



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
*Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations*

***Department for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities***

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Email: michael.gove@communities.gov.uk

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Dear Council Leaders and Chief Executives,

PUBLICATION OF THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

Today marks the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper which sets out a programme of change to reverse the geographical disparities which remain such a stark feature of this country. We can simultaneously celebrate the economic, academic and cultural success stories of the UK's counties, towns and cities whilst renovating the economic, social and cultural fabric of those parts of the UK that have stalled so far. Levelling up is a programme to challenge, and change, the persistent disparities which have seen

Alongside the private sector, civil society and other public sector organisations, local democratically elected leaders have a crucial role in helping us to deliver this agenda. At the heart of this is a fundamental commitment to changing the way the whole of Government works with places. This is rooted in evidence that shows places need a mix of factors to support growth: strong innovation, a climate conducive to private sector investment, skills, transport systems, culture, pride in place, safety and strong local institutions. Twelve new medium-term missions will galvanise action and form the basis for a comprehensive plan to transform this country.

We are not the first government in the UK to attempt to tackle widening disparities over the past century. Lessons from these past attempts have taught us that we need to be bolder, more coordinated and long-termist. We also need to give local leaders more powers and accountability to design effective policies at the local level. This is about creating the right information, incentives and institutions to change how decisions are made.

Chapter two of the white paper sets out the details of this new way of working. This includes a new framework to extend, deepen and simplify local devolution for the first time. But this is not a one-way street. There need to be high standards of transparency for councils, a culture of continuous improvement, well-informed scrutiny and stronger accountability that fits with other parts of the private sector and resonates with the most customer-focused parts of the private sector. A new independent body will enable us to improve data and transparency to enhance our understanding of place-based leadership, delivery and organisational efficiency. We will engage local leaders on the design of this. We also want to work with Combined Authorities on how more flexible access to business rates powers may enable them to fund local priorities, whilst considering the potential impacts on local businesses.

Local leaders also play a vital role for communities, and we need your input and expertise to deliver change at the local level. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will see local leaders have more control over local decision making to support this whilst drastically reducing the bureaucracy experienced with EU Funds. This is part of wider work to simplify the complex local growth landscape.

Chapter four of the document sets out the extensive programme of engagement that will be needed to meet these aspirations. Teams in my department will be in touch to commence this co-design and delivery and I look forward to working with you all.

The full Levelling Up White Paper can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'M'.

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
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and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations**

Annex A: The 12 Missions to Level Up the UK

1. 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.
2. By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least one third over the Spending Review period and at least 40% by 2030, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.
3. 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.
4. By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 Healthy Life Expectancy will rise by 5 years.
8. By 2030, measures of well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.
12. By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution with a simplified, long-term funding settlement.