056](#))
- 58 Railway Industry Association ([LRS0032](#))
- 59 Reading Borough Council ([LRS0022](#))
- 60 Road Haulage Association ([LRS0039](#))
- 61 Royal Institute of British Architects ([LRS0018](#))
- 62 SSE Group ([LRS0033](#))
- 63 Sandbach, Professor Roy ([LRS0023](#))
- 64 Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority ([LRS0013](#))
- 65 Shropshire Council ([LRS0074](#))
- 66 Social Investment Business ([LRS0015](#))
- 67 South East England Councils (SEEC) ([LRS0041](#))
- 68 South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LRS0051](#))
- 69 Surrey County Council ([LRS0049](#))
- 70 The School for Social Entrepreneurs ([LRS0053](#))
- 71 UK Finance ([LRS0010](#))

- 72 UK Research and Innovation ([LRS0047](#))
- 73 UK Theatre and Society of London Theatre ([LRS0020](#))
- 74 UK2070 Commission ([LRS0025](#))
- 75 University College London (UCL) Public Policy ([LRS0001](#))
- 76 University of Birmingham ([LRS0028](#))
- 77 University of Nottingham ([LRS0034](#))
- 78 Western Gateway ([LRS0027](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Post-pandemic economic growth: Industrial policy in the UK	HC 385
2nd	Climate Assembly UK: where are we now?	HC 546
1st Special Report	The impact of Coronavirus on businesses and workers: interim pre-Budget report: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2019–21	HC 119
2nd Special Report	Net Zero and UN Climate Summits: Scrutiny of Preparations for COP26—interim report: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 120
3rd Special Report	Uyghur forced labour in Xinjiang and UK value chains: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 241
4th Special Report	Mineworkers' Pension Scheme: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 386

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	My BEIS inquiry: proposals from the public	HC 612
2nd	The impact of Coronavirus on businesses and workers: interim pre-Budget report	HC 1264
3rd	Net Zero and UN Climate Summits: Scrutiny of Preparations for COP26 – interim report	HC 1265
4th	Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for the Chair of the Regulatory Policy Committee	HC 1271
5th	Uyghur forced labour in Xinjiang and UK value chains	HC 1272
6th	Mineworkers' Pension Scheme	HC 1346
1st Special Report	Automation and the future of work: Government Response to the Committee's Twenty-third Report of Session 2017–19	HC 240
2nd Special Report	Future of the Post Office Network: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019	HC 382
3rd Special Report	Safety of Electrical Goods in the UK: follow-up: Government Response to the Committee's second report of Session 2019	HC 494
4th Special Report	COP26: Principles and priorities—a POST survey of expert views	HC 1000