



# ○ LEVELLING UP THE EAST OF ENGLAND:

## 2023-2030

The East of England's progress  
towards achieving the Government's  
twelve levelling up missions.



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## Preface

The East of England APPG, the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA), business leaders and academic partners have come together to assess the region's progress towards the twelve missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper which was published in February 2022.

This has been a unique and successful collaboration that has produced insightful and illuminating analysis across each of the levelling up ambitions in the White Paper. Our thanks to all who contributed to a commendable report that should be of interest not only to the Government but to all stakeholders with an interest in the prospects and prosperity of the East of England.

What the report makes clear is that the East of England is an economic success story with high levels of employment, pay and productivity as well as clusters of

world leading research and development (R&D) and innovation excellence. However, ours is a region where areas of significant deprivation, often, but not exclusively within our coastal and rural communities, as well as specific pockets of deprivation within our towns and cities, sit alongside some of the UK's most successful places. Sustainability – our proposed thirteenth mission – is also vitally important in the East of England.

The goals for each mission were set out in more optimistic times, as the worst of the pandemic was ending, and before the invasion of Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and this new period of recession.

Due to the timing of this report we have been able to reflect on the goals in the context of the UK's challenging economic conditions as at Q3 of 2022/23, including the most recent announcements from the Autumn Statement on 17 November.

The detailed analysis of each mission reveals mixed results. There are elements where the region is doing well despite the impact of Covid-19 and other factors, and where we retain a high degree of confidence that the Government's four can be addressed: [employment and pay](#); [R&D and wellbeing](#).

Unsurprisingly, there are now a number of missions where there is only medium confidence, including [digital connectivity](#), [pride in place](#), [crime](#), [devolution](#) and [our proposed additional mission on sustainability](#).

There are also missions where we now see low confidence, and critically in some of the issues most important to the people and prospects of the East of England: [education](#), [skills](#), [transport](#), [health and housing](#). These sectors, including local government, are being pushed to the brink, often running simply to stand still, so to achieve substantial improvements in these missions is even more challenging than ten months ago.

This report is therefore a call to action to prioritise and address levelling up barriers, in particular in our "low confidence" missions. We advocate urgent Government attention and propose a partnership approach with local government and wider business, public and third sector stakeholders to drive sustainable solutions.

As financial stability returns to central government, it must return for the region's key institutions - for councils, for schools, the police, for the increasingly integrated NHS and social care system. The role of local government is critical to this endeavour. Local Authorities are the leaders and conveners of place so a strong and financially sustainable local government sector is essential to the overall achievement of the levelling up policy.

However, this is not all about money.

Partnership will also be key to making progress as will a greater willingness to devolve powers. Skills and transport are good examples of where a delegated or devolved approach, and not just to those areas with Mayoral deals, could also help deliver results.

We look forward to working together with DLUHC as well as BEIS, DfT, DHSC and DfE to move forward.

We all subscribe to the same ambition: to level up the East of England by delivering a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable region.

As a net contributor to the Treasury, and an international gateway to the prosperity of the rest of the UK, this region stands ready to work in partnership, in the spirit of collaboration that has inspired this report, and make progress on levelling up in 2023 and beyond.



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## Executive summary

### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the first regional analysis of the position across the East of England regarding the [Levelling Up missions in the Government's White Paper of February 2022 - Levelling Up the United Kingdom.](#)

In the White Paper the Government set out the proposed scale of ambition for Levelling Up across the UK, detailing twelve missions against which progress could be measured over time.

Achieving progress against these missions requires a strategic and integrated approach, in terms of:

- Policy development and delivery - nationally, regionally and locally; and
- The prioritisation of funding to tackle inequalities

so that every community in the UK can benefit and prosper as intended from these ambitions.

- The role of local government is critical to this endeavour. Local Authorities are the leaders and conveners of place, so a strong and financially sustainable local government sector will be a rate limiting factor overall to the achievement of this policy.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EAST OF ENGLAND

The East of England is an economic success story with traditionally high levels of employment and pay, having several clusters of R&D and innovation excellence, and being one of only three regions which are net contributors to the Exchequer.

As our [Regional Prospectus](#) and [Offer to Government](#) publication of 2021 demonstrates we have confidence that, with the right profile of funding and support our regional economy can continue to grow, due to our considerable existing assets and strengths in sectors of the future such as life sciences, agri-tech, green energy, higher education, tourism and ICT.

Meanwhile the city of Cambridge is undisputedly a globally competitive city - but we have other places, corridors and centres of innovation in our region which stand on the cusp of bigger opportunities.

However, we are also a region where:

- Areas of significant deprivation sit alongside some of the UK's most successful places.
- DLUHC has categorised all local authorities into priority 1, 2, 3 for levelling up funding using a methodology that aligns with indices of multiple deprivation. In the East of England there are 9 council areas assessed by DLUHC as most in need of levelling up funding (Great Yarmouth, Harlow, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Luton, Maldon, North Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Tendring).

- Whilst recognition of the needs of these category 1 areas is welcome, this broad-brush approach will hide pockets of places in many of the other 35 council areas with high levelling up needs.



The East of England Population has grown **by 8.3% per the 2021** Census data, making us the fastest growing region in terms of population.

Too much of the region's potential is being held back by some of the key barriers to Levelling Up which are noted in this report, for example housing affordability and quality, access to skills, transport connectivity, reduced digital connectivity, and the threats posed by climate change. These are already presenting significant risks to the achievement of the Levelling Up missions as a whole.

## OUR FINDINGS AND MEASURING THE MISSIONS

At the time of writing this report there is no national framework or prescribed set of metrics for assessing and measuring the missions.

There are therefore no consistent or formal baselines from which to measure or benchmark our current position for this specific purpose, although various existing metrics, parameters and data sets that could potentially be aligned to the missions have been considered by the authors and reflected in this report.

It is anticipated the approach to systematic measurement will be shaped over the coming months by central government with the engagement and co-production of local government and many other bodies. Partners in the East of England would wish to be closely involved in this programme of work.

The assessments we have made – our current view regarding current whether there is high, medium or low confidence that the mission will be achieved by 2030 – are set out in the following thematic chapters where we have explained the background to the issues and our analysis.

A thirteenth chapter focussed on the important issue of sustainability, including net zero and water security, has been added to our report, with the impact of climate change on our region in particular being of paramount importance.

Our initial analysis and confidence assessment for each of the thirteen areas outlined in this report gives a mixed result. There are examples where the region is doing well and could be considered on course to achieve the Government's objective(s) but there are also plenty of areas where confidence is rated low to medium and a number of areas that are considered as "flashing red".

The Government can only achieve the ambitions in the Levelling Up White Paper by heeding the recommendations in this report and working in partnership with the local government sector, the wider public sector, the private sector, academic bodies and innovators.

# Levelling Up missions, confidence levels and key recommendations

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
<b>I</b> 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.	The Government should recognise the unique challenges to improve pay, employment and productivity in rural and coastal areas and publish a rural and coastal levelling up strategy to address these challenges.	HIGH
<b>II</b> 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.	Maintain R&D funding commitments and invest in places where the return on this investment is maximised and which are already acting as the engine room for levelling up.	HIGH
<b>III</b> 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.	Simpler, longer-term funding mechanisms to facilitate stable regional transport investment pipelines that support the priorities already set out in the strategies of the region's two Subnational Transport Bodies (STBs).	LOW
<b>IV</b> By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.	Ensure that the areas within the East of England with the poorest fixed and mobile connectivity are targeted first for intervention.	MEDIUM
<b>V</b> 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.	Particular attention should be given to the funding formula that applies to rural schools. In addition, greater funding than the announced £4.6bn is required to adequately support all children in education including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.	LOW

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
<b>VI</b> 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.	<p>To meet the future needs of the region, there needs to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much greater in-work education provision and participation in further education and skills training for adults.</li> <li>• Improvements in the overall quality of training, access to training (linked to rurality and transport factors) and</li> <li>• A better alignment with employer needs.</li> </ul> <p>The Government should promote “skills devolution” to allow opportunities for greater local oversight of skills funding and coordination across local partnerships.</p>	LOW
<b>VII</b> 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 have risen by five years.	<p>Government funding policies should recognise the significant population growth in the East of England to ensure the region receives a fair share of funding overall for its demography, and that its most deprived areas are recognised within this. The delivery of inclusive economic recovery should ensure the gap in HLE is not widened further.</p>	LOW
<b>XIII</b> By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.	<p>To improve wellbeing in the region, the Government needs to work together with local authorities especially district and borough councils, business, charities and our communities to enable a more local, coordinated and preventative approach to tackling wellbeing inequality.</p>	HIGH
<b>IX</b> 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.	<p>The East of East must receive equitable funding through the Government’s levelling up policy to mitigate risks to sustainable growth. This is an even more pressing priority given the pressure on local government’s budgets overall, and the region’s recent population increases. The ability of councils to invest in our places and the public realm will be significantly curtailed by shrinking budgets.</p>	MEDIUM

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
<b>X</b> <p>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.</p>	<p>The Government should institute a range of support for First Time Buyers, for example more support for Shared Ownership and a renewal of Help to Buy 2. Urgent Government investment is required to develop more social housing.</p>	LOW
<b>XI</b> <p>By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.</p>	<p>Funding should be provided to police forces and partner agencies to support evidence based, public-health oriented, local initiatives to tackle complex crime issues with more research being conducted to understand the drivers of serious violence.</p>	MEDIUM
<b>XII</b> <p>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.</p>	<p>Given the specific challenges on skills and transport (amongst others) in the East of England, the Government should, at pace, offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers of these – and other issues - to ensure devolution delivers benefits for all areas including more rural and coastal areas in the region.</p>	MEDIUM
<b>XIII</b> <p>By 2030, the levelling up agenda will not only be viewed by partners nationally, regionally and locally as inextricably linked to the agenda of delivering sustainable growth (including net zero targets and ensuring water security) but also progress on delivering joined up policies and interventions will have been achieved at every level of Government and in every region.</p>	<p>Sustainability, (including net zero and water security) should be integral to all further national, and local policy development and implementation approaches for Levelling Up.</p>	MEDIUM

- I 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Pay, employment and productivity are key indicators of a thriving economy and will be vital measurements of the levelling up agenda. The East of England performs well for each metric, relative to other regions, but growth has slowed in recent years. Plans to level up the region must address this.

While predominantly a rural area, the East is proud of its cities, which act as socio-economic and cultural hubs for the region fostering economic growth, R&D and creating jobs. The mission's commitment to one 'globally competitive city' in each region is commendable. In this chapter we argue that Cambridge already fits this description.

This mission aims to bridge the gap between the wealthiest and least wealthy areas. However the cost-of-living crisis is currently exacerbating this divide, with wages drastically falling behind the level of inflation and the UK has now entered a period of recession.

Succeeding in this mission means understanding the role that developing skills and closing the skills gap will play in countering the cost-of-living crisis and facilitating social mobility.



## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

### **PAY**

The average worker in the East of England is paid more relative to their counterpart in other regions of the UK. Gross weekly pay for full-time workers in the East was £628.6 in 2021, £17.9 more than the UK average, and gross hourly pay for full-time workers was £15.88, £0.29 more than the UK average. Wages have also been increasing.

However, weekly pay growth in the East was 0.86% slower than the UK average and hourly pay growth 0.6% slower. In addition, current inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis is likely to have an impact on this.

There are vast disparities in income levels within specific parts of the East of England which can be missed when looking at the macro-regional level. 20 of the 44 districts within the region are in the top 3 quintiles nationally for income deprivation and 2 of those districts are also in the top 20 of all districts nationally on the 'deprivation gap ranking'.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

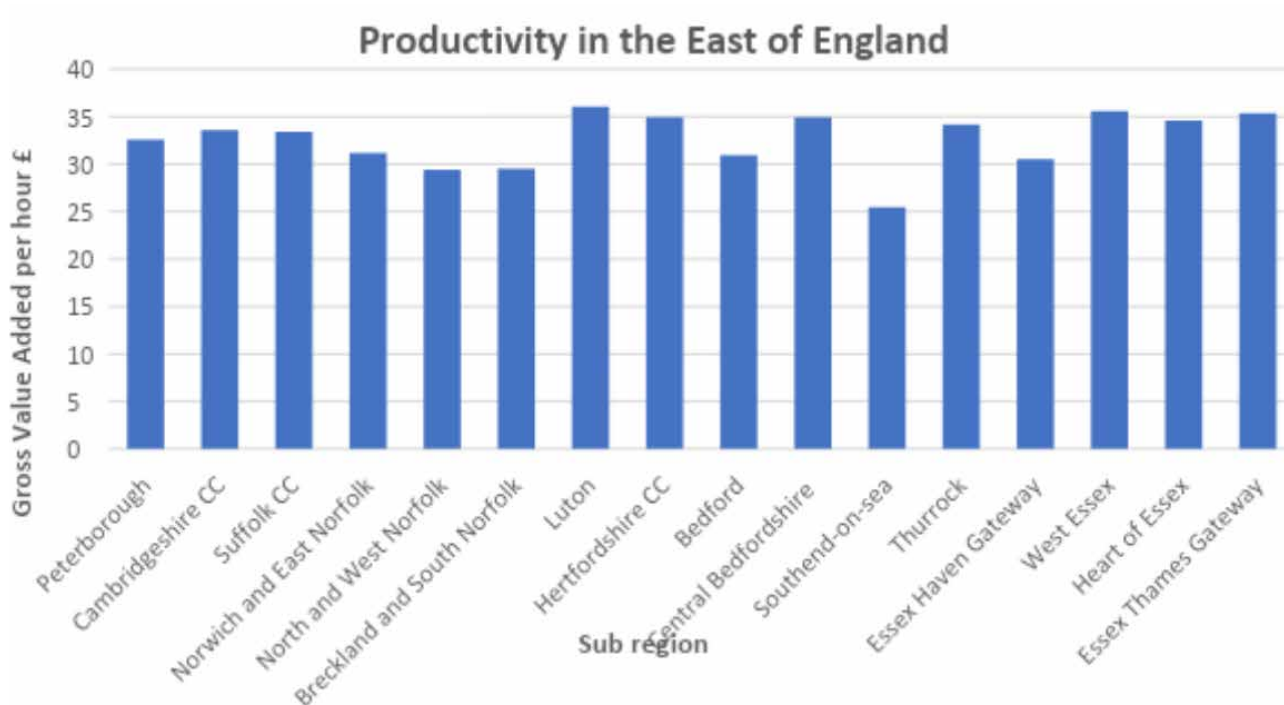
As with wages, the East's employment rate is better than the UK average. From February to April 2022, the region's employment rate stood at 77.8%, 2.2% greater than the UK average and 1.9% greater than the England average. The region's unemployment rate was also lower than the UK average, at 3.7% from February to April 2022 – 0.1% less than the UK average and 0.2% less than the England average.

Despite outperforming the UK and England average, both employment and unemployment in the region are heading in the wrong direction. The employment rate was down 1% from November 2021 to January 2022 and unemployment was up 0.6%. Following the same pattern of wages, the rates of decline in employment rates are worse than the UK average which stood at 0.2% increase for employment and -0.2% decrease for unemployment.

## PRODUCTIVITY

Similar patterns emerge when assessing productivity. In 2008 the region was on par with the UK average in terms of productivity measured as gross value, but by 2019 the GVA stood at £33.36, 5% below the UK average. In fact, measuring productivity growth over the past decade, the region is only ahead of the North West and Yorkshire and Humber.

This is not to say that the whole region struggles with productivity, as there are wide variations in GVA per hours worked. The top performer is the Heart of Essex with £37.34 per hour, and the worst Southend on Sea with £25.87 per hour. You can see the table below for regional variances in productivity.



## PATTERNS AND TRENDS

The primary trend apparent in these statistics is that while the East outperforms the UK average in most respects (pay, employment and skills demand in particular), levels of growth have fallen behind the UK average over the past decade. This pattern presents both opportunities and challenges.

# SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

## ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

### Cambridge city region and the university

The city of Cambridge is an economic hub which has been one of the fastest growing economies in the UK for the past five years. The city region even managed to thrive throughout the pandemic when others struggled, with employment and company turnover increasing by 1.8% and 0.7% respectively.

In 2021, a year still dominated with restrictions due to Covid-19, Cambridge reported the 6th highest GVA out of the top 50 UK cities. The city performed particularly well with employment, reporting the sharpest growth in employment rate in the UK throughout 2020, creating 4,300 jobs overall.

Part of the reason for Cambridge's economic success is its world class university which provides the city with its innovation base. As well as consistently ranking in the top three universities worldwide, the University of Cambridge spent £2.1 billion from 2020-21 directly supporting 12,437 employees.

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## CASE STUDY

Astra Zeneca



Cambridge's leading life sciences sector was catapulted into the spotlight throughout Covid-19, none more so than Astra Zeneca (AZ), the pharmaceutical company based in Cambridge.

The organisation, which employs over 2,000 workers in its global HQ at Cambridge, has recently signed up to be a living wage employer and spends billions on R&D annually. AZ exemplifies how innovation fuels productivity and employment, highlighting the economic role the university and innovation cluster plays in Cambridge.

Source: Cambridge Ahead: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/10678/pdf/>

## The East as an International Gateway

The East's geographical location to mainland Europe and London means it is instrumental to the UK's international trade and freight sectors. With two Freeports, and many other key ports and airports, the East of England is the UK's key gateway to Europe and beyond.

Port operations and air freight in the East combined to contribute a staggering £15.7 billion in GVA in 2015. In fact, half the UK's containerised goods pass through the region at some stage. This role as a global gateway for trade is crucial to the East's economic success, with countless jobs dependant on the sector.

Looking domestically, the East also has strong links to London, the Midlands and the North. The region should aim to expand on its role as a global gateway, improving these already strong freight connections to the rest of the UK. This means prioritising and investing in rail freight services to enhance reliability, efficiency and sustainability.

## Other economic strengths

The East has so many economic strengths that it would be impossible to cover them all in this chapter. Instead, we will list a few of the most important ones below:

- **Agriculture:** Agricultural output totalled £3.3 billion in 2018, a significant proportion of England's total output with the region specialising in wheat, potatoes, pork and poultry.
- **Tourism:** The East's visitor economy is valued at £10bn a year and directly employs 240,000 people. The scenic country landscape coupled with excellent accommodation and attractions make it perfect for day trips, weekends, or longer holidays.
- **ICT:** ICT and tech are at the heart of the East's economy, creating successful sustainable businesses and high skilled jobs. The Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor typifies this as world leaders in food, energy, medicine and mobility.
- **Higher education:** The East's Universities are amongst the best in the UK, equipping hundreds of thousands every year with valuable skills and contributing roughly £9.4 billion to the economy annually, however the region could improve upon its graduate retention rates.

## BARRIERS TO CHANGE

### Government investment

The region received £11,175 in capital spending in 2020-21, which was the third lowest as a region and considerably lower than the England and UK average. The East also received the second-lowest amount of Levelling Up Round One funding.

The East is currently one of three net contributors to the UK economy along with London and the South East, but this may not stay the case if the Government continues to reduce investment in key infrastructure and services within the region. The image of an affluent region is also somewhat misleading as many communities are among the most deprived in the UK. A lack of investment in the East risks leaving these types of communities behind while claiming to be levelling up.

### Intraregional transport connectivity

Transport links in the East have been stunting the region's productivity by decreasing the available methods of travel for employees, consumers and those in education, all of whom stimulate the economy in different ways. The absence of seamless travel between modes of transport is partly due to the region's geographical challenges. The region's two Sub-national Transport Bodies – Transport East and England's Economic Heartland - are increasingly working together to develop a coherent approach to transport policy and delivery.

Transport East has launched its Transport Strategy, highlighting six key transport corridors that are key to improving connectivity, aiding the efficient movement of employees and consumers to encourage spending, create new jobs and increase productivity. England's Economic Heartland's transport strategy similarly aims to improve cross-regional as well as local and rural connectivity and has a strong focus on decarbonising the network.

## THREATS AND RISKS

### Ageing population

The challenges of an ageing population are pertinent to the East. England's most ageing local authorities in terms of demography are along the coastline, including Tendring and North Norfolk. The East is on average older demographically than the UK as a whole with a higher than average dependency ratio (a measure of the number of dependents aged 0 to 14 and over the age of 65, compared with the total population aged 15 to 64). It is therefore more susceptible to the threat of increased skills shortages of an ageing population and demand on public services.

## CASE STUDY B

### Luton

Luton is an example of a town with a relatively low percentage of working age people. The rate of economically active workers stands at 74.4%, compared to the national average of 78.2%. The consequences of this are exacerbated skills shortages, in-work poverty and increased inequality.

Luton's Inclusive Economy Board is currently tackling this and driving economic growth through its employment and skills strategy, part of its 2040 vision. With sufficient funding and improved relationships between Luton Borough Council and central Government, the town will be able to decrease the dependency ratio and level up its workforce.

Source: Luton Borough Council

### Rurality

The East's high level of rurality presents some economic challenges and issues but also provides opportunities. Rural areas tend to have higher living costs and housing prices, on top of the ageing population and substandard transport connectivity that we have already explored. On the other hand, sectors like agriculture, tourism, and social enterprise thrive in rural areas, and the East is no exception.

With regards to level up and this mission, the key is to understand that rural areas are vastly different from urban and suburban areas and as such will require a different approach to levelling up. There is no one size fits all levelling up agenda, instead levelling up policies in rural areas must look to alleviate the challenges mentioned above and support the prosperous job sectors.

### Graduate retention

Despite being home to several excellent universities, the East's graduate retention rate is among the worst in the country. In 2018 the East's student retention rate was 33.3%, the lowest for any UK region and almost over 20% lower than the national average. The economic implications of a lower graduate retention rate are a widening skills gap and a greater likelihood of skills mismatches.

Better retention of graduates would help to reduce employee shortages, particularly in highly skilled jobs which typically require extensive training. Universities should be aware of regional skills strategies and support them by aligning their own courses and initiatives to satisfy the skills demand of the region.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Offshore renewables and green energy

The East is in a unique position, as it is capable of being the region to lead the UK's transition to renewable energy. 44% of the UK's offshore wind power is produced off the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk, with the region containing 46% of the UK's wind turbine fleet. In addition to the substantial proportion of wind energy produced in the East, the region houses Sizewell C which is expected to meet 7% of the UK's energy needs when operational.

The East is well positioned to be at the forefront of the net zero transition, driving innovation and the production of clean energy. With its outstanding research and development capabilities spearheaded by Cambridge University, and the green energy infrastructure already in place, the opportunity is there for the East to act as the driving force behind the UK's green transition. A by-product of this would be a huge influx of high skilled, well paid green jobs, and a sharp uptick in GVA. The region already contains 4,166 businesses with 35,422 employees in the energy and low carbon sectors, with a further 12,000 jobs in the wider supply chain. With the right investment and policies these figures could significantly grow by 2030.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

### Increase pay, employment and productivity

In terms of increasing pay, employment and productivity we have rated this part of the mission as medium confidence. As we have established, pay in the region is relatively high and it is increasing, although at a slower rate than other regions. The same can be said for productivity which is growing but at a slower pace than other regions. Employment is the only measure which is not currently increasing, but unemployment is only up 0.6% in the region. As employment is arguably the most volatile measure, it's entirely possible there will be an overall increase in the employment rate by 2030.

The increase to each measure is not as significant as it could be, especially when measured against other regions. Skills shortages are significantly hampering potential growth in productivity, and the cost-of-living crisis has meant that any increase in wages is being outpaced by the rising costs of everyday essentials like food and fuel. In addition, wide inter-region disparities exist with some areas performing amongst the best nationally and some amongst the worst.

### Globally competitive city

Cambridge is a globally competitive city and as such we have rated this part of the mission with high confidence. Cambridge is a global leader in life-sciences and tech. The city is home to the headquarters of Astra Zeneca, a pioneering pharmaceutical company which spends billions on research and development annually. The city is also home to Europe's largest technological cluster. Cambridge is unquestionably the innovation capital of the UK, with the most patents per person, and one of the fastest growing economies in the country.

### Closing the gap between top performing and other areas

The East experiences large regional disparities in economic performance. We see this represented in the key measurements for the mission: pay, employment and productivity. For example, Thurrock and the Heart of Essex vastly outperform Norfolk and Southend in terms of productivity. But this gap is also apparent for wider economic inequality. Coastal neighbourhoods in Great Yarmouth, for example, experience much more income deprivation compared to rural neighbourhoods in Suffolk.

Local authorities and their partners are working hard to address disparities within their areas. However, one of the major issues here is the perception of the region as relatively wealthy and a strong economic performer. This is true for large parts of the East but misses the massive amount of regional inequality that exists.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

It is recommended that the Government and industry must do the following to ensure that this mission is achieved by 2030:

1. Recognise the unique challenges to improve pay, employment and productivity in rural and coastal areas and publish a rural levelling up strategy to address these challenges. Any rural strategy must be embraced and integrated into all Local Authorities plans to level up and address regional economic inequalities.
2. Commit sufficient investment to enhance rail and other key infrastructure priorities in the region, particularly focusing on capacity, reliability, efficiency and sustainability.
3. For all stakeholders in education, industry and politics to cooperate on regional skills strategies, address specific shortages and understand the important role green skills will play in the East's future.

- II 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

R&D has a crucial role to play in boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards across the UK. However, from a global perspective the UK trails behind many other peer nations in R&D spending, in both absolute and relative terms. Recognising this challenge and crucial role which public spending plays in stimulating private sector investment, the Government has committed to spending £20 billion a year on R&D by 2024-25.

The Levelling-Up White Paper makes clear the importance that every region of the UK should benefit from this uplift, with at least a 40% growth in domestic public R&D investment outside the Greater South East driving at least twice as much private sector investment. We are strongly supportive of the objective to increase R&D across the UK but doing so must not be to the disadvantage of an area of existing excellence.

Indeed, effectively harnessing existing successful economic clusters is key to the mission, ensuring that immediate return on investment is maximised whilst at the same time spreading this impact across the country through enhanced collaboration and partnership.

There are many examples of where impactful partnerships between universities and businesses already demonstrate the power of complementarity across regions, and these are set out in further detail in this chapter.

It is also important to recognise that Levelling-Up is about improving standards of living across the country and helping every place to reach its potential. As the White Paper recognises, economic disparities “are often larger within towns, counties or regions than between them...indeed, many of the worst areas of deprivation are found in the UK’s most successful cities”. This is true of the East of England, where pockets of some of the most significant levels of deprivation in the country exist alongside major economic success stories.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Total R&D expenditure in the East of England is £6.9bn per annum - equivalent to approximately 18% of all R&D spending across the UK. But value created in the East of England is often captured elsewhere and companies seeded here often deliver high value jobs across the UK.

In the East of England the relationship between research and commerce has leveraged one of the world's leading innovation ecosystems. Nowhere is this more evident than in Cambridge, where the city's two University's sit at the heart of a life science and technology hub - driving growth through research excellence, world-leading innovation and the training of highly-skilled graduates.

The success of the Cambridge Cluster is a powerful engine for levelling up, both in the East of England and across the whole of the UK – as the following examples demonstrate:

- AstraZeneca, whose global headquarters are in Cambridge, employ around 4,000 employees elsewhere in the UK (primarily in the North West) - where seed companies and jobs are created and new clusters emerge – and indirectly support the employment of another 40,000 across the UK.
- The Cambridge Biomedical Campus (excluding Astra Zeneca) is responsible for supporting £1.30 billion in turnover and £542 million in GVA for UK businesses outside of the East of England. The impact of this is also felt in the Campus' economic contribution to the Eastern region where it supports the equivalent of additional 15,602 full time jobs (beyond those employed directly on site) and generates £158 million worth of operating income along supply-chains within the region.

- PragmatlC Semiconductor, headquartered in Cambridge, has raised \$80m (£58m) from investors including chip designer Arm for a new plant in County Durham that will create more than 100 jobs.
- CMR Surgical (CMR), a global surgical robotics business, is opening a new large-scale manufacturing facility in Ely, Cambridgeshire, which will house up to 200 skilled employees.

University Enterprise Zones (UEZs) play an important role in encouraging universities to strengthen their roles as strategic partners in local growth and to stimulate development of incubator or 'grow-on' space for small businesses in locations that encourage businesses to interact with universities and to innovate.

Four UEZ's have been established in the East of England Region:

- The Go Herts University Enterprise Zone - University of Hertfordshire (£1.1m)
- Greater Cambridge Health Tech Connect - University of Cambridge (£500,000)
- AVIATE+ - Cranfield University (£1.2m)
- Accelerating Innovation at the Knowledge Gateway - University of Essex (£800,000)

## THE UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

University Enterprise Zone



**Investment Readiness:** An innovative business support and webinar programme, Space to Grow helps budding businesses get investment ready. The team offers webinars, plus specialist one-to-one support with help to commercialise ideas and secure investment.

Working with many partners introducing a unique combination of expertise from across the UK to enhance the level of support available to entrepreneurs especially in the areas of equality and diversity. The University of Essex UEZ's Space to Grow programme has held 50 webinars attended by close to 1,000 business people, delivered 444 one-to-one mentoring meetings with 168 entrepreneurs and helped numerous start-ups refine their pitch for investors.

**Angels@Essex:** A regulated, invitation-only equity investment platform that links angel investors to entrepreneurs with innovative ideas. Launched in May 2020, Angels@Essex fosters the growth of new and exciting disruptive technologies across the UK. The unique combination of guidance to carefully selected innovative entrepreneurs and the presentation of opportunities to a select group of angel investors from diverse sectors has been groundbreaking in its delivery.

The Angels@Essex investment platform has secured £3.49 million for companies on its platform and £4.22 million in pledged investment. The Angels@Essex team has spoken to 168 businesses and registered 34 opportunities. There are now 93 investors on Angels@Essex, representing syndicates and fund managers alongside high net worth individuals.



The development of the Cambridge-Norwich Tech corridor demonstrates the vitality of growth to the East of Cambridge, building on the existing Innovation Corridor between London and Cambridge.

## CASE STUDY

Norwich Research Park



The government recently recognised the economic potential of Norfolk and Suffolk's capacity for agri- and bio-tech innovation. The Department for International Trade's High Potential Opportunity in plant science for nutrition was awarded to both counties. Innovative companies in Norfolk and Suffolk are using plant science and genomics to improve sustainable food production and enhance the nutritional value of food.

There is a major commercial opportunity for businesses to exploit Norfolk and Suffolk's globally renowned plant science expertise to develop nutritious food products, from concept to consumer. This will meet growing global demand for sustainable food that improves physical and cognitive health.

The Norwich Research Park is Europe's largest single-site hub of research, training, education, and enterprise focused on plant science, with more than 3000 scientists and clinicians working on research and innovation in food, genomics, sustainability and health.



More than 40 businesses including spin outs and spin ins, are co-located on the Park alongside:

- University of East Anglia
- Norfolk and Norwich University  
Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

and four independent, internationally-renowned research institutes:

- John Innes Centre
- Quadram Institute
- Earlham Institute
- The Sainsbury Laboratory

The forthcoming legislative change regarding genetic technology (precision breeding) will establish the commercialisation of gene edited products. This post-Brexit regulatory reform will have a transformative effect on the bio-tech and agri-tech capabilities of the UK's life science sector, with the potential to produce and market nutritionally enriched food whilst tackling pressing contemporary challenges including food security, climate change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss. The Norwich cluster could attract global investment and help the government to realise its "science superpower" ambitions. Through the Levelling-Up strategy, the government must ensure that prosperity, brought about by this investment and growth, permeates across the Eastern region and benefits left-behind communities, particularly in rural and coastal areas.



## CASE STUDY

### British Sugar: A Case Study in Gene Editing Innovation



British Sugar is a homegrown industry working with over 3,000 sugar beet growers across East Anglia and the East Midlands. The organisation has four manufacturing sites in the region and produce, and supply, over 50% of the sugar consumed in the UK as well as exporting across the world.

#### What is Gene Editing (GE)?

- GE is a precision tool which permits controlled adjustments to a plant's existing DNA.
- GE technology gives us the opportunity to rapidly and safely create new plant varieties similar to those that could have been produced more slowly through natural breeding processes, allowing crop yields to be increased faster and more effectively.
- GE should not be confused with Genetic Modification.

#### Why is the introduction of GE important for sugar beet?

- GE technology can play a critical role in protecting crops from invasive species, while safeguarding agricultural industries and rural communities that rely upon these products and have exhausted other avenues to preserve yields.
- In the case of sugar beet, virus-carrying aphids are having a significant impact on the crop. Previously, growers have managed the risk of Virus Yellows by using neonicotinoid seed treatments. While the use of neonicotinoids specifically for sugar beet under stringent safeguards poses no risk to human or bee health, in the longer term, British Sugar and sugar beet growers want to move away from relying on these pesticides to protect the crop.
- Sugar beet is an essential crop for many farmers and plays a vital role in soil and crop health in the arable farm rotation. As a break crop, sugar beet 'breaks' the cycle of many pests, weeds and diseases.
- It is, therefore, critical that we protect sugar beet's viability to take full advantage of the benefits that it provides in the process of arable rotation and to safeguard the livelihoods of growers in the East of England and East Midlands.

### British Sugar's Partnership with Tropic Biosciences on Gene Editing Technologies

- British Sugar has partnered with Tropic Biosciences (<https://tropic.bio/>), a Norwich-based pioneering agricultural biotechnology company that leverages cutting-edge precision breeding methods to develop healthier, more robust and sustainable varieties of tropical crops. Tropic's use of gene editing technology accelerates breeding of crops so that they can withstand climatic stress, exhibit disease-tolerance, produce higher yields, longer shelf-life and are just agronomically better suited to their growing environment. Ultimately, these improved plant varieties have a profound impact on farmers by lowering their production costs, chemical usage and carbon emission footprint.
- This collaboration will make use of Tropic's technology platform, GEiGS® to make minimal and precise gene edits in sugar beet enabling the plants to resist infection by yellowing viruses. Armed with these gene-edited varieties, sugar beet breeders could develop elite commercial sugar beet with natural genetic resistance to Virus Yellow (VY).



## SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

The inclusion of this mission within the White Paper is as a result of the historical uneven distribution of R&D spending across the UK. Whilst this overarching goal is to be applauded it can and should only be delivered at a time when R&D spending is increasing in all areas. Certainly in seeking to drive up R&D expenditure outside the Greater South East – and redirect limited public funding – the Government should guard against underinvesting in proven, globally significant, economic clusters of success.

The Government should also recognise an opportunity, as the East of England is doing much to drive up total R&D expenditure in the UK – including many institutions and companies who are spreading these benefits to the most deprived parts of our region and across the UK. These benefits should be factored into the policy analysis that informs the delivery of this mission. In other words, the world-class assets which exist in the East of England should be celebrated, and at the same time supported as they seek to help other areas to increase their research and innovation capacity.

For example, Norwich hosts a life-science cluster of growing international importance, with specific expertise in plant and nutrition innovation. A growing commercial community of more than 40 businesses are co-located on the Norwich Research Park alongside four independent, internationally-renowned research institutes, the University of East Anglia and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The forthcoming regulatory reform of precision breeding techniques will bring global investment opportunities in agri-tech and bio-tech innovation, as recognised by the Department for International Trade's High Potential Opportunity in plant science for nutrition in Norfolk and Suffolk.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

When it comes to the key components of this Levelling Up mission, the questions – and our answers, are:

- By 2030, will domestic public investment in R&D in the Greater South East increase (even if not as greatly as elsewhere)?
- We welcome the Government's commitment to increasing public R&D spending to £20bn by 2024/25 and encourage them to retain the ambition to increase public R&D spending to £22bn by 2027. This will harness additional private investment and is vital to driving economic growth through innovation and making the UK a leading location for the industries of the future.
- Will any additional spending leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.
- This is certainly the case in the East of England which has a track record of innovation, co-production and commercialisation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

1. Maintain R&D funding commitments and invest in places where the return on this investment is maximised and which can act as engines for levelling up.

We welcome the Government's commitment to increasing public R&D spending to £20bn by 2024/25 and encourage them to retain the ambition to increase public R&D spending to £22bn by 2027. This will harness additional private investment and is vital to driving economic growth through innovation and making the UK a leading location for the industries of the future.

2. Invest in the infrastructure to sustain R&D-led levelling up. This includes critical research and innovation infrastructure which the businesses of tomorrow are finding it increasingly difficult to access.

Across the Oxford-Cambridge region there is over 2.8 million sq ft of demand and virtually no lab space available. Government should also embrace opportunities for enhanced connectivity through key strategic transport links, notably East West Rail. This will ensure that the benefits of growth can be spread out across the Oxford to Cambridge corridor and beyond to some of the East of England's more deprived areas in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. There is £8bn+ of RD&I investment currently being sought across the Arc but this global capital and these innovation businesses will go elsewhere internationally and be lost to the UK if the Oxford-Cambridge Arc opportunity is not grasped.

3. Expand the University Enterprise Zones (UEZ) programme to other Universities in the East and across England. A 2020 evaluation of UEZs found that for every £1 of UEZ funding provided by government, UEZs generated £4.50 of additional public and private funding. UEZs are providing space for start-ups, supporting collaborative research projects, boosting university partnerships with employers, creating jobs, helping to meet skills needs and providing opportunities for apprentices.

- III 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Transport is an enabler of all socio-economic activity. Poor access and connections hinder economic activity, prosperity, and the achievement of many of the other Levelling Up metrics.

The East of England's £153 billion economy relies on the web of transport connections between over 120 major towns and cities. While Cambridge meets the criteria for a global city, the East has no high-density city region. We benefit from our proximity to London and have a nationally important role in the movement of goods through our 17 ports and airports. However, our ability to attract ongoing international investment and ensure all areas of the region benefit from planned growth, depends on safer, more reliable, more integrated, and more sustainable journeys across our road, rail and local networks.

Transport improvements have wide-ranging benefits that interface with other policy areas so impact on many of the other Levelling-Up missions.

- Evidence shows private global investment is attracted to places well-connected to potential customers, suppliers, and employees.
- To take advantage of high-quality skills training people need to be able to access it, reliably and affordably.
- Physical inactivity costs the NHS up to £1 billion per annum, and increasing activity can reduce people's risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, dementia and poor mental health.
- Across the East, transport is the largest contributor to carbon emissions at 42%, so is critical to achieving net-zero alongside improving air quality and environmental resilience.



## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Car-dependency is evident across the East of England with 79% of people using a car or van to travel to work, 7% taking public transport (bus, coach or train), 9% walking and only 4% cycling. Only 12% of households in the East of England do not own a car or van, compared to 18% for England outside London and 40% of London households with no car or van.

Travel to work data only looks at one reason for travel, so looking at the proportion of public transport and active trips as a total of trips per year, we find across the East of England 32% of trips were undertaken by public transport or active travel – the vast majority were walking for under a mile. Public transport trips are only 6.4%.

The picture for England outside London is very similar with 33% of trips by public transport and active travel, 6.8% of those by public transport. However, the Levelling Up mission is to get significantly closer to London standards of public transport and the London proportion of trips by public transport and active travel is 68%, with 30% of those by public transport.

Buses are the most used public transport mode and reliability is a crucial factor for people opting for bus travel. Across the East of England, the average percentage of non-frequent bus services running on time was 85.9% in 2018-19.

This compares favourably to the England (outside London) average of 82.7% but hides noticeable disparities across the region. Of those authorities providing data, Hertfordshire's non-frequent bus services ran at 93.6% reliability, while Southend-on-Sea's ran at 70% reliability. Differences in road environment, congestion and service patterns may account for this.

The East of England also has a nationally significant role as a gateway between the UK and the world and is home to two designated Freeports – Thames Freeport and Freeport East. London Stansted Airport has had the fastest recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic of any major UK airport, and London Luton is also one of the top five busiest airports in the UK. With thirteen ports, the East moved 83.5 million tonnes of goods in 2019 including half the UK's containerised goods. These goods supply businesses and customers the length and breadth of Britain.

The Government's commitment to East West Rail at the recent Autumn Statement was welcomed by the region. The project will directly connect three of the Centre for Cities 'Fast Growth Cities group' – Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford. Norwich and Peterborough, two more of the fast growth cities, could be part of an expanded East West Main Line. These places have been identified as some of the 'most successful and innovative places in the UK'. Improved connections along this corridor will also benefit communities between these cities as new business investment is already being planned along the route.

## SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

### Local transport threats and opportunities

The region has set ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans, but only five of the 17 local authorities who applied in our region received funding to deliver these changes. Despite the welcome continuation of Bus Service Operating Grant to steady services following the Covid pandemic we are still seeing operators removing essential services, even from relatively well-populated areas and swathes of our region are 'transport deserts' where everyday journeys cannot be made without a car.

This follows years of underinvestment in the East's local public transport networks. In 2016-17 the East of England had the joint lowest funding for local public transport at just £12 per person. This was a third of the England average of £35 per head and around 1/10 of the London spend on local public transport of £112. This funding had diminished substantially over the previous five-years from £126.3 million in 2012-2013 to £74 million in 2016-17.

Despite increasing collaboration between commercial bus operators through the Enhanced Partnerships, passengers are still faced with poor route coordination, low-frequency services, and complex fares, tickets and information. A new approach to local transport funding and delivery is urgent.

### Major Infrastructure threats and opportunities

Over the longer-term upgrading rail connectivity and access is essential. We welcome the emerging thinking from Great British Railways Transition Team on areas such

as simpler tickets, station accessibility and increased integration across the rail industry and with other transport networks. However, rail infrastructure investment across the East has not kept track with growth and is now constraining both passenger and freight services.

Within the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline only six schemes are within the East of England region, with an additional two in London that would benefit our rail network. The last update on the RNEP was in 2019, and development work has paused while we wait for funding allocations to progress crucial projects including Ely Area Capacity Enhancement, Haughley Junction, Watford Junction and St Albans station.

Frequent, reliable services between our major cities, towns and employment centres are essential to attract and create highly skilled people, increase inward investment and manage planned growth while decarbonising the region.

The East West Main Line which was specifically referenced in the Autumn Statement 2022 will directly connect three of the Centre for Cities 'Fast Growth Cities group' – Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford. Norwich and Peterborough, two more of the fast growth cities could be part of an expanded East West Main Line. These places have been identified as some of the 'most successful and innovative places in the UK'. This will also benefit communities between these cities as new business investment is already being planned along the route. A clear commitment from the Government for the central section of the main line between Bedford and Cambridge is overdue.

## International Gateways threats and opportunities

Our international gateways and surrounding enterprises form economic clusters of skilled, productive jobs, driving the regional economy and levelling-up communities across the East.

London Stansted Airport's role in supporting high-growth sectors within the regional economy is well-evidenced. The high concentration of knowledge intensive industries around Cambridge relies on international connections to secure new investment, recruit talent globally and enter new markets.

Recent research by Stansted Airport found strong demand for new long-haul routes to destinations in Asia and the U.S. These routes would deliver a high economic dividend for the region and UK plc. For example, a direct route between Stansted Airport and Boston could generate up to £95 million in new investment, grow exports by £45 million and create 25,000 new passengers per annum. This would not just be business travellers between two global centres of excellence in technology and life sciences but would open a new visitor market for East Anglia, and support job growth through supply-chains.

To maximise the value to the region of Stansted's global connections, onward journeys need to be considered. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Stansted Express operated four trains per hour between Stansted Airport and London Liverpool Street. This was reduced to two trains per hour during the pandemic. With passenger numbers rebounding rapidly, the Stansted Express must be restored to four trains per hour to provide a reliable and sustainable transport option. Rail connections to the East and West of the airport are limited with

many requiring a change through London. This creates a barrier for local communities to benefit from the skilled roles available on the airport campus.

The East is also an essential connector in the UK's global trading routes; critical to the national economy, supply chains and hundreds of thousands of businesses across the UK. Many ports are located close to priority Levelling Up areas. However, local public transport connections can be limited.

Freeport East has significant plans to develop a 'green energy hub' at the Port of Harwich with high-skilled jobs supporting the large-scale manufacturing of offshore wind turbines and components. Harwich, already a busy port for roll-on roll-off freight traffic to Europe, moving 3.5 million tonnes a year, is at the end of a one-lane section of the A120. Jaywick, is the most deprived place in the country and less than 20 miles from the port of Harwich. But it takes around 40 mins to drive there and 1hr 40 mins by public transport.

Without steady investment in our road and rail transport networks, the East cannot maximise the planned private investment into our growing region. Communities most in need of access to skills, jobs, services and opportunities will not be able to benefit; current challenges will worsen and prevent the region, and country, from reaching its full potential, economically, socially and environmentally.

## Transport planning and funding: threats and opportunities

The development of Sub-national transport bodies over the last five years has created new capacity and capability in sustainable transport planning. Working closing together, Transport East and England's Economic

Heartland are strengthening the case for transport investment through their regional Transport Strategies and respective work programmes. Along with regional partners, they are amplifying the East's voice in Government and with bodies such as National Highways and Network Rail. However, the opportunities are limited at a regional level for integrating transport with other major infrastructure such as utilities and digital, and land-use planning to maximise outcomes.

The funding environment for transport investment is also very challenging. Competitive 'bid' funding leads to notable disparities between local authorities and makes it difficult to plan a stable pipeline of investment. Resources are spent developing bids with no guarantee of success. Reduced maintenance funding to local transport authorities is now significantly impacting their ability to keep local roads and footpaths in good condition.

Increased powers around transport have been identified within the framework for devolution in the Levelling Up White Paper. A 'County Deal' for Suffolk was announced in the Autumn Statement and discussions continue on a deal for Norfolk. The full implications for transport funding and delivery are yet to be seen but each authority may be able to introduce bus franchising and have access to a more integrated transport funding settlement. The region already has the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority with transport planning and development responsibilities.



# An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

When it comes to the Government's mission the key questions are:

- By 2030, will local public transport connectivity across the country be significantly closer to the standards of London?
  - This seems highly unlikely unless projects in the Rail Network Enhancement Programme including Ely and Haughley Junctions are supported by the Government and funding is allocated to support buses in those authorities which did not receive a Bus Service Improvement Plan funding.
- Will there be improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing?
  - Again, this seems unlikely without further Government support and funding despite the best efforts of local Enhanced Bus Partnerships and the region's two sub-national transport bodies, Transport East and EEH.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

1. Increased and stable funding for bus services and network maintenance across all Local Transport Authorities as well as commitment to major rail schemes identified in the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline and East-West Rail central section.
2. Simpler, longer-term funding mechanisms to facilitate stable regional transport investment pipelines that support the priorities already set out in the strategies of the region's two Subnational Transport Bodies (STBs).
3. Scheme appraisals focused on delivering outcomes most relevant to specific places, including economic growth, other levelling up metrics and decarbonisation.

#### IV By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Increased working from home, movement to e-commerce and the delivery of virtual support services during the Covid-19 pandemic have all shone a light on the importance of high speed and reliable internet provision. This is now viewed as an essential utility alongside water and electricity.

The societal and economic benefits of high-quality digital infrastructure are well documented. Inclusion of this in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper is a clear indicator of its importance. The document states that it 'has the potential to drive growth and productivity' and 'also allows for the development of high-value sectoral clusters, which can drive growth and jobs in new areas'.

Broadband to premises and mobile broadband technology has moved on a great deal in the last decade to accommodate the changing demands of businesses, communities and consumers. However, some communities are left-behind either due to their location or as a result of the commercial market forces in their area. This is specifically the case in several areas of the East of England which are being left behind in terms of internet speed and mobile coverage.

The East of England has a high proportion of residents living in rural communities. Often, these communities are more isolated than those in more urban areas and therefore the delivery of high-quality infrastructure is crucial to achieve the improvements in educational attainment, adult skills and access to jobs required to support inclusive economic growth. Achieving this mission is therefore essential to reducing inequalities and promoting social mobility.

It is to be welcomed that Government has set an increased ambition to achieve nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 5G coverage for the majority of the population by 2030 in the Levelling Up White Paper. This chapter will detail the current position for the East of England with regards to coverage, highlight the challenges faced in achieving improvements and make recommendations to Government on the support needed by the region for the mission to become a reality.

## ACCESS TO SUPERFAST AND GIGABIT BROADBAND

Data provided by **thinkbroadband** shows that 97.7% of premises in the East of England have access to superfast ( $\geq 24$  MB per second) broadband as at September 2022. Therefore, general coverage is good. However, only 65% of the premises have access to gigabit broadband – (1000 MB per second) (6.4% lower than the national average). And an average of 1.23% of premises can still only access speeds lower than 15 Mbps.

This increases to 2.46% of premises in Norfolk. Therefore, it is clear to see that the region as a whole is being left behind with some areas experiencing much lower levels of service.

The table below provides a breakdown of provision by county/unitary area: greatest to lowest coverage of superfast (accurate as of 7th September):

	Gigabit (1000 Mbps) %	Superfast ( $\geq 24$ Mbps) %	Below 15 Mbps %
England	71.39	97.93	1.18
East of England	65.03	97.71	1.23%
Luton	91.02	99.46	0.27
Southend-on-Sea	78.22	99.18	0.10
Central Bedfordshire	76.06	98.65	0.83
Hertfordshire	82.39	98.57	0.75
Bedford	78.16	98.51	1.01
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	72.43	98.51	0.94
Essex	61.13	98.34	0.99
Suffolk	46.73	97.89	1.44
Thurrock	84.91	97.63	1.52
Norfolk	47.03	96.49	2.46

## ACCESS TO 4G AND 5G MOBILE COVERAGE

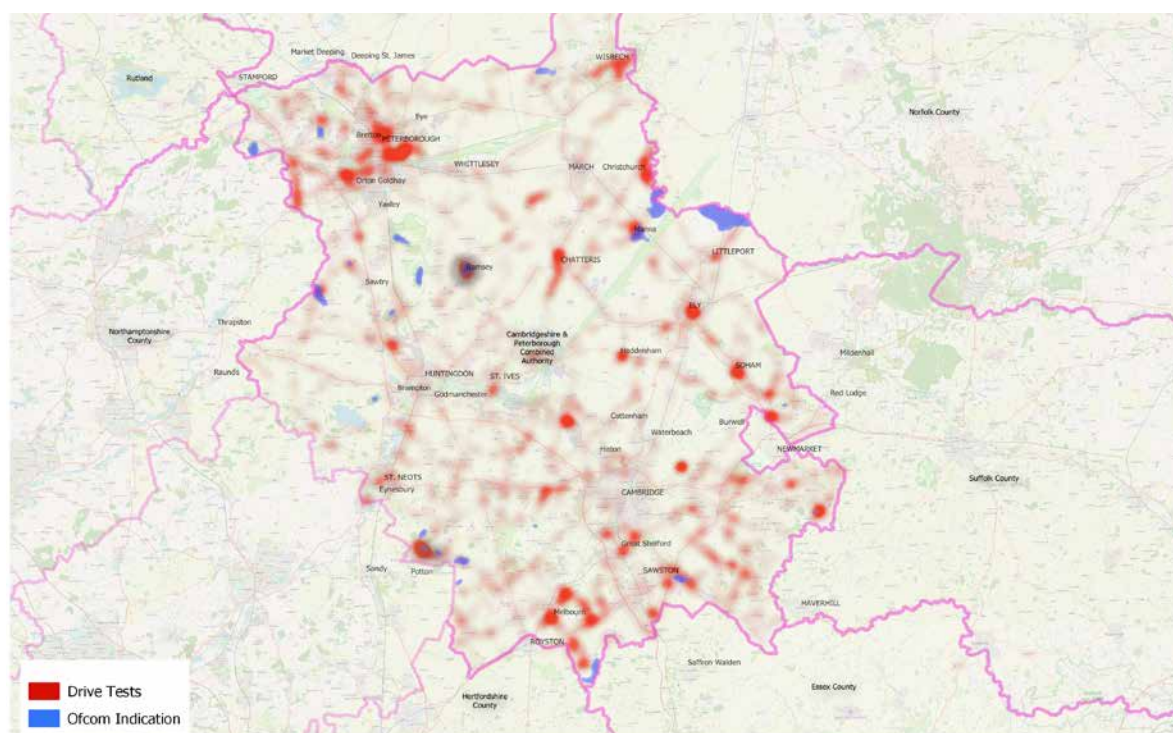


Due to mobile broadband being provided separately by 4 main providers, it is difficult to have a clear understanding of the coverage of 4G and 5G technology in the East of England. However, when reviewing provision from one of these providers, it is clear to see that there are substantial issues in our region.

The map on the left shows coverage from one provider – dark green indicating good coverage and yellow to white where there are problems or no coverage at all.

According to the **Shared Rural Network** website, which details the programme of joint investment from the Government and the 4 main providers to improve coverage, prior to the initiation of the programme, 90% of the East of England received coverage from all 4 major providers and following the completion of the programme, this will rise to 93%.

The illustration below – just for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – shows that 4G “not-spots” are widespread. Also that Ofcom’s analysis is not borne out with actual drive tests.



## SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

### Commercial activity

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) believe that around 80% of England will gain access to gigabit capable fibre to the premises via purely commercial activity and that this will leave 20% of the country that will require some kind of intervention.

### Government intervention: Project Gigabit

In March 2021, the Government announced 'Project Gigabit'. A £5bn programme of activity to provide over a million hard to reach homes with gigabit broadband. Funding is supplied to providers via open procurement exercises setting out the level of intervention needed where commercial delivery is not viewed as financially viable.

In August 2022, an update on Project Gigabit was published. This update stated the following:

- The East of England has now achieved 64% gigabit capable coverage, up from 24% in August 2021.
- Engagement with suppliers has identified that there is currently a high likelihood that procurement to achieve delivery in eastern parts of Hertfordshire will not be successful.
- Responses have been received in the first stage of procurement for Norfolk and Suffolk.

- Responses have also been received in the second stage of procurement for Cambridgeshire.
- For Essex, suppliers have submitted responses to the first stage review prior to procurement taking place.

Although the Government states that it is 'on track' to deliver against its targets, the regional procurement exercises planned for the East of England to achieve gigabit delivery, are behind schedule when compared with indicative dates shared in November 2021. This ranges from 2 – 4 months for most areas but up to just under 2 years for Essex.

In addition, there is a lack of focus on the social housing sector. It can be more difficult to install fibre to the premises in social housing due to the added complication of liaising with social landlords. These organisations, for very good reasons, have become increasingly robust in their assessment of works to buildings and this can cause delay in broadband improvements. Therefore, sometimes provider can choose what are perceived as easier options first.

In many cases, local authorities in the East of England have pursued opportunities to deliver broadband improvements whilst carrying out upgrades to the road and cycling network where they are responsible for these schemes. However, for larger schemes that are delivered by national bodies, the same hasn't taken place and there have been missed opportunities.

### Very Hard to Reach Premises

Also, in the summer update to Project Gigabit, the Government states that 'DCMS continues to assess available policy options for premises in remote areas that are unlikely to be reached through Project Gigabit procurements due to their rurality and the potential cost and complexity of providing them with Gigabit service'.

### Shared Rural Network

The Shared Rural Network is a partnership between the UK's four mobile network operators (MNOs) and DCMS formed to transform mobile coverage in rural areas.

With £1 billion investment, the Government aims to increase 4G mobile coverage throughout the UK to 95% by the end of programme, underpinned by legally binding coverage commitments.

To deliver the programme, MNOs will invest £532m to eliminate the majority of 'partial not-spots' – areas which receive coverage from at least one, but not all, operators. The UK Government will provide a further £500m to build new masts to eliminate 'total not-spots' – hard to reach areas where there is currently no coverage at all.

The programme suggests that MNOs are on track to eliminate the majority of 'partial not-spots' by mid-2024 and the Government remains confident the combined coverage will be delivered to 95% of UK geography by the end of 2025. However, we know that for a number of areas in the East of England, the designated intervention areas for this programme do not match up with the improvements needed on the ground.

[Below is an example of this for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.](#)

#### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Issues with the Shared Rural Network Programme**

An independent survey was carried out across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to understand the extent of mobile 4G/5G coverage issues. This work showed that the level of partial not-spots was a lot higher than previously suggested in Ofcom data. Ofcom has also confirmed that they believe the independent survey data carried out to be credible.

The Ofcom data was used to decide which areas would be targeted for intervention by the Shared Rural Network and therefore, it has

now become apparent that this programme will not achieve the level of improvement previously suggested.

In addition to the recognition that the Shared Rural Network is now unlikely to achieve previously suggested ambitions for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, there is also a lack of transparency around the locations where infrastructure improvements have been made. It is vital for the Connecting Cambridgeshire Programme to have access to this information in order to understand where improvements have been achieved and where more work needs to be done.

Case Study provided by  
Connecting Cambridgeshire

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

When it comes to the key components of this Levelling Up mission, the questions and our answers are:

- By 2030, will the East of England have full gigabit-capable broadband?
  - Yes probably. However, we would like to see a more ambitious delivery target from Government.
- By 2030, will the East of England have full 4G coverage and 5G coverage for the majority of the population?
  - It will be very hard for Government to achieve full 4G coverage if the issues around the shortfalls in the Shared Rural Network programme are not addressed.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

1. Ensure that the procurement exercises and resulting delivery plans for Norfolk, Suffolk and Thurrock, the three areas with the highest percentage of properties with the slowest internet speeds, prioritise those areas with the biggest issues and do not just focus on the 'easy wins'. Also ensure the procurement exercise to secure improvements in Essex is not delayed unnecessarily.
2. Revisit the intervention areas for the Shared Rural Network programme to ensure this reflects the true picture of coverage issues across our region. Also, share information about current and planned improvements with local authority officers and provide an up to date roadmap for the Shared Rural Network for the East of England.
3. At the earliest opportunity, publish delivery plans to achieve improvements in 'very hard to reach areas' following the 'call for evidence' that was completed in June 2021.
4. Ensure that nationally-led, major transport infrastructure schemes also include fibre ducting improvements to maximise on these projects.

- V** 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Evidence demonstrates that improved educational achievement hugely benefits individuals themselves – improving, for example, their life chances, including health and wealth, and their sense of wellbeing. Educational attainment also helps improve economic growth. In a region where there is great demand for an educated workforce, the aspiration for 90% of primary children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths is therefore supported by all sectors and all parties across the East of England.

It should be noted the Schools White Paper, ‘Opportunity for all’, adds to the goal for primary school children, one that seeks to lift the attainment of all secondary pupils. This sets out an ambition to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030. The region is also fully behind this goal and arguably this ambition should also be a measure of this White Paper’s success.

It is also worth noting the importance of Early Years education – from nought to four. As the recent report ‘The Best Start in Life’ published by the Government makes clear: “a high-quality early years education is vitally important. Children attend early years provision at a crucial developmental point in their lives.

The education and care that they receive affects not only future educational attainment but also their future health and happiness.”

In addition, regional partners applaud the Government’s commitment to “level up opportunities for all children and young people – without exception. We are just as ambitious for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as for every other child.” All agree that we want to see a system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential.

It is therefore welcome that there has been a significant increase in the number of SEND packages in support of reducing inequalities. Nationally a total of 473,000 children and young people are now in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), an increase of 10%, or 42,000, over the previous 12 months alone. However it must be noted that in order to fund further increases additional sums will be needed to be allocated to councils. The Council Dedicated Schools Grant deficits already stands at an estimated £1.9 billion, a figure that the LGA estimate could rise to £3.6 billion across England by 2025.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Currently 64% of primary school children in the East of England achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. This is below the England average of 65%. In two areas of the region attainment was less than 60% - Fenland at 52% and Peterborough at 56%.

Disadvantaged pupils – those eligible for free school meals and therefore a focus for levelling up – achieve less well: 47% in the East of England compared to the English average of 52%. In three of the region's 11 educational authority areas less than 40% of disadvantaged children achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths: Bedford, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire.

On the measure focussed on GCSEs, the East of England is currently just above the national average at 65.4% compared to 64.6% for grade 4 or above at Mathematics and English. However, in four areas achievement is below 60% - Luton and Ipswich are both on 59%, Peterborough is at 55% and Fenland at 54%. Again, for disadvantaged children the picture is less good: 42.5% secured grade 4 or above compared to an English average of 44.7%.

## SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

### STRENGTHS

Councils continue to play an important role in supporting schools and educational attainment. This role was brought to the fore during the Covid-19 pandemic and is clear to see in local authorities' duties around place-planning and support for vulnerable pupils. The proposal of council-led Multi Academy Trusts is yet another example of the sectors crucial support.

In the Levelling Up White Paper, 55 Education Investment Areas (EIAs) were identified. It was indicated more investment across these areas would be made to drive school improvement and improve pupil outcomes. In the East of England there are 7 EIAs, they are:

- Bedford
- Central Bedfordshire
- Luton
- Peterborough
- Cambridgeshire
- Norfolk
- Suffolk

In the Schools White Paper, 24 Priority Areas (a subset of EIAs) were identified. These are areas in which more intensive investment is being made. The Priority Areas within the EIAs in the East of England are:

- Fenland and East Cambridgeshire
- Norwich
- Ipswich

The Government is prioritising work to bring underperforming schools in the Education Investment Areas into multi-academy trusts; the Regional Director wrote to affected schools in October and representations are now being submitted for review, first decisions will be communicated by end December.

There are a range of other initiatives that the Government are taking forward within EIAs to deliver on its educational ambitions. These include:

- The **Trust Capacity Fund (TCaF)** is a competitive grant fund available to help trusts develop their capacity to grow. It has a particular focus on supporting strong trusts, and strong schools forming trusts, to take on underperforming schools in Education Investment Areas.
- Proposals for new mainstream **free schools**, including 16 to 19 free schools, will be prioritised in the Education Investment Areas.
- A **Levelling Up Premium** is available to eligible teachers of chemistry, computing, maths, and physics. They can claim a levelling up premium payment for teaching in eligible state-funded secondary schools.

- With the **Connect the Classroom** programme, The Department for Education is investing up to £150m to upgrade all schools in Priority Areas, and schools within Education Investment Areas rated 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' at their last inspection, that fall below Wi-Fi connectivity standards.
- 24 Priority Areas nationwide – including the three in East of England – will share £40m of **additional funding** for bespoke interventions to address local needs. The Department for Education is currently on track to develop a delivery plan for each by the end of the year.
- Pupil **attendance** is a departmental priority as is the commitment to a school week of 32.5 days for all primary children. Both are seen to improve educational attainment and help level up.
- To support parents, 75 local authorities across the country have been announced as eligible for a share of £302 million to create new **Family Hubs** in their areas. In the East of England there will be Family Hubs in Bedford, Thurrock, Norfolk, Peterborough, and Luton.

The Government also has a number of initiatives that are available to all schools all aimed at improving the quality of teaching or leadership. These include school hubs, National Professional Qualifications and the National Tutoring Programme.

In light of widespread fears across primary and secondary schools that there will be insufficient funds, especially in third year (25/26), the local Government sector welcomed the additional £4.6 billion in school funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25, at a time when schools are struggling with rising energy and food bills, alongside the need to fund agreed pay rises, including for teachers.

## WEAKNESSES

Unfortunately, there are a range of factors that are mitigating against success. These include:

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has created gaps in knowledge as well as in emotional and social skills. There has also been an increase in mental health issues. Evidence published by the Government itself suggests that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and other children will have widened.
- The impact of the cost of living crisis has yet to be properly felt but there have already been reports of increasing numbers of children turning up at school hungry. It is also leading to an exodus of teaching assistants (TAs) who are seeking slightly better paid jobs in retail or hospitality to make ends meet
- There is a schools' leadership gap with for example vacancies in secondary headships at their highest level for five years and a similar situation if not quite as bad with primary headships. Also, the evidence is mixed on whether the fact of becoming a Multi Academy Trust or Free School is enough in itself to raise education standards.

- It is not clear to what extent the additional funding announced in the Autumn statement will be used to plug gaps rather than to extend provision for disadvantaged children but clearly some part of it should be committed to improving Key Stage 2 (KS2) including extending SEND provision.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

The Institute for Government (IfG) have said it would be "virtually impossible" to deliver the 90% primary education goal in "only eight years, without any known approaches that have been effective in producing the scale of improvement needed."

Given the cost of living pressure and the likely increase in child poverty, the gap between disadvantaged children and areas is in the short term more likely to widen than narrow. In the current circumstances, standing still would be a success.

In the longer term, if stable and sufficient funding can be provided, in addition to ongoing concerted effort in the EIAs and Priority Areas, then some progress will hopefully be achieved.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

In order to be on track:

1. A significant part of increased school funding of £4.6bn over the next two years should be allocated to councils to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Particular attention should be given to the funding formula that applies to rural schools.
2. In addition to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) programme of activity in the longer term it will be necessary to improve and extend early years support and education as well special educational needs so that children have the best start in life and educational opportunities are levelled up for all children.
3. The better alignment of education with wider Government policies all related to levelling up such as health, the economy and income (benefits). A greater awareness of the particular problems that rural schools face – for example difficulties in recruitment – would also assist many schools in the East of England.



- VI** 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

This mission is aimed at making sure skill levels rise in all areas of the country, and particularly in the places where they are the weakest, so that more people have the skills they need to get good jobs. Improving employment and skills is crucial for levelling up as skills are a major driver of economic disparities between people and places.

Improving skills provision will ensure that more people can access training that provides the stepping-stone to better jobs and pay. Further education and adult learning can improve employment outcomes at various stages in individuals' working lives, alongside health, wellbeing and social integration outcomes (see Missions 7 and 9).

The East of England has a population of 6.3 million people and is one of the most economically successful regions in the UK, contributing 153 billion GVA to the UK's economy. In terms of population and

economy, the East of England is one of the fastest growing regions in the UK both in terms of population and the economy. It is home to many of the growing industries of the future – agri-tech; agri-science; life sciences; renewable energy; technology and advanced engineering and is projected to deliver around 600,000 new jobs by 2036.

However, skills shortages and mismatches with local employer needs pose significant challenges for the region. Ensuring these skills shortages and job vacancies are filled in the region is crucial as unfilled vacancies represent lost productivity.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

### Headline Data:

The East of England has the highest employment rate of any UK nation or region with 79.1% (more than 3.1million people) aged 16 to 64 in work or self employment. The average is 75.5%. It also has the lowest unemployment rate of any nation or region – 2.8%. The UK average is 3.6%.

At 193,00 the number of current vacancies exceeds those out of work (100,000). It is worth noting that more than 10,000 current vacancies have been identified as employer skills shortages (ESS) ie not low skilled.

Skills participation and achievements have been declining significantly over the past 10 years, across all regions in England including in areas with the lowest skills. However, in 2021/22 adult Government-funded further education and skills participation increased by 4.6% to 1,511,900 compared to 1,445,100 in the same period in 2020/21. Looking more closely at a regional level, in 2021/22 the indicative participation rate per 100,000 population was 3,658 (approximately 3.6% of adults) for the East of England, which was the lowest of all the regions in England (Fig x). The highest participation rate of 5,451 per 100,000 population was seen in the North East.

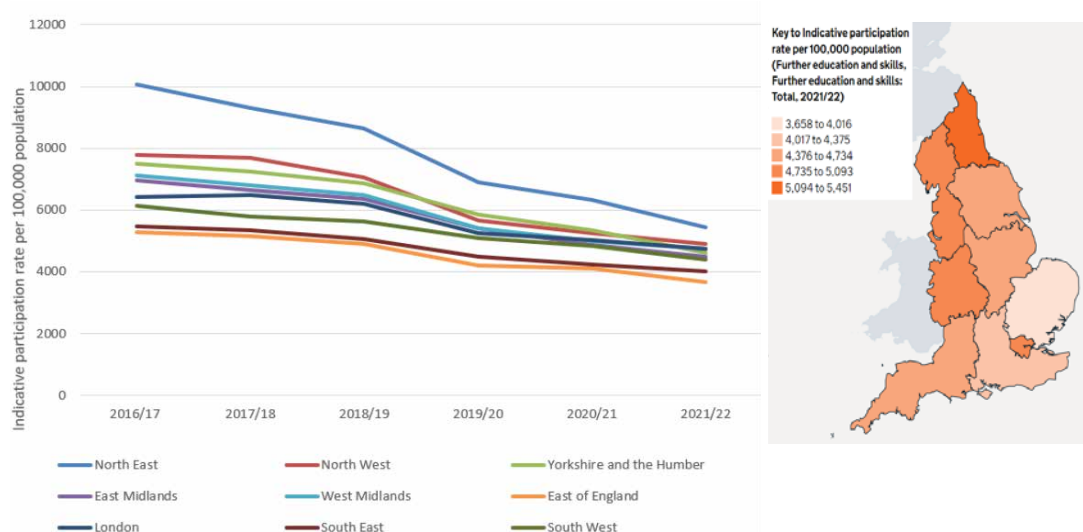


Fig X. Adult (19+) funded further education and skills participation rate per 100,000 population Further education and skills, Academic Year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk))

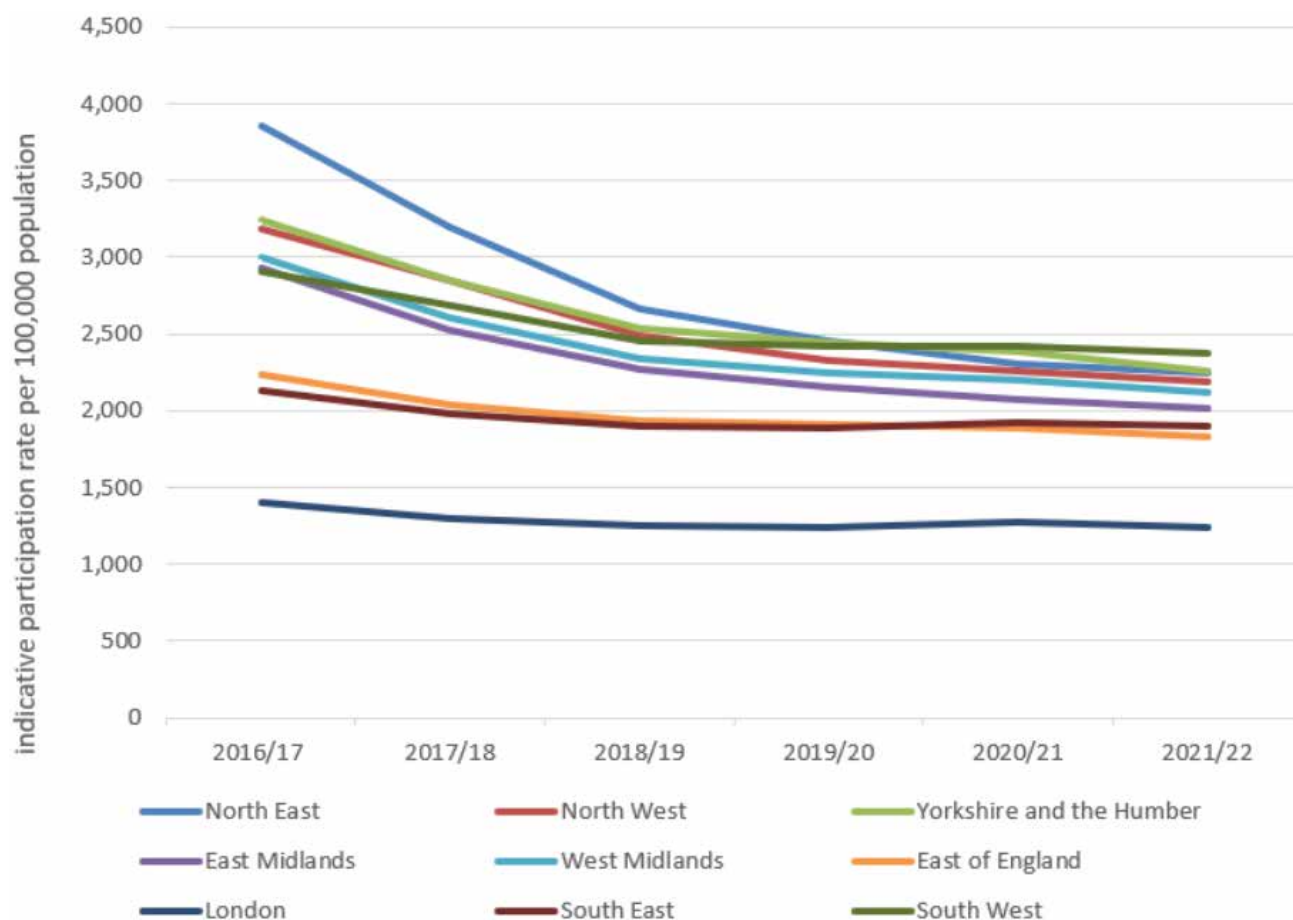


Fig Y. Apprenticeships indicative participation rate per 100,000 population  
Further education and skills, Academic Year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics  
– GOV.UK ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk))

Apprenticeship uptake has been impacted by the Apprenticeship Levy (2017) and Covid-19 and all UK regions saw a fall in apprenticeship participation between 2018 and 2022. The East of England has low apprenticeship participation compared to other regions ranking 8th out of 9 regions in England.

In 2021/22 apprenticeships participation rate per 100,000 for the East of England was 2,019 (approximately 2% of adults) compared with the South-West with the highest participation rate of 2,370 and London with the lowest at 1,240 (Fig Y). In 2017 only 18.3% of firms in the East of England were offering in-work training, ranking 7th out of the 9 UK regions.

There are regional disparities in the share of the resident population with higher level qualifications, indicating that some of the areas within the East of England have difficulties in attracting or retaining higher-skilled workers and the region lags behind the national average. In 2021, 39.6% of the resident population aged 16-64 had an NVQ4 or above qualification, while the UK rate was 43.5%.

## SWOT analysis relevant to this mission.

### OPPORTUNITIES

The East of England has major energy generation capabilities, with a unique mix of wind power, nuclear and gas assets and aspires to become the UK's Clean Growth Region. 60% of offshore wind energy in the UK is already generated in the East of England, making it an important centre of clean energy.

Hydrogen East unveiled its plan in June 2022 to lead the development of a clean hydrogen cluster in the East of England, with a proposal for six "core" electrolyser sites across Norfolk and Suffolk, creating new jobs in the region.

### THREATS AND RISKS

A key theme emerging from the Strategic Economic Plans of the 5 LEPs in the East of England is that skills shortages and mismatches with local employer needs pose significant challenges, and this is further compounded by the demands of technological progress. Skills shortages were reported in a number of sectors including agri-tech, renewable energy, construction, manufacturing, logistics and health and social care. A shortage in data skills also poses significant challenges for the region across all sectors.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

On the basis that the East of England is just a little more than 10% of the England population the mission would suggest that at least 20,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 8,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

With the lowest participation rate per 100,000 population in adult funded further education and skills in England and low apprenticeship uptake compared to other regions in England, when it comes to the key parts of the Government's mission the question, and answers, are:

- By 2030 will the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training in the East of England region have significantly increased?
- There seems little evidence that the region's very low participation rates will increase significantly.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

1. The Government should promote “skills devolution” to allow opportunities for greater local oversight of skills funding and coordination across local partnerships.
  - More than ever we need to work collaboratively to address the skills and labour market challenges faced by our region and to respond to the proposals set out within the Government’s White Paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth. The local Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) which bring together employers, skills providers, local authorities and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level will be at the centre of this.
2. Continued Government investment in skills and a commitment to put employers at the heart of skills provision.
  - Participation in further education and skills training in the region is at the lowest level in England so targeted Government investment is needed if the mission is to be achieved by 2030. There also needs to be greater alignment between further education and skills training and the requirement of our employers to ensure skills levels meet the region’s key growth sectors. Targeted investment is needed to enable employers to improve skills provision and participation and address skills shortages through work-based learning programmes. DfE piloted new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) in 2021-22 and supported providers with Strategic Development Funding (SDF) to help shape technical skills provision to better meet local labour market needs. The East of England was awarded £10,181,954 in funding from the SDF for 2022/23 to support the development of the region’s teaching and training provision and update facilities in preparation for the Government roll-out of LSIPs across England. Continued targeted investment of this kind is needed to ensure the region has the right skills for the future.
3. Improved messaging from local and national Government around post-19 skills training.
  - Some core barriers to skills training uptake are people not feeling training is worth the time or money and a lack of awareness of the options available. Strong communications and consistent messaging are needed, both from local and national Government and the private sector, to emphasise the importance of skills training and to highlight the options available for continued learning.

- VII** 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 have risen by five years.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) combines information on the proportion of the population who rate their health as good or very good with information on how long, on average, people can expect to live based on current death rates. Together these measures provide an 'estimate of lifetime spent in "very good" or "good" health, based on how individuals perceive their general health'. Clearly, all partners in the East of England would want to see HLE rise and for the gap between areas where it is highest and lowest to have narrowed by 2030.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

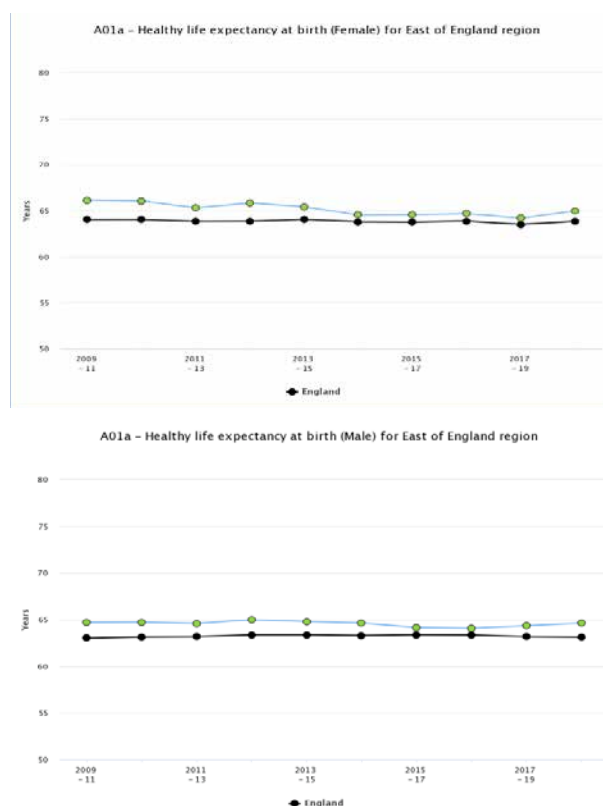
In the East of England, in 2018-20, healthy life expectancy for women was 65.0 years while that for men was 64.6 years. During this period, overall life expectancy, a measure of length of life, for women was 83.8 years and for men 80.2 years. This means that women in the region can, on average, expect to spend 19 years (22% of their lives) in less than good health. The figure for men is 16 years (20% of their lives).

Although healthy life expectancy for men and women in the region has shown some year-on-year fluctuation, over the last decade the longer-term trend shows relatively little change.

Comparing 2009-11 with 2018-20 healthy life expectancy for women decreased from 66.2 years to 65.0 years. For men, healthy life expectancy in 2009-11 was 64.7 years, very similar to the figure for 2018-20 at 64.6 years. For both men and women, healthy life expectancy in the East of England is better than the England average. In 2018-20, healthy life expectancy for men in England was 63.1 years and for woman 63.9 years. It should be noted that the 2018-20 data does not take account of the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Figure 1 Trend in healthy life expectancy in East of England and England. Source: OHID Fingertips<sup>3</sup>



Although overall, healthy life expectancy in the East of England is better than the national average, within the region there are inequalities both for men and for women.

In the East of England 2018-20, there was an 8.6 year gap in healthy life expectancy for women between the local authority with the lowest level, Peterborough at 59.1 years, and the local authority with the highest level, being Cambridgeshire at 67.7 years. The gap for men is 8.7 years, between Central Bedfordshire at 67.9 years and Luton at 59.2 years.

In the East of England for men, only two local authorities (Central Bedfordshire and Suffolk) and for women only one local authority (Cambridgeshire) has an average healthy life expectancy that exceeded the state pension age of 67 years.

Healthy life expectancy is strongly linked to socioeconomic deprivation. Within the East of England region, 71% of the variation in the HLE between local authorities for women can be explained by differences in the levels of socioeconomic deprivation. For men, 58% of the variation in HLE can be explained by variation in level of socioeconomic deprivation.

## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

The opportunity to live a healthy life is influenced by a range of factors including the circumstances in which we are born, our experiences in early life, our education, work and income, our housing and environment and our access to health and care services. The factors that lead to good or poor health intersect, with multiple disadvantages over a lifetime increasing the risk of poor health.

In 2019, data from the international Global Burden of Disease study showed that in the East of England, across all ages, the ten leading causes of death and ill health were: ischaemic heart disease, low back pain, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, lung cancer, stroke, depressive disorders, falls, headache disorders and Alzheimer's disease. If an adjustment is made to take account of the age structure of the East of England population, drug-related deaths are then identified amongst the ten leading causes in place of Alzheimer's disease.

The Global Burden of Disease study estimated that overall, nearly half (42%) of the ill health and early death in the East of England can be linked to preventable risk factors. For some conditions, the percentage of early death and ill health that can be linked to preventable risk factors is considerable. For example, the study estimated that 79% of the burden in the East of England due to cardiovascular disease could be linked to preventable risk factors.

Tobacco, diet-related factors, and alcohol were identified as major contributors to ill health and early death. Environmental factors, such as low temperature, also contribute. These factors are also important contributors to the inequality gap in health outcomes between richer and poorer areas. While progress has been made in reducing smoking rates in the region, trends for some other determinants of health are moving in the wrong direction.

Current estimates are that 12.7% of adults in the region are current smokers. This represents a fall compared to previous years. There are, however, persistent inequalities in levels of smoking between different areas and between different groups in the population. In 2020, 23.3% of those in routine and manual occupations in the region smoked compared to only 9.5% in managerial and professional occupations.

If the region were to achieve the national ambition of being smoke-free (with only 5% of the population smoking) by 2030, this would make an important contribution to improving healthy life expectancy and reducing the inequality gap. Trends are not so positive in other areas.

For some years, survey data has consistently shown that among adults, being overweight or obese has become the norm, with an

increasing trend. Latest estimates from 2020/21 suggest that 64% of adults in the East of England have a body mass index (BMI) indicating that they are overweight or obese, an increase of 2.4 percentage points from 2015/16.

In the years prior to the COVID pandemic, obesity levels among reception children in the region had been relatively stable at around 9%. In 2020/21, levels of obesity among this school year jumped to 14%, the highest levels recorded in the region since the National Child Measurement Programme began in 2006.

Among children in school year 6 (aged 10/11), levels of obesity had been gradually rising prior to the pandemic but saw a larger year on year increase from 2019/20 to 2020/21 than had previously been recorded. Over one child in five in this school year in the region now have BMI indicating that they are obese. There is a marked social gradient in levels of obesity. Across England overall, 34% of children in the poorest areas have BMI suggesting that they are obese compared to 14% of children in the richest areas.

Survey data for all England has shown that there was a 58.6% increase in the proportion of respondents drinking at increasing risk and higher risk levels between March 2020, the start of the first pandemic lockdown, and March 2021.

Prior to the pandemic in the East of England, early deaths from liver disease considered preventable (which includes alcohol liver disease) had been steadily increasing over the past two decades from a rate of 9.9 deaths per 100,000 population in 2001-03 to 13.5 per 100,000 in 2017-19.

Drug-related deaths had also increased over this period but had appeared to have stabilised prior to start of the pandemic.

Deaths of people due to suicide have increased in the East of England for both men and women. For men, the rate of death due to suicide was 16.5 per 100,000 in 2018-20 compared to 13.8 per 100,000 in 2011-13. For women, the rate in 2018-20 was 5.4 per 100,000 compared to 4.2 in 2011-13. National data shows that the proportion of 6 to 16 year olds with a probable mental disorder increased from 11.6% in 2017 to 17.4% in 2021. This increase was evident in boys and girls.

Nationally, ONS estimate that 3.1% of the population were experiencing long COVID symptoms as of 31 July 2022. Of these, over 8 in 10 (83%) reported experiencing long COVID symptoms at least 12 weeks after first having (suspected) Covid-19 and over 4 in 10 (45%) at least one year after.

Core funding available for East of England local authorities has decreased over the last five years to the point where the East of England is now the most disadvantaged region when analysing the most recent data from the Revenue Account Budget in 2022/23.

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, the total grants received by local authorities in the East of England decreased by 3.9% - making it one of only two regions (alongside the North-East) where total grants from the Government declined. East of England local authorities receive £793.90 in grants per capita, representing 86% of the amount granted to the South-East – comparable in terms of deprivation.

### Characteristics of the East of England and the people who live in the region which are important to consider in relation to the healthy life expectancy ambition

The East of England is a richly diverse region. This diversity brings many benefits but also means that the varied nature of the region must also be considered as part of the drive to achieve gains in healthy life expectancy for all across the region and close the inequality gap.

28.6 % of people in the East of England live in a rural area; for those aged 65 years or over, this rises to 35.3%. The region also has an extensive coastline with a number of coastal towns and communities. In 2020, analysis by ONS identified 16 coastal towns in the East of England of which 12 were classified as being of higher deprivation based on levels of income deprivation among residents. Collectively these more deprived coastal towns are home to over 500,000 residents in the region.

These factors may help to explain in part why the region scored less well for the Healthy Places domain of the recently released ONS Health Index than some other regions. Within this domain, the East of England scores amongst the lowest of all regions (second only to the South West) on access to services.

The East of England population has also grown. Between the 2011 and 2021 census, the number of people living in the former East of England Government Office Region (GOR) increased by 490,000 to 6.3 million. This is an 8.3% percent increase, the largest percentage increase of all GORs in England. Some local authorities within the region have experienced percentage increases in population size amongst the highest in England.

These include Bedford which has recorded a 17.7% increase between census 2011 and 2021, Cambridge which recorded a 17.6% increase, Peterborough at 17.5%, and Central Bedfordshire at 15.7%.

If investments in housing, education places, jobs, transport infrastructure and other key public services such as NHS service provision are not keeping pace with these population trends then the wider determinants of health and wellbeing will be adversely affected, along with the overall economic growth potential for our local places.

Meanwhile ONS projections suggest that the number of people in the region aged over 65 will increase by more than 450,000 by 2041. This is in the context of an average healthy life expectancy of 65 years for women and 64.6 years for men.

During 2020 – 2022 nationally we have received cohorts of people fleeing Ukraine and Afghanistan and seen a marked increase in the number of asylum seekers entering the UK. The East of England region, having multiple ports of entry, has received a significant number of these entrants to the UK who are gradually being resettled into more permanent accommodation. As at mid November in the East of England there were approximately 4000 people in asylum hotels, approximately 8,600 people hosted under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and approximately 850 people in bridging hotels, primarily Afghan refugees.



## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

There are multiple challenges to achieving the levelling up mission in relation to healthy life expectancy. Factors such as the impact of long Covid and the cost of living crisis are yet to be seen and measured in data sets ahead, but will almost definitely impact negatively on the achievement of this mission, either per se, or the trajectory of progress that can be achieved over time.

Issues such as on-going Covid-19 surges, risk of other pandemic events, economic depression, the cost of living crisis, the recession we have just entered, the number of children living in poverty, impact of long term debt, the impact of homelessness/evictions/rent and mortgage arrears due to rising cost of living and lack of affordable housing generally, plus to the need to mitigate the impact of climate change, especially in our coastal communities - will all have long lasting impact on life chances and health and wellbeing.

There are also very specific and often less visible issues of inequality such as the difficulties of gaining access to NHS dentistry, and the variance in this across our region and nationally.

The existing care sector workforce crisis will also impact on the availability of care staff and care support which means more older people, those with disabilities or others in need of support for more independent living are likely to be adversely affected.

The Autumn statement 2022 included additional resources targeted to fund up to 200,000 additional care packages over the next two years, intended to relieve pressure on the health and care system, speed up hospital discharge, and support people with their care needs outside of hospital settings, along with the ability to continue with the social care precept levy in local council tax arrangements.

The delivery of these additional packages of care however relies on being able to reach adequate workforce levels in the care sector, which remains a major barrier to the sustainability of social care in East of England.

Current NHS backlogs caused by the Covid-19 pandemic may also have an impact on health life expectancy in the long term, although significant focus and attention is being given to ensuring these backlogs are dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Finally, maintaining the Government's commitment to the national building programme for hospitals is also an essential element of addressing healthy life expectancy. There are notable and very pressing requirements in the capital programme for our region's hospitals, in particular for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn, the NW Anglia Foundation Trust and the West Suffolk Hospital.

In conclusion, the health mission was agreed by Government at a time of economic growth and low inflation as well as a new funding commitment to health services through the social care levy.

With the financial environment now much changed and more and more individuals facing cost of living pressures it is currently impossible to make an accurate assessment of the likelihood of delivery by 2030,

especially as the impact of the most recent factors affecting this ambition are yet to be evidenced in terms of their medium-term effects.

However, there is currently low confidence that this ambition can be met within this timescale, as this is seen as extremely challenging.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030**

1. Government funding policies should recognise the significant population growth in the East of England to ensure the region receives a fair share of funding overall for its demography, and that its most deprived areas are recognised within this. The delivery of inclusive recovery and inclusive growth will ensure the gap in HLE is not widened further.
2. Sustainable solutions to the planning and delivery of integrated workforce for health and social care are critical to ensure quality and safety of care, reduce vacancies, prevent avoidable cost pressures and mitigate against further deterioration in HLE.
3. We would also recommend to the six Integrated Care Systems in the East of England that:
  - To improve HLE in all parts of the East of England, it is crucial that all agencies work together on a collaborative, evidence-driven approach towards early intervention and prevention service design and delivery.
  - Interventions to address inequalities in HLE need to be planned and targeted based on clear understanding of root causes and what will work in different settings and for particular groups of the population.
  - The new Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) should prioritise investment in targeted and impactful prevention and early intervention programmes.
  - The lessons learned from the multiagency responses during Covid-19 should be built on. These could provide models for designing and delivering more impactful multiagency interventions in the medium term.
  - The East of England region has a very vibrant and vital resource in terms of academic knowledge which could further support this levelling up mission.

## VIII By 2030, wellbeing will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

### Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Levelling up life satisfaction and reducing wellbeing inequality is more important than ever. The What Works Centre for Wellbeing highlights that ‘almost everything in our lives affects wellbeing’. Social determinants such as secure employment, education and connectivity to community, family relationships, the environment and green spaces are all underlying factors that contribute to overall wellbeing.

Improving wellbeing is key to levelling up the region, as good wellbeing improves physical health, has important social benefits on educational attainment, economic productivity, social and family relationships, social cohesion and overall quality of life.

It is difficult and complex to measure wellbeing. Since 2011 information about the UK’s wellbeing has been collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in

the Annual Population Survey. The ONS defines wellbeing as ‘how we are doing as individuals, communities and as a nation and how sustainable this is for the future’ and personal wellbeing is measured by the ONS through subjective reports of life satisfaction, purpose, happiness and anxiety.

Many things including mental health, sense of purpose and satisfaction might reflect how people feel about their work, education, connectivity to others and their environment. Collecting wellbeing information and measures of wellbeing inequality helps to capture the real-life experience of inequality better than many other metrics as they pick up economic, health and relational impacts together.

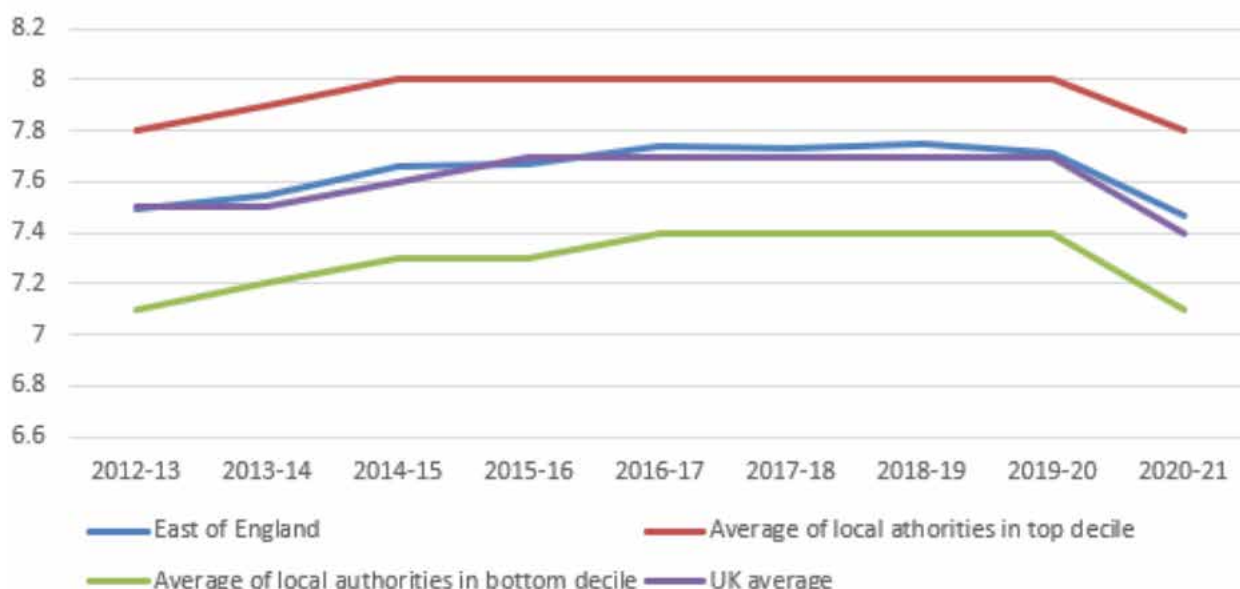


## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Disparities in wellbeing are complex and wellbeing measures suggest that there are large and persistent inequalities at both a regional level and local level. Looking at life satisfaction ratings as one of the key measures of wellbeing, Fig X shows

that the East of England region sits just above the average life satisfaction rating in the UK as a whole. A marked downward trend in life satisfaction during 2020-21 reflects the first year of Covid-19.

**Figure X. Average life satisfaction ratings across top and bottom performing regions, with East of England and UK averages (2012 – 2021). Annual personal wellbeing estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)**



Levels of deprivation, low income and unemployment can all negatively impact wellbeing. Seven of Government's Priority 1 areas for Levelling Up funding are in the East of England: Great Yarmouth, Harlow, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Luton, Peterborough, Southend on Sea and Tendring.

However, looking at life satisfaction indicators for these areas of relative deprivation there is a complex picture showing considerable disparity between these Priority 1 areas in the region (Fig Y). This reflects that there are complex and often hyper-local factors affecting wellbeing.

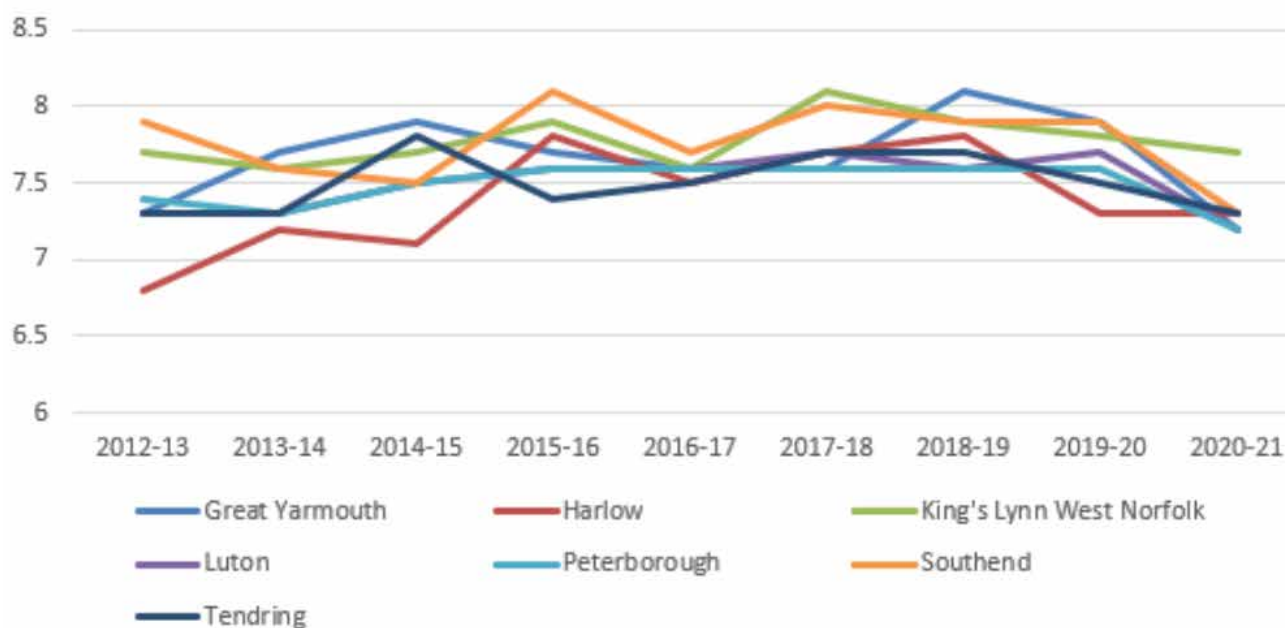


Figure Y. Average life satisfaction ratings across Government's Priority 1 areas for East of England (2012 – 2021). Annual personal wellbeing estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

## Swot analysis relevant to the mission.

### THREATS

The decline seen in wellbeing indicators in the region during the year April 2020 – March 2021 took place against the backdrop of the pandemic. Subsequently, the successful rollout of the vaccine programme has allowed the public to return to relatively "business as usual".

However, the UK is now facing an unprecedented energy and cost of living crisis, rising inflation, the backdrop of an international war in Europe, growing evidence of the climate crisis (rising sea levels and coastal erosion) and has the UK has now entered a period of recession.

These factors present threats to the wellbeing metrics overall and pose particular threats to significant areas of our region, including

areas that are already noted as deprived such as Tendring, Great Yarmouth and Peterborough. These threats can all impact on key factors related to wellbeing such as connectivity, health and secure employment.

There will also be reduced wellbeing in communities due to threats such as breakdown of community cohesion and/or rising crime; increases in financial vulnerabilities of people and communities; increased rates of mental ill health and substance abuse; increased homelessness or inability to access affordable housing. These are all potentially likely to increase during the recession and cost of living crisis.

## OPPORTUNITIES

A range of initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing are being implemented across the region. Examples include: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's 'Living Well' partnerships which link district councils, local communities, multi-agency neighbourhood teams, primary care networks and locality wellbeing initiatives, such as support for carers and promoting physical activity; and Norfolk's Homes and Health' work programme supports better use of, and improvements to, current homes which will have a positive effect on people's health and wellbeing.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

The East of England region has above average life satisfaction ratings in the UK as a whole and our hopeful assessment is that the region, after a difficult couple of years, will get on track to help the Government deliver the mission by 2030.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. To improve wellbeing in the region, Government needs to work together with local authorities especially district and borough councils, business, charities and our communities to enable a more local, coordinated and preventative approach to tackling wellbeing inequality.
  - Multiple agencies take a role in leading aspects of wellbeing, but better coordination of effort and investment is needed. Government needs to work together with local authorities, business, charities and our communities to enable a more coordinated approach to wellbeing, prevention, social determinants and early intervention programmes. Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) in the East of England should play a bigger role in shaping the future of their local services through a more strategic and integrated approach and need to make better use of squeezed budgets to achieve better outcomes for individuals in the region.

2. Investment in public services and a preventative approach to tackle wellbeing inequalities.

- Public services such as transport, healthcare, public safety, availability of quality jobs and affordable housing are important generators of quality of life and of fairer life chances. A focus of Government and local authorities should be to shift the balance of investment towards a preventative approach to wellbeing with targeted investment in public services. Focusing resources at prevention can be a challenge for Government and local authorities even when evidence about return on investment is strong. Resource needs to be proportionate to the degree of need in the region and should not be narrowly targeted towards one disadvantaged group or one geographical area.

3. Government to undertake further work to supplement existing data on wellbeing at a subnational level.

- The reliable measurement of wellbeing is an essential prerequisite to understanding the variation in different communities and the impact of policies and programmes. If the maximisation of wellbeing is the ultimate goal of the levelling up policy, wellbeing measurement must be better embedded within the public sector. The Government will need to undertake further work to supplement existing data on wellbeing at a subnational level, as well as to understand the drivers of wellbeing and identify the most impactful levers available to policymakers in order to better understand the complex and often hyper-local factors underpinning wellbeing.

- IX** 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Everyone wants to feel a sense of pride in the place they live – it's human nature. Pride of place and our affiliation with our communities influences the decisions we make; from where we choose to make our home, to where we work, where our children go to school, where we shop, socialise, and engage in leisure pursuits. Pride in place, and feeling safe for our local places, supports wellbeing and strengthens a community.

The East of England is a region of huge variety, from rural agricultural communities to academic university communities. Combined with the large swell of tourists to the coast in the summer, and commuters into the City of London, it is hard to paint one narrative of the region. Despite these differences, the region has always maintained a strong collaborative ethos, driven by a desire to deliver for its citizens, and a pragmatic streak that runs through both the public and private sector in the area.

However, the argument in favour of building pride in place does not just stop at a desire to build a sense of identity. Studies show that areas with stronger social capital and a higher sense of belonging tend to be healthier and more egalitarian places. Furthermore, they show that social capital has been strongly linked to GDP growth.



## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

There is a strong ethos in the East of England making sure that place matters, while also taking a pragmatic approach to cooperation beyond administrative boundaries to ensure that the interests of place are well served.

Any discussion of pride in place must address the fact that currently, to quote the Government, “statistical measurements of pride in place are in their infancy”. However, some existing sources of intelligence which indicate the current position of the East of England can be found below:

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sports Community Life Survey suggests that the East of England has consistently ranked around third or fourth in local area satisfaction since 2013/14. In 2020/21, just over 80% of adults in the East of England were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- Another measure of place, relating to the RSA's Heritage index, suggests that the East of England measures 5th out of 9 regions on average ranking.
- A 2022 study (published by the RAND Corporation and Cambridge Ahead Quality of Life Group) looking at the quality of life of people in Cambridge found that respondents are generally satisfied with their local area; though raised that pride in place will depend on the exact group asked, as different cultural and socioeconomic groups held differing views.

- While the overall swing is relatively small, individuals from the East of England feel they know their neighbours less well now than since before the pandemic, when compared to the UK average, and are generally less connected to their local community.
- In the Halifax Quality of Life Ratings, published in 2020, four of the top ten ranked areas in the UK are in the East of England – East Hertfordshire, Maldon, Babergh and St Edmundsbury - and 10 of the top 50 are from the East.
- According to the Sunday Times Best Places to Live Guide, the East of England came second, with Norwich ranking particularly highly. Furthermore, Cambridge has also claimed the top spot in this ranking in the past.
- Woodbridge and Bury St Edmunds were both included in the top 20 of Rightmove's Happy at Home index 2022, which surveyed 21,000 people across the UK about how happy they feel about where they live. Woodbridge was named as the third-happiest place in the UK, while Bury St Edmunds was listed as the eighth happiest. This year's Happy at Home index found a sense of belonging is the most important factor contributing to a resident's happiness.

In conclusion, while the East of England is by no means failing in its progress towards the pride of place mission, there is further scope for improvement.

## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

Something that everyone in this region can be proud of is our strong connections as a region. When organisations work together with place in mind, it promotes a shared vision and pride in place. Recent evidence of this can be seen in our anchor institution networks, which encourage local businesses, public sector bodies and major employers, to leverage their overall capacity, capability, powers, and funding. This use of their powers as employers, procurers and commissioners can be used to the specific benefit of the growth and wellbeing of their local areas.

Further evidence of promoting pride in our region is our overall economic performance. The East of England is one of only three regions that provide a net surplus to HM Treasury. This is due to our region being home to some of the largest and most productive growth-engines in the country, such as our growing energy sector, our strong manufacturing base, and our historically world-leading research sector.

As referenced in other chapters of this document we are also faced with managing the pace of population growth. The East of England is the fastest growing region in the UK, with a population that has increased by 8.3% over the last 10 years – an increase of nearly 500,000 people.

Our population trajectory suggests a further one million more people will be in our region by 2040. In terms of levelling up, investment into the region will have to keep pace with this trend in population growth.

A further consideration is that co-delivery and codesign of key community assets and the active nurturing of a civil society is expensive and time-consuming work. If there is to be a serious attempt to increase the priority of local pride in place, then this work will need to be supported to ensure that we are effectively meeting the needs of our residents.

There can be an element of exhaustion with multiple consultation and engagement activities, both for communities and officers, so how these activities are constructed and delivered for maximum, integrated impact and achieving timely outputs is key. With an increasingly challenging fiscal environment, there is now a real danger that local authorities, the traditional custodians of place, will have to reprioritise their finances and staff resources to maintain statutory responsibilities and services. This means that areas such as community engagement and activities or investments that enhance pride of place have to be de-prioritised.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

Pride in place is subjective and will mean alternative things to different individuals and communities. This makes it hard to measure. Our region must continue to build and harness pride in place to continue to attract the people and businesses that will help it thrive and grow. Robust, statistical surveys of attitudes towards place are still very much in their infancy, but more work is being done to understand and capture this information.

An example can be found in the early work that is being pioneered in New Zealand around the “Happiness Index”, highlighting non-economic ways in which belonging can be measured statistically, and then meaningfully used as a metric to measure policy against. Much the same could be said about the Levelling Up mission around wellbeing, which will also require similar advances in statistical innovation.

However, the East of England has not waited for the right conditions to make a start on this. Local authorities across the East have started programmes to boost pride in place, from consultations with citizens, to economic regeneration, investing in the public realm, and comprehensive place-branding.

### CASE STUDY 1

#### The Stevenage Regeneration Programme

Stevenage is a perfect example of what can be accomplished where national funding meets local drive, pride and collaboration. The Stevenage Regeneration Programme, worth £1bn in public and private funding, will make sure that Stevenage has the resources it needs to renovate key areas of its town centre, such as by greening its town square and providing safe outdoor places for residents to gather and spend time with one another. This was done in collaboration with local groups to ensure that the spirit of the area was retained, and that local landmarks could be preserved in a rational, common-sense way.

However, place-shaping goes beyond local authorities and community groups. Larger private or public-private enterprise has a role to play as well. For example, universities that often straddle the public and private, can

be crucial anchor institutions by employing local residents, and acting as a skills provider for local industry. Meanwhile, as Case Study 2 outlines, there is the opportunity for businesses to be a bigger part of the solution:

## CASE STUDY 2

### Anglia Water and the power of strong anchor institutions

Located just 40 miles away from Cambridge, the town of Wisbech faced several challenges, but also had huge potential for growth and development. Once a thriving town, it had struggled to redefine itself since the industrial revolution, experiencing sustained underinvestment, increased levels of deprivation, and low-skill and low-paid employment.

Anglian Water has committed to focusing its funding and convening power in this area. Anglian Water designed and sponsored two courses run by the College of West Anglia in Wisbech aimed at improving skills and providing a pathway into apprenticeship programmes. In addition, Anglian Water used its role as a convenor to boost support for connectivity improvements, to address the historic lack of rail link and other connectivity issues.

In summary, it can be hard to know exactly how well our places are facilitating local pride, and therefore it is difficult to risk-assess in a meaningful way. At present, based on current information available we can potentially

assess that the East of England is somewhere around the middle ranking of English regions when it comes to local and community pride, and further hard work and resources will be needed to push it higher up the ranking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

The East of England has a lot to be proud of on a regional and local level, from its strong foundations of collaboration, its academia and research credentials, its agriculture, its tourism, and green energy sectors. The region should continue to develop its identity as an agricultural heartland, but also push further towards becoming a modern and green region.

The region and central government should also embrace partnership working between big employers in the East to create a better sense of place and create further sustainable growth opportunities. Businesses have a lot to offer in terms of supporting and enhancing local communities and should be part of the solution.

In addition, the East of England needs to achieve the level of government funding that other areas are receiving. The East of England received the second lowest amount of funding from the Levelling Up fund per capita, with only London receiving less. This is funding that could have been used to promote further return on investment within our region and enhance pride in our places.

To be serious about levelling up nationally means to be serious about this in the East of England to make sure that our entire region can prosper.

Some organisations, such as the London School of Economics and the Bennett Institute, are calling for the Community Ownership Fund to be increased in size from £150m to £1bn, to better resource community groups, build capacity within civil society, which could alleviate some of the pressure on local authorities.

The pursuit of pride in place must be integrated with a consistent and effective programme of devolution, so local people can decide the priorities of their local places.

The Levelling Up paper has started by outlining a devolution framework, and we look forward to seeing this unfold in practice. We encourage the government to be ambitious, and to trust local areas to act in the best interests of their citizens.

Finally, it's important that the UK Government works with statistical bodies, thinktanks and local communities to establish how best to measure pride in place. As the exact method of measurement is likely to impact on the outputs produced, serious thought must be put into this along with the resources needed to measure this effectively both within the framework of local government data and from other data and intelligence sources.

### **Specific Recommendations:**

1. The East of East must receive equitable funding through the Government's levelling up policy to mitigate risks to sustainable growth. This is an even more pressing priority given the pressure on local government's budgets overall, and the region's recent population increases. The ability of councils to invest in our places and the public realm will be significantly curtailed by shrinking budgets.
2. There is a need to promote more effective methods and research into measuring pride of place, including the most effective and efficient methods of community engagement in the digital era.

- X** 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Partners in the East of England support the aspiration to home ownership and recognise that the number of first-time buyers should be increasing in all areas including the region's "hot spots" where high prices will be an issue as well as in "cold spots" where low incomes will be an issue.

Partners in the East of England also support the Government's ambition to reduce the number of non-decent rented homes. Non decent homes are those in a state of disrepair, harder to heat and unhealthier.

However, in addition to these shared concerns partners across the East of England have several other housing priorities:

- To increase the number of homes available – by housing associations or by councils - at social and affordable rent levels. There are currently 99,604 on the waiting list for social housing across the councils of East of England.
- Reduce homelessness and rough sleeping – there are currently 266 people in the East of England sleeping rough on any given night and the total number of homeless are 14,856 including those in temporary accommodation. This is 1 in every 422 people in the region – many of these will be families with children.



## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Home ownership in the East of England is the highest of any English region - 67.4% in 2021. The English average is 63.8%. The recent trend - since 2015 when owner occupation stood at 65.7% - has been very slightly upwards. However, between 2002 (when owner occupation stood at 73.2%) and 2015, there was a very slight but steady decline in owner occupation. In other words, there are fewer homes in owner occupation now than twenty years ago.

House building in the East of England is strong – the fourth highest in England after the South East, the North West and the South West. There were 21,110 completions in 2021/22 – the vast majority of these were in the private sector (16,930) with 4,050 built by housing associations and just 140 by councils.

Whether measured by the ratio of median house prices to median work place earnings – the most widely used metric – or on an ‘affordability ratio’ based on lower quartile house prices and lower quartile workplace-based earnings, more typically used when considering affordable housing provision, homes to buy are less affordable in the East of England than in the rest of the UK.

In England the median house price is 8 times higher than median earnings. In the East of England 42 out of 45 local authority areas with responsibility for housing areas are higher than this. In Hertsmere and St Albans house prices are 18 times more than the median income.

In only three areas is the ratio lower than the English average: in Norwich, Peterborough and Great Yarmouth. In Great Yarmouth house prices are 7 times median earnings.

Despite the affordability challenge outlined, there are still first-time buyers. Nationally there has been a steady increase in numbers of First Time Buyers over the last 14 years with levels in 2021 reaching 340,910 – just above the levels achieved before the financial crash of 2008. Unfortunately, the number of First Time Buyers in the East of England is not a publicly available statistic so it is not possible to ascertain whether that trend is reflected in this region.

However, statistics from Homes England concerning Help to Buy (the Government scheme by which people can get an equity loan of up to 20% of the cost of buying a new-build home), show the overwhelming majority of people using Help to Buy since 2013 in the East of England have been first time buyers, 82% (this is slightly less than the UK average of 83.7%.) For information, the amount you pay for a home depends on where in England you buy it. These are set at 1.5 times the average forecast regional first-time buyer price. In the East of England the figure is set at £407,400.

In 2021 the parameters of Help to Buy 2 shifted so that they are focussed on supporting first time buyers only. However, despite the evidence that Help to Buy 1 and 2 have indeed been helpful to first time buyers it closed to new applications on 31 October.

## NON-DECENT HOMES

A decent home is one that meets all of the following four criteria:

- meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (from April 2006 the Fitness standard was replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating system)
- is in a reasonable state of repair.
- has reasonably modern facilities and services.
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Figures for England show that 13% of social rented homes are non-decent as are 21% of private rented homes. Over all tenures, including the owner occupied sector, the figure is 15%.

Figures for the East of England show that 5% of social rented homes are non-decent – better than the England average – but 24% (almost 1 in 4) of private rented homes are non-decent – worse than England average. Over all tenures 13% of all homes – one in eight – are non-decent. This is better than England but still means 352,000 homes, mostly in the private rented sector, are non-decent.

The East of England had the third biggest improvement in reducing non-decent homes between 2010 and 2020 – after the South East (from 24% to 9%), London (from 25% to 12%). The East of England fell from 26% to 13%.

The Government's Levelling Up White Paper mission specifically refers to a reduction in rented non decent homes. In the East of England the figures for private rented (which includes homes rented out by housing associations) was, in 2020, 24%, down from 37% in 2010.

This is, however, worse than the 2020 England average.

## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

### FIRST TIME BUYERS - OPPORTUNITIES

The Government has helped over 800,000 households to purchase a home since spring 2010 through Government backed schemes - [www.ownyourhome.gov.uk](http://www.ownyourhome.gov.uk). Schemes other than Help to Buy include:

- Shared Ownership enables home buyers to purchase a share of their home of between 10% and 75% of the home's value and pay rent on the remaining share.
- The mortgage guarantee scheme helps to increase the supply of 5% deposit mortgages for credit-worthy households by supporting lenders to offer these products through a Government backed guarantee on new 95% mortgages. It is currently due to shut on 31 December 2022.
- The new First Homes programme: this is currently a pilot programme and has not been extended beyond 1,500 properties. It is designed to help local first-time buyers and key workers on to the property ladder by offering homes at a discount of at least 30% compared to the market price.
- The Government must increase investment in social rented properties and genuinely affordable homes for low or no income households.

## FIRST TIME BUYERS - THREATS

The impact of recent interest rate rises would appear to be dampening the housing market – making homes more affordable when looking at income to cost ratios. However, at the same time higher interest rates make mortgages more expensive – making homes less affordable. The net result, certainly in the short term, is to depress the housing market and mitigate against first time buyers getting on the property ladder. The private market for housebuilding will likely contract.

Whether the trend continues in the medium and long term – in other words until 2030 - will depend on macro-economic factors. These include inflation and interest rates neither of which are in the gift of local Government or other partners in the region. Meanwhile some Government schemes to assist FTBs most notably Help to Buy 2 have ended.

## NON DECENT HOMES - OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Improving non-decent homes, especially those in the private sector, remains a priority for many councils. Doing so generates considerable benefits for levelling up as improving the housing stock delivers better insulation, which reduces fuel poverty and help towards the move to zero carbon, and also helps create healthier homes.

However, the discretionary funding from councils – usually provided in the form of home improvement grants and loans - to assist owners in the PRS is small and has been diminishing since the end of the 1990s. This is largely due to reduction in Government funding which does not have any dedicated Decent Homes Programme although it did conclude a review of the Decent Home Standard in 2022.

The Chancellor's decision to reduce energy demand – prompted by the energy crisis and climate change concerns - has led to a new warm homes initiative ECO+ which is in addition to the already announced Help to Heat programme. These will help make homes more energy efficient and in the process reduce the number of non-decent homes in the region. There are, however, questions about the speed of delivery and whether the numbers that will be helped will be sufficient.

Meanwhile affordable housing – which would help reduce housing waiting lists and homelessness – requires further support through an increased allocation to the East of England from the Affordable Homes Programme fund.

In particular social housing is in crisis. Despite the fact that if prices/land values fall it would be a good time to boost social/affordable housing and that this would also have beneficial impacts on local economies, it should be noted that construction costs are increasing and the need for Government subsidy will remain.

# An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

When it comes to the key components of this Levelling Up mission, the questions – and our answers, are:

- By 2030, will renters have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas?
  - The prospects for first time buyers look bleak at least in the short term in our region, with numbers expected to decrease over the next couple of years. The achievement of this metrics will depend on macro-economic factors including whether the Government provides funding for a new round of market interventions.
- By 2030 will the number of non-decent rented homes have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas?
  - Without earmarked Government funding for councils, the 50% reduction over the last ten years is highly unlikely to be matched by a further 50% reduction by 2030.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government should institute a range of support for First Time Buyers including more support for Shared Ownership and a renewal of Help to Buy 2. The Government may also need to look at mortgage rescue schemes rather than mortgage guarantee schemes.
2. The East of England has a huge non-decent homes challenge especially in the private rented sector where one in four is non-decent. Central government funding to councils is required in order to continue to reduce the number of non-decent homes.
3. The Government should increase investment in much needed genuinely affordable homes, with some funding targeted at social rented properties for low or no income households.

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

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

The overall objective of mission 11 is “restoring a sense of community, local pride, and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost”. The reduction of crime is an important factor in individuals maintaining a sense of safety, security and wellbeing in their communities. People and businesses and across the East of England undoubtedly support this aspiration.

Calculations of the economic and social costs of crime by the Home Office (using data from 2015/16) estimate that crime in England and Wales costs approximately £50bn for crimes against individuals. Violent crime generates the greatest economic and social costs, due to the higher physical and emotional costs to the victims of violent offences.

Serious violence is defined as “specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing.” Although these crimes are perpetrated by a small minority – as they represent only 1% of all crimes recorded by the police - their impact can be detrimental for the whole society.

Neighbourhood crime, including residential burglary, theft from the person, robbery, vehicle theft, also generates high levels of public concern, due to the range of economic, social and emotional impacts this crime has on individuals and communities as a whole.

In addition, responding to neighbourhood crime places considerable pressure on police resources, while also generating significant costs for the broader criminal justice system.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Mission 11 is to be measured through three metrics: homicides, serious violence and neighbourhood crime. Statistics on each of the headline metrics are reported (using preferred data sources where possible) for the six police forces in the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk). Statistics are then reported specifically for the worst-affected areas in the East of England, as measured by the police forces with the largest volumes of hospital admissions over a three-year period (2015-16 to 2017-18). Essex is one of the eighteen police force areas identified as worst affected by serious violence. As such, statistics specifically relating to Essex are included below.

## HOMICIDE

In England and Wales homicide refers to three offences: murder, manslaughter and infanticide. The homicide rate in England and Wales remains low (9.9 per million population in 2021-22). Trends in the national homicide rate showed a significant decrease of 42% between 2001-02 and 2014-15, but an increase of 39% from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

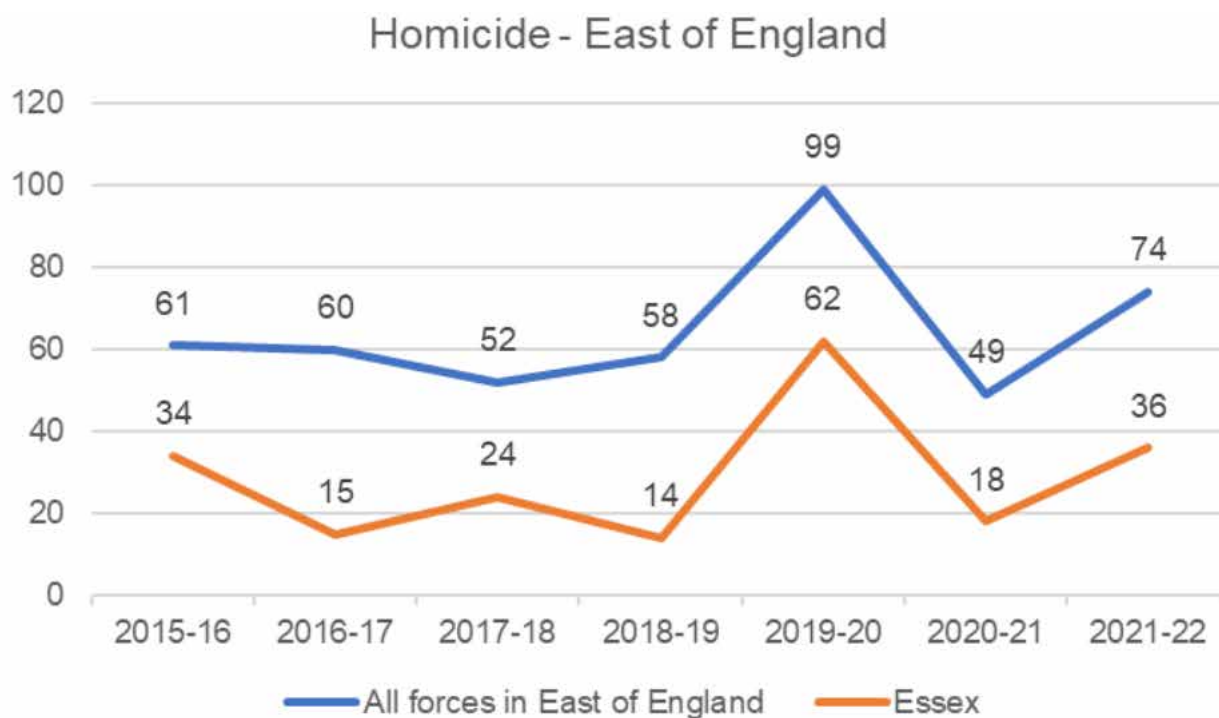
In this chapter, homicides are measured using police recorded crime data. Data is available from the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2022. Figure 1 shows the police recorded incidents of homicide. The blue line shows the total incidents in the six forces in the East of England and the orange line shows the incidents for Essex (the worst-affected area in the East). Figure 1 shows relatively low numbers of homicide between 2015-16 to 2021-22.

There is a spike in homicide incidents shown in Figure 1 for 2019-20 as this figure includes the manslaughter figures for the 39 migrants found dead inside a lorry in Essex.

The homicide rate in the East has remained relatively stable since 2015-16. For the year 2021-22, the homicide rate was around 11.7 homicides per 1 million population. The homicide rate for Essex for this period was higher than for the East of England at 24 homicides per 1 million population.

While it appears there has been a slight increase in the homicide rate in the year 2021-22 compared to pre-COVID years (2015-16 to 2018-19), it is important to observe the long-term trends in homicide (as opposed to year-on-year changes) and to consider the national picture, which remains low when compared to other countries and historical patterns from England and Wales.

Figure 1



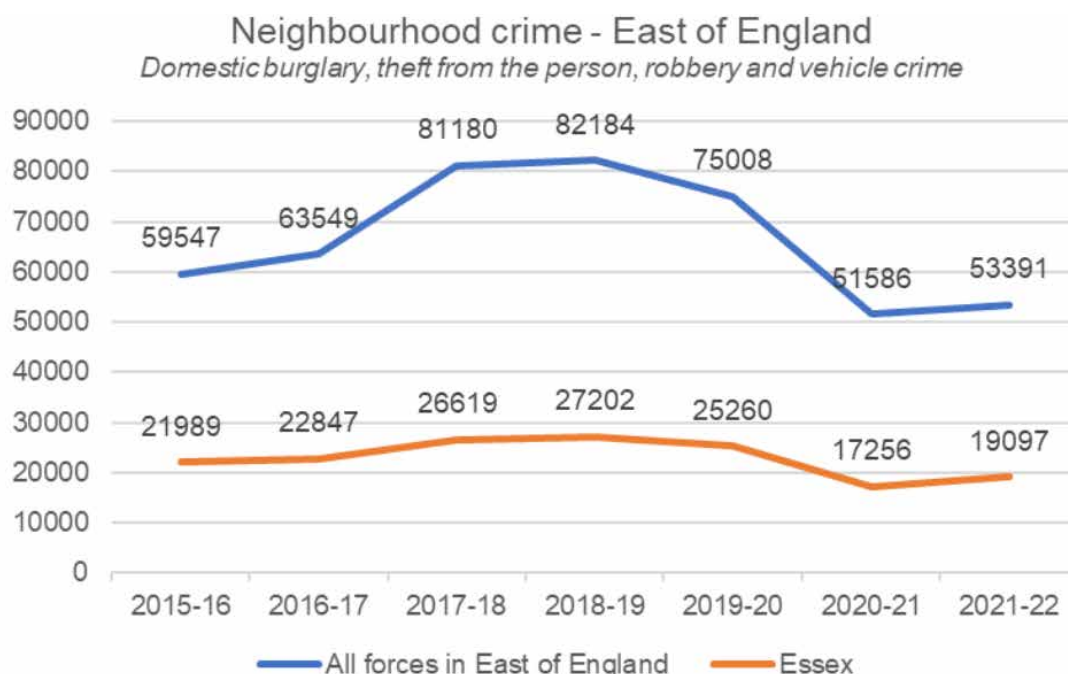
## NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIME (DOMESTIC BURGLARY, THEFT FROM THE PERSON, ROB- BERY AND VEHICLE CRIME)

In this chapter, neighbourhood crime is measured using police recorded crime data. Data is available from the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2022. Figure 2 shows the total figures of the offences domestic burglary, theft from the person, robbery and vehicle crime for the six forces in the East (blue line) and for Essex (orange line). This shows a rise in neighbourhood crime from 2015-16 to 2018-19. In the last two years, rates of neighbourhood crime have significantly dropped. This is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown restrictions, which meant people spent more time in their homes, limiting the opportunity for theft.

## SERIOUS VIOLENCE

In this chapter, serious violence is measuring looking at incidents of assault by a sharp object for those under the age of 25, as recorded by hospital admissions. Data was available from 2012-13 to 2020-21. Figure 3 shows the number of admissions for assault with a sharp object for those under the age of 25 for all six forces in the East (blue line) and for Essex (orange line). Figure 3 shows a rise in the number of admissions from 2012-13 to 2017-18. This is in line with national trends for this time period. Admissions have fallen from 2017-18 to 2020-21 when examining the total for all forces in the East.

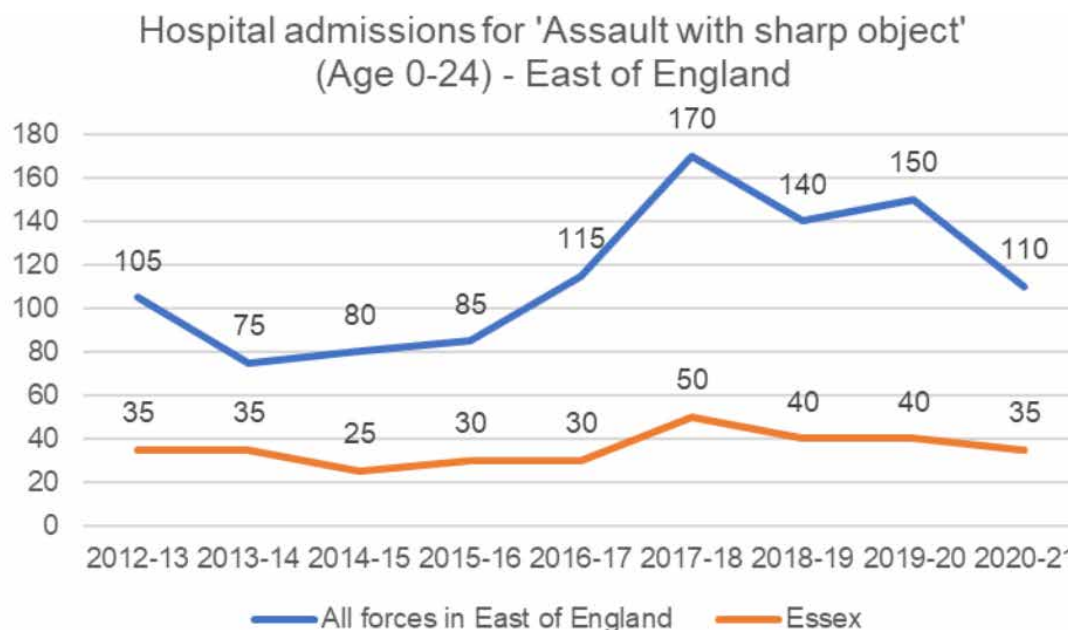
Figure 2



In Essex, admissions have remained relatively stable from 2012-13 to 2020-21. Of the six forces in the East, Essex has the highest number of hospital admissions and has accounted for roughly 30% of all hospital

admissions in the East. However, Essex is also the largest county in the East of England with the largest population which may contribute to these figures.

Figure 3



## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

### THREATS TO ACHIEVING MISSION 11:

- Due to the nature of crime trends in England and Wales (and other developing countries), it is unlikely to expect a significant rise in homicide or neighbourhood crime by 2030 as these offences have been trending down for the past decades. However, local areas in the East of England are likely to face challenges in dealing with these crimes in the coming years due to limited resources and the ongoing cost of living crisis.
- Serious violence remains an issue of national concern, however these offences typically make up a very small percentage of crime recorded by the police (around 1%). Despite this the cost of violent crime is significant, both in terms of resources and the impact on victims.
- The complexity of understanding and investigating serious violence means that focusing on short-term reductions in offence figures risks simplifying the issue. As such, it is important that there is a focus on understanding the underlying drivers of violence in local areas to design long-term approaches.
- While serious violence funding has been provided to Essex as the 'worst affected area', it is important that funding is provided to the other forces (and partner agencies) in the East, particularly to address serious violence, to ensure that these issues are tackled across the region.
- Pressures on police forces to deal with a broad range of social issues (e.g. mental health and child protection) with limited resources means that it is challenging for police to focus and prioritise long-term crime reduction strategies.

The ongoing cost of living crisis is likely to put more pressure on individuals and police forces due to the links between deprivation and crime.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVING MISSION 11:

- Funding to support evidence-based, public-health oriented, local initiatives designed to reduce serious violence. The recently published Home Office Serious Violence Duty will require local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities, criminal justice agencies and health authorities to collectively conduct evidence-based analysis and formulate strategies for reducing serious violence in local areas. The Duty also includes a broader definition of serious violence including domestic abuse and sexual offences and includes a new funding package to 'drive down' serious violence (including knife crime, gun crime and homicide). It will be important that this funding is available across the East of England (and not just to the worst affected areas).
- Funding to police forces and partner agencies to support evidence-based crime prevention initiatives specific to addressing neighbourhood crime.
- Continue to support partnership working across different agencies in the region (e.g. local councils, social services, charities and non-Government organisations) to address local issues, as it is not solely the responsibility of police forces to address these issues and reduce crime.
- Develop a better understanding of the drivers of serious violence (e.g. role of drug markets and current legislative framework in relation to drugs).

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

Trends in homicide, neighbourhood crime and serious violence in the East of England follow a similar pattern to the national picture. The Covid-19 pandemic has a significant impact on a range of crime trends in the past two years. Neighbourhood crime in particular fell. However, as the pandemic has eased it will be important to monitor if these crimes continue to trend down or rise to previous levels.

In terms of homicide and serious violence, understanding and addressing these crimes is multi-faceted. These offences are often too complex to be explained by single-factor explanations and as such, a long-term approach is necessary. The existing evidence on reducing homicide and serious violence suggests two key approaches: a public-health oriented approach that prioritises early intervention and providing social support to those at the highest risk of involvement in serious violence and localised, evidence-based crime prevention initiatives that are driven by locally-specific analysis of crime data.

It is clear that all six police forces in the East of England are prioritising these crimes as indicated by the Crime and Police Plans for each force.

All Police and Crime Commissioner' plans in the region mention addressing serious violence and preventing neighbourhood crime, alongside various other priorities such as addressing domestic abuse, violence against women and girls and other crime. Forces are prioritising community-based, partnership focussed and community-led approaches to tackling serious violence, which is in line with the existing evidence for violence reduction and the Government's Serious Violence Strategy.

In Essex, the 'worst-affected area' in the East of England, the development and activities of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Partnership demonstrates an important step in addressing serious violence in the county.

18 such Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) were established in 2019 across the police force areas experiencing the highest rates of serious violence in England.

The Essex VVU is dedicated to reducing serious violence through working in partnership with local agencies and organisations, with a focus on tackling gangs, County Lines and exploitation across the county. Their work includes funding targeted interventions specific to local community needs, with a focus on reaching those most at risk of future offending.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the region and/or the Government in order to be on track to deliver the mission by 2030, we propose the following recommendations:

1. Funding is provided across the region to police forces and partner agencies to tackle complex crime issues such as serious violence and further research is undertaken to understand the drivers of serious violence.
2. Police forces to continue to implement local evidence-based crime prevention initiatives taking a community-oriented, public-health approach to reducing serious violence.
3. Police forces to continue to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and address local issues.

- XII** 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.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Devolving powers and funding from the centre to local areas has been a key Government policy for many years and has gone through various iterations and levels of popularity over time.

It is to be welcomed therefore that the Levelling Up White Paper was used by Government to set out the next phase of devolution and its ambition that '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.'

Local areas and their elected representatives are best placed to understand the needs of their residents and businesses and make choices about how they are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.

This chapter will set out the current situation regarding devolution in the East of England, including progress in the latest round of deals, and identifies the opportunities for greater devolution. It will also highlight recommendations to the Government to support the mission to be realised in this region.



## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

### CITY DEALS 2012-14

The first experience of devolution in the East of England was via 'City Deals' that were introduced in two waves between 2011 and 2012. City Deals, negotiated between the Coalition Government, local authorities and/or Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were bespoke packages of funding and powers aimed at promoting local economic growth in the 'core and next largest cities' of the UK.

In the second wave of deals, Greater Cambridge, Greater Norwich, Greater Ipswich, and Southend-on-Sea in the East of England successfully negotiated devolved powers and funding. Plans for these areas proposed to use additional funding to achieve:

- Increased jobs and apprenticeships
- Increased private sector investment
- Additional support for businesses

### CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY 2017

In 2014, the first, significant deal for wide-ranging devolved funding and powers to a city region was announced by the Government and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Following this deal, the Government stated that it was 'committed to building strong city regions led by elected mayors, building on the ground-breaking devolution deal with Greater Manchester'.

This led to many regions of England submitting bids for devolution to their own mayoral combined authorities. In 2016, following early progress towards an 'East Anglia Devolution Deal' to cover Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the decision was taken to instead focus on two deals separating Suffolk and Norfolk from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The Suffolk and Norfolk deal was subsequently withdrawn. In March 2017, The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority devolution deal. Provisions announced included:

- New powers over transport, planning and skills
- A £600 million investment fund over 30 years to grow the local economy
- £170 million to deliver new homes

## COUNTY DEALS AND THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

In the Levelling Up White Paper, it was announced that alongside seven other areas in the country ‘both Norfolk and Suffolk have been invited to agree new devolution deals’. The White Paper also set out a framework for these devolution deals in an aim to clarify the varying levels of funding and powers available based on three forms of governance:

- **Level 1:** Local authorities working together across a functional economic area (FEA) or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee
- **Level 2:** A single institution or County Council without a directly elected mayor, across a FEA or whole county area
- **Level 3:** A single institution or County Council with a directly elected mayor, across a FEA or whole county area

Levels of funding and powers range from the opportunity to pool services at a strategic level under Level 1 devolution up to a long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation under Level 3.

Considerable work was undertaken to prepare and present respective deals during Q1&2 of 2022, and decisions and announcements were delayed by a combination of national events during the middle of the year. However, a deal for part of the East Midlands was announced just prior to the change of Prime Minister on 5 September 2022, followed by a Suffolk County Deal announced as part of the Autumn Statement in November 2022, along with an indication that deals for Norfolk, Cornwall and an area of the North East would be announced in the near future.

Subsequently proposed Devolution Deals for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cornwall were published in December 2022.

## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

A range of successful and unsuccessful negotiations and, ultimately, bids for greater devolution to local authorities and their partners in the East of England has provided us with useful learning to draw upon when exploring future opportunities:

### EARLY ENGAGEMENT

The experience of the way in which Government announces the opportunity to bid for greater devolution and then seek formal proposals is that this invariably involves short timescales for complex negotiations. Areas that have had more successful experiences have begun early conversations across key partners way before the opportunities and options from Government are set out.

### STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Although the latest round of ‘county deal’ type devolution does not formally require the agreement of all local authorities in a given area prior to the submission of proposals, we have seen from previous failed proposals for devolution in the East of England that strong working relationships across all councils is desirable. Inevitably, all local authorities within the geography covered by the deal will be required to work together to deliver on devolution, and to realise the societal and economic potential on offer.

## CLARITY ON THE AMBITION

Within the current, flexible framework that is being utilised by Government to negotiate devolution deals, it is important that local areas have a strong starting point for those conversations. It is more likely that an area will be successful if there is clarity from that area on the level of ambition from the outset.

## FOCUS ON RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Arguably, previous attempts at devolution have failed because there has been too much focus on the potential governance arrangements arising from a successful deal. If partners in an area engage early with communities and businesses to reach a clear understanding of their needs and desires and how greater devolution could achieve this, it is more likely that the deal is one that all local partners can get behind and progress.

## REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The Government's approach towards devolution has, with a few exceptions including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, had a strong focus and bias towards large city regions.

The East of England is not home to a city of this size and therefore, to achieve the Government's mission for 'every part of England' to receive devolved powers and funding, a different approach which takes into account specific geographical issues including those linked to rurality and coastal communities, is required.

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out a more flexible approach towards devolution and highlights nine counties (some of which are more rural than others) that have been invited

to negotiate 'county deals'. However, it is not clear to what extent the powers and funding on offer will be able to be tailored to meet the specific needs of more rural and coastal areas.

In recent years, the East of England has received relatively low levels of funding from the Government to support economic growth. For example, in the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, the region received the second lowest amount of any region in England. Therefore, the potential additional central Government investment resulting from devolution deals in the region would be of huge benefit.

## CURRENT FINANCIAL PRESSURES

Following record rates of inflation, and the UK entering a recession in Q3 of 2022/23, residents, businesses and the nation's economy face an extremely challenging period of time. This is true, also, of local authorities and their finances. Whilst it will be necessary for the Government to introduce a range of fiscal measures to mitigate against these pressures, the focus on devolution cannot be allowed to suffer as a result. Greater devolution will allow local areas to best plan for and deliver the support needed in their communities.

## OTHER APPROACHES TO DEVOLUTION

### GREATER ESSEX DEVOLUTION

Partners across Greater Essex (Essex, Southend and Thurrock upper tier areas) have agreed to work together on a devolution bid to submit to Government.

A devolution deal could turn Greater Essex into an economic powerhouse, building on the two freeports and two airports we already have. Our economic strengths in construction, energy, advanced manufacturing and engineering, digi-tech and life sciences.

A devolution deal could also enable us to tackle barriers to growth that have persisted for decades, such as low skills, a lack of affordable, quality housing and constrained infrastructure capacity.

The Greater Essex devolution work is a collaborative programme that is being led by the Leaders of Essex, Southend and Thurrock and also involves local district councils, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and other partners.

Although the Government White Paper puts upper tier authorities in the leading role in devolution, we believe in working collaboratively across the county and therefore the input of districts is critical. We are developing specific proposals around three broad areas:

- Economic growth, skills and environment
- Housing, infrastructure and transport
- Communities, wellbeing and public services

Greater Essex is a diverse place and our devolution model will reflect this. Devolution won't mean a one size fits model across the region. Rather we will use devolution to strengthen the work that is already happening in our economic sub-geographies, so that plans are tailored to the needs and opportunities of local areas. Our devolution model will also reflect our commitment to empowering and strengthening our communities, building on the work we are already doing in this space with local partners.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

When it comes to the key components of this Levelling Up mission, the questions and our answers are:

- By 2030, will every part of the East of England that wants a devolution deal have one?
  - Possibly, but this will require Government to work at a much faster pace and develop deals that reflect regional characteristics and wants e.g. not one size fits all.
- Will these deals give powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement?
  - They could, but for policy areas like transport, there needs to be Government recognition that delivery is very different in rural and coastal areas compared to metropolitan areas.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers to ensure the model works for more rural areas in the East of England. In particular, given the specific challenges on skills and transport (amongst others) in the East of England, the Government should offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers of these – and other issues - to ensure devolution delivers benefits for all areas including more rural and coastal areas in the region.
2. Ensure that devolution negotiations and deals are completed at a pace which achieves better outcomes for people and communities as quickly as possible: specifically guard against current economic pressures hindering progress towards devolution deals.
3. Areas of the region that were not announced in the first wave of county deals should work together at the earliest possible opportunity and engage with the residents and businesses they serve.

- XIII** By 2030, the levelling up agenda will not only be viewed by partners nationally, regionally and locally as inextricably linked to the agenda of delivering sustainable growth (including net zero targets and ensuring water security) but also progress on delivering joined up policies and interventions will have been achieved at every level of Government and in every region.

## Why is this mission important to the East of England?

Sustainability considerations, including getting to net zero and ensuring water security, were omitted from the Levelling up White Paper despite the fact that:

- In 2008 the UK passed the UK Climate Change Act, which is the basis for the legal duty to act on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the UK's four nations. It commits the Government to reduce greenhouse emissions by 100% of 1990 levels BY 2050.
- In 2015 the UK signed the Paris agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, with the goal to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- In 2019 the UK Government voted to declare a climate emergency and subsequently, UK Local Authorities published climate and ecological emergency declarations and action plans and introduced the commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

- In 2021 the UK hosted COP26 in Glasgow and reaffirmed financial commitments to Paris 2015.
- In 2022 at COP 27 Prime Minister Rishi Sunak built on the UK's COP legacy with a series of announcements on energy transition, climate financing and forest and nature preservation.

Given these legally binding and high-profile national commitments, the East of England partners believe that any national level strategy, which distributes investment and informs planning via local authorities should consider their sustainability including impact on the environment, climate change and water security.

Therefore, the mission as worded above – or similar – should be added to the Levelling Up missions and prioritised going forward.

## A summary of where the East of England is in relation to this mission including key statistics.

Climate change is not just happening to other people in other countries, climate change is happening in the East of England. As the extreme summer weather of 2018, 2020 and 2022 have demonstrated, our weather patterns are changing, and more extreme heat and persistent dry weather is becoming more common.

The East of England is the UK's region most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The East is well-known for its low-lying land at sea level that is prone to flooding and erosion, but it holds critical at-risk nationally important infrastructure of buildings, roads, rail, energy, communications, data. The region's wide-scale agriculture is of course dependent on temperature and rainfall, as are its rich biodiversity habitats because of its rivers and fens, and their role in peatland restoration and carbon sequestration.

For example one third of land in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is at high risk of flooding and flood resilience has historically been underfunded by Government. In the Ouse Washes alone, jobs protected through flood risk management over the next ten years will add £5.3 billion GVA to the local economy. Investment needed over the next 100 years to sustain the current standard of service of flood risk management assets is £1.8 billion. Of this up to £946 million has to be found locally, assuming Grant in Aid methodology does not change.

The East produces 10% of the UK's emissions, the 4th highest emitting region in the UK. This is the equivalent of 5.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per person (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), a drop of 3.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e since 2005, which reflects the overall UK decline in emissions because of the decarbonisation of UK electricity supply, and reductions in industrial activity.

In the East of England domestic emissions are 4% higher than the England average and transport emissions are well above average given the rural nature of the region. It is only the region's carbon emissions from industry (which includes agriculture and land use) which are below average.



## SWOT analysis relevant to the mission.

### OPPORTUNITIES

The East of England's North Sea coast is home to 52% of the UK's offshore wind capacity, and some of the world's biggest wind farms are being built or are soon to start. The East of England is and will continue to be a power exporting region. Renewable energy capacity in the Eastern Region is 6,269 GW (56 per cent from wind and 34 per cent from solar PV).

Forty percent of the East of England's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are from transport, compared to 36% for England, reflecting the Region's geography and distances.

With population increase and the end of new petrol and diesel engines by 2030, electric vehicles (EVs) are forecast to be between 1.2 and 1.9 million, mirroring large increases across the rest of the country. There is a big opportunity to transition the East of England to EVs in the coming years if the right charging infrastructure is installed to enable this.

Climate change mitigation and adaption are huge drivers for innovation and infrastructure investment providing ample employment opportunities for the people in the East of England, as demonstrated by the below case study.



## CASE STUDY

### Anglian Water Getting to Net Zero



Anglian Water, the Water company that serves the East of England, has led the water sector towards introducing net zero targets and has committed to being operationally Net Zero by 2030. They are delivering innovative low carbon energy solutions across the East, such as the industrial scale Tomato Greenhouses in Whitlingham powered by heat from the sewage treatment process:

- The Whitlingham Greenhouse Project is a true example of the net zero, circular economy in action; using latent heat from the water recycling process to power large industrial greenhouses that are growing local tomatoes.
- The facility created over 250 new jobs in the local agri-tech market in the first year of operation.
- In addition to the heat, all the organic material removed in the water recycling process is treated and returned to the land as agricultural fertilizer, providing UK farmers with locally produced products that are resilient to the current supply and pricing challenges seen elsewhere in the supply chain.
- Whitlingham Water Recycling Centre is also the first in the country to inject biomethane directly into the national grid, providing renewable gas sources to UK consumers – all from the by-products of treating used water.



## THREATS

One third of land in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is at high risk of flooding and flood resilience has been underfunded by Government. In the Ouse Washes alone, jobs protected through flood risk management over the next ten years would add £5.3 billion GVA to the local economy. Investment needed over the next 100 years to sustain the current standard of service of flood risk management assets is £1.8 billion.

Of this up to £946 million has to be found locally, assuming Grant in Aid methodology does not change. The soft sedimentary coastline of the East of England is eroding rapidly. The coast is heavily managed and in 2020, under the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Strategy for England, funding for flood and coastal erosion was doubled to £2.5bn 2021-2027.



## CASE STUDY

### Lowestoft Pipeline Relocation Scheme

Water companies, and specifically Anglian Water in the East of England, are on the front line of the climate crisis. They have a huge role to play in adapting to this crisis and must find ways to continue to deliver their service despite drought, flood or coastal erosion. Anglian Water have invested £4.7million to protect vital sewage infrastructure from the eroding Suffolk coastline. The work included relocating three sewer pipes from the beach to Gunton Warren Nature Reserve, a few kilometres away. The local sewer network will now be fit for the future so Anglian Water customers can continue to flush their toilets without worrying that the pipeline might be damaged by coastal erosion.

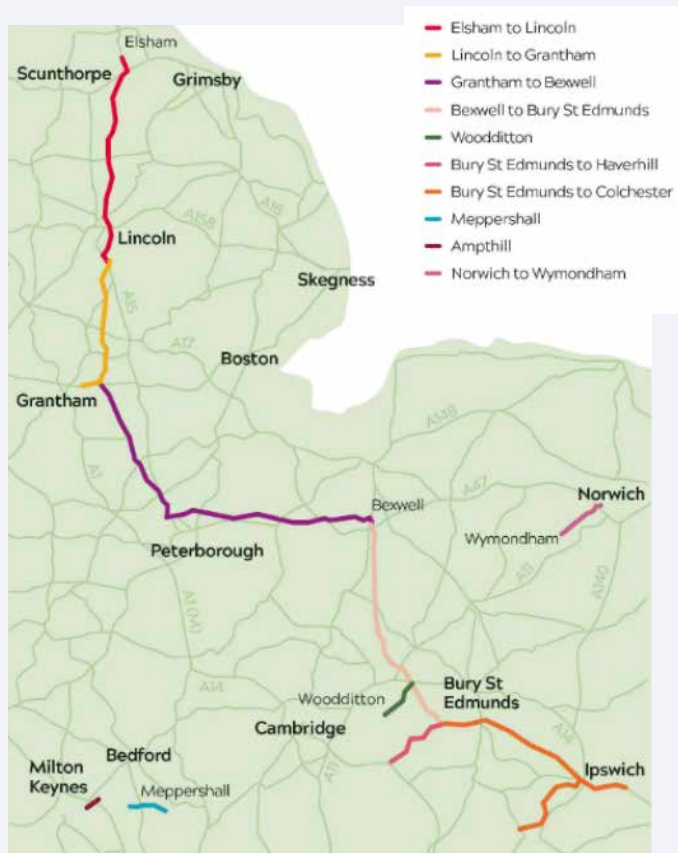
The East of England has distinctively low rainfall. Hosepipe bans and drought were declared across the UK in Summer 2022. Action must be taken proactively to ensure the water resources are available for water

supply as well as for the environment. This case study demonstrates how Anglian Water is ensuring East of England has a secure water supply for future generations.

## CASE STUDY

### The Strategic Pipeline Alliance

Anglian Water has been adapting and improving resilience to extreme weather for some time. That's why Anglian Water is building a £400 million pipeline, which will span hundreds of kilometres to bring water from the north of their region (near Grimsby) where there is plenty of rainfall, down to the dry south and east (near Essex) where water resources are less resilient.



The scheme will be completed in 2025 and will be longer than the M6 motorway. It will reduce the amount of water taken from the environment, as well as strengthening local resilience by reducing the number of homes and businesses which rely on a single water source. Directly employing nearly 1000 people, this is the largest water resilience scheme underway in the country at the moment, happening in the East of England.

## An assessment of whether the region is on track to deliver the mission.

Local councils are working together with partners both locally and at the regional level, through the East of England LGA Climate Change Forum, to ensure sustainability is factored into policy formulation and decision making.

The East of England therefore has confidence that partners in the East of England along with central Government can move forward positively on this agenda and that by 2030, the levelling up agenda will be inextricably linked to the agenda of delivering sustainable growth (e.g. including net zero targets and ensuring water security) and there will have been progress on delivering joined up policies and interventions at every level. In order to do this:

- The respective roles, levers and funding arrangements between national Government, local Government, the private sector and the public need to be articulated in a clearer roadmap.
- The critical role of local authorities in the planning and delivery of sustainability and resilience in local places needs to be properly funded in the medium term.

### CASE STUDY

#### The East of England: A Hydrogen Hub

Its geography and existing skills base mean the East of England is uniquely placed to support the decarbonisation of UK industry, transport and home heating. Through its Capital Hydrogen and Hydrogen Valley projects, Cadent is working with energy producers, infrastructure operators and end users to create a vision for a net zero, energy secure, future in the East of England.

#### The East's role

Through the existing energy infrastructure in Bacton and along the East's coast, the region already plays a significant role in supporting the UK's energy sector. We believe this role can be expanded and the East can become one of the UK's leading hydrogen production regions – with the East of England playing a key role in producing hydrogen for Greater London and the West Midlands.

In November 2022 Cadent, alongside National Grid and SGN, launched a Capital Hydrogen project, which foresees the construction of new hydrogen infrastructure to transport low carbon hydrogen produced in the East of England to Greater London.

Capital Hydrogen will support the creation of thousands of jobs across the East, Greater London and the South East, helping the East of England become both a powerhouse for hydrogen production and a region taking large strides towards decarbonising its industry, transport and home heating.

In 2023 the next phase of Cadent's plans for the East of England – the Hydrogen Valley project – will be launched. This will involve further investment in infrastructure in the region, to make it ready to serve hydrogen demand in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the West Midlands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Without considering carbon emissions in the delivery of levelling up, the Government is ignoring its own commitments to preventing the climate crisis and seriously risking climate stability for future generations. Meanwhile organisations in the East of England are working hard to improve climate resilience and help grow the economy through green jobs.

The Government should support this by:

- Sustainability, (including net zero and water security) should be integral to all further national, and local policy development and implementation approaches for Levelling Up.
- Acknowledging the East of England is at the sharp end of climate change in the UK and supporting the region's efforts to adapt to changing weather through innovation, technology, and infrastructure.
- Committing to working in partnership with local councils to facilitate an acceleration in the roll out of the infrastructure needed for Electric Vehicles.

# Levelling up the East of England: 2023-2030

The East of England's progress towards achieving the Government's twelve levelling up missions.

## The report was edited by

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Please note the report reflects the views of the APPG and EELGA Chairs only and not those who have provided very welcome advice, information and examples.

*This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.*

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