

## Executive Summary and Overview of Key Points

### Introduction

- This paper provides a factual overview of the key points in the White Paper.
- We'll provide further briefing to DCN members over the next week which will offer more of a commentary. The additional briefing will be accompanied by a template letter to send to your local MPs, setting out the DCN's views and requesting their support as we seek to secure the best possible outcome for our councils during the consultation phase.
- There's a lot of information in the White Paper. In this briefing we've pulled out the points that are most obviously relevant to DCN councils – these are mostly in Mission 9 (Pride in Place), Mission 10 (Housing) and Mission 12 (Local Leadership). These points are summarised below and highlighted in bold in the more detailed section of the briefing.
- We've tried to give a flavour of the full spectrum of the measures in the White Paper, including those where the immediate relevance to DCN councils is less direct but where there may still be implications and opportunities.
- One of the positive things about the White Paper is that its ambitions are very wide ranging. The twelve national missions it sets out give plenty of scope for our councils to get involved and play an influential role – not only through the powers and services we directly offer but through our ability to influence the wider determinants of economic, social, health and civic items. We'll come back to this in our next briefing.

### Key policy announcements for DCN councils

- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be devolved to local leaders and distributed via an allocation methodology rather than through a competitive bidding process. Most of the fund will be allocated to district councils in two-tier areas. **The Government has now published [pre-launch guidance](#) and a [guide](#) explaining which councils will be lead authorities in each region.**
- There will be a first wave of County Deals
  - Government intends to agree deals in nine Phase 1 areas by the end of 2022: Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Durham; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; and Suffolk.
  - The framework of options for County Deals offers the most powers to a directly elected mayoral model; fewer powers to a single accountable institution model (i.e. county council); and minimal powers to a joint committee model.
  - Involvement of district authorities will be encouraged, but deals will only be agreed with county and unitary local authorities.
- Government will not impose top-down restructuring of local government. Reorganisation will not be a requirement for a devolution deal.
- A neighbourhood governance review will look at the role and functions of parish councils in England and how to make them quicker and easier to establish.

- Powers for local authorities to require landlords to rent out vacant properties to prospective tenants, incentivising filling of vacant units.
- Local Planning Authorities will be expected to work with communities to create new local design codes to shape streets as residents wish, widen the accessibility of neighbourhood planning, and increase community say in regeneration
- Government will explore the possibility of transferring control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to combined authorities and upper-tier authorities.
- Creation of a new independent body in England focused on data, transparency and robust evidence.
- Introduction of Levelling Up Directors to provide a key point of contact for local areas, acting as a bridge between local leaders and central government.

## The White Paper's Overarching Aims and Missions

The White Paper contains 12 national missions which frame all its policy announcements and are the basis for measuring the success of delivery:

**Mission 1 - Living Standards:** By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

**Mission 2 - Research and Development (R&D):** By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, 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.

**Mission 3 - Transport Infrastructure:** 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.

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

**Mission 5 - Education:** 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.

**Mission 6 - Skills:** 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.

**Mission 7 - Health:** By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.

**Mission 8 - Wellbeing:** By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

**Mission 9 - Pride in Place:** 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 the top performing and other areas closing.

**Mission 10 - Housing:** 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.

**Mission 11 - Crime:** By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.

**Mission 12 - Local Leadership:** 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.

These missions fit within four overarching aims:

- a) **boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards** by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging;
- b) **spread opportunities and improve public services**, especially in those places where they are weakest;
- c) **restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging**, especially in those places where they have been lost; and
- d) **empower local leaders and communities**, especially in those places lacking local agency.

## More detail on the 12 missions

### Mission 1 - Living Standards

- Government will work with a new Levelling Up Advisory Council on options for unlocking capital for SMEs.
- Drive to encourage an “Investment Big Bang” by institutional investors, including asking Local Government Pension Schemes to publish plans for up to 5% of assets to be invested in projects which support local areas.
- Direct funding, including the £1.4bn Global Britain Investment Fund, to support internationally mobile firms seeking to make or expand brown or greenfield investments.
- Focus on existing sector strategies, new technology, transformative investment and investment in Net Zero.
- Seeking to build on the Government’s Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (2020).

### Mission 2 - Research & Development (R&D)

- The context for this mission is the Government’s R&D Roadmap and Innovation Strategy (2020).
- Spending Review 2021 committed to increase R&D spending to £22bn by 2026-27.
- Commitment to invest a minimum of 55% of R&D funding outside the South East and to support the growth of R&D hotspots across the UK.
- Office for National Statistics and UK Government Office for Science will collect and publish subnational data on all departments’ R&D spending
- BEIS will make levelling up one of the objectives of its R&D investment strategy.
- Departments are encouraged to spend R&D funding on net zero initiatives e.g. Department for Transport (DfT) will use £299m R&D funding for decarbonising transport schemes across the UK and Defra will spend £75m on net zero R&D in the next three years

### Mission 3 - Transport Infrastructure

#### Local transport

- **Government will explore transferring control of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing to combined authorities and upper-tier authorities – page 179.**

- In addition to the £96bn Integrated Rail Plan, Government has committed £3bn this Parliament to support and improve bus services across England and introduce new zero-emission buses.
- Significant bus transformation will be funded in Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas. Outside MCA areas, the Government will fund ambitious plans for bus improvement, enhancing services and reducing fares.
- As well as improvements to bus routes, the UK Government will spend over £200m this year and £2bn across the Parliament on improvements for cycling and walking.
- Government will explore devolving more transport powers and responsibilities in England. For areas where the highest level devolution deals are agreed and with directly elected leaders, Government will accelerate funding to put Local Transport Plans in place before the end of this Parliament.

#### **Mission 4 - Digital Connectivity**

- The context for this mission is the National Infrastructure Strategy (2020) which committed £5bn in public funding to roll out gigabit broadband to at least 85% of the country by 2025, aiming to achieve as close to 100% as possible.
- Public investment will target hardest to reach premises that would otherwise not be provided for by the private sector.
- £1bn deal agreed between Government and mobile operators to deliver Shared Rural Network programme. Operators will collectively increase 4G coverage to 95% by 2025.
- Ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027.
- Wireless Infrastructure Strategy will be published in 2022 to review how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure (including 5G) across the UK.
- Local leaders and Government will continue to work to develop Local Digital Skills Partnerships, which are operating in seven regions across England.

#### **Mission 5 - Education**

- Continued encouragement for schools to join Multi Academy Trusts.
- New Education Investment Areas (EIAs) to drive school improvement. They will cover a third of authorities in England, where attainment is weakest.
- £300m investment in Family hubs and Start for Life across half of local authorities in England.
- £200m to expand the Supporting Families Programme.

#### **Mission 6 - Skills**

- Reform of the funding and accountability for Further Education. This will embed local employers at the heart of an increasingly devolved, outcomes-oriented system, enabling providers to respond effectively to local skills needs as they evolve over time.
- Increasing funding for apprenticeships to £2.7bn by 2024-25.
- Easier for large employers to transfer their Apprenticeship Levy to SMEs to further support apprenticeships in disadvantaged areas
- From April 2022 the Lifetime Skills Guarantee will expand to include a trial enabling any adult with a level 3 qualification or higher who earns below the National Living Wage or who is unemployed to access a further high-value level 3 qualification for free, regardless of their prior qualifications.
- Multiply numeracy programme, offering national and local support for adults to gain or improve their numeracy skills, worth £559m over the Spending Review period and delivered as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- £99m investment over the next three years in an In-Work Progression offer. This will extend work coach support to people on low incomes across Great Britain to address any skills or wider barriers to progression

## **Mission 7 - Health and Mission 8 - Wellbeing**

- A White Paper on Health Disparities is expected in 2022. It will focus on reducing the gap between health outcomes with a focus on prevention and demographic disparities. It will promote community-mobilised place-based solutions.
- A National Food Strategy white paper will be published and include pilot programmes building on Holiday Activities and Food programmes spearheaded by many DCN members.
- NHS England to roll out comprehensive social prescribing and green social prescribing (green space access to improve mental wellbeing), increasing link workers by 1000, and with the aim that 900,000 people will have been referred by 2023-24.

## **Mission 9 - Pride in Place**

- Much of this mission centres on the role of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), provision of greenspace and efforts to harness community engagement. These are all within the purview of districts.
- **The '80/20 rule' will be scrapped, with much of the £1.8 billion brownfield funding instead being diverted to transforming brownfield sites in the North and Midlands. Metro Mayors will be allocated £120 million of this funding – page 208.**
- **Local authorities will have powers to require landlords to rent out vacant properties to prospective tenants, incentivising filling of vacant units – page 211.**
- **A new £30m parks fund, in addition to current Levelling Up Parks Fund, will deliver up to £1m for refurbishment to at least 30 local parks in England – page 212.**
- **A neighbourhood governance review will look at the role and functions of parish councils in England and how to make them quicker and easier to establish. It will pilot new models for community partnership and explore the idea of Community Covenants – page 215.**
- **LPAs expected to work with communities to create new local design codes to shape streets as residents wish, widen the accessibility of neighbourhood planning, and increase community say in regeneration – page 216.**
- Plans for further greening the Green Belt in England, and delivery of nature recovery.
- New Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships, listening to communities and harnessing their power.
- 20 places identified, starting with Wolverhampton and Sheffield, to undertake ambitious, King's Cross-style regeneration projects.
- Government support to bring together funding available to local leaders to drive regeneration, and partner this with private investment. Homes England will lead this strategic approach in places.
- Dormant Assets Scheme will be expanded to unlock up to a further £880m with a consultation later in 2022. This may include a new Community Wealth Fund proposal.

## **Mission 10 - Housing**

- As statutory providers of housing and homelessness prevention services, much of this mission is highly relevant to DCN councils.
- **New powers for councils to apply a premium of up to 100% to homes left empty for a year, rather than two years – page 225.**
- **The Renters Reform White Paper will be published in the spring – page 226.**
- **The Social Housing Regulation Bill will be brought forward, enabling those who live in poor quality social housing to hold landlords to account – page 226.**
- Government will deliver previously announced £2bn of investment to tackle root causes of homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years, building on Rough Sleeping Initiative

- Continuation of previous policy announcements made in the Planning White Paper, including further support for re-using brownfield land for development; a more positive approach to employment land in national policy to support the provision of jobs; and increased engagement with infrastructure providers in plan making to bolster productivity
- New Task Force to be launched shortly to look at ways to provide better choice, quality and security of housing for older people.

### **Mission 11 - Crime**

- **Police in England will be given powers to deal with noise complaints. This will remain the statutory duty for district councils but will provide the police effective tools to tackle incidents which constitute crime and anti-social behaviour – page 233.**
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will seek to create a legal duty for public sector partners to work together to prevent and tackle serious violence.
- There will be £50m each year until 2024/25 in the Safer Streets Fund, with two rounds 18 months apart available.
- Local authorities are being encouraged to take greater advantage of unpaid work placements to improve the local area.
- A National Spring Clean will be brought forward which will see Community Payback leveraged in support of cleaning up neighbourhoods.

### **Mission 12 - Local Leadership**

- This mission contains the most significant measures for DCN councils and is the crux of the White Paper from our perspective.
- The Government sets out four principles for further devolution (i) Effective Leadership (ii) Sensible Geography (iii) Flexibility (iv) Appropriate Accountability.
- **Local devolution will be offered in shire areas via County Deals. The involvement of district authorities will be encouraged, but deals will only be agreed with county and unitary local authorities. No authority will have a veto over the progress of neighbours who are prepared to move quickly and adopt strong governance models – page 137.**
- **Creation of a new independent body in England focused on data, transparency and robust evidence. The aim is to enhance the Government's understanding of place-based leadership, quality of local service delivery and organisational efficacy – page 138.**
- **The devolution framework is designed to create a flexible and tiered approach. The government has laid out a menu of options that offers the most powers to a directly elected mayoral model; fewer powers to a single accountable institution model (i.e. county council); and minimal powers to a joint committee model – page 140.**
- **Annex 1 below outlines the menu of powers on offer. The main areas are:**
  - **Strategic delivery of services**
  - **Supporting local businesses**
  - **Local control of sustainable transport**
  - **Investment spending**
  - **Adult skills and the labour market**
  - **Local control of infrastructure decisions**
  - **Keeping the public safe and healthy**
  - **Financing local initiatives for residents and business**
- **Government will not impose top-down restructuring of local government. Reorganisation will remain a locally led avenue available where there is broad local support, but will not be a requirement for a devolution deal - page 143.**

- 9 areas have been invited to start formal negotiations to agree County Deals - Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Durham; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; and Suffolk – page 235.
- The proposed combined authority models are to be made up of upper-tier local authorities only. District councils can be non-constituent members only. County councils will be expected to work closely with their district councils – page 235.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be devolved to local leaders and distributed via an allocation methodology rather than through a competitive bidding process. Most of the fund will be allocated to and invested by districts in two-tier areas – page 242.
- There will be trailblazer deals in metropolitan areas for MCAs in West Midlands and Greater Manchester to act as blueprints for others.
- The integration of LEPs into MCAs, the GLA and County Deals is encouraged. Where a devolution deal does not yet exist, LEPs will continue to play their part, but likely with less funding. Where devolution deals cover part of a LEP, this will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

## Other points

- Government will appoint Levelling Up Directors. They will provide a key point of contact for local areas, acting as a bridge between local leaders and central government – page 247.
- Government will engage with local government and key stakeholders on the simplification of the local growth funding landscape – page 247.
- Creation of a new Levelling Up Advisory Council – see page 156.

## Annex 1 – summary of County Deal Options

**Table 2.3 Devolution Framework**

**Level 3** – A single institution or County Council with a directly elected mayor (DEM), across a FEA or whole county area

**Level 2** – A single institution or County Council without a DEM, across a FEA or whole county area

**Level 1** – Local authorities working together across a FEA or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee

Function	Detail	L1	L2	L3
<b>Strategic role in delivering services</b>	Host for Government functions best delivered at a strategic level involving more than one local authority e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to pool services at a strategic level	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets	✓	✓	✓
<b>Supporting local businesses</b>	LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice		✓	✓
<b>Local control of sustainable transport</b>	Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. local transport plans*		✓	✓
	Defined key route network*			✓
	Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			✓
	Ability to introduce bus franchising		✓	✓
	Consolidation of existing core local transport funding for local road maintenance and smaller upgrades into a multi-year integrated settlement			✓
<b>Investment spending</b>	UKSPF planning and delivery at a strategic level		✓	✓
	Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation			✓
<b>Giving adults the skills for the labour market</b>	Devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget		✓	✓
	Providing input into Local Skills Improvement Plans		✓	✓
	Role in designing and delivering future contracted employment programmes			✓
<b>Local control of infrastructure decisions</b>	Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations (with consent of host local planning authority)			✓
	Devolution of locally-led brownfield funding			✓
	Strategic partnerships with Homes England across the Affordable Housing Programme and brownfield funding			✓
	Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)		✓	✓
<b>Keeping the public safe and healthy</b>	Mayoral control of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions where boundaries align^			✓
	Clear defined role in local resilience*		✓	✓
	Where desired offer MCAs a duty for improving the public's health (concurrently with local authorities)			✓
<b>Financing local initiatives for residents and business</b>	Ability to introduce mayoral precepting on council tax*			✓
	Ability to introduce supplement on business rates (increases subject to ballot)			✓