

EELGA Levelling Up White Paper Briefing

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Purpose

To consider the contents of the government's Levelling Up White Paper and assess the implications for local authorities in the East of England, and the region as a whole.

Introduction to the White Paper – Missions and Key Policies

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the Levelling Up White Paper, Government sets out its key policies aimed at ensuring that people living in every part of the UK benefit from the same life-chances, opportunities and level of prosperity. The document also sets out a 'framework for devolution' detailing the kinds of powers that local leaders could expect to have depending on the level of devolution that is adopted in their area.
- 1.2 The White Paper, expectedly, highlights how government investment will be increased in regions outside of London and the South East. Although it is not implicit, the East of England seems to be included as part of this city-region and, as a result, interventions to increase funding in our region are few and far between.
- 1.3 This report looks at the anticipated implications and further considerations for our region against each of the twelve missions set out in the White Paper.

2. Missions and policy programme

- 2.1 The government has set out 12 new levelling up "missions". These are targeted, measurable and time-bound objectives that it aims to deliver by 2030. These are primarily targeted to reducing inequalities and addressing differences in performance between different geographical areas. Each of these missions has a suite of statistics that will be used to measure progress. These have been set out in a separate document, and [can be found on gov.uk](#).
- 2.2 The government states these are not "mechanisms for holding the government to account" but are instead "intended to precipitate systems change through cooperation across the public, private and voluntary sectors".
- 2.3 However, given the emphasis put on these missions, and the importance of "levelling up" in the eyes of this administration's election manifesto, it is impossible not to see them as a mandate.

3. Changes to central government

- 3.1 A number of changes to the way central government operates are outlined in the white paper. These include:

- The government will look to increase spatial analysis, distilling where the benefits of any given policy decision will be achieved across the country. In addition, it will further review its approach to formula-based spending.
 - The government will also employ Levelling Up Directors, who will work with local areas to build local capacity, improve the evidence base for local areas, catalyse local change amongst local partners and bring strategic coherence.
 - Public bodies will be required to reduce geographical variations in the outcomes related to their business area.
 - The programme of moving civil servants out of greater London into other parts of the country is set to continue, aiming for 22,000 to be relocated by 2030. However, aside from Cambridge, there is no indication that any further relocations will be taking place into the East of England region.
- 3.2 The government is also looking to streamline the funding landscape this year, with the objective of consolidating funding pots, streamlining bidding, ensuring robust monitoring arrangements and tailoring investments. Furthermore, the government will look to shift procurement rules to enable local authorities to prioritise “Social Value” factors, such as the environment, or their local economy.
- 3.3 The government will set up a Leadership College to upskill its workforce. This will be made available to local government executives, including Chief Executives and senior officers and will open in April 2022.
- 3.4 The government is also going to invest in more granular, timely and harmonised subnational statistics via a Transformative data and analysis strategy, based around
- The Government Statistical Service’s Subnational Data Strategy
 - A new ONS interactive subnational Data Explorer
 - Better data visualisation; and
 - Increasing incentives for experimentation in spatial data.
- 3.5 To boost the accountability of central government, there will be a statutory obligation to report annually on progress towards meeting the Levelling Up Missions.
- 3.6 An independent and expert levelling up advisory council will also be implemented.

Policies and Implications by Mission Area

- 4. Mission: By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing**
- 4.1 As announced at the 2021 Spending Review, Government will invest £1.6bn in British Business Bank (BBB) Regional Investment Funds to support the financing of SMEs. Areas covered by this are the Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, South West England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 4.2 Government is asking Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds, working with the LGPS asset pools, to publish plans for increasing local investment, including an ambition of 5% of assets to be invested in local projects.
- 4.3 The UK Infrastructure Bank will support local authorities to deliver infrastructure in their areas.
- 4.4 Government will embed the adoption and diffusion of new technologies into its business support schemes, particularly in areas of low productivity. There will be a sub-committee for regional adoption and dissemination and infrastructure for the new Levelling UP Advisory Council.
- 4.5 **Implications for East of England local authorities**

- From the detail in the White Paper, it appears that there will be no additional support for SMEs in the East of England via the BBB Regional Investment Funds
- The geography and boundaries for LGPS fund investment are not yet clear.

5. Mission: By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

5.1 The Greater South East (exact geography undefined by government) has world-class assets in research and innovation, and the UK Government is committed to its continued success as a key driver of future productivity and prosperity.

5.2 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will aim to invest at least 55% of its R&D funding outside the Greater South East by 2024-25.

5.3 The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) will ensure that the new contractual period for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research and Clinical Research centres, and their associated facilities, will see increased levels of investment outside London, Oxford and Cambridge.

5.4 The Department for Transport (DfT) will invest £299m R&D investment in decarbonising transport to trial zero-emissions road freight and invest in maritime emissions reductions in and around major ports.

5.5 Implications for East of England local authorities

- There is a risk that the BEIS commitment on spend outside of the Greater South East may result in reduced R&D investment in the East of England.
- The DHSC's commitment on spend on Biomedical Research and Clinical Research centres and facilities outside of London, Oxford and Cambridge could see a decrease to funding received by the world class super sectors along the UK Innovation Corridor.
- Given the East of England's many major ports, will our region benefit from the £299m of DfT funding to trial zero-emissions road freight and maritime emissions reductions?

6. Mission: By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.

6.1 In places where it will make the most impact, the UK Government will enable increased bus frequencies and reduced fares, with high-frequency services in densely populated areas.

6.2 Significant bus transformation will be funded in Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas. Outside of MCAs, the Government will fund ambitious plans for bus improvement, including for example in Luton. Further conversations will take place with councils to 'ensure their commitment to the improvements set out in the National Bus Strategy'.

6.3 Government will work to devolve the Bus Service Operators Grant to MCAs and Local transport Authorities that request it.

6.4 £360m will be spent to introduce London style contactless ticketing across regional rail commuter networks.

6.5 Government is spending over £200m this year, and a total of £2bn across this Parliament, on improvements for cycling and walking. Much of the new infrastructure will be in places where funding is most needed. The new Executive Agency, Active Travel England, will work with local authorities on the detailed design of schemes over the months ahead.

- 6.6 Government has announced a £5.7bn City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, for eight city regions. These give mayors the power to design their own plans. However, none of these are in the East of England.
- 6.7 For areas in England that agree the highest-level devolution deals with directly elected leaders, Government will make more targeted resource support available sooner, to put Local Transport Plans in place before end of parliament. There will also be an offer of multi-year integrated settlements covering core local transport funding streams for highway maintenance.
- 6.8 In MCA areas, the Government will provide new powers of direction to increase mayors' control over Key Route Networks. Government will also explore transferring control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to combined authorities and upper-tier authorities to allow these to be integrated into Local Transport Plans.
- 6.9 Government will publish new guidelines on Local Transport Plans, so that Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) can publish revised plans in this parliament. Government will also explore regional centres of excellence to provide bespoke support to LTAs
- 6.10 Government will progress work on various roads, including the A428 and A12 in the East of England.

6.11 Implications for East of England local authorities

- Does the use of the terminology 'where it will make most impact' on bus service improvements mean that the East of England will miss out on investment due to its rurality?
- Luton is highlighted as an area for significant funding for bus improvement.
- Will areas in the East of England be included in the definition of areas in most need of Active Travel funding?
- A large proportion of the transport improvement funding is going to large city-regions. None of these are in the East of England.
- Government will progress work on the A428 and A12.

7. **Mission: By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population**

- 7.1 The Government has announced a target of 100% of gigabit broadband and 4G coverage by 2030
- 7.2 In 2022, the UK Government will publish the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy. By 2027 this will review how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure – including 5G – across the country and determine whether there are any market failures in places that need to be addressed, and how the UK Government could tackle these.

7.3 Implications for East of England local authorities

- No new funding announcements for digital infrastructure
- East of England already has key rural areas that are lagging behind in mobile and broadband coverage. How will government target these areas sooner to achieve its new target of 100% coverage by 2030?

8. **Mission: By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.**

- 8.1 The DfT will publish its next steps in reforms to the national funding formula for schools in due course.

- 8.2 A third of local authorities, where educational attainment is weakest, will be classed as Education Investment Areas (EIAs). There will also be a consultation on moving schools in these areas with successive 'requires improvement' Ofsted judgements into multi-academy trusts.
- 8.3 Government will offer schools in EIAs retention payments to help them with teacher supply challenges.
- 8.4 Government will make more intensive investment across some EIAs to tackle wider issues. This could include support from the network of school hubs, new pilot programmes to improve attendance and new mainstream free schools, where there is clear demographic need.
- 8.5 The Department for Education (DfE) will open 11 new specialist maths schools for 16–19-year-olds across England, with at least one in each region. There will be three in total in the East of England, with one already announced in Cambridge and a further two yet to be announced.
- 8.6 Government will ensure that talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to a college, school sixth form or a 16-19 academy with a track record of progress to leading universities. DfE will also open new 16-19 free schools targeted at areas that need it most. This selection process will prioritise bids from EIAs.
- 8.7 The Government will invest £300m in a network of Family Hubs and Start for Life services in half of the local authorities in England. It will also invest £200m to expand the Supporting Families programme. Areas with higher deprivation will receive additional funding
- 8.8 **Implications for East of England local authorities**
- The following areas in our region are announced as Education Investment Areas: Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough and Suffolk
 - There will be a new specialist 16-19 maths school opened in Cambridge and there are a further two planned to be opened in the East of England; proportionally this is well above the national average.
 - EIAs in the East of England will be able to bid for the opening of new 16-19 free schools.
9. **Mission: By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.**
- 9.1 The DfE is piloting new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) in 2021-22 and supporting providers with Strategic Development Funding, to help shape technical skills provision to better meet local labour market needs. The Government will now roll out these employer-led LSIPs across England, together with supporting funding, prioritising areas with the most pressing skills needs. LSIPs will be led by employer representative bodies and will engage with MCAs and other stakeholders during their development.
- 9.2 Apprenticeship funding of £2.7bn will be provided by 2024-25 and will include an enhanced recruitment service for SMEs.
- 9.3 Government will initiate new 'pathfinder areas' to attempt to align the delivery of education and skills interventions. None of these pathfinder areas will be located in the East of England.
- 9.4 The DfE is setting up a new Unit for Future Skills which will work with BEIS and the Department for Work and Pensions to bring together the skills data and information held across government and enable its use across central and local government.
- 9.5 South Essex College will be a lead organisation for a new Institute of Technology – a collaboration between colleges, universities and employers to deliver high tech education.

- 9.6 From April 2022, there will be a trial enabling any adult with a level 3 qualification (or higher) who earns below the National Living Wage, or who is unemployed, to access a further high value level 3 qualification for free, regardless of their prior qualifications.
- 9.7 MCAs and the GLA will have the flexibility to determine the low wage thresholds in their local areas.
- 9.8 As part of the launch of the £2.6bn UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), adults across the whole of the UK will benefit from the Multiply Numeracy programme, offering national and local support for people to gain or improve their numeracy skills.
- 9.9 To support the work of Jobcentres, the UK Government will also appoint specialist Progression Champions across Great Britain who will make connections between employers, local authorities and skills providers.
- 9.10 The UK Government will provide £1.3bn over the 2021 Spending Review period for employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions.
- 9.11 The UK Government will also continue to take forward proposals in the Health and Disability Green Paper, Shaping Future Support, to ensure the welfare system better supports disabled people and people with health conditions to live independently, and will publish a White Paper with further details later this year.

9.12 Implications for East of England local authorities

- Will areas in the East of England be defined as having the 'most pressing skills needs' and therefore be prioritised for Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- How will local authorities be involved in the development of LSIPs in the areas without directly elected mayors?
- The region's high proportion of SMEs should benefit from the 'enhanced recruitment service' for apprenticeships.
- None of the new skills 'pathfinder areas' will be located in our region.
- Will MCAs and local authorities have access to the data from the Unit for Future Skills?
- South Essex College will be a lead organisation for a new Institute of Technology (a collaboration between colleges, universities and employers to deliver high tech education).

10. Mission: By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

- 10.1 The UK Government will set out a strategy to tackle the core drivers of inequalities in health outcomes in a new White Paper on Health Disparities in England, in 2022.
- 10.2 The UK Government's forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper will take forward the recommendations from Henry Dimbleby's independent review into a National Food Strategy, to help ensure that everyone can access, understand, and enjoy the benefits of a healthy and sustainable diet.
- 10.3 A joint project will be launched between DfE and the Food Standards Agency to design and test a new approach for local authorities in assuring and supporting compliance with school food standards. The project will engage with multiple local authorities in March, with pilots expected to go live in September.
- 10.4 Implications for East of England local authorities:**
- No authorities in the East of England are stated as being part of the DfE and Food Standards Authority project on school food standards.

11. Mission: By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

11.1 The £1.8bn housing investment announced in the 2021 Spending Review will be made available across England. This investment will not be subject to the 80/20 rule, which historically led to 80% of particular housing funds being targeted at areas of lowest housing affordability.

11.2 The existing Brownfield Housing Fund will be extended in Mayoral Combined Authorities; though this does not appear to include the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority.

11.3 Twenty areas will be selected to engage in “Transformational Urban projects”, to encourage regeneration in places that could benefit from it most. The first two areas to benefit from this policy have been announced as Sheffield and Wolverhampton.

11.4 Homes England will use its statutory powers to partner with local leaders, unlock barriers to development and drive forward regeneration.

11.5 To boost high streets, commercial landlords will be incentivised to fill vacant units through a new local authority power that can be used to compel landlords to rent out vacant properties to prospective tenants. Furthermore, 68 additional local authorities will receive support from the High Streets Task Force, with this support being phased in from summer 2022 – 2024.

11.6 The Government is looking to further protect Green Belt space, bring back wildlife and secure natural improvements. However, the paper does not make clear the exact policy levers that the government will use to do this.

11.7 A new £30m Parks Fund will deliver up to £1m to at least 30 local parks in England (targeted to refurbishment) with an emphasis on facilities for younger families. This will run alongside the £9m Levelling Up Parks Fund which will provide direct grants to fund over 100 green spaces in communities with the lowest access.

11.8 Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be used to restore habitats, and the Government has also committed to a 10% Biodiversity gain in new housing developments.

11.9 £560m of funding will be granted to facilitate the National Youth Guarantee, which will ensure that by 2025 every young person in England will have access to regular out-of-school activities. The Government has committed to kickstarting these measures with £10m in funding to be spent this year. This will be supported by the following additional policies:

- £368m will be provided to areas in England with high levels of child income deprivation and lack of youth provision.
- £288m will be provided to deliver 300 new and refurbished youth facilities.
- Funding a reformed National Citizens Service for the next three years.
- Offer the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme to every state secondary school in England.
- Eliminating current non-military uniformed youth groups waiting lists for teenagers.
- £4m to the #iwill fund to create thousands of volunteering opportunities.

11.10 The Government will set out a strategy for community spaces and relationships, which will be guided by the principles of “community power,” e.g. understanding what works, listening to communities and every community matters. This will be supported by better data and statistical work which will seek to better understand how to measure community activity.

- 11.11 The Government will review neighbourhood governance in England, working with partners in local government and civil society. It will look into how local groups can set local priorities for a neighbourhood, and look at the role, function and incorporation of new parish councils.
- 11.12 The Government will pilot new models of community partnership to give local people the power to influence services, control community spaces and engage in place-shaping.
- 11.13 One such model will be to test “Community Covenants”. These are agreements between public bodies and the communities they serve and would outline how local social capital and infrastructure can be built and sustained.
- 11.14 The Government wants councils and communities to create new local design codes to shape streets as residents wish and facilitate accessibility. In addition, the ability to meaningfully influence individual planning applications will be improved.
- 11.15 The Government will consult on how the Community Ownership Fund can be enhanced in time for round two of the fund.
- 11.16 The Government is currently considering how to best encourage social organisations to flourish in left behind areas. In addition, it is looking to support community activity and leverage private investment in all activity it undertakes.
- 11.17 The UK will plan to reform procurement practice across the public sector to put greater emphasis on social value. This will include awarding contracts on the basis of “Most advantageous tender”, to encourage social value considerations.
- 11.18 £44m will be unlocked through the Dormant Assets Scheme. This includes:

- £20m through the Youth Futures Foundation, which looks to help accessibility into employment for young people
- £20m to Access – a foundation for social investment
- £4m to Fair4All Finance.

The Dormant Assets Scheme will be expanded to unlock a further £880m, with a public consultation to take place in 2022.

- 11.19 The Government has committed Arts Council England to spend 100% of the additional funding agreed in the 2021 Spending Review to support culture and creativity outside London. The organisation will also look to diversify its boards, increase the national impact of London-based operations, and continue the work of the Cultural Investment Fund worth £40m.

11.20 Implications for East of England local authorities:

- Ending the 80/20 rule could lead to more housing investment in the East of England.
- Regarding the Brownfield Housing Fund, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority appear to not be on the list of supported authorities within the White Paper.
- Local authorities in the East of England to receive support from the High Streets Task Force are:
 - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
 - Kings Lynn and West Norfolk District Council
 - Basildon Borough Council
 - Bedford Borough Council
 - East Suffolk Council
 - Stevenage Borough Council
 - Fenland District Council
 - Breckland Council
 - North Norfolk District Council

- Thurrock Council
- Harlow Council

12. Mission: By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership, with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

- 12.1 The Government is continuing to work towards its stated goal of 300,000 new homes per year in England by the mid-2020s. Investment in brownfield and infrastructure projects, the Affordable Homes Programme, and the Levelling Up Home Build Fund are all cited as key pillars of this strategy.
- 12.2 Regarding renting, the Government is looking to encourage renters to buy properties through the Help to Buy Scheme and the First Homes Scheme. The government is also looking to ban new leasehold houses and new financial ground rents and is currently consulting on measures to enable leaseholders to take over property management and buy their freehold.
- 12.3 The Government is looking to increase housing quality in rented homes through various measures. They will look to publish a white paper in the spring setting out how they will support those in the rented sector, including the abolishing of S21 evictions, and giving all tenants a right to redress. Minimum standards for rented homes will be created, and a national landlord register will be established to enable stronger accountability. The Decent Home Standard will also be reviewed.
- 12.4 The Government is looking to bolster the existing power of local authorities to levy a council tax premium of up to 100% to homes left empty, reducing the amount of time that the property has to be uninhabited to one year, rather than just two years. Councils will also be allowed to retain all additional revenue this generates.
- 12.5 The Government will also bring forward a Social Housing Regulation Bill, which will give residents performance information so they can hold their landlord to account and ensure that complaints are handled promptly. Fines can be issued for the worst offenders.
- 12.6 Poor energy efficiency will be addressed through retrofitting funding already announced and will be carried forward through a Future Homes Standard and Future Building Standard.
- 12.7 The government will also look to increase the choices available for older people in non-decent or unsuitable accommodation, with a taskforce to be set up shortly to address this.
- 12.8 £2bn of investment will be invested by the government to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.
- 12.9 The Government wants improvement within the planning system, suggesting that this could come from digital improvements to planning software, simpler and shorter local plans, and a new Infrastructure Levy. However, there is no firm detail.

12.10 Implications for East of England local authorities:

- New measures to support those who are renting are welcome, but will potentially have an impact on local authorities who are the ultimate landlords of some social housing, and may therefore have to start gathering performance information and avoid fines.
- The ability to charge additional council tax of vacant homes could be relevant in some local authorities with resort towns that might host holiday homes.
- New reform ideas proposed suggest that the government is going to put Local Plans under much greater scrutiny.

13. Mission: By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

- 13.1 As announced at the 2021 Spending Review, the Safer Streets Fund will continue for the three financial years between 2022 and 2025, with local authorities able to apply for a maximum of £500,000, though they must put in at least £1 for every £2 the government provides.
- 13.2 The government's 10-year drugs strategy will come into force, with £3bn funding over the next three years, including £900m of additional funding targeted to places of extra need.
- 13.3 The Government will work with Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery (ADDER) areas to provide additional support and local coordination around drug users in a locality, to stop them committing crime. Within the East of England, Norwich is the only ADDER Area.
- 13.4 The Government is investing £93m over the next three years to increase the amount of unpaid work that offenders deliver to around 8m hours per year. This is 1.75m hours higher than at any time since records began in 2015. This will include ramping up unpaid work undertaken by 16 and 17 year olds. This boost in unpaid work will be leveraged as part of a "National Spring Clean" plan.
- 13.5 The Government will bring in new powers for the police to deal with noise complaints, which will mirror the powers already seen in Scotland. However, local authorities will retain the statutory responsibility for dealing with noise nuisance. This legislation will be brought forward "when parliamentary time allows".
- 13.6 The Government will publish a new plan for anti-social behaviour and quality of life issues.
- 13.7 **Implications for East of England local authorities**
- Local government would be better suited to work within ADDER areas if the objective is additional support and coordination. Government should therefore ensure there is good funding in place for Norwich City and Norfolk County councils to address drug policy in their area.
 - The increase in unpaid hours that could be worked by offenders could potentially be used by local authorities.

14. Mission 12: By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

- 14.1 Devolution will be extended by inviting nine areas to start formal negotiations to agree new county deals, ideally to be agreed by autumn 2022. County Councils will be expected to work closely with their district councils on these, and any future, county deals.
- 14.2 Furthermore, new Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) deals will be agreed, and existing deals will be enhanced.
- 14.3 Devolution will be deepened through "Trailblazer" deals with the West Midlands MCA and Greater Manchester MCA, which will act as blueprints for other MCAs to follow. The funding landscape for MCAs will also be streamlined, initially as part of the Trailblazer deals.
- 14.4 Devolution will be simplified through the creation of a Devolution Framework, which will clarify the kinds of devolution available in England. Non-trailblazer MCAs, and the GLA, will be invited to bid for further powers through this new framework. There are three different "Levels" of devolution within the framework:
- Level 1: Local authorities working together across a functional economic area (FEA) or a whole county area
 - Level 2: A single institution or county council without a Directly Elected Mayor, across a FEA or a whole county area

- Level 3: A single institution or County Council with a Directly Elected Mayor across a FEA or whole county area.

14.5 While devolution is handled in a bespoke manner, the higher the level, the more a local authority can expect funding and powers to be devolved to them.

14.6 For example, whilst level 1 areas can pool some resources and act on climate-change related policy, control over transport policy, in the main, requires that the area be a level 3. The list of expected powers has been attached as ANNEX 1.

14.7 The government will also legislate to establish a new form of Combined Authority Model to be made up of Unitary and County authorities only. District councils can be non-constituent members, and County Councils will be expected to work closely with their district councils.

14.8 The Government wants to encourage private sector-led partnerships, particularly around existing clusters of business activity.

14.9 The Government is encouraging the integration of LEPs and their business boards into MCAs, the GLA and County Deals where they exist.

14.10 Where a devolution deal does not yet exist, LEPs will continue to play a role. Devolution deals that cover part of a LEP will be covered on a case-by-case basis. LEPs will be given more information as soon as possible.

14.11 The Government reaffirmed its commitment to “Local Growth Funds”. These are comprised of: 1) The Levelling Up Fund, 2) The Towns Fund and 3) the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

14.12 To deliver a more transparent, simple and accountable approach, the UK Government will set out a plan for streamlining the funding landscape this year which will include a commitment to help local stakeholders navigate funding opportunities.

14.13 The paper confirms that money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be allocated to, and invested by, either MCAs where they are present, or to unitary and district councils. These bodies will then be encouraged to work with other districts, counties and unitaries when it comes to commissioning work. Lead authorities will be responsible for developing Local Investment Plans. More details can be found [here](#).

14.14 Implications for East of England local authorities:

- Two counties in the East of England (Suffolk and Norfolk) have received offers to start formal negotiations for a county deal.
- We have one MCA in the East of England (Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority)
- Unitary and district councils in the East of England will be responsible for the planning and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The future configuration of LEPs in our area will be subject to a number of factors including the pace and scale of devolution deals, and the geographies involved. The White Paper indicates more detail is to follow shortly on the implications for LEPs.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The Levelling Up White Paper highlights the crucial role that councils play in improving opportunity and quality of life for its residents. It also puts local government at the forefront of place-shaping and achieving sustainable economic growth. It is to be welcomed that central government recognises that councils are best placed to plan for and deliver the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, in a move away from previous, more centralised approaches.

- 15.2 More local control and accountability for the delivery of services will improve outcomes on the ground and further detail on the devolution framework, its implementation and how it can be navigated by all tiers of local government will be welcome.
- 15.3 In a number of policies and funding announcements in the White Paper, it is clear that the Government views the East of England as part of 'London and the South East' and/or the 'Greater South East'. At EELGA, we believe that the East of England is distinct and different from those areas with its own set of unique challenges and opportunities. This view could potentially be very damaging for the residents and businesses of our region if it leads to decreased levels of funding to improve vital infrastructure and the provision of support services.
- 15.4 In our summary of the implications for our region, as set out per each mission above and in the "at a glance document" we have posed a number of clarification questions. We will be following these up with central government colleagues to test our assumptions and analysis further, and will update members as soon as we have any further information or clarity on these.
- 15.5 EELGA and its member authorities, alongside the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group and other regional partners, is leading a programme of public affairs and advocacy to ensure that the government continues to hear about the unique characteristics of the region and what it can offer with the right levels of investment. To find out more, please contact adam.thorp@eelga.gov.uk

ANNEX 1 – Devolution Framework

Function	Detail	L 1	L 2	L 3
Strategic role in delivering services	Host for Government functions best delivered at a strategic level involving more than one local authority e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies	X	X	X
	Opportunity to pool services at a strategic level	X	X	X
	Opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets	X	X	X
Supporting local businesses	LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice		X	X
Local control of sustainable transport	Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. local transport plans*		X	X
	Defined key route network*			X
	Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			X
	Ability to introduce bus franchising		X	X
	Consolidation of existing core local transport funding for local road maintenance and smaller upgrades into a multi-year integrated settlement			X
Investment spending	UKSPF planning and delivery at a strategic level		X	X
	Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation			X
Giving adults the skills for the labour market	Devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget		X	X
	Providing input into Local Skills Improvement Plans		X	X
	Role in designing and delivering future contracted employment programmes			X
Local control of infrastructure decisions	Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations (with consent of host local planning authority)			X
	Devolution of locally-led brownfield funding			X
	Strategic partnerships with Homes England across the Affordable Housing Programme and brownfield funding			X
	Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)		X	X
Keeping the public safe and healthy	Mayoral control of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions where boundaries align^			X
	Clearly defined role in local resilience*		X	X
	Where desired offer MCAs a duty for improving the public's health (concurrently with local authorities)			X
Financing local initiatives for residents and business	Ability to introduce mayoral precepting on council tax*			X
	Ability to introduce supplement on business rates (increases subject to ballot)			X

* Refers to functions which are only applicable to combined authorities.

^ refers to functions which are currently only applicable to mayoral combined authorities.