

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

16th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room and remotely via Teams on Friday, 20th October, 2023 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. **Request to Present**

- (a) Conradh na Gaeilge - CAJ

3. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Organisational Reviews - Democratic Services/Equality and Diversity Units (To Follow)
- (b) Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers (Pages 1 - 16)
- (c) QUB Civic Commitment to South Belfast University Area (Pages 17 - 26)

- (d) Review of Continuous Improvement and how reviews are conducted (Pages 27 - 30)
- (e) Belfast Regional Innovation Hub Bid (Pages 31 - 34)
- (f) External Funding Update Report (Pages 35 - 44)
- (g) Hardship Fund – Emerging Considerations (Pages 45 - 56)

4. **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

- (a) Extract of Minutes - Philips Lighting Contract (Pages 57 - 58)

To consider further the minute of 22nd September which was taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

5. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) UK Future Cities Commission (Pages 59 - 112)
- (b) Consultation response to Northern Ireland's Emissions Reduction Targets and Carbon Budgets the UKCCC's Advice Report (To Follow)
- (c) Visit Belfast - Management Agreement; and Renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast (Pages 113 - 116)
- (d) Dual Language Street Signs Gaeltacht Quarter Proposal (To Follow)

6. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Asset Management (To Follow)
- (b) Physical Programme Update (To Follow)

7. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Contracts Update (To Follow)

8. **Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 9th October 2023 (Pages 117 - 180)

9. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 12th October (Pages 181 - 186)
- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (To Follow)
- (c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Disability Working Group of 10th October (Pages 187 - 200)
- (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group of 11th October (Pages 201 - 208)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
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Extract from minutes of:-

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

22nd September, 2023

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO/ Delegated Officer	Description	Supplier
Supply, delivery & commissioning of replacement illuminate lighting fittings & ancillary equipment as part of the PPM maintenance programme	Up to 3 years	Up to £60,000	S Grimes	The City Hall Illuminate system is wholly proprietary to Philips lighting. The system is installed throughout the City Hall utilising a specialist technology, that is a closed protocol, and will only operate with the family of Phillips products. Signify (Phillips) do not supply to clients direct, as they use approved wholesalers. Due to our partnership in the 2013 EU project, we have a wholesale account directly with them.	Signify Commercial Ireland Ltd

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Subject:	UK Future Cities Commission
Date:	20 th October 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To update members on the key recommendations emanating from the UK Future Cities Commission report and outline the Council's current position in relation to the proposed recommendations.	
2.0	Recommendation	
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the UK Future Cities Commission report. 	
3.0	Main Report	
3.1	The UK Urban Futures Commission is an ambitious enquiry established to unlock the potential of the UK's cities. The Commission is led by the Royal Society of Arts in partnership with Core Cities UK and Lloyds Banking Group and aims to work with cities and citizens to develop a transformative national plan for their future.	
3.2	The Commission has recently published a report 'Unleashing the potential of the UK's cities' (see appendix 1) which was guided by three core questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are cities and what role do they play in our social, economic and environmental systems? What are the biggest challenges and opportunities – both now and in the coming decades? 2. In light of those challenges, what do we want and need them to be? 3. How do we reach our vision for cities? What steps can we take now to get there? 	
3.3	The report produced a series of recommendations and actions for consideration of cities and national government, each of which are summarised in the tables below, alongside a brief summary of Council's current position against those specifically related to cities.	
3.4	Recommendations for cities to consider	
	Recommendation 1: Cities need a plan to replenish and grow their natural, social and economic assets.	
	<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
	1a) Form a City Coalition , reflecting the plurality of leaders in a city, with actors from local government, business, anchor institutions, and the community.	The refreshed Belfast Agenda and the supporting city governance arrangements is the mechanism for achieving this coalition in Belfast. A review of the governance arrangements is currently taking place to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Likewise, the Belfast Region City Deal is a further established leadership space for the city driving game

		changing programmes of work for the city.
	1b) Develop a Local Prosperity Plan. Cities should have a single long term strategic plan for delivering ‘prosperity’ – defined in social, economic and ecological terms - for their citizens and beyond, co-developed by the City Coalition	This description resonates with elements of the refreshed Belfast Agenda with themes focused on our People & Communities, Our Economy, Our Place, Our Planet and a Compassionate City.
	1c) Strengthen data and modelling capabilities, with a view to better measurement of economic, social and natural value, and modelling of the interconnected effects of interventions across the three systems.	Lack of data is an ongoing issue for Belfast and NI (evidenced in the Future Cities report where a lot of the comparative tables do not cover Belfast due to a lack of available data). BCC would welcome the opportunity to explore the data and modelling capabilities with other Core Cities members. There have been recent discussions with NISRA to explore opportunities to jointly improve data modelling for Belfast and work continues with Queens University on GIS mapping. A Council data maturity assessment has been undertaken with a view of assessing how we can better use data.
	1d) Increase citizen participation through residents’ councils and juries. Ensuring the voices of different interests are heard is important for the legitimacy and durability of decision-making.	The Belfast Agenda refresh commits to enhanced citizen engagement. Work is currently being undertaken to develop a co-design framework for the Belfast Agenda that will be brought to SP&R Committee at a future date.
Recommendation 2: Cities need the powers and tools to execute the plan.		
	<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
	2a) Develop urban leadership schemes, to build and retain the skills needed to transform our cities.	To be further explored as part of the People Strategy. Work is ongoing regarding managing in a political environment.

<p>2b) Co-fund the establishment of a Cities Investment Hub, a central spine of specialist expertise available to all cities, delivering economies of scale to help develop Local Prosperity Plans and associated investment propositions.</p>	<p>Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment.</p>
<p>2c) Consider establishing an Urban Wealth Fund to manage and increase local revenues from public sector assets.</p>	<p>Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment. Ongoing work on Strategic Site Assessments will ensure that public assets are being utilised strategically.</p>
<p>2e) Grant local authorities and mayoral combined authorities in England more streamlined, long-term and flexible funding, putting an end to all current competitive economic development funding pots, and rolling those that are delivered at a local authority level into an integrated revenue and capital allocation for 'prosperity' in the Local Government Finance Settlement, on a multi-year basis.</p>	<p>Whilst this specifically references England, it is recommended the Council strategically supports this recommendation as an alternative to the levelling up fund approach.</p> <p>Council has commissioned an analysis of regeneration funds that are currently available to local authorities in GB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Cities need to secure investment to finance the plan.</p>	
<p><i>Actions</i></p>	<p><i>BCC Position</i></p>
<p>3a) Catalyse private investment through joint ventures and special purpose vehicles, for projects linked to the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>Council is currently exploring funding models for regeneration and climate related projects.</p>
<p>3b) Set up publicly capitalised investment funds, explicitly linked to social, economic and ecological objectives in the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.</p>
<p>3c) Join with senior representatives of financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact, with a commitment of 5% of their assets directly contributing to filling the investment gap in the Core Cities by 2030.</p>	<p>It is recommended that Council explores this recommendation further.</p>

3d) **Host investment showcases** to advertise investable, regenerative programmes to both domestic and foreign investors.

Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.

3.5 **Recommendations for national government to consider**

The Commission also provides a number of recommendations for national government that are required to support the work detailed in the report.

- **Reinstate national industrial strategy with our largest cities at its heart.**
Mirroring Local Prosperity Plans, this should take account of outcomes across economic, social, and natural systems. It must also articulate cities’ contribution, both individually and collectively.
- **Introduce a new statutory purpose for city councils to generate prosperity** in their place, defined by social and ecological as well as economic health. This new statutory purpose would place generating local prosperity on an equal footing to core services, providing the City Coalition with a strong mandate for action.
- **Accelerate progress on the devolution of powers to local government in England**, moving to the default presumption of powers and assets being devolved unless the UK Government can provide a strong rationale not to do so.
- **Revise the remits of UK’s major investment agencies** to allow them to better support cities.
- **Support responsible local borrowing for regenerative projects**, deploying the Office for Local Government to offer better oversight and regulation and promoting investment in social and environmental capital through discounted interest rates.
- **Enhance fiscal devolution** through a target for HM Treasury to bring the share of taxes controlled locally to the OECD average by the end of the next parliament.
- **Rewire the UK’s macroeconomic and fiscal framework**, shifting our fiscal rules from a focus on net debt to net wealth, broadening the definition of capital to include social and natural dimensions and correcting for limitations in the Green Book.

3.6 Following the launch of this report, Council will consider the Commission’s recommendations further and work with Core Cities and other associated partners to review how they can be applied. These recommendations will also be taken forward internally through discussions during the corporate planning process over the coming months.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.7 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report at this stage.

3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment associated with this report at this stage.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – ‘Unleashing the potential of the UK’s cities’ report of the UK Urban Futures Commission</p>

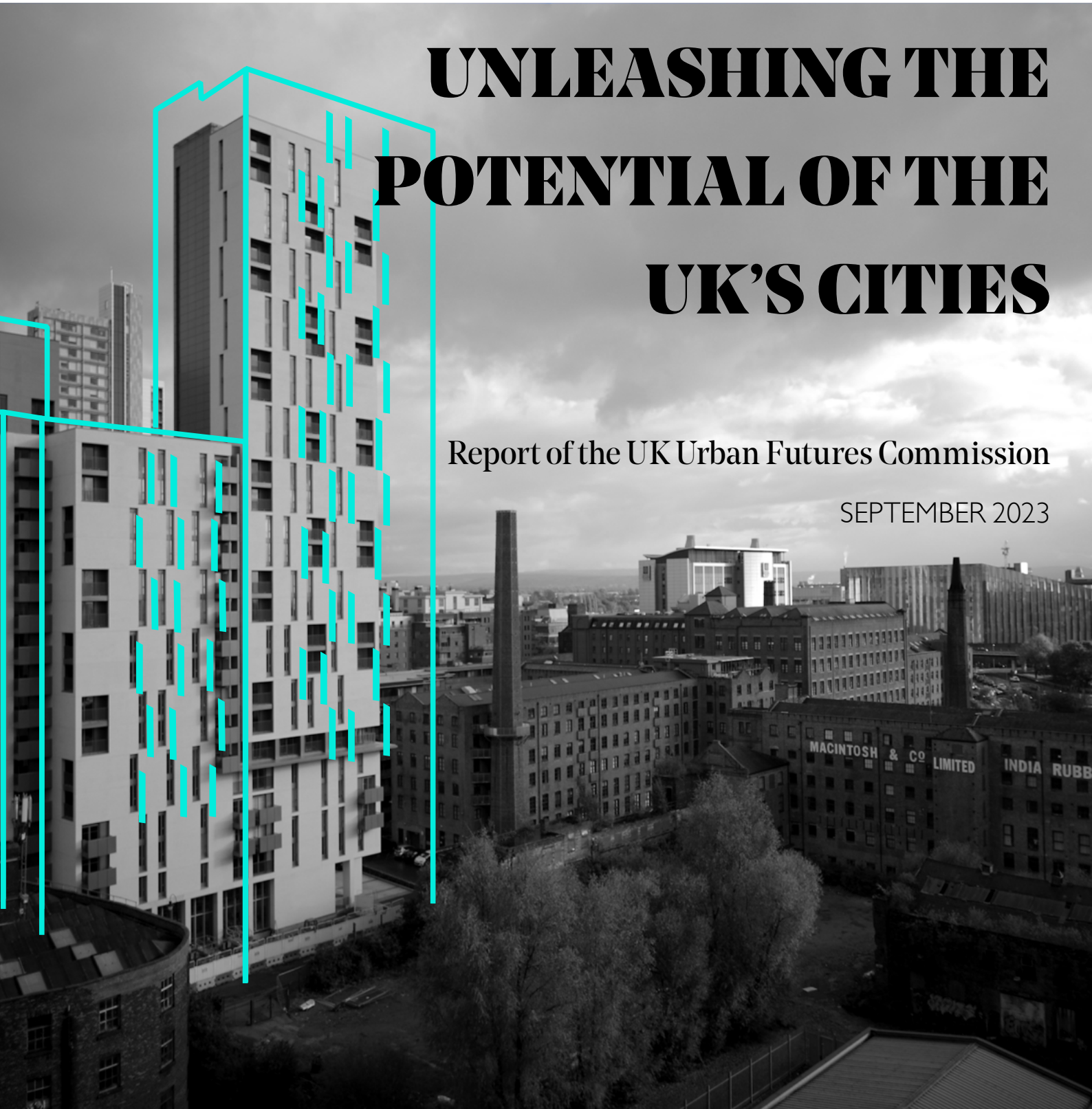
In partnership



UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF THE UK'S CITIES

Report of the UK Urban Futures Commission

SEPTEMBER 2023



Acknowledgments

The journey of the UK Urban Futures Commission over the past year has been an intense and highly rewarding one, driven by its mission to empower cities to deliver a more regenerative future for the whole of the UK. In this endeavour, we wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the individuals and organisations that have been instrumental in making this a reality.

First and foremost, we must express our gratitude to our Co-chairs and Commissioners: Marvin Rees, Andy Haldane, Anna Valero, Bruce Katz, David Hutchison, Jane Davidson, Lord Karan Bilimoria, Michael Keith and Polly Mackenzie. Not only has the Commission been enriched by your expertise, passion and diversity of perspectives, but the team has learnt and been inspired by your example in many other ways besides.

We are also hugely indebted to members of the Urban Finance Advisory Group, led by David Hutchison, whose invaluable insights have helped shape our vision: Andrew Travers; Bethany Carter; Carol Culley; David Pitt-Watson; David Treacher; Harinder Mann; Jessica Bowles; John Godfrey; and Tom Le Quesne.

Our journey would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our partners: Core Cities UK, Inner Circle Consulting, PwC, and Lloyds Banking Group.

We reserve a special mention for Stephen Jones, Core Cities UK and the leaders and officers of the cities that are at the centre of this report. Your generosity in sharing your insights and advice, along with the unique context, successes, and challenges of your places, has hugely enriched this report.

Furthermore, we wish to extend our gratitude to the experts and critical friends who guided us throughout this journey. A special acknowledgment is due to Joan Munro, Joshua Bailey, Josh Priest and Sam Monger for their expert contributions throughout the Commission.

Thanks to the incredible team at RSA, both past and present, who built and executed the Commission's vision since its inception last year.

Finally, this is a report owned and created by the RSA. While it has been shaped extensively by others – especially our Commissioners and the leaders and officers of the Core Cities – contributors should not feel beholden to its contents. We welcome ongoing discussion and debate of our analysis and recommendations, in favour of them or otherwise. Any errors or omissions in this report remain the responsibility of the authors alone.

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We are the RSA. The royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce. Where world-leading ideas are turned into world-changing actions. We're committed to a world where everyone can fulfil their potential and contribute to more resilient, rebalanced and regenerative futures.

The RSA has been at the forefront of significant social impact for over 260 years. Our research and innovation work has changed the hearts and minds of generations of people. Central to all our work are our mission-aligned Fellows; a global network of innovators and changemakers who work collectively to enable people, places and the planet to flourish in harmony.

We invite you to be part of this change. Join our community. Together, we'll unite people and ideas in collective action to unlock opportunities to regenerate our world.

Find out more at thersa.org

We define our ambitions as:

Our mission

To enable people, places and the planet to flourish in harmony.

Our vision

A world where everyone can fulfil their potential and contribute to more resilient, rebalanced and regenerative futures.

How we deliver our work

We do this by uniting people and ideas in collective action to unlock opportunities to regenerate our world.

About our partners

This Commission would not have been possible without the support of our partners. While we have worked in close partnership throughout, this report reflects the Commission's own independent findings.



Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group is a financial services group focused on retail and commercial customers. Its purpose is Helping Britain Prosper, and it does this by creating a more sustainable and inclusive future for people and businesses. With a presence in nearly every community, it is committed to supporting the regions to realise their full potential and shaping finance as a force for good.



Core Cities UK

Core Cities UK is an alliance of 11 cities - Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. Its mission is to unlock the full potential of our great city regions to create a stronger, fairer economy and society.



Inner Circle Consulting

Inner Circle is a 21st century consultancy for 21st century challenges, aiming to deliver strong public services and thriving places so everyone can live a good life. The big missions of local government and its partners are our purpose. Working alongside the public sector for more than a decade, we know the impact of austerity, Covid and the cost of living crisis and we know that radical transformation and rebuilding civic trust in institutions are the only way to foresee and prevent future crisis. Our success lies in the success of future leaders to maintain their organisations' relevance and viability in a world marked by inequalities, and inadequacies in the public response.



PwC

At PwC, we're working to build trust, deliver sustained outcomes and help clients solve their most important problems by combining human ingenuity and understanding with the right technology.

Globally, our network employs nearly 328,000 people working in 152 countries advising and managing services for 191,000 private and public sector clients of all sizes and sectors.

From building teams with diverse perspectives, experiences and expertise to investing in our skills and technologies, we take a human-led, tech-powered approach, working alongside our clients to deliver results that make the difference.

We help shape strategy at the heart of government and healthcare to improve results on the frontline. We're inspired and guided by the real difference the public sector and health industry make to people's lives. Follow us @PwC_UK.

Our cities are magnets for skills and culture, business and growth. They have long been the wellspring of innovation and progress and the bellwether of economic and societal success. And this is true now more than ever in a world that is 55 percent urban. Cities are the means through which we reach more lives, more quickly, than through any other form of human organisation.

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But the UK economy is stalled. The social fabric is frayed. And the planet is depleted. This is not the endowment we would want the next generation to inherit, economically, socially or ecologically. To avoid that fate we will need to act, at scale and speed, to reinvest in all these of these systems.

A great many of the UK's great cities are hives of activity, hubs of culture, mechanisms of delivery, envied around the world. Yet so much of their potential remains untapped. There is huge scope for them to add dynamism to our economies, cohesiveness to our communities, redemption to our environment. The long-term dividends from doing so are enormous. The practical question is - how it is to be done?

This report seeks to provide practical and implementable answers to that question. It is the culmination of 12 months' work by the Urban Futures Commission which we had the honour to co-chair. It has drawn on contributions from an outstanding set of fellow Commissioners, partners and staff, in a joint initiative between the RSA and Core Cities UK.

The report presents a very different lens on city regeneration than any of its predecessors. We have sought to understand what cities are, what we need them to be, and how we can get there. The cities of tomorrow need to be regenerative – that is to say, capable of replenishing natural and social capital every bit as much as economic and financial. This will need a new model of local development, putting local investment and asset accumulation and local citizens and stakeholders front and centre in its design and delivery.

Cities must be enabled and given the space to flourish. This new model requires a re-wiring of all of the moving parts of city strategy: from Local Prosperity Plans to the powers and duties needed to execute them; from new infrastructure

for project delivery to new ecosystems for its financing. And the scale and pace of investment needed for the UK's cities to realise their potential is large – perhaps £1trn over the next couple of decades.

The larger part of that money will not come from government but from the private sector. This is a not a plan designed to be directed from the centre. It is a plan to enable and empower local leaders, public, private and civic, to make good on their own plans, exercise their own powers, operate their own delivery mechanisms, financed locally.

While cities should not be waiting around for national government, it does have its role to play in this regeneration effort. Its approaches to investment and financing are among the root cause of decades of underinvestment in our cities. They, too, need a root-and-branch revamp, with asset accumulation – economic, social and natural – put centre stage and connectivity between, as well as within, cities invested in at much larger scale.

This is a hopeful report – and there are very good grounds for that optimism. Our cities can be solutions to the local, national, and international challenges. They should lead the charge on the regeneration of our economies and communities. They should lead the charge on tackling the climate and nature crises. They should once more be the wellspring of progress and the bellwether of UK success. By showing the way, we hope this report helps summon the collective will of leaders to secure the necessary resources to make good on this vision.



Andy Haldane and Marvin Rees



Anna Valero. Distinguished Policy Fellow at the LSE.

The UK faces a series of challenges that urgently need to be addressed, including its poor productivity record, large-scale inequalities and the need to deliver on net zero commitments. UK cities, where most of the population lives and works, have a key role to play in generating the required investments and driving change across interconnected systems. This is a critical platform to examine how local and national policies can help to realise the full potential of UK cities and the wider country.



Bruce Katz. Director of the Nowak Metro Finance Lab.

Cities are uniquely positioned to navigate an historic period characterised by geo-political tensions, economic restructuring and the imperative to address heightened climate, housing and social challenges. The common question across nations is how to unlock the special assets of cities so they can perform and problem-solve at the highest levels. The UK Urban Futures Commission offers an opportunity both to impart evolving solutions from the US and take lessons home.



David Hutchison. Former Chief Executive, Social Finance.

Our cities represent precious national assets. Generations have chosen to build their lives within their walls for the community, stimulus and opportunity they offer. But to realise fully their potential and build a resilient future, they need billions of investment - far beyond the capacity of the public purse to provide. For too long, the conversation between investors and cities has remained just that. The Commission offers the opportunity to turn that conversation into a thriving partnership.



Jane Davidson. Former Education and Environment Minister, Welsh Government.

Cities are not just engines of the economy; they are a sum of their societies – their neighbourhoods and communities – of their cultures and of their environments. Our cities are poised to demonstrate the many benefits of changing how we live and work to align with climate science while opening up new opportunities for individual and collective wellbeing. As John Rawls says, “do unto future generations what you would have had past generations do unto you”.



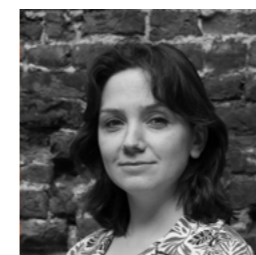
Lord Karan Bilimoria. Founder of Cobra Beer.

Cities, throughout history, have been the epicentres of culture, commerce, and innovation. The challenges the UK currently faces, from addressing our productivity to grappling with large-scale inequalities, mirror the issues I have encountered in business: they demand vision, commitment, and above all, action. The UK Urban Futures Commission’s report serves as a vital compass, guiding our path towards harnessing the full potential of UK cities for the benefit of all.



Professor Michael Keith. Director of PEAK Urban at Oxford University.

UK cities have rich histories, problematic legacies and extraordinary potential to shape better futures responding to the polycrises of climate, polarisation and economic change. Their power arises from their complexity and capacity for innovation. This Commission hopefully advances an understanding of this complexity, a disposition that is intelligent (rather than smart) about inevitable trade-offs to come and a commitment to imagining, thinking and acting for the long term.



Polly Mackenzie. Chief Social Purpose Officer, University of the Arts London.

So many people seem to spend time overwhelmed by the problems cities face. I find myself overwhelmed by their possibilities. As centres for human creativity, connection and ingenuity, cities have no rival. Cities are at the heart of the solution to almost all the problems we face – environmental, social and economic. I hope this Commission has helped inspire more people to have faith that together, cities and their people are the solution not the problem.

The UK's cities are a magnet for business and growth, skills and culture, innovation and ideas. They are the means through which we improve more lives, more quickly, than any other form of human organisation.

Yet the potential of the UK's cities is largely untapped. At a time when the economy is stalled, the social fabric frayed and the environmental crisis immediate, there has been no better time to unleash this potential.

This report, from the UK Urban Futures Commission co-authored by the RSA and Core Cities UK, provides a set of practical proposals for doing so.

Chapter 1 highlights the fragilities in our economies, societies and in the environment. This calls for a new policy paradigm to nurture people, place and planet – a *regenerative* paradigm.

Chapter 2 explains why cities are the ideal vehicle for this regenerative agenda, as the home of a *dense, dynamic, diverse* array of economic, social and natural assets needing replenishment.

Chapter 3 discusses how the UK's cities, while often thriving, are still falling short of their potential due to long-standing *underinvestment in their assets*, economic, social and ecological.

Chapter 4 sizes the prize from unleashing the potential in the UK's cities and scale of the investment needed to do so. The return on this investment, economically, socially and ecologically, is large.

Finally, **Chapter 5** sets out a *practical three-point plan* for realising these benefits. Taken together, this would transform the strategic, delivery and financing infrastructure to support city regeneration.

It comprises:

- *New Local Prosperity Plan*. Underpinning city regeneration needs to be a *Local Prosperity Plan* - a single, long-term strategic plan to grow the assets of a city, economically, socially and ecologically. The plan would be crafted by a new *city coalition* - a broad set of city stakeholders. This plan should be informed, and tracked, using improved data and modelling capacity at the city level and the views of city residents through a new *Residents' Council*. The *Local Prosperity Plan* should be nested within a national industrial strategy.
- *New delivery architecture*. There needs to be a transformation in local capacity and capability for delivery of the *Local Prosperity Plan*. To achieve this, and working across the public, private and civil society sectors, we need to develop: an *Urban Leadership Academy* to nurture a pipeline of local leadership and talent; a *Cities Investment Hub*, a public-private partnership providing a spine of specialist expertise to cities on developing an investable portfolio of projects; and an *Urban Wealth Fund*, for professionally managing public assets to enable regeneration, both local and those transferred from central government. This needs to be complemented and supported by: the introduction of a *new statutory duty on local leaders* to generate the broadly-based prosperity of the city; a reconfiguration of local authority funding through a *regenerative funding formula*; and devolving to *local leaders the powers they need to enact the Local Prosperity Plan*, unless there are overriding reasons not to.

- *New financing ecosystem*. The lion's share of the financing of city regeneration can and should come from the private sector. To enable this, we will need: greater use of *joint ventures* and *special purpose vehicles*, and *publicly capitalised investment funds*, for city-level investment projects, informed by the work of the Cities Investment Hub; a *Cities Investment Compact* among financial institutions and local authorities, committing 5 percent of assets to city regeneration; and investment showcases, hosted by the Core Cities network, to attract domestic and foreign capital into cities. At the national level, this financing plan could be complemented and supported by: revisiting the remits, and enhancing the coordination between, the *UK's investment agencies* (such as Homes England and the British Business Bank); encouraging *responsible local borrowing* through preferential rates for regenerative projects complemented by sufficient oversight; committing to *enhanced fiscal devolution*, bringing local tax-raising powers up to the OECD average; and revising the *UK's fiscal framework* away from a focus on national debt over the short term and towards net national worth over the longer term.

This is an optimistic plan. If implemented, it would enable and empower local leaders to enact their own plans, exercise their own powers, operate their own delivery mechanisms, financed locally. This would transform the UK's cities, and their many millions of citizens, for the long term and for the better. The next phase of this work will involve working with city leaders to implement this plan and realise these dividends.

Actions for city leaders		Actions for national government	
<p>Recommendation 1: Cities need a plan to replenish and grow their natural, social and economic assets.</p>	<p>1a. Form a City Coalition, reflecting the plurality of leaders in a city, with actors from local government, business, anchor institutions, and the community.</p> <p>1b. Develop a Local Prosperity Plan. Cities should have a single long term strategic plan for delivering 'prosperity' – defined in social, economic and ecological terms - for their citizens and beyond, co-developed by the City Coalition.</p> <p>1c. Strengthen data and modelling capabilities, with a view to better measurement of economic, social and natural value, and modelling of the interconnected effects of interventions across the three systems.</p> <p>1d. Increase citizen participation through residents' councils and juries. Ensuring the voices of different interests are heard is important for the legitimacy and durability of decision-making.</p>		<p>1e. Reinstate national industrial strategy with our largest cities at its heart. Mirroring Local Prosperity Plans, this should take account of outcomes across economic, social, and natural systems. It must also articulate cities' contribution, both individually and collectively.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Cities need the powers and tools to execute the plan.</p>	<p>2a. Develop urban leadership schemes, to build and retain the skills needed to transform our cities.</p> <p>2b. Co-fund the establishment of a Cities Investment Hub, a central spine of specialist expertise available to all cities, delivering economies of scale to help develop Local Prosperity Plans and associated investment propositions.</p> <p>2c. Consider establishing an Urban Wealth Fund to manage and increase local revenues from public sector assets.</p>		<p>2d. Introduce a new statutory purpose for city councils to generate prosperity in their place, defined by social and ecological as well as economic health. This new statutory purpose would place generating local prosperity on an equal footing to core services, providing the City Coalition with a strong mandate for action.</p> <p>2e. Grant local authorities and mayoral combined authorities in England more streamlined, long-term and flexible funding, putting an end to all current competitive economic development funding pots, and rolling those that are delivered at a local authority level into an integrated revenue and capital allocation for 'prosperity' in the Local Government Finance Settlement, on a multi-year basis.</p> <p>2f. Accelerate progress on the devolution of powers to local government in England, moving to the default presumption of powers and assets being devolved unless the UK Government can provide a strong rationale not to do so.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Cities need to secure investment to finance the plan.</p>	<p>3a. Catalyse private investment through joint ventures and special purpose vehicles, for projects linked to the Local Prosperity Plan.</p> <p>3b. Set up publicly capitalised investment funds, explicitly linked to social, economic and ecological objectives in the Local Prosperity Plan.</p> <p>3c. Join with senior representatives of financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact, with a commitment of 5% of their assets directly contributing to filling the investment gap in the Core Cities by 2030.</p> <p>3d. Host investment showcases to advertise investable, regenerative programmes to both domestic and foreign investors.</p>		<p>3e. Revise the remits of UK's major investment agencies to allow them to better support cities.</p> <p>3f. Support responsible local borrowing for regenerative projects, deploying the Office for Local Government to offer better oversight and regulation and promoting investment in social and environmental capital through discounted interest rates.</p> <p>3h. Enhance fiscal devolution through a target for HM Treasury to bring the share of taxes controlled locally to the OECD average by the end of the next parliament.</p> <p>3i. Rewire the UK's macroeconomic and fiscal framework, shifting our fiscal rules from a focus on net debt to net wealth, broadening the definition of capital to include social and natural dimensions and correcting for limitations in the Green Book.</p>

CHAPTER 1

THE

WORLD

ATA

TIPPING

POINT

1 The world at a tipping point

The UK Urban Futures Commission takes place at a critical juncture for the UK. Extreme weather brings the climate crisis – once a threat on the horizon – to a present, lived reality. The pandemic not only exposed long-standing inequalities in health and education but also underlined the inability of our public services to remedy them. The cost of living crisis has seen record drops to living standards, following a decade of sluggish productivity and pay.

These are symptoms of a fragile world. We are seeing major shifts in the global economy to respond to the opportunities – and threats – of emerging technologies. Changes in the geopolitical world order – from our place in Europe to tensions with Russia and China – put a higher premium on the UK's self-sufficiency and safety. And given the rising challenges of climate change, we will need to reimagine our energy, infrastructure, water and food systems to adapt to its effects.

But this is not the time for despair. Rather, these seismic shifts open up the opportunity to rethink and redesign our economic, social and ecological systems. They should serve as a spur to innovation and action. The UK can capitalise on the chance to build a greener, more innovative and more inclusive future. And in that transition, cities – with their unique concentrations of people, culture, ideas and innovation – are the most powerful weapon in our armoury.

We must deploy them strategically but urgently, unlocking their potential. But doing so requires more than words; it needs a practical plan of action. That is the purpose of this report.

In conceiving such a plan, the Commission's Co-chairs set as its three guiding questions:

Box 1.1: Three questions to guide our enquiry

1. What are cities and what role do they play in our social, economic and environmental systems? What are the biggest challenges and opportunities – both now and in the coming decades?
2. In light of those challenges, what do we want and need them to be?
3. How do we reach our vision for cities? What steps can we take now to get there?

Readers will find these questions echoed – and hopefully answered – in the content of the report. This is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** highlights the UK's urgent need for a plan, including a new, regenerative approach to our planet, society and economy.
- **Chapter 2** defines cities and their unique role in the delivery of that plan for the UK's renewal.
- **Chapter 3** sets out where our cities are now, and the drivers of their significant unrealised potential.
- **Chapter 4** sets out where our cities could be, and both the scale of investment needed and significant benefits of unlocking their full potential.
- Finally, **Chapter 5** sets out a practical plan to get us there, with recommendations for action at local and national levels.

A lost decade

This is a commission about the potential of the UK's cities. However, the wider context of the UK matters, not least because cities have an outsized role to play in moving the country forward at pace and scale.

Starting with the economy, standard measures of economic success¹ show anaemic rates of growth alongside flatlining productivity and pay over at least the past decade (as Figure 1.1 shows). In many ways, these trends reflect a series of shocks: the global financial crisis in 2008, our departure from the EU and Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and, most recently, the war in Ukraine and cost of living shock. However, that the impacts of those events have been so deep, and recovery so sluggish, is testament to the UK's lack of economic resilience in the first place. Our economy immune system has been weak, making us susceptible and sensitive to shocks. That, in turn, is a reflection of our failure to invest in a wide range of the things we know are vital to economic success, from physical and digital infrastructure to innovation and technology to education and skills to health and wellbeing.

A similar story manifests if we turn from the economy to society more broadly. Taking our health as an example, longstanding improvements in life expectancy are beginning to slow (as we see in Figure 1.2), while rates of poor physical and mental health are on the rise.² A case in point is the current alarm around rates of economic inactivity linked to ill-health, which have increased significantly since the pandemic.³ The UK's health vulnerabilities are longstanding but were then amplified by the

pandemic. Then, a failure to invest not only in preventing ill-health, but in promoting good health, manifested itself in the highest excess mortality rate amongst comparable European countries for under-65s.⁴

These individual-level outcomes have community-wide consequences. Various measures highlight the fraying of our social fabric over the past decade, with the people's sense of belonging or neighbourliness declining⁵ and rates of loneliness declared an 'epidemic'.⁶ All this in spite of our living in an age of hyper-connectivity. A period in which radical social and economic shifts – deindustrialisation, globalisation and digitisation – have heightened insecurities and inequalities has coincided with a period of structural underinvestment in the social infrastructure so important for cushioning these consequences, for individuals and communities. A more divided and anxious society is also a less trusting and more volatile one.⁷ Indeed, we now not only trust each other less, but also the institutions intended to serve as binding agents for our communities and societies (as we see in Figure 1.3).

4 ONS (2022) Comparing different international measures of excess mortality [online] Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/comparingdifferentinternationalmeasuresofexcessmortality/2022-12-20
 5 ONS (2020) Social capital in the UK: 2020 [online] Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/socialcapitalintheuk/2020.No significant change or improvement observed in the 2022 bulletin](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/socialcapitalintheuk/2020.No%20significant%20change%20or%20improvement%20observed%20in%20the%202022%20bulletin)
 6 Independent (2023) How do we tackle an epidemic of loneliness and foster a sense of belonging? [online] Available at: www.independent.co.uk/voices/minister-loneliness-stuart-andrew-health-epidemic-b2334312.html; Telegraph (2022) The devastating cost of Britain's loneliness epidemic [online] Available at: www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/12/26/devastating-cost-britains-loneliness-epidemic/; Guardian (2021) 3.7m over-16s in Britain often or always feel lonely, ONS finds [online] Available at: www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/07/37m-over-16s-in-britain-often-or-always-feel-lonely-ons-finds
 7 Onward (2020) The State of Our Social Fabric [online] Available at: www.ukonward.com/reports/the-state-of-our-social-fabric/

1 As we'll discuss later in this chapter, these are flawed in their narrow definition of a successful economy, and particularly in their exclusion of the economy's role in generating social and environmental value.
 2 House of Commons Library (2023) Mental health statistics: prevalence, services and funding in England [online] Available at: commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06988/; ONS (2023) Rising ill-health and economic inactivity because of long-term sickness, UK: 2019 to 2023 [online] Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/releases/risingillhealthandeconomicinactivityduetolongtermsicknessuk2019to2023
 3 Ibid.

Figure 1.1: Labour productivity and pay over time

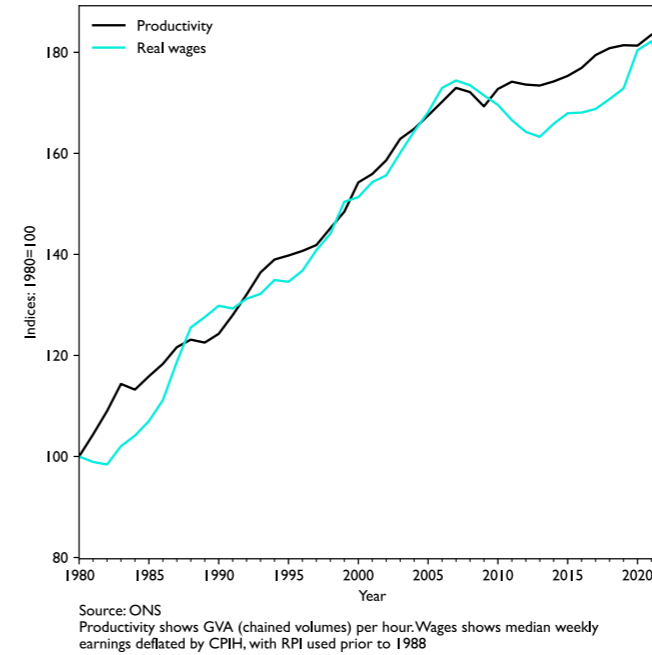
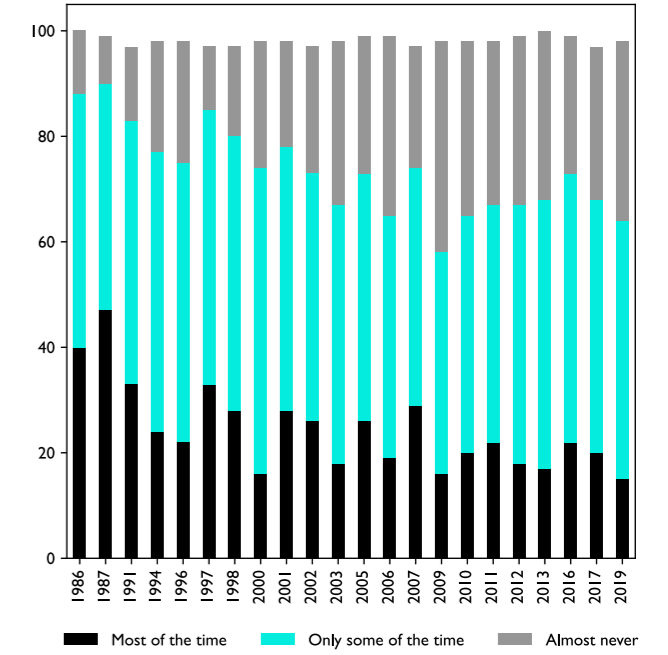
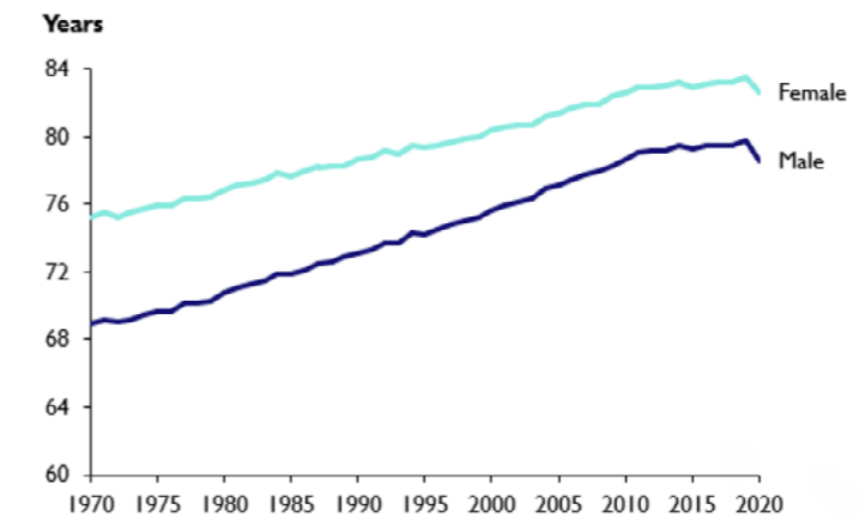


Figure 1.3: Trust in government



Agreement to the statement "Trust government to put the needs of the nation above the interests of their party"

Figure 1.2: Life expectancy at birth



Finally, we are witnessing a precipitous decay in our natural environment. Figure 1.4 shows the number of hot days in the UK each year, with wide inter-year fluctuations replaced by a reliable stream of 27.5°C+ temperatures since 2020. Figure 1.5, which shows the condition of the UK's bird populations, reflects wider pressure on the UK's biodiversity and ecosystem health. Our environmental degradation is not news. But the short-term costs and trade-offs have all too often been a reason to dilute and delay solutions. Recent debates around new licenses for oil and gas exploration, Ultra Low Emissions Zones and now delays to key net zero deadlines – reactions to the war in Ukraine and a local by-election – are a case in point. Meanwhile, a lack of investment in the natural environment not only delays but increases the costs longer-term of remedial action.

These economic, social and ecological phenomena are, of course, intimately connected. An economy which does not deliver improved wellbeing or stronger communities cannot deliver sustained prosperity. Prosperity in turn is a prerequisite for the action and investment needed on climate change and improving our biodiversity. And a common denominator in explaining all these challenges, and the accompanying fragility in our economic, social and ecological system, is a decades-long habit of short-termism over sustained strategy and investment in replenishing our economies, societies and environments.

The decades ahead

No overview of the current context is complete without some understanding of what might lie ahead and whether these fragilities are set to improve or worsen over time. Are our systems (economic, social, ecological) self-regenerating? Or are these fragilities likely to spillover negatively, as in the recent past? This is particularly important if we are gauging whether different policy approaches might be needed in the future to those used in the past.

Even the most ambitious scenarios for emission reduction predict the UK will experience a c0.5°C increase in temperature by 2050.⁸ The coming decades will in turn necessitate not only radical shifts in energy and consumption patterns, but significant investment in adaptation. Inaction presents significant risks – to our health and wellbeing, economy and supply chains, and the further erosion of natural protections (for example, carbon sequestration through vegetations and soils). But in this challenge lies huge opportunity: the drive to transform our buildings and use of land, clean our energy systems, and secure our food supply has the potential to create and expand new industries and generate sustained green jobs and growth.

This will also be an era of significant social and demographic shifts. Climate-related migration will certainly reach our shores. Hundreds of millions of climate refugees are expected to be created by 2050, particularly in parts of the world – for example, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – with historical and familial links to the UK.⁹ And this will occur alongside the

number of people over 85 doubling over the next 25 years,¹⁰ placing increasing demands on our welfare, health and social care systems. This requires us to consider now what a more sustainable social contract and model of public service provision looks like, and invest accordingly.

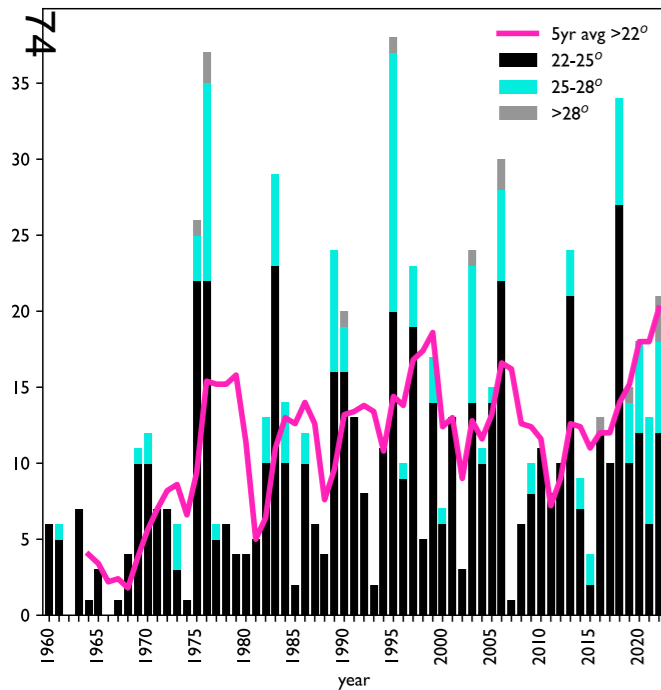
Finally, the coming decades will see a significant reorganisation of the global economy. Emerging technologies are already transforming labour markets, creating thousands of new jobs every year¹¹ and displacing others. These trends – and the rise of new green jobs too – generate a significant demand for new skills, and the imperative to upskill and reskill if this transition is to be an equitable one. Meanwhile, competition for technological advantage – not only for prosperity but also for national security – will see global patterns of trade and political cooperation change dramatically. We are already seeing nations adopt strategies of 'reshoring' or 'friendshoring' to protect their supply of key resources.¹²

In the face of these challenges that lie ahead, maintaining the status quo is not a palatable option. It risks another lost decade of economic growth, a further unravelling of the social fabric and continued depletion of our natural resources and environment. This is a cumulative cycle of, at best, stasis and, more likely, decay. A fresh approach is needed to shape our economies, societies and environment, if we are to avoid this fate.

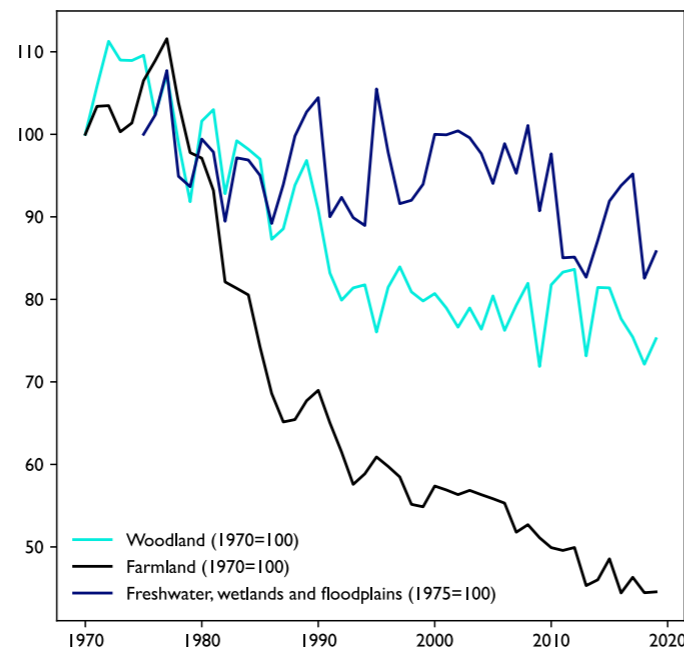
Figure 1.4: UK temperature over time – number of hot days per year

Figure 1.5: Condition of UK ecosystems over time – bird populations

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Source: Met Office HAD-UK dataset



Source: ONS Natural Capital Accounts, Habitat Condition 2022

10 The Health Foundation (2021) Our ageing population [online] Available at: www.health.org.uk/publications/our-ageing-population

8 Climate Change Committee (2021) Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk [online] Available at: www.theccc.org.uk/publication/independent-assessment-of-uk-climate-risk/#key-findings

9 House of Lords (2023) Climate change-induced migration: UK collaboration with international partners [online] Available at: lordslibrary.parliament.uk/climate-change-induced-migration-uk-collaboration-with-international-partners/#:~:text=Climate%20change%20is%20likely%20to,the%20hardest%20hit%20regions%20uninhabitable.

11 Estimated at around 15,000 jobs a year. See: Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) (2023) State of the Tech Workforce [online] Available at: comptiacdn.azureedge.net/webcontent/docs/default-source/research-reports/comptia-state-of-the-tech-workforce-uk-2023.pdf?sfvrsn=92751023_0

12 HM Government (2023) Integrated Review Refresh: Responding to a More Contested and Volatile World [online] Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1145586/11857435_NS_IR_Refresh_2023_Supply_AllPages_Revision_7_WEB_PDF.pdf

A new paradigm for people, place and planet

What might a fundamentally different approach look like in practice? Our vision is for a world which is **regenerative**.¹³ People often refer to the world's challenges as 'complex' and 'systemic'. But this is only a partial representation of reality: the world is in fact made up of multiple, interacting complex systems, whose interfaces often serve to multiply and reinforce economic, social and ecological phenomena, whether for good or for ill. We can characterise that world as a **nested set of three systems** in particular (see Figure 1.6):

- **Economic**, encompassing the financial exchanges between people. When working as it should, the economic system equitably generates income, employment and wealth.
- **Social**, encompassing the non-financial exchanges between people. When working as it should, the social system builds trust, agency and wellbeing for all.
- **Natural**, encompassing the interactions between natural ecosystems and socio-economic systems. When working as it should, the natural system maintains and creates climate stability, biodiversity and security for human and non-human life.

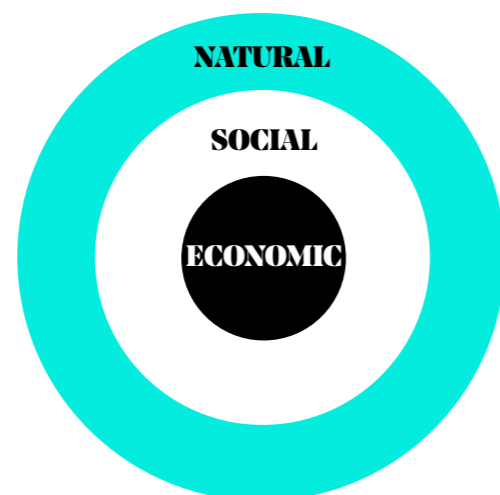
The UK, like many other countries, is experiencing negative feedback between these systems, adding to their fragilities and stifling their sustained health and growth. As long as the economy continues to flatline, little can be done to improve the nation's health or insecurity, tackle the climate crisis or restore nature. And without flourishing people and communities, or the stability and security of the planet, any economic gains are increasingly uneven, subdued and precarious.

¹³ See the RSA's Design for Life Mission Paper [online] for more information, available at: www.thersa.org/globalassets/_foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/approach/rsa_design-for-life-paper.pdf

But while this sounds like a recipe for despair, the reverse is true. By understanding the system-level drivers of our problems, we can identify durable solutions to them. The beauty and power of nested systems is that their interdependence multiplies not only dysfunction and deficiency, but strength and stability too. Properly harnessed, this offers the opportunity to convert the vicious cycles of degeneration that we see today into virtuous cycles of regeneration.¹⁴

This regenerative approach requires us to not only acknowledge, but actively tend to each of the three systems. The means and incentives to do this rely on finding a way to measure their health. One way of doing so is through defining a set of related assets or 'capitals' (as set out in Box 1.2). Our path to a more resilient future lies in investing adequately, equitably and durably across the three systems, to replenish and grow the stores of capital within each.

Figure 1.6: The nested systems



Note the placement of the rings, with our social and economic systems nested within the natural system, reflecting the planetary limits within which these activities must operate.

¹⁴ Regeneration is a word with a history in urban policy circles. While the terms have some commonalities, not least the aspiration to create virtuous circles of prosperity, amenity and investment in our cities, there are also important distinctions. In particular, while the regenerative paradigm leads us to an integrated set of economic, social and ecological interventions, regeneration might focus on specific kinds of development and investment in a localised space. Where possible, we will refer to this new regenerative paradigm using the adjectival form to avoid confusion.

Box 1.2: Social, natural and economic capital

It is an old policy adage that 'what gets measured, gets managed'. Ensuring equal valuation of, and investment in, each of the three systems requires us to find ways to define the assets contained within each of them. However, some are better conceptualised and measured than others – something which we are seeking to highlight and resolve through this Commission.

- **Economic capital.** This captures the stock of economic or financial resources in the economy, both human (the skills, health, education and experience of people) and non-human (the quantity and quality of machines, buildings, technologies and ideas). This stock of resources gives rise to a flow of incomes or transactions in the economy. This is what is typically referred to as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and rises in GDP are what is typically taken to mean economic growth. By growing the stock of (human and non-human) economic capital, an economy can be expected to generate a higher future flow of income and activity, higher GDP and living standards for its citizens over time. Economic capital is the best measured of the three capitals, although this is only true of non-human economic capital, with human capital still not captured in the UK's national accounts. As we transition further towards a knowledge-based economy and become ever more reliant on human capital, it will be increasingly important to fill this gap.
- **Social capital.** This captures the stock of non-financial resources in society, among citizens and within communities. This includes endowments of trust, relationships, belonging and agency among people, together with the social infrastructure that supports these assets, including civic and community institutions. This stock of social assets generates a flow of improved wellbeing among citizens. This is often captured in subjective measures of life satisfaction and happiness from surveys of citizens, but relational aspects of social capital are less well measured. Further work is required to systematically measure social capital and further funding is required to provide detailed measures at a local level and for different demographics, both of which would require greater sample sizes for survey data. By growing its stock of social capital and social infrastructure, a society can be expected to generate higher levels of life satisfaction and wellbeing among its citizens over time.
- **Natural capital.** This captures the stock of natural assets on the planet, from lakes and oceans, to forests and soils, to animals and the biosphere. These assets are not easily quantified or given a market value, but can be given accounting or user values for the essential services they provide to sustain people, biodiversity and places. Much progress has been made in the UK and internationally in recent years in measuring natural capital, with the ONS producing accounts at a national level. Further funding and research are required to produce detailed spatial accounts, to allow local people and policymakers to understand the value of natural capital and the impact of social and economic activity on the natural systems in which it takes place.

Of course, people, relationships and the environment have a value all of their own, without needing to be translated into a quantifiable, monetisable form. However, this is an important – and pragmatic – first step in ensuring social, economic and ecological forms of value are given equivalent consideration.

This regenerative approach offers a different lens on both the problem and the solution to concepts like 'inclusive growth' or 'sustainability'. These more established approaches centre on the idea of the economy 'doing less harm' – growing without harming equality or the environment. A regenerative approach instead insists on 'doing more good'¹⁵, actively replenishing economic, social and natural systems through a set of policy interventions. So, while inclusivity and sustainability are both necessary conditions for success, neither is sufficient for delivering lasting resilience and growth at this critical moment for the UK and the wider world.

Figure 1.7: From 'doing less harm' to 'doing more good' – evolution of frameworks over time



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¹⁵ This idea of growth doing more good – including in cities – is also a focus for other organisations. For example, PwC produce an annual analysis of city performance against a broad set of 'good growth' indicators – from income distribution and work-life balance to emissions and safety from violence. See more here: www.pwc.co.uk/industries/government-public-sector/good-growth.html

CHAPTER 2 WHY CITIES HOLD THE ANSWERS



Me, I see a city and I hear a million voices
 Planning, drilling, welding, carrying their fingers
 to the nub
 Reaching down into the ground,
 Stretching up into the sky
 Why? Because they can, they did and they do,
 So you and I can live together



Lyrics from New York Morning, Elbow¹⁶

Chapter 1 highlighted the UK's need for a rapid and radical transformation, including through a more regenerative approach to economies, societies and the environment. In pursuing that ambition, the UK has no more powerful vehicle of delivery than its cities. Home to more than half of the population,¹⁶ working with cities offers the opportunity to reach more people, more quickly, than any other form of spatial organisation.

But the contribution of cities goes beyond sheer numbers. Cities are home to a vast array of economic, social and natural assets, and the way they collide and cluster in urban environments gives them enormous potential for innovation and impact. As a result, investments in our cities potentially yield an outsized return on investment, due to spillover effects within the city – so-called agglomeration effects – but also due to wider regional, national and indeed global spillovers.

What makes cities so special?

As the first of our Co-chairs' questions for the Commission (Box 1.1), it is worth reflecting briefly on what cities actually are. On the one hand, cities are difficult - some have even argued impossible¹⁷ - to reduce to a single definition. They vary significantly by time and place¹⁸ and their most definable features depend on which branch of social science you ask (as we see in Box 2.1).

It is only in pinpointing what makes cities distinctive that their power becomes fully apparent. Common to all these traditional definitions, however, are three cross-cutting traits: **density, diversity and dynamism**.¹⁹ Taken together, these point to why cities have so much potential to propel economies and societies, as they have historically and are doing today.

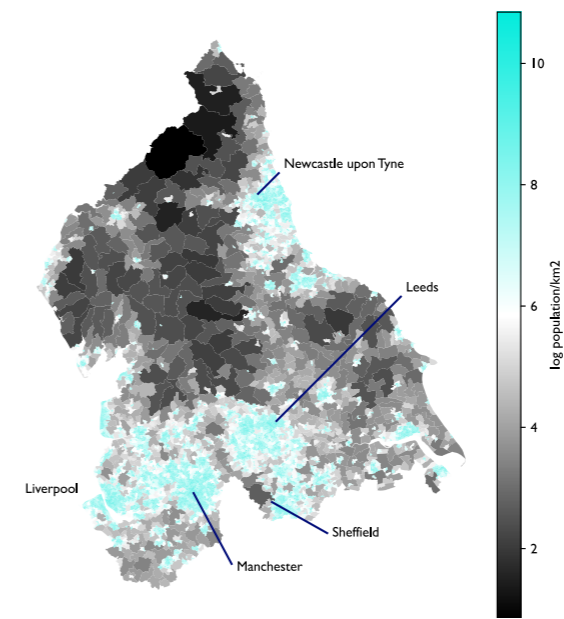
“Cities are the absence of physical space between people. They are proximity, density, closeness. They enable us to work and play together, and their success depends on the demand for physical connection”.

Excerpt from The Triumph of Cities, by Ed Glaeser.

Density

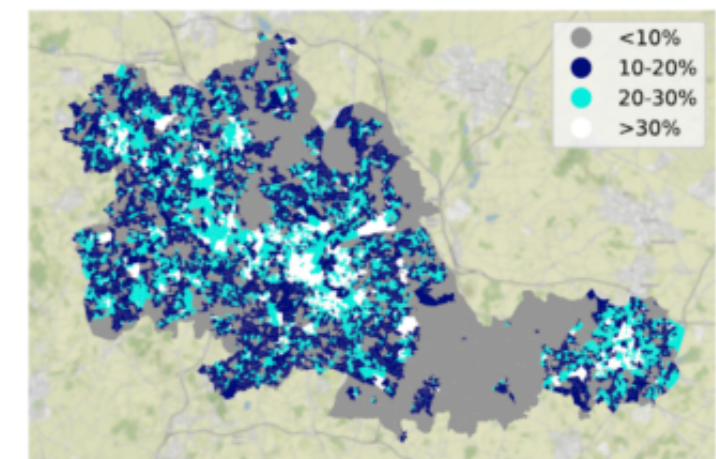
Cities are notable in how they cluster people and physical space tightly in a small geographical area. Despite being home to over half the UK's population, cities represent less than 9 percent of the UK's land surface.²⁰ Figure 2.1 highlights cities as patches of relatively high population density (shown in teal). Figure 2.2 shows the density of commercial and residential buildings - in this case in Birmingham – which peaks at the core of the city and declines into the suburbs, a pattern mirrored in most cities.

Figure 2.1: Population density in the North of England



Source: ONS
 Chart shows log(population/km2), calculated by LSOA

Figure 2.2: Density of commercial and residential buildings within Birmingham (percent of land area covered by buildings)



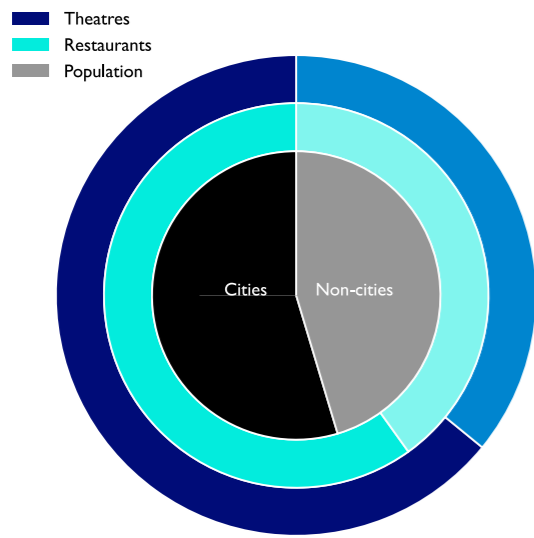
Sources: Staman Design (for map titles), OpenStreetMap (for map data), Ordnance Survey (for building density data)

16 Or up to 83 percent, depending on whether you merely include 'cities' or the more inclusive definition of 'urban areas'. Government Office for Science (2021) Trend Deck 2021: urbanisation. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/trend-deck-2021-urbanisation/trend-deck-2021-urbanisation#increasing-global-urban-population

17 So much so that Georges Perec claimed it was an entirely futile exercise: Ne pas essayer trop vite de trouver une definition de la ville; c'est beaucoup trop gros, on a toutes les chances de se tromper. (Georges Perec, 1974: 119)
 18 Scott, AJ and Storper, M (2015) The Nature of Cities: The Scope and Limits of Urban Theory. Int J Urban Regional, 39: 1-15. Available at: doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12134
 19 Beall, J, GuhaKhasnobis B, and Kanbur J (2010) Beyond the Tipping Point: A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Urbanization and Development, in (ibid) (2010) (eds), Urbanization and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives.

20 World Economic Forum (2021). Available at: www.weforum.org/reports/net-zero-carbon-cities-an-integrated-approach/#:~:text=Cities%20cover%203%25%20of%20the,have%20to%20achieve%20net%2Dzero.

Figure 2.3: Share of theatres and restaurants in England and Wales, by city and non-city area



Sources: ONS and Valuation Office Agency
Chart uses Centre for Cities' list of 63 PUAs.

Figure 2.4: Energy efficiency / per person in cities vs the rest of the UK

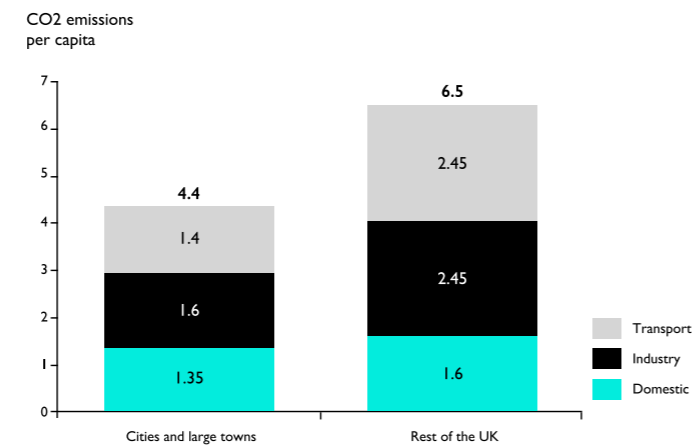
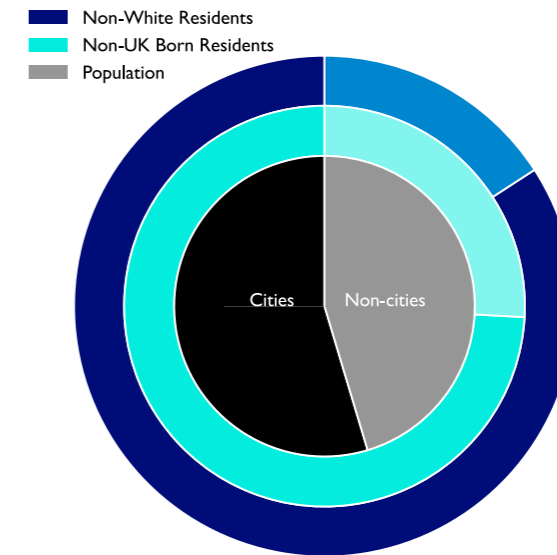


Figure 2.5: Diversity of ethnicity and nationality by city and non-city area



Cities' share of ethnic minority and non-UKborn residents, England and Wales
Source: ONS
Chart uses Centre for Cities' list of 63 PUAs.

This density equips cities with features that spur their growth. Economically, it allows firms to benefit from access to people and skills, opportunities to specialise and share in economies of scale, and the generation and diffusion of knowledge.²¹ Under the right conditions, this generates positive feedback loops of increasing efficiency, innovation and growth, in a phenomenon known as agglomeration. As a result, cities have a unique potential to spawn and incubate high-productivity industries and jobs that enliven the economy.

But agglomeration is not merely an economic phenomenon; it is social too. Kostof refers to cities as a kind of 'energized crowding',²² where institutions that serve social and cultural purposes – theatres, restaurants and sports clubs (see Figure 2.3) – profit from high volumes of people looking to connect with each other and with new experiences. It may even be the social draw of cities that drives its economic potential, given humanity's

unique proclivities for learning from others through interpersonal interaction.²³ Finally, cities' density leads to public services and social infrastructure being concentrated in a small space, often offering city residents better access than in sparser, rural areas.²⁴ Taken together, cities provide the hubs for social connectivity and service provision.

Finally, when it comes to the environment, the density of city living offers efficiencies that are critical for reaching net zero: key amenities being close together promotes active travel and lowers car use,²⁵ while

flats²⁶ require less energy than the detached houses more frequently found in non-urban areas. Consequently, while cities are high emitters of greenhouse gases in an absolute sense, they have the lowest carbon footprint on a per capita basis (see Figure 2.4).²⁷ This makes cities one of our best routes to reducing emissions, with investments in denser urban housing and green public transport delivering benefits that less populated places struggle to match.

Diversity

Cities have a magnetic attraction that draws in a diverse range of people from the wider region, nation and globe. On a day-to-day basis, cities see a vast array of visitors – from commuters and shoppers to tourists and international students; 75 percent of international migrants to the UK after 2011 were living in an urban

area 10 years later;²⁸ while cities also see higher rates of internal migration within the UK (as is seen later in this chapter at Figure 2.11). This is linked to the social and economic opportunities cities provide, with studies highlighting their role in upward social mobility.²⁹ Cities stand out for the heterogeneity of their populations,³⁰ as we see in Figure 2.5, melting pots of different people, ideas and mindsets.

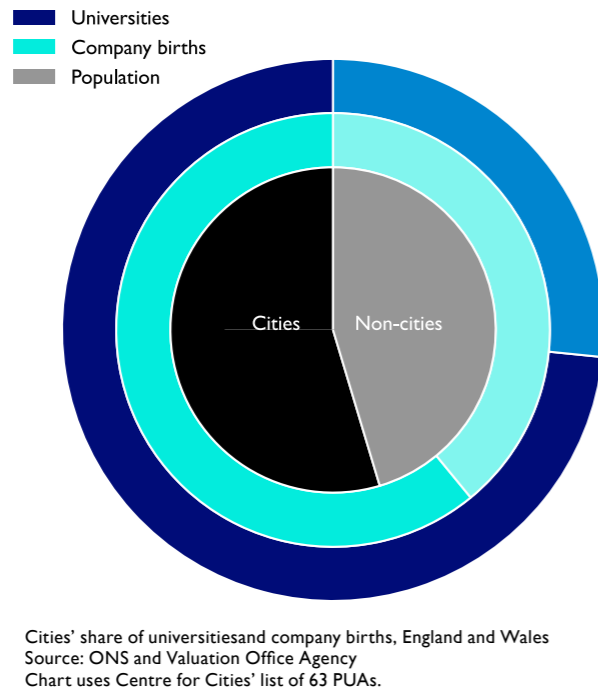
"You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours".
Excerpt from *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino

21 Duranton, G and Puga, D (2004) Micro-foundations of Urban Agglomeration Economies in Henderson, JV and Thisse, J (eds) Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics. Elsevier, Volume 4.
22 Kostof, S (1991) The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History, Boston, p37.

23 Enquist (2008) Why does human culture increase exponentially? Theoretical Population Biology, Volume 74, Issue 1, pp46-55 [online] Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004058090800052X
24 See Naylor, C and Buck, D (2018) The role of cities in improving population health: international insights, The King's Fund. Available at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/cities-population-health and Naylor, C and Buck, D (2018) The role of cities in improving population health: international insights, The King's Fund. Available at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/cities-population-health, particularly in relation to cities' concentration of health services.
25 ONS (2022) Census maps: Cars or vans owned or available for use by a household. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing/number-of-cars-or-vans

26 ONS (2022) Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales: 2022. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/energyefficiencyofhousinginenglandandwales/2022
27 Quinio, V and Rodrigues, G (2021) Net zero: decarbonising the city. Centre for Cities, pp3. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/publication/net-zero-decarbonising-the-city/
28 Centre for Cities (2022) Which cities have seen the largest inflows of migrants in the last decade? Available at: www.centreforcities.org/blog/cities-with-the-largest-inflows-of-migrants/
29 Michelangeli, A and Turk, U (2020) Cities as drivers of social mobility. Cities, 108 (1). Available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264275120313172. (NB this evidence derives from international examples, but the UK's Social Mobility index also highlights UK cities as hot-beds of upward mobility. See, for example: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496103/Social_Mobility_Index.pdf)
30 Wirth, L (1938) Urbanism as a way of life. American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 44, No. 1 (July 1938) pp1-24.

Figure 2.6: Universities and company births – cities vs. non-cities



Coupled with their density, cities' diversity gives them greater potential for creativity and invention, culture and heritage, unmatched by other types of place. Socially, this enriches cities' cultural offering, making them more attractive places to live and work and enhancing residents' social connectivity and wellbeing.

More than this, the proximity of new ideas with ready access to people and resources makes cities the perfect drivers of research, innovation and entrepreneurialism.³¹ Economically, 62 percent of the new businesses registered in the UK 2021 started in cities,³² while their role in research and development is reflected in their disproportionate share – over 70 percent – of England and Wales' universities (Figure 2.6). Economic growth is rooted in innovation and research and development

of this type, driving upwards productivity and pay. And this innovation will also be essential when tackling our environmental crises - from carbon capture and green transport to new building methods and forms of food production.

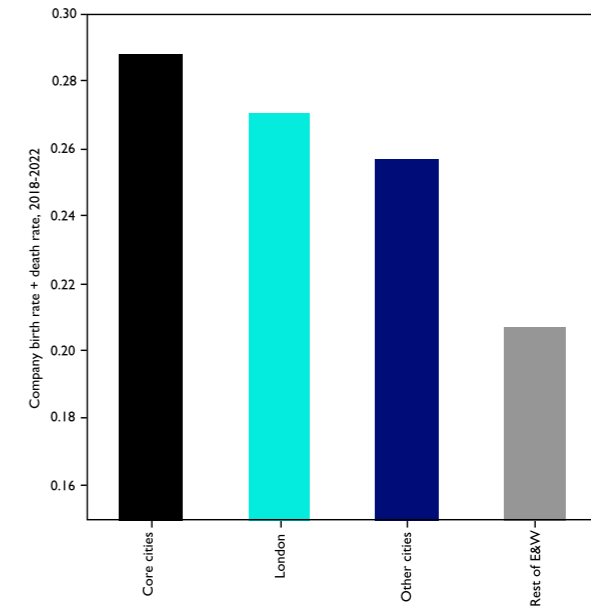
Finally, the confluence of new ideas and people make cities a hot-bed for social and political innovation.³³ Campaigns from the Suffragettes in the 19th century to the Occupy movement in the 21st originated in cities. The fact that urban populations have roots in so many other parts of the world make them densely networked and connected to events on the global stage, making them ripe for the diffusion of change. In short, facing wicked problems and enticing opportunities, cities' powers of invention and reinvention – driven by diversity – gives them an innate ability to generate and regenerate, sourcing and spreading solutions.

31 García, AB (2014) Analyzing the determinants of entrepreneurship in European cities. *Small Business Economics*, 42(1), 77–98. Available at: www.jstor.org/stable/43553721

32 Centre for Cities (2023) *City Outlook 2023*. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-31-Cities-Outlook-2023.pdf. Note: City boundaries are based upon Primary Urban Area definitions, using the 63 largest cities as defined by Centre for Cities.

33 Beall, J, GuhalKhasnobis, B, and Kanbur, R (2010) 'Beyond the Tipping Point: A Multidisciplinary Perspective on Urbanization and Development', in Beall, J, GuhalKhasnobis, B, and Kanbur, R (eds) *Urbanization and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* [online] edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Jan 2011).

Figure 2.7: 'Creative destruction' – rate of company births and deaths in the Core Cities, London, other cities and rest of England and Wales



Dynamism

Taken together, cities' density and diversity give them a *dynamic* quality. This enables change to happen at a speed and scale in cities that we do not see elsewhere. This can be seen, for example, in higher rates of 'creative destruction' in cities, the process by which new innovations emerge, making older innovations obsolete. Figure 2.7 shows this through the higher rate of company births and deaths in the Core Cities, London, and other cities than in the rest of England and Wales. This intensity of activity can also be observed in the speed with which new technologies are adopted or social movements are spread in cities compared to other areas.

“Lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves”.

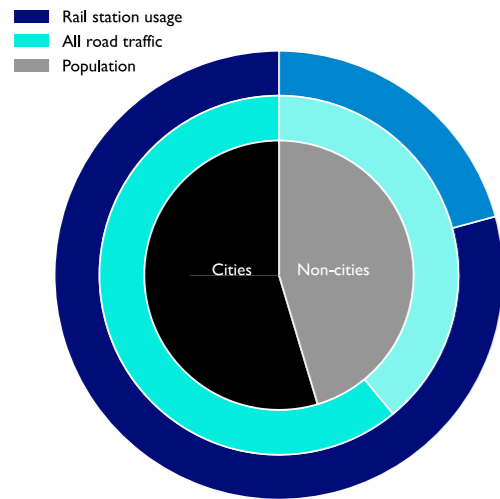
Excerpt from the *Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs

Importantly, the inventiveness and energy we find in cities has the potential to spill over widely to other levels of geography. Cities are marked by their high levels of connectivity, as Figure 2.8 shows in the relative levels of road and rail traffic. Maps of the UK show arterial connections into, out of and within cities, clustering with increasing intensity towards their core.³⁴ Clearly, cities' dynamism motivates places to connect to them, both within their immediate region and beyond it. International exchange plays a particularly important role in cities,³⁵ supercharging their ability to specialise, and to sell their outputs in exchange for the specialised outputs of other places. Figure 2.9 shows cities' prominence in promoting the UK on the global stage, through their ability to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). This is also seen through the active city-to-city international networks that exist both on a bilateral basis and in multilateral relationships like the Urban7 (U7) or Eurocities.

34 Scott and Storper (2014), op cit, even refer to the physical area taken up by circulation as the 'third space' in cities, alongside areas for commercial activity (production space) and for living and socialising (social space).

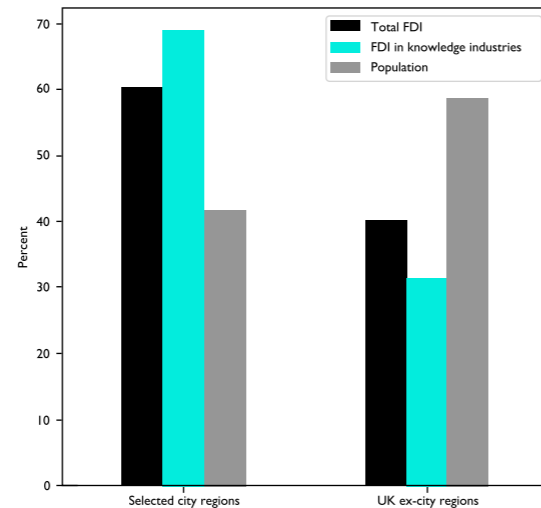
35 Ibid.

Figure 2.8: Share of movement by rail and road in England and Wales, by city and non-city area



Sources: ONS, DfT
Chart uses Centre for Cities' list of 63 PUAs.

Figure 2.9: Foreign direct investment into the UK, select city regions vs rest of UK



Source: ONS
City regions are those with existing or proposed combined authority deals plus London

There are often stark differences between the economic output of cities compared to that of their surrounding regions. For example, the share of UK Gross Value Added (GVA) contributed by rural areas in 2020 was 15 percent, compared to 72 percent from urban areas.³⁶ However, this is not a zero-sum game where cities' successes trade off with the prosperity of surrounding towns or villages. On the contrary, studies show that these benefits cascade to other levels of geography. For example, for every 100 jobs created through a business opening a new office, a further 44 are created in the wider region from the increased economic activity in the supply chain.^{37,38} Recent Centre for Cities analysis found a positive correlation between the proportion of residents in satellite towns and villages commuting to a

nearby city and average incomes in these places.³⁹

In short, cities contain concentrations of economic, social and ecological assets. These concentrations arise and grow due to the density, diversity and dynamism that defines cities. Building on this rich endowment is a route to transformative change, if handled correctly. Without careful management, however, these qualities can also cause cities to tip into dysfunction.

For example:

- **Density:** if only the economic benefits of agglomeration are prioritised, commercial buildings can proliferate at the expense of community and green space or affordable housing, weakening social and natural capital.
- **Diversity:** in the absence of community infrastructure or inclusive planning, diverse city communities can become segregated, making cities

39 Centre for Cities (2023) Does trickle out work? [online] Available at: www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Does-trickle-out-work-September-2023.pdf

36 DEFRA (2021). Rural productivity and gross value added. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rural-productivity

37 English Partnerships (2008). Additionality Guide: Third Edition.

38 Centre for Cities (2022) have also shown that employment tends to be higher in towns closer to a city. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/blog/myth-9-a-close-relationship-with-a-city-is-bad-for-a-towns-economy/

places of division and alienation rather than connection.⁴⁰

- **Dynamism:** cities' links to their wider geography can have negative as well as positive effects, drawing on their hinterlands for significant food, water and energy resources as well as generating and spreading pollution.⁴¹

The key to harnessing cities' full regenerative potential therefore lies in giving balanced consideration to all three nested systems – economic, social and natural – and in nurturing the benefits while avoiding the pitfalls of density, diversity and dynamism.

40 Wirth, L. (1938) Urbanism as a Way of Life. American Journal of Sociology, 44(1), 1–24; Beall, J and Fox, S (2009). Cities and Development. London: Routledge.

41 Rees, W (1992) Ecological Footprints and Appropriated Carrying Capacity. Environment and Urbanization, 4(2), October: 121–30

Box 2.1: How are cities defined, analysed and administered?

Traditional definitions

There are a number of popular approaches to defining a city. These all capture important aspects of a city's essence, in many ways reflecting the priorities of the different disciplines from which they derive.⁴² **Population size or density** is the most popular method of defining cities, used by more than half of countries globally;⁴³ the **presence of particular institutions** is an approach familiar from the common belief that a cathedral or university make a place a city, emphasising its civic and political role^{44,45} while others use the **density of economic activity in a small area**, sometimes measured by the physical footprint of buildings within close proximity to each other that collectively pass some threshold for activity.⁴⁶ This perspective majors on how cities bring skills and firms into close proximity.

UK administrative and statistical units

In practice, the level at which a policy is administered, or the availability of data will often play a prominent role in choosing definitions for analytical purposes. Some of the key geographic units used in this report are explained below.

Local authority (LA) – the administrative boundaries of the city council. This can vary significantly in size by city, with Leeds LA significantly larger than that of Manchester in Figures 2.10a and 2.10b below. This is the most common level at which granular data on cities are available.

42 Cowgill G. L. (2004), Origins and Development of Urbanism: Archaeological Perspectives. Annual Review of Anthropology 33:1, 525-549. Available at: doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.32.061002.093248

43 World Bank (2020) How do we define cities, towns, and rural areas? Available at: blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/how-do-we-define-cities-towns-and-rural-areas

44 House of Commons Library (2022) What makes a city? Available at: commonslibrary.parliament.uk/what-makes-a-city/. It is worth noting how this – more historical - approach can be at odds with more commonly used metrics. St Davids in Wales, for example, is classified as a city due to its cathedral, despite having a population of less than 2,000 people.

45 That cities are a political construct – as well as being the product of organic circumstances – is reflected in the way city status is formally granted in the UK. In true bureaucratic style, a competitive bidding process is overseen by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities before successful applicants are issued a letter by the monarch.

46 Centre for Cities (2016) The changing geography of the UK economy. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/the-changing-geography-of-the-uk-economy/#:~:text=From%20an%20economic%20point%20of,they%20use%20to%20produce%20it.

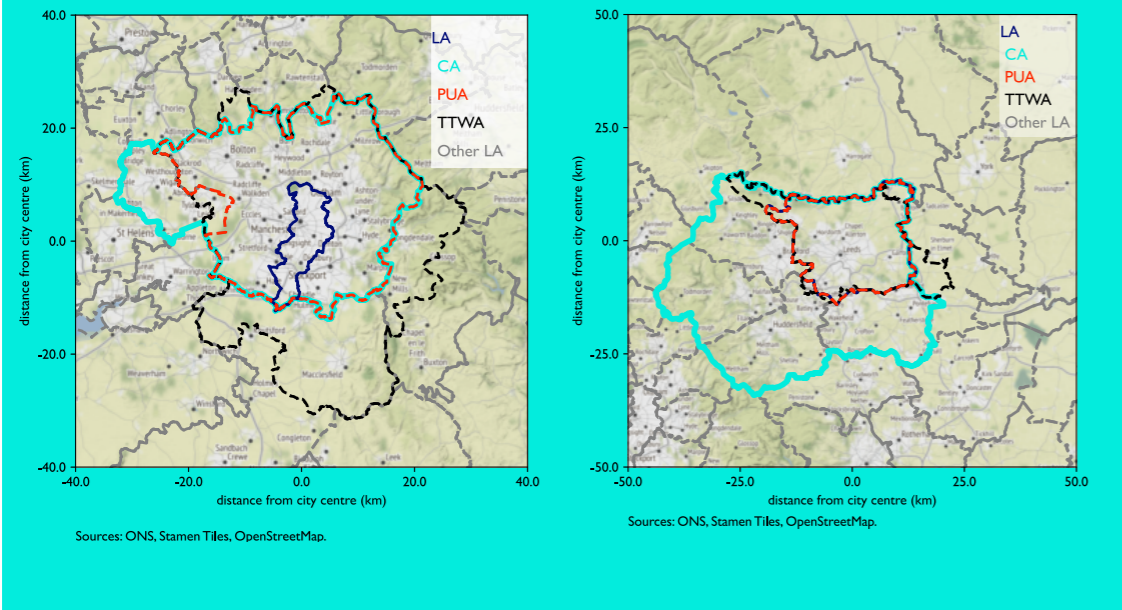
Combined Authority (CA) – the administrative boundaries of the wider 'city region' in England. As shown in the example of Leeds below, a CA can encompass a wide area of several LAs, often beyond the city into the surrounding towns and rural areas. CAs are the product of devolution deals with central government, with 10 currently in existence (covering seven out of the eight English Core Cities with plans being taken forward in Nottingham). Different city region arrangements exist for Belfast, Cardiff and Glasgow, with their respective neighbouring authorities. CAs comprise LAs, so aggregation of data from the underlying LAs is easy.

Primary urban area (PUA) – the physical footprint of the city, based on areas of continuous built-up land. This tends to reflect the majority of business, commercial and residential activity. This area, outlined in purple in Figures 2.10a-2.10b below, is much more uniform across both Manchester and Leeds. Because PUAs are calculated using topographic data, they cut across statistical measurement boundaries (like LAs), making it hard to compile socio-economic data directly. Instead, we follow Centre for Cities in approximating PUAs by aggregating the underlying LA data on a nearest-fit basis.

Travel to work area (TTWA) – this aims to approximate the labour market of a given city, with boundaries showing the area where at least 75 percent of the population live and, of that population, 75 percent also work. TTWAs are calculated using census data at a finer geographic granularity than LAs, meaning that they again cut across LAs and make it hard to compile socio-economic data.

For some forms of analysis, it will make sense to capture the 'nucleus' of the city (using the LA, say) while, for others, a broader footprint, such as that of the PUA, will be appropriate. We will use the most relevant of these city boundaries at different points in the report, with the spatial unit used noted in the footnotes.

Figure 2.10a-2.10b: Maps of Manchester and Leeds with the administrative and economic geographical boundaries shown.



What makes our cities special?

This is a Commission about the UK's cities. In particular, it is about the 11 Core Cities: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. These cities have a unique set of strengths that make them worthy of focus in a plan to regenerate the UK. These are strengths they have in common, but also exhibit individually and which can be combined in complementary ways to operate as a national collective or network. Although the Commission's analysis and recommendations pertain to the Core Cities, many of them would also apply generically to other major cities and indeed towns right across the UK.

The Core Cities represent a significant share of the UK's population: collectively, nearly a fifth (18 percent) compared to London's 13 percent in 2021.⁴⁷ They

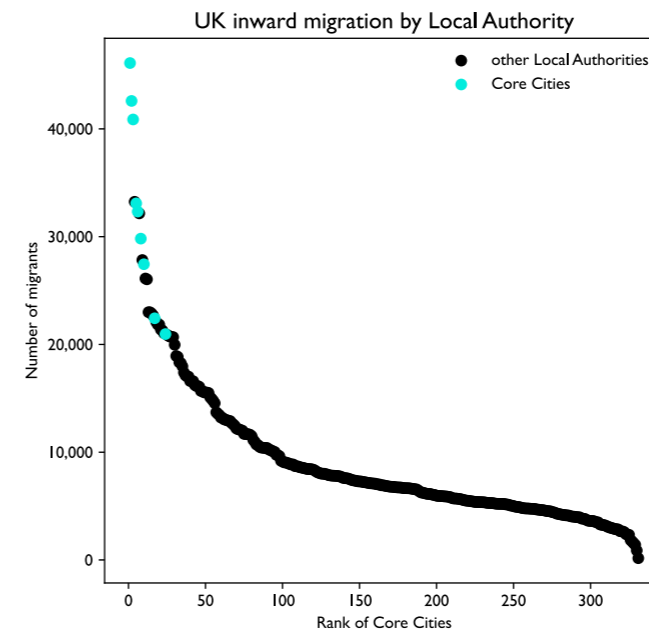
represent some of the deepest pools of diverse, skilled labour beyond London and contribute a significant share of the UK's Gross Valued Added – 18 percent in 2020.⁴⁸ But the Core Cities' value extends beyond their numerical and economic significance. Figures 2.11 and 2.12 show the Core Cities' draw in terms of internal migration – most likely for education or employment - and starting a business. Especially notable is the number and calibre of the Core Cities' universities, each with a member of the Russell Group and collectively home to nearly 40 overall.⁴⁹ The power of research and innovation in cities more generally applies particularly to the Core Cities.

The Core Cities also have a rich cultural heritage. Most Core Cities are synonymous with a well known band or football team(s). As Figure 2.13 shows, the UK punches well above its weight in the production of music and literature, and much of this originates in its major cities. This enriches their

47 Office for National Statistics (2019) Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: local authorities by NUTS1 region. Released 19 December 2022, accessed 4 March 2023. Based on TTWA definition.

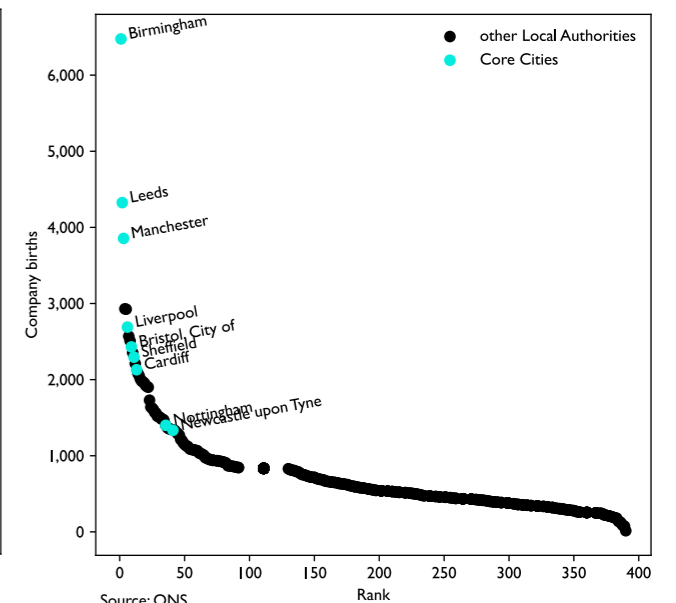
48 Most recent figures available.
49 Source: PwC Analysis (2023).

Figure 2.11: Inward internal migration excluding London



Source: ONS
Chart shows inward internal migration for year by Local Authority

Figure 2.12: Company births excluding London

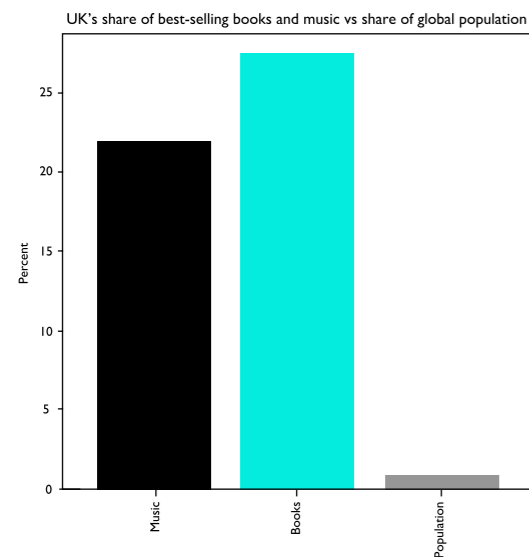


Source: ONS
Chart shows company births in 2022 by Local Authority

international appeal and promotes tourism. Figure 2.14 illustrates the strength of the Core Cities' 'brand recognition' based on the frequency with which they appear in a corpus of modern texts, compared to the largest 10 non-capital cities in each of the 38 OECD countries. All of the UK's Core Cities are ranked in the top 100 (out of 360), with Manchester and Liverpool making the top 10 and seven of the Core Cities making the top 50. These assets are not only a source of civic pride but the basis of the Core Cities' standing on a global stage, both of which will be critical for their leadership in a decisive decade for the UK.

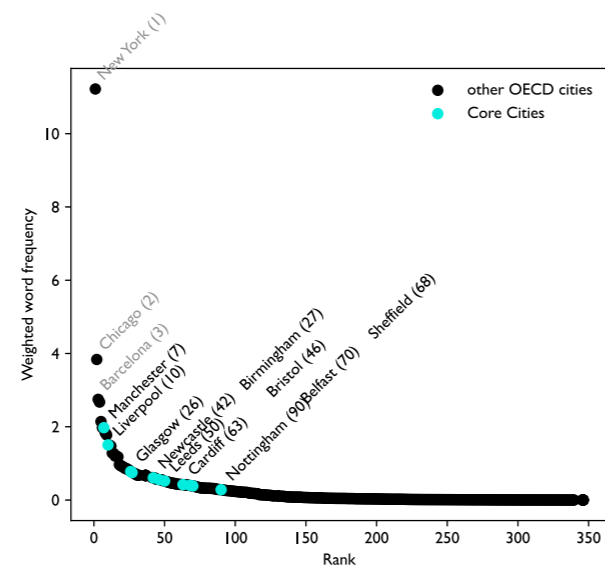
Ultimately, the UK's Core Cities as a network has the potential to be greater than the sum of their parts. They exist not as islands but as part of a system of cities within the UK. Their individual strengths and specialisms – based upon their sectoral strengths or differential cultural offers – can be complementary rather than a zero-sum competition between them (see Box 2.2).

Figure 2.13: UK's share of best-selling books and music vs. share of global population



Source: Wikipedia
Books shows share of sales for authors born in the UK, for books with estimated sales of at least 10m books. Excludes religious texts. Music shows share of sales for musicians born in the UK for musicians with estimated sales over 75m albums. Population shows share of global population.

Figure 2.14: Brand strength of Core Cities vs top non-capital OECD cities



Sources: wordfreq (Robyn Speer, (2022). rspeer/wordfreq: v3.0 (v3.0.2). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7199437>), UN Stats, Wikipedia.
Chart shows the frequency of city names in the wordfreq corpus, for the 10 largest cities in each OECD country, excluding capitals. Word frequencies are calculated for each OECD language, then weighted by the number of speakers of each language. Shown per 100,000 words.

Box 2.2: Complementing cities' strengths

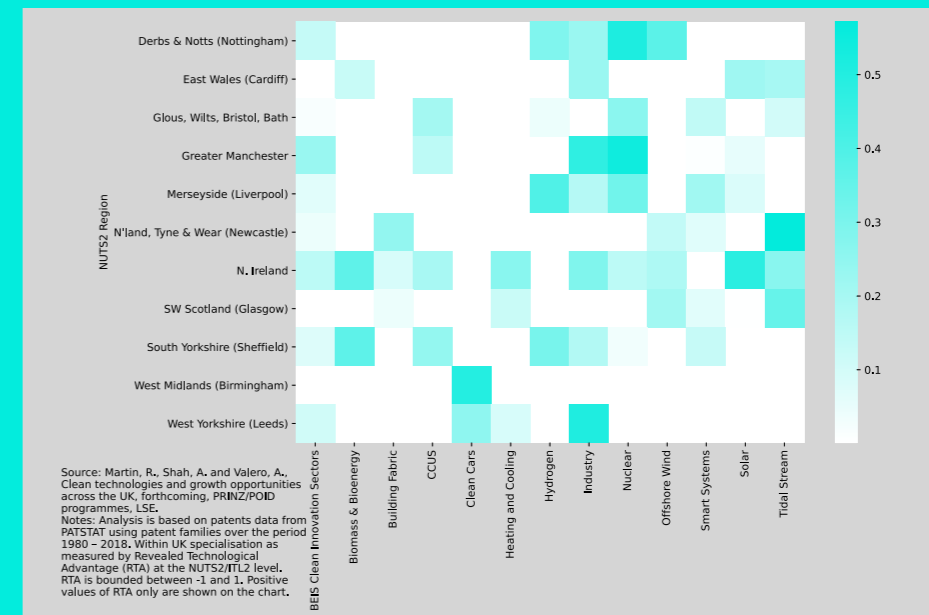
The UK's cities already have considerable strengths. The question is how these can be most effectively identified and deployed, including in complementary ways with other cities. This is more complex when we look to the future and consider strengths that may still be emerging but offer significant promise for innovation and growth.

The two approaches below show how quantitative data can be leveraged – together with 'softer' local intelligence – to identify these potential areas of strength. For example, drawing on work from Martin et al,⁵⁰ Figure 2.15 uses patent data to show the intensity of innovation in types of green technology. The different regions around the Core Cities exhibit very different strengths (shown through darker squares of green), from tidal stream patents in Newcastle to clean cars in Birmingham, for example.

Figure 2.16 uses a different methodology based on Coyle and Mealy,⁵¹ using measures of complexity to identify existing industrial strengths and to suggest promising future industries in which cities do not currently specialise but could transition to in future, given similarities to existing specialisations. Given the strong professional services base in most Core Cities, the 'opportunity' industries often include elements of financial services, while also suggesting industrial sectors like creative arts and entertainment in Newcastle and advertising in Cardiff.

Beyond the usefulness of these insights for individual cities, they can also highlight where cities have similar strengths – for example, nuclear technologies in Nottingham and Manchester – but also complementary ones such as green batteries and clean cars. This can inform a more collaborative – rather than competitive – approach to unlocking cities' future opportunities. By working together to identify sources of investment and other enablers (such as skills), cities can unlock benefits that are more than the sum of their parts.

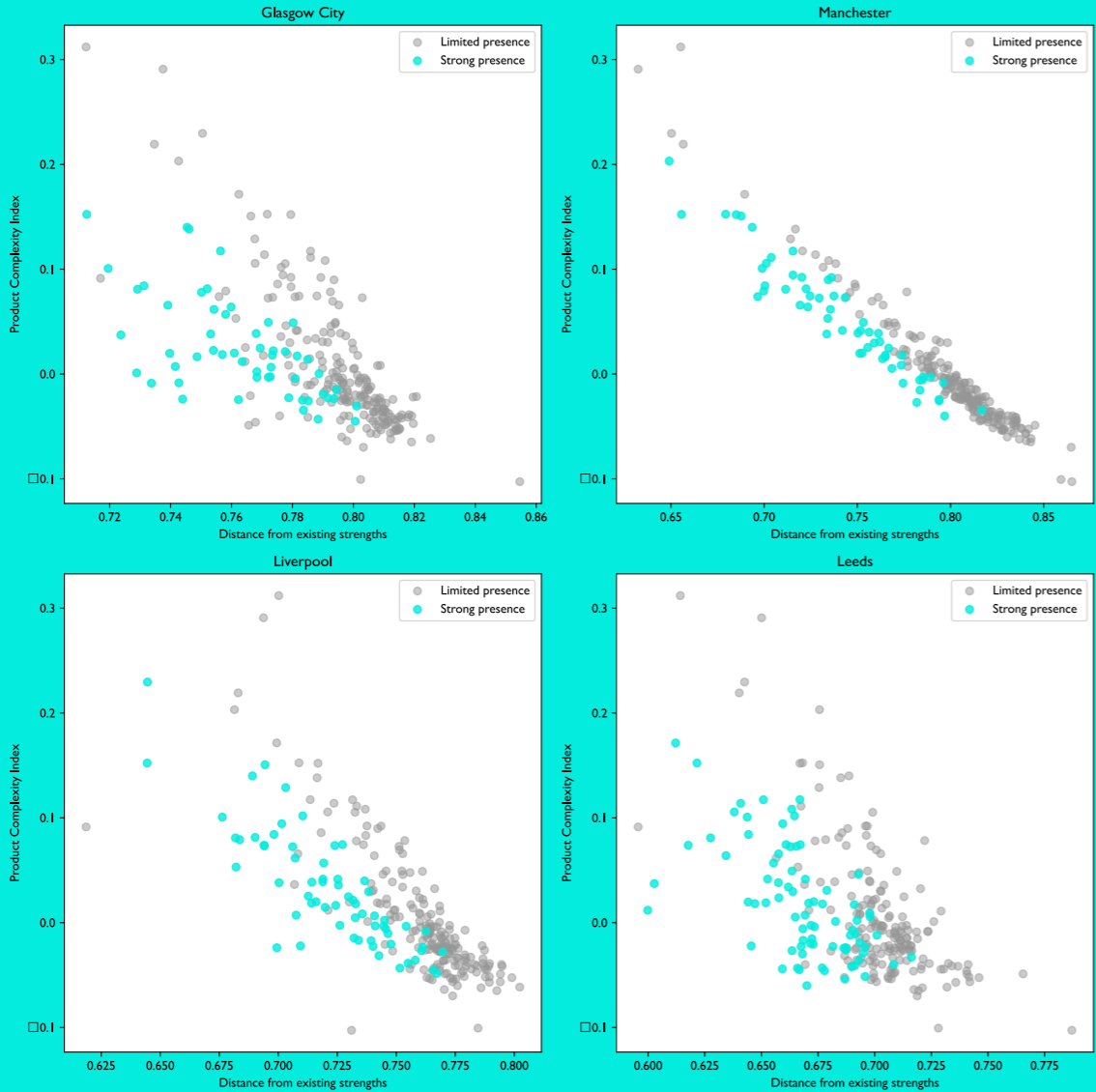
Figure 2.15: Distribution of patents in green technologies by Core City region



Source: Martin, R., Shah, A. and Valero, A., Clean technologies and growth opportunities across the UK, forthcoming, PRINZ/POID programmes, LSE.
Notes: Analysis is based on patents data from PATSTAT using patent families over the period 1980 – 2018. Within UK specialisation as measured by Revealed Technological Advantage (RTA) at the NUTS2/ITL2 level. RTA is bounded between -1 and 1. Positive values of RTA only are shown on the chart.

50 Martin, R, Shah, A and Valero, A (Forthcoming) Clean technologies and growth opportunities across the UK. PRINZ/POID programmes, LSE.
51 Coyle, D and Mealy, P (2021) To them that hath: economic complexity and local industrial strategy in the UK. Int Tax Public Finance 29, 358–377 (2022) doi.org/10.1007/s10797-021-09667-0

Figure 2.16: Economic complexity in four Core Cities



The UK's compactness also offers the potential to harness the collective – as well as individual – strengths of its major cities much more readily than nations like the US or China.⁵² The UK's major cities are closer to one another compared to countries with a larger land mass. For example, the distance between London and Manchester (339km) is almost half that between Boston and Washington DC (708km). However, to make the most of these advantages requires a mentality shift, from a top-down mindset that looks to 'pick winners' between our cities to a recognition that our cities are at their best when they pool their strengths to compete globally.

As we will set out in Chapter 3, while the Core Cities have considerable strengths and have experienced good growth by and large, their potential is yet to be fully harnessed. The Core Cities underperform relative to their potential, and compared to London, in ways that constrain not only their own prosperity but that of the country as a whole. And these benefits for the UK would be larger still if the benefits of unlocked potential within cities were to be amplified by unlocking the potential between cities through improved connectivity and coordination.

52 Goodstadt, V and Yaro, B (2023) Discussion Note on Mega-Regions. UK2070 Commission

CHAPTER 3 OUR CITIES AS THEY ARE **NOW**

3 Our cities as they are now



A city's offer is like that of a superstar player... and when they are put into play, in the right way, in the right position, they transform a team's fortunes. But currently it's like they've been left on the bench



Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol and Co-chair of the Commission

Chapter 2 sets out why cities possess unique qualities for building a regenerative future, in general. It also showcases the considerable strengths of the UK's cities. Yet it is clear those strengths are not being fully harnessed at present. While the Core Cities' collective contribution to the UK's GVA is significant (18 percent in 2020), it stands in unfavourable comparison with London's individual contribution (23 percent). It was not always so, with the economies of the UK's major cities and the capital on a par as recently as 1997.⁵³

The Core Cities' GVA is one example of a wider story of their unrealised potential. This chapter will outline the scale of that unrealised potential, looking across economic, social and natural outcomes, as well as pinpointing the key systemic barriers standing in the way of this latent energy being released.

Signs of our cities' unrealised potential

Cities are underperforming economically

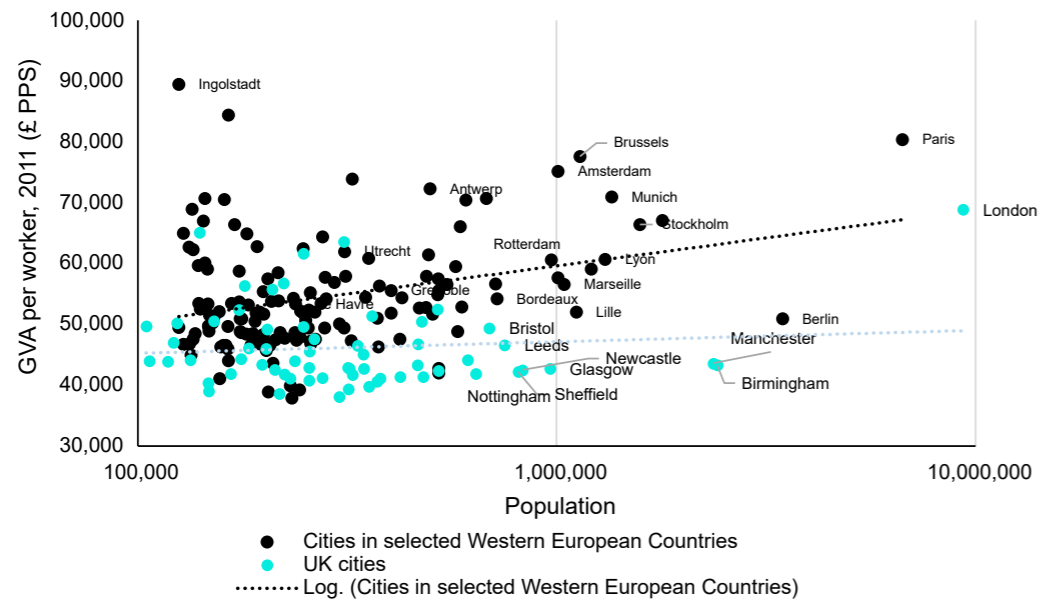
The story of the Core Cities' economic performance is well-rehearsed. As we saw in Chapter 2, the phenomenon called agglomeration is what gives cities their distinctive economic advantage, with the magnetic attraction of people, culture and business combining in a virtuous cycle. As a result, across advanced economies, productivity and incomes tend to increase with city size. Strikingly, this is not as clearly the case in the UK⁵⁴ (see Figure 3.1).

53 Office for National Statistics (2017) Regional GVA(l) by local authority in the UK. Released 31 March 2017, accessed 11 August 2023.

Note: this is often attributed to the UK's deindustrialisation and shift to service-based economies, a transition that London appears to have made more successfully.

54 OECD (2020) Enhancing Productivity in UK Core Cities: Connecting Local and Regional Growth, OECD Publishing, Paris; Cambridge Econometrics (2018). Does productivity necessarily increase with city size? Available at: www.oecd.org/cfe/cities/UK-Core-Cities-PH-Final.pdf

Figure 3.1: Productivity with city size



Reproduced from 'Is London too successful?', Centre for Cities, 2021

Figure 3.2: Total GVA (£) per employee by select and grouped broad industry groups. Green cells show where each city is more productive than the UK average, and red where less productive

	All industries	Finance and insurance	Information & communication	Construction	Manufacturing	Transport & storage	Public sector	Professional services	Retail	Hospitality
Belfast	56,900	111,800	60,200	103,400	68,600	66,900	43,800	36,900	48,900	25,000
Birmingham	57,200	137,700	105,900	88,300	77,900	41,300	46,900	34,100	44,600	28,400
Bristol	63,200	116,200	66,700	85,500	79,200	49,000	46,300	62,100	45,200	20,700
Cardiff	56,200	148,300	73,600	79,700	87,900	36,900	42,500	32,600	34,900	21,000
Glasgow	54,200	120,600	73,800	62,300	73,800	46,800	46,200	32,500	39,000	23,600
Leeds	58,700	109,800	82,500	80,500	69,000	49,200	44,800	38,800	51,100	27,300
Liverpool	51,800	114,800	102,700	72,000	79,200	46,400	45,000	30,600	35,500	23,800
Manchester	57,200	126,200	78,700	81,300	78,400	44,600	47,100	39,700	41,900	26,600
Newcastle	50,100	96,000	76,400	72,700	71,200	45,000	40,500	37,100	34,600	20,600
Nottingham	54,900	116,700	65,700	72,400	68,200	36,500	44,200	44,200	42,900	21,600
Sheffield	49,700	91,000	68,100	77,200	55,700	36,500	45,800	32,100	35,800	18,300
London	90,700	226,000	116,100	114,700	79,400	71,400	55,900	68,300	55,300	40,500
UK Average	64,500	158,300	94,300	83,600	78,500	50,600	46,300	46,100	44,600	26,600

There are several potential drivers of this relative economic underperformance of the Core Cities. First, their economies tend to be skewed towards lower productivity and lower potential sectors. This is often linked to the shift from an industrial to service-based economy in the 1980s and 1990s, where the Core Cities struggled to identify and build strong economic specialisations in a fast-changing economy built around services rather than traditional manufacturing.⁵⁵

Deindustrialisation alone is not a sufficient explanation. Strikingly, productivity within sectors across the Core Cities is lower than the national average, which mainly reflects how far they are behind London on this metric (Figure 3.2).⁵⁶ Some of the Core Cities exhibit relatively low 'economic complexity' as we see in Figure 3.3, with all falling well short of inner London which dominates the right tail of the distribution. Economic complexity indices attempt to measure the types of industry in which

an area specialises, with a higher number representing more complex industries.⁵⁷ (More detail is given on the meaning and measurement of economic complexity in Box 2.2).

Figure 3.2 does offer some select green oases of stronger relative performance in the UK's Core Cities – for example, information and communication in Birmingham and Liverpool. Identifying these oases of opportunity is particularly important when we look to the future. Technology, digitisation and the imperatives of net zero and climate adaptation will create opportunities for the Core Cities to build new sectoral specialisations, if they move quickly and decisively. Many of these new sectors are also likely to benefit from cities' propensity for creativity, connectivity and cross-firm networks. For example, the technology sector is already disproportionately clustered in urban areas.⁵⁸

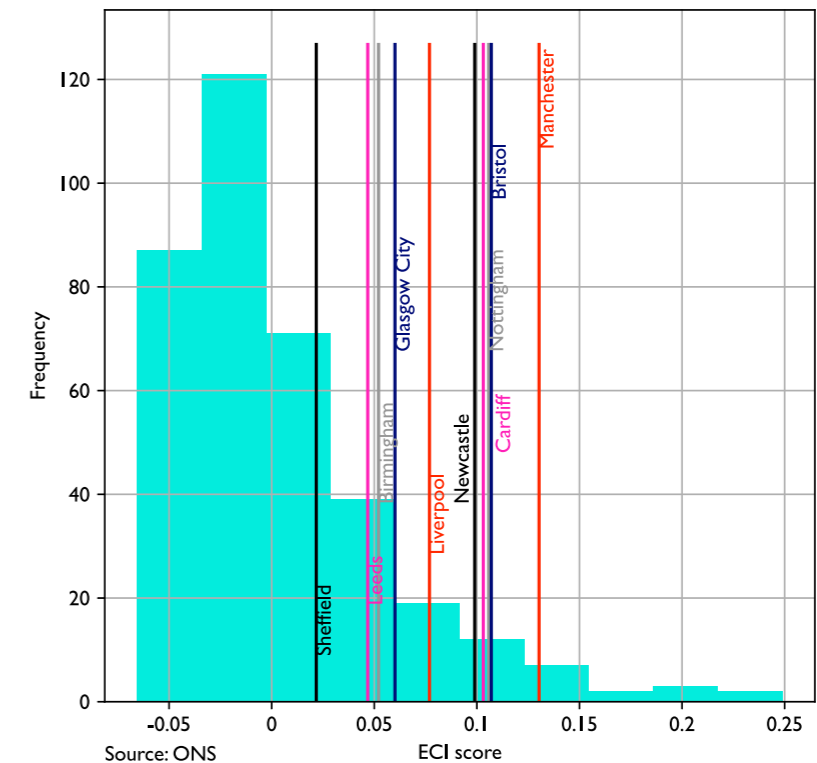
55 Ibid.

56 For a more detailed exploration of the relative roles of sector composition and within-sector productivity differences, see Productivity in towns and travel to work areas, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk), which shows that within-sector productivity explains more of the gap to London and the south east.

57 Coyle, D and Mealy, P (2021) op cit.

58 RTPI (2017) The Digital Economy and Town Planning: Planning's new role in the growth of the new economy. Available at: www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1960/digitaleconomytownplanning-practiceadvice2017.pdf

Figure 3.3: Economic complexity index (ECI) for the Core Cities



Source: ONS
Chart shows a calculator of ECI for each Local Authority in Great Britain, following the methodology in Coyle and Mealy (2021).

Transitioning our cities to the cutting edge of 21st century industries will require the right skills base. In this respect, the Core Cities have a lower starting point than London, as Figure 3.4 shows. While around three in five working-age adults in London are educated to degree-level or above, the equivalent figure hovers around two in five across seven of the Core Cities (though there is clear variation between the 11 cities).⁵⁹

As Anna Stansbury, Ed Balls and Dan Turner highlight in their recent paper,⁶⁰ this picture has improved in recent decades. Moreover, evidence suggests it may be a lower demand for graduates - due to a shortage of jobs in high value-add industries in the Core Cities - rather than the supply of sufficient graduates that is to blame. Either way, almost all of the Core Cities remain net exporters, rather than importers, of new graduates. While the picture is complex, this finding reinforces the need to identify and commit to promising future sectors as magnets for talent and skills, domestic and overseas.

Looking to future skills, Figure 3.5 highlights the expected impacts of automation both to create and displace jobs in the Core Cities' key sectors. These potential sectoral reallocations are large. While the degree of uncertainty around this type of exercise is high, it highlights the need for a strategic approach to reskilling and upskilling to ensure the future economy has the skills its needs to thrive and there is no further widening of inequalities between either socio-economic groups or different regions of the UK.⁶¹

As Chapter 1 discusses, realising cities' economic potential also relies on their ability to connect people, places and opportunities as efficiently as possible. Infrastructure within the Core Cities, both physical and digital, acts as a drag on this connectivity, thereby constraining the benefits of agglomeration. For example, while two thirds of people in comparable European cities can reach their city centre by public transport within 30 minutes, the equivalent figure in large UK cities is much lower, at only 40 percent.⁶²

Recent Centre for Cities research highlights just how critical good transport is for the positive spillover effects of city prosperity to the surrounding towns by linking them efficiently to better employment opportunities.⁶³ And while this speaks to connectivity within a city region, the same can be said for connections between our major cities too. Figures 3.6 and 3.7 highlight the lower frequency and efficiency of journeys outside of links to London, reducing the possibilities for regional, or indeed national, economic clusters.

Finally, the built environment of the Core Cities also tends to compound their economic underperformance. Few urban neighbourhoods in the UK exhibit the level of housing density found in other European cities.⁶⁴ This inflates both journey times and costs, reducing the benefits of agglomeration and scale. Sparser populations also make it harder to demonstrate returns to investment when building new routes, compounding the existing advantage in better connected places like London and the south east (Figures 2.6 and 2.7).

Figure 3.4: The distribution of skills across the Core Cities and London

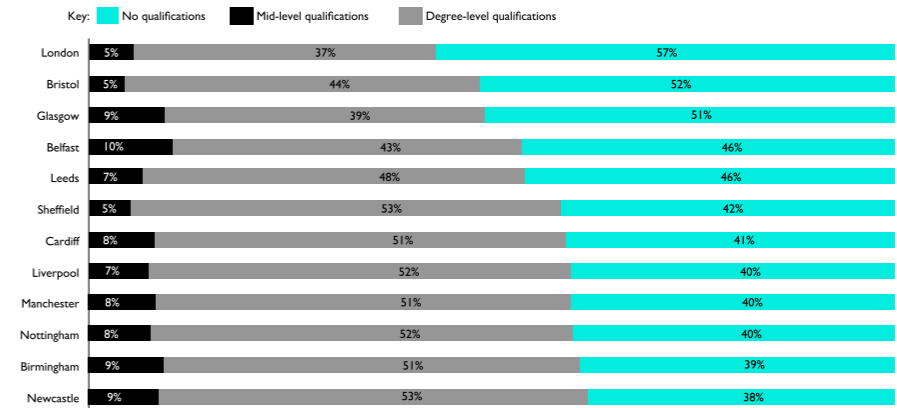


Figure 3.5: Estimated net employment effects of automation and AI by industry, 2018-40

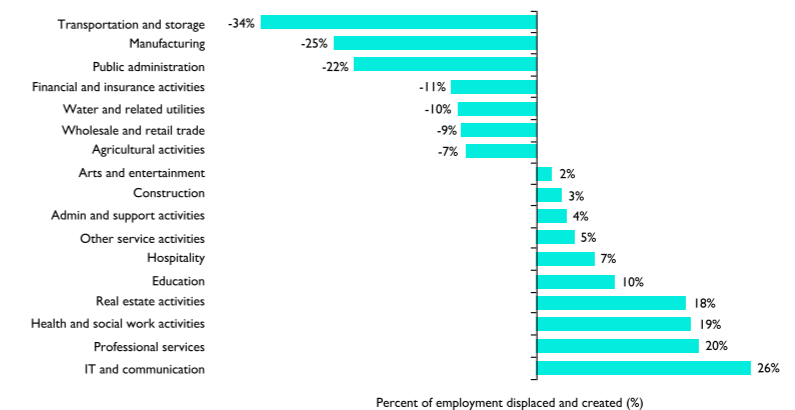


Figure 3.6: Number of journeys between the Core Cities and between the Core Cities and London (thickness of line corresponds with frequency of journeys)

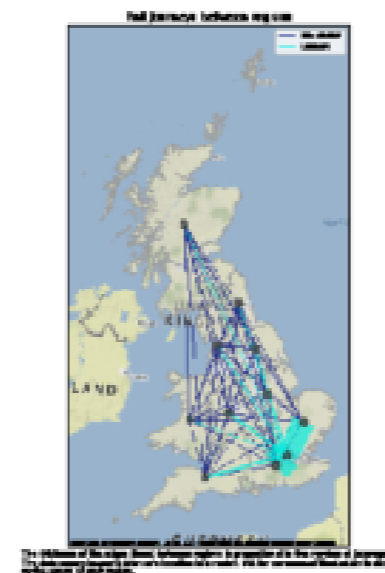
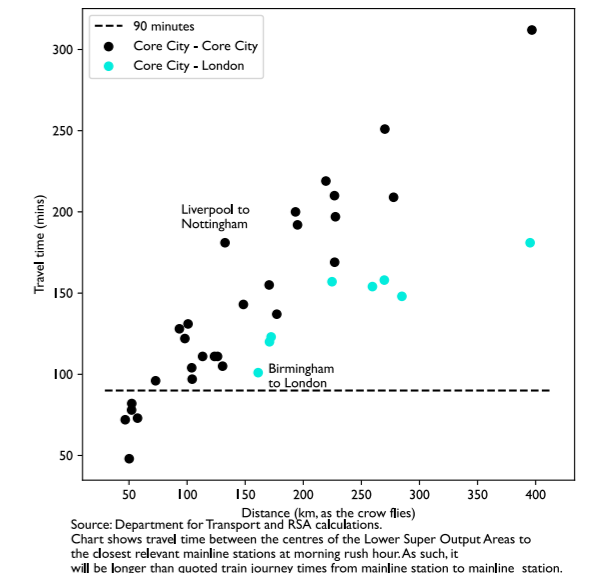


Figure 3.7: Journey times between the Core Cities, and between the Core Cities and London



59 Graduates make up 38 percent of the working age population in Newcastle but 52 percent in Bristol; those with no qualifications make up 10 percent in Belfast but only 5 percent in Sheffield.
 60 Stansbury, A, Turner, D and Balls, E (2023) Tackling the UK's regional economic inequality: Binding constraints and avenues for policy intervention. M-RCBG Associate Working Paper Series.
 61 Centre for Cities (2018) The rise of the robots could compound Britain's North/South divide – with 1 in 4 jobs at risk in cities outside the South. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/press/rise-robots-compound-britains-northsouth-divide-1-4-jobs-risk-cities-outside-south/

62 This is estimated to cost the UK economy around £23bn a year in lost output.
 63 Centre for Cities (2023) Does trickle out work? [online] Available at: www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Does-trickle-out-work-September-2023.pdf
 64 Bessis, H (2018). Is increasing density the answer to the land squeeze in successful cities?. [online] Available at: www.centreforcities.org/blog/increasing-density-answer-land-squeeze-successful-cities/; Quinio V and Rodrigues, G (2021). Net zero: decarbonising the city. [online] Available at: www.centreforcities.org/publication/net-zero-decarbonising-the-city/

Cities face persistent inequality, poor health and disconnected communities

The Core Cities have concentrations of income deprivation and pockets of poor health outcomes (Figures 3.8 and 3.9). Social and economic outcomes tend to reinforce one another here: deprivation and inequality have well-documented scarring effects for both individuals and for the economy, including through lower education and skills attainment and reduced productivity and income.^{65,66,67,68} The relationship between quality of work and health is also two-directional, with stressful, insecure and sedentary work also driving many health issues.⁶⁹ Figure 3.10 shows how levels of income inequality correlate with rates of health deprivation in the Core Cities.⁷⁰

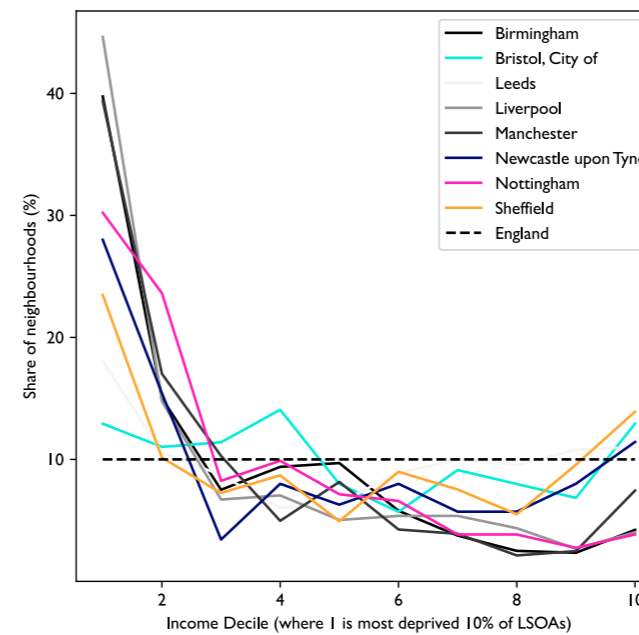
The availability and quality of housing is another key dimension of socio-economic problems in the Core Cities. Levels of poverty and inequality intersect with a chronic shortage of housing in many UK cities.⁷¹ The failure to build and densify houses drives up costs and drives down the quality of housing, forcing less advantaged city residents into lower quality housing or cheaper housing further away from the city centre, with associated higher commuting costs. In 2020, 28.8 percent of UK city centre housing was deemed

'non-decent'.⁷² This in turn reinforces cities' issues with health and wellbeing, both mental and physical.⁷³

After interventions to tackle the wider determinants of poor health, cities' public services are their next line of defence. But not only have there been significant national cuts to local services (including to the Public Health Grant which funds key preventative health services⁷⁴) over the past decade, these have been shouldered disproportionately by cities (as we see later in Figure 3.20 below). This has added to pressures on the least advantaged citizens within cities.

Similar trends to public services can also be observed in patterns of investment in social and cultural infrastructure, such as youth services or museums, theatres and galleries. These are known to be supportive of both individual and community wellbeing, health and a sense of pride in place.⁷⁵ Flat or falling local authority budgets have been consumed, to an increasing degree, by statutory service provision in areas such as health and social care. That, in turn, has led to significant cuts to local spending on the arts⁷⁶ and community assets like youth centres.⁷⁷ Such social infrastructure is also often undervalued in private-led regeneration efforts.⁷⁸ This depletion of social infrastructure, social connectivity and ultimately social capital is a national phenomenon, but one felt acutely by the UK's Core Cities.

Figure 3.8: Share of English Core City neighbourhoods in national income deciles



Source: ONS Indices of Deprivation

Figure 3.9: Share of English Core City neighbourhoods in national health deprivation deciles

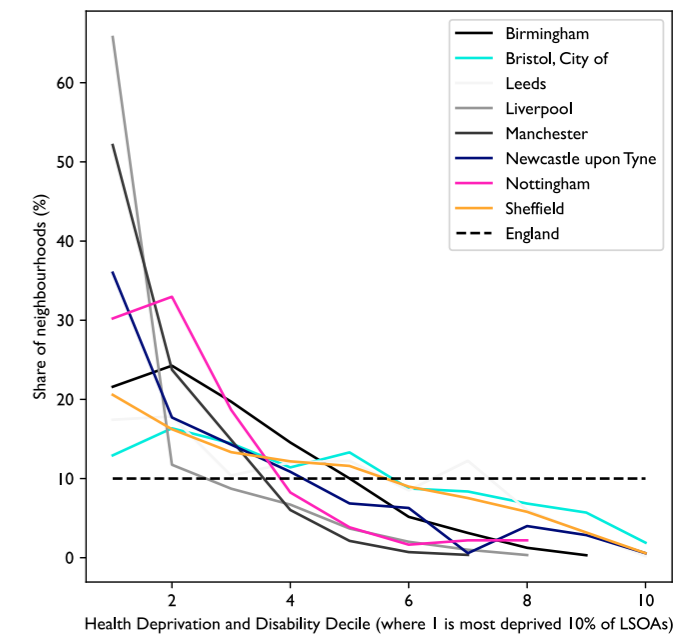
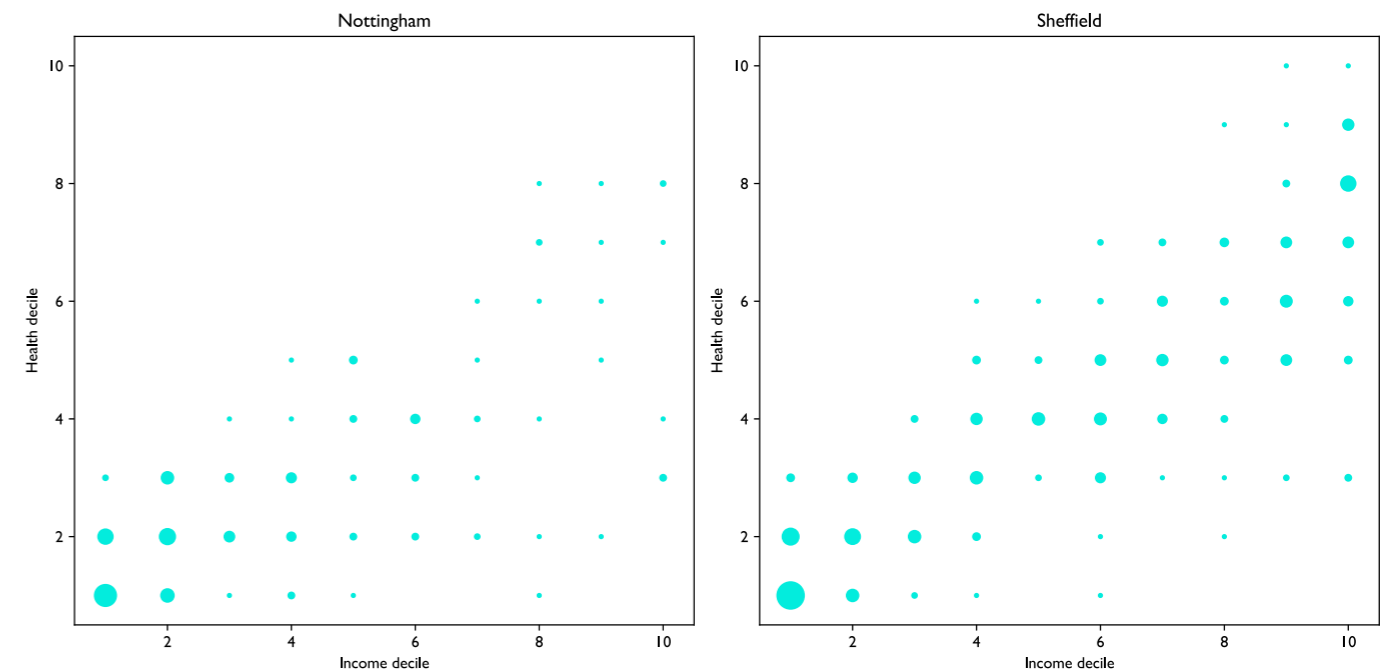


Figure 3.10: Correlation of income and health outcomes



Source: ONS Indices of Deprivation. The areas of the circles are proportionate to the number of LSOAs in each pair of income and health deciles.

72 Marmot, M et al (2020) Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On. Available at: www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on

73 Ibid.

74 The Health Foundation (2023) The Public Health Grant [online] Available at: www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/public-health-grant-what-it-is-and-why-greater-investment-is-needed

75 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2022) Reimagining where we live: Cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda. Available at: committees.parliament.uk/publications/31429/documents/176244/default/

76 Core Cities (2019) Cultural Cities Enquiry. Available at: www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20%5Bweb%5D.pdf

77 Gregory, D (2019), Skittled Out? The collapse and revival of England's social infrastructure. Available at: localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/local_trust_skittled_out_essay.pdf

78 Shaw, J et al (2022) Townscapes: Pride in Place, Bennett Institute for Public Policy.

65 Pickett, K and Wilkinson, R (2010) The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone. Penguin UK.

66 Hallaert, J, Vassileva, I and Chen, T (2023) Rising Child Poverty in Europe: Mitigating the Scarring from the COVID-19 Pandemic. IMF Working Papers.

67 OECD (2015) In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All, OECD Publishing, Paris.

68 Cingano, F (2014) Trends in income inequality and its impact on economic growth. OECD SEM Working Paper No. 163. Paris: OECD.

69 Marmot, M et al (2020) Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On. Available at: www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on; Myerson, J (2016) Cities and Health. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509931/future-of-cities-health.pdf

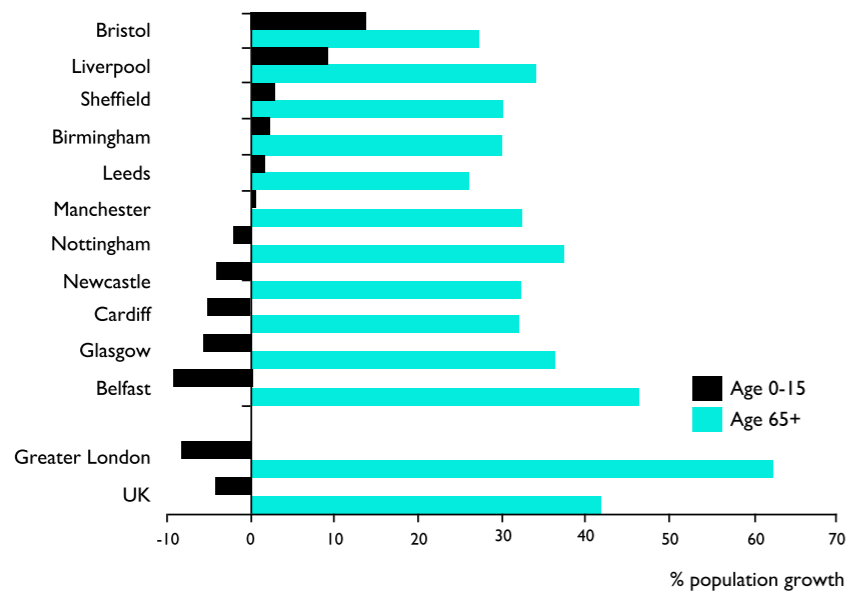
70 A composite indicator comprising premature death, rates of illness and disability, and mood/anxiety disorders, among others.

71 Centre for Cities (2023), The Housebuilding Crisis [online]. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/publication/the-housebuilding-crisis/

While urban populations generally skew younger than the country as a whole, the Core Cities will still be affected by an ageing population. As we see in Figure 3.11, all of the Core Cities will see a sharp increase in the elderly population (albeit smaller than the UK average in all but Belfast) alongside smaller increases, or even decreases, in the younger population. This will in turn place even greater pressures

on local health and social care services, as well as testing their affordability through a higher dependency ratio. Cities will need to find ways to keep their populations healthier and active for longer to offset these risks and harvest the benefits of an experienced, longer-lived working population.

Figure 3.11: Forecast population change (%) between 2018-40



Source: ONS, 2020. 2018-based subnational principal population projections for local authorities.

Cities are degrading their natural environment

Chapter 1 highlights cities' unique contribution to the environment, housing and transporting large numbers of people in energy-efficient ways. However, that potential to do good is not being maximised across the UK's cities. And the failure to do so will take on increasing seriousness and urgency over the coming years given trends in temperature rises and reduced biodiversity.

The UK's cities are not as dense as their European counterparts, in ways which limit not only their economic potential but also their potential to reduce emissions from housing and transport.⁷⁹ The low

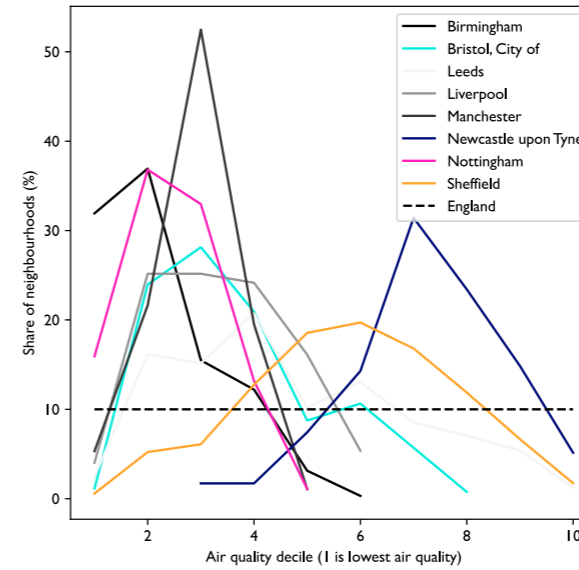
density 'urban sprawl' that characterises the suburbs of many UK cities expands their footprint, makes their residents more dependent on cars and other transport and drives up air pollution.⁸⁰ Figure 3.12 shows a significant share of Core City neighbourhoods in the bottom half of the distribution for air quality. The annual mortality rate from air pollution in the UK – around 28,000 to 36,000 deaths a year – and its estimated costs to the NHS and social care - £1.6bn – put this into stark perspective.⁸¹ In addition, Figure 3.13 shows that a large proportion of the urban

79 Quinio, V and Rodrigues, G (2021) Net zero: decarbonising the city, Centre for Cities. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/reader/net-zero-decarbonising-the-city/cities-need-to-become-denser-to-achieve-net-zero/

80 Rodrigues, G and Breach, A (2021) Measuring up: Comparing public transport in the UK and Europe's biggest cities, Centre for Cities. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/reader/measuring-up-comparing-public-transport-uk-europe-cities/introduction/

81 CBI Economics (2020) Breathing life into the UK economy: Quantifying the economic benefits of cleaner air. Clean Air Fund. Available at: www.cleanairfund.org/resource/breathing-life-into-the-uk-economy-cbi-economics-

Figure 3.12: Share of Core City neighbourhoods in national air quality deciles



Source: ONS English Indices of Deprivation

housing stock is energy-inefficient (shown here as the proportion of properties with an energy efficiency rating lower than C), with associated retrofit costs.

The land and resource needs of growing urban populations also threaten biodiversity and green space. UK planning approaches have often privileged developing greenfield land over re-developing and densifying central brownfield sites.⁸² This has led to thousands of hectares of wetlands and woodlands being built on each year.⁸³ Green space in urban areas declined from 63 percent to 55 percent between 2001 and 2018.⁸⁴ Figure 3.14 visualises these trends using satellite data. Given the increased likelihood of heat shocks and flooding, the loss of these green spaces adds to these risks.

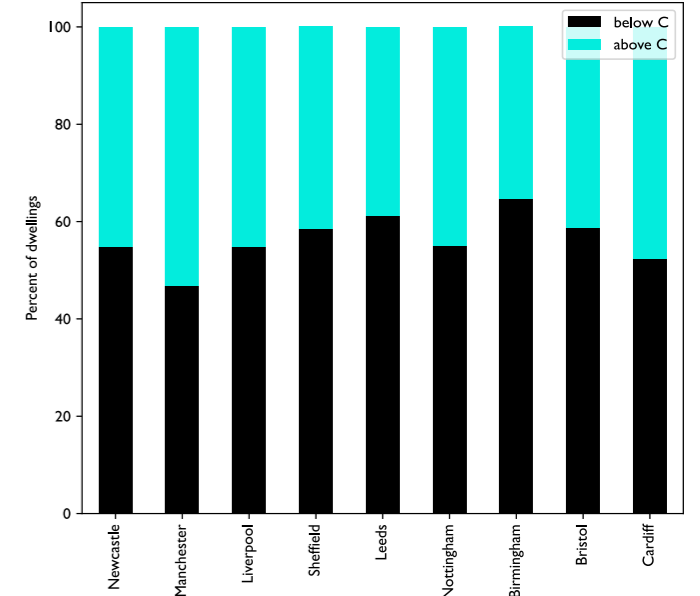
Extreme weather will affect the Core

82 Quinio, V and Rodrigues, G (2021) op cit.

83 Environment Agency, Chief Scientist's Group. (2021). The state of the environment: the urban environment. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/the-state-of-the-environment-the-urban-environment

84 Committee on Climate Change. (2019). UK housing: fit for the future?

Figure 3.13: Share of dwellings with energy efficiency rating below C for Core Cities in England and Wales



Source: ONS dataset using DLUC and VOA data.

Cities in different ways depending on their geographical characteristics. Some indicative impacts are summarised in Figure 3.14. While western cities may experience greater precipitation, those in the south are more likely to experience heat and water shortages. Adaptation will require more space and vegetation, to cool cities through shade or flood risks through water absorption.⁸⁵ These ecological investments would have social and economic, as well as ecological, benefits. Access to green and blue spaces, including those with higher levels of biodiversity,⁸⁶ has well-evidenced positive effects on residents' wellbeing and health.⁸⁷ And lower temperatures in cities would deliver benefits in improved activity and productivity.⁸⁸

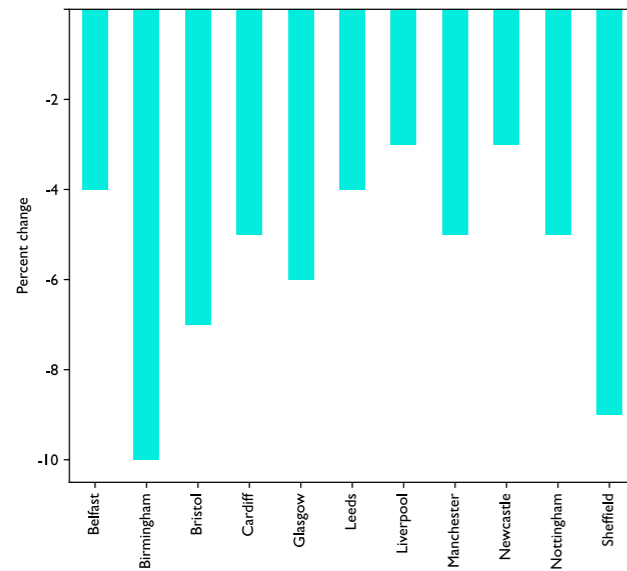
85 Holmes, G (2018) Climate change: the future of UK cities, Climate Change Committee. Available at: www.theccc.org.uk/2018/01/04/uk-cities-climate-change/

86 Wood, E and others (2018) Not all green space is created equal: biodiversity predicts psychological restorative benefits from urban green space. Frontiers in Psychology 27 November 2018.

87 Weber, AM and Trojan, J (2018) The Restorative Value of the Urban Environment: A Systematic Review of the Existing Literature Environmental Health Insights. doi:10.1177/1178630218812805

88 In London alone, the July 2022 heatwave saw 74 percent of the usual daytime workers in the capital.

Figure 3.13a: Decline in green space 1990-2023



Source: OptimalCities
Chart shows the change in green space from 1990 to 2023 within the Primary Urban Area. Calculated by OptimalCities, using analysis of satellite data.

Figure 3.14: Climate risk by Core City and risk type (low to high)

Climate Risk	Belfast	Birmingham	Bristol	Cardiff	Glasgow	Leeds	Liverpool	Manchester	Newcastle	Nottingham	Sheffield
Surface Water Flooding	High	Medium	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Coastal Flooding	High	Medium	High	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Heat-wave risk	Low	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Impact of heat islands	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Medium	Low	High	High
Drought risk	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Source: PwC analysis of various sources											
High	Medium	Low	N/A								

Box 3.1: The nested systems at play in our cities

This chapter has highlighted some of the key points of interplay between the nested economic, social and environmental systems in cities. For example, a weak and imbalanced economy causes negative spillovers into the social system in the form of inequality and ill-health, and in the ecological system through increasing pollution and declining green space and biodiversity.

The three systems in a microcosm: the ‘effective size’ of cities

The example of UK’s cities’ relatively low density encapsulates how these systems interact in practice. A sparsely distributed population, poorly connected by public transport, can lead to:

- An inability to access, sort and match people, skills and opportunities efficiently, limiting the economic returns from agglomeration (economic).
- Disconnection of residents from one another, as well as from amenities, jobs and opportunities, contributing to a lack of social mobility, cohesion and connection (social).

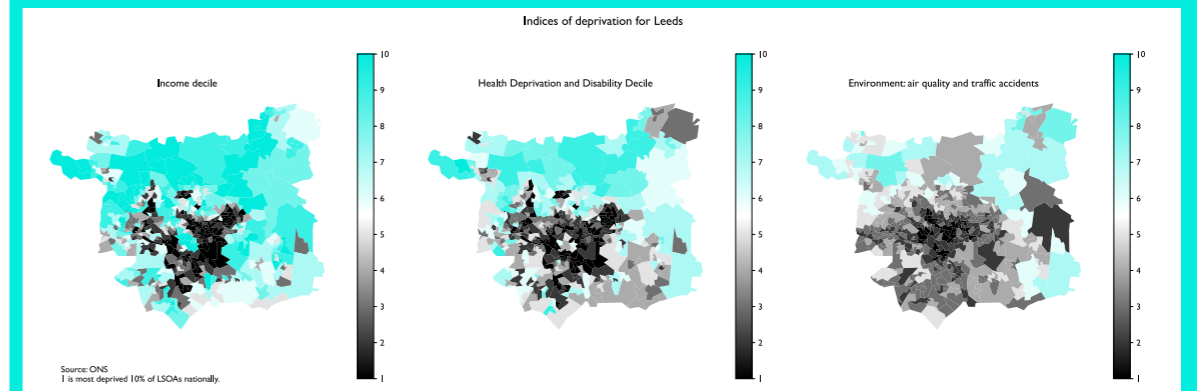
- Energy inefficiency and car dependency, by driving up emissions and air pollution, as well as pre-existing degradation of natural habitats by developing new – rather than densifying existing – land for housing (ecological).

In turn, areas of lower density feel the effects of the mutual interaction between these issues: lower incomes (from fewer opportunities), higher costs (from transport or access to amenities) and worse health outcomes (from pollution, inactivity or deprivation).

Spatial patterning of outcomes

These patterns of clustering can be seen at the local and hyper-local level in many of the UK’s cities. In the chart below (Figure 3.14a), the spatial distribution of income (economic), health (social) and air quality (ecological) show a striking degree of overlap in one particular city (Leeds).

Figure 3.14a: Spatial clustering of social, economic and ecological outcomes in Leeds



What is holding our cities back?

Despite their significant assets, and even greater potential, the available data suggests at present our cities have lower stores of economic, social and natural capital than is needed to reach their full, regenerative potential. In some cases, those stores are actively being eroded in ways that create negative spillovers into the other systems – for example, with an imbalanced economy driving poor health and wellbeing outcomes for citizens or declining green space presenting risks to future economic resilience.

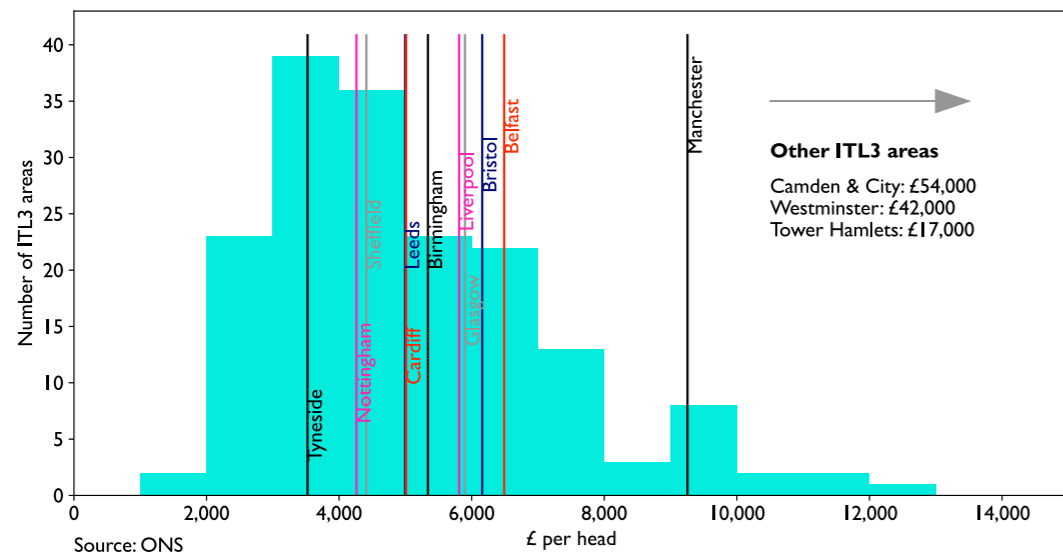
Each of the Core Cities has their own unique version of this story. But there are some common denominators explaining this failure to invest adequately in the economic, social and natural capital within our cities.

These include:

- Prioritising short-term solutions and book-balancing over longer-term growth, dynamism and resilience.
- Giving insufficient consideration to cities’ natural, social and economic systems, either individually and/or especially collectively.
- Accordingly, failing to provide sufficient investment, appropriately balanced across these three nested systems.

It is easiest to illustrate these points from an economic perspective through ONS data on patterns of investment (gross fixed capital formation or GFCF) across the Core Cities. Investment in economic forms of capital, such as buildings, machinery and even knowledge, matters because it is used to produce services or goods more efficiently, increasing productivity.

Figure 3.15: Investment per capita between Core Cities and rest of UK



Investment accumulates over time adding to the stock of economic capital, and it follows that underinvestment leads to deficits in capital stocks constraining cities' productive capacity.

Disparities in investment across the UK, and in particular its cities, are well established. They represent a policy challenge that lies at the heart of the Levelling Up agenda. Figure 3.15 shows investment per head in the Core Cities, relative to each other and compared to other parts of the UK. The teal histogram shows the distribution of investment per head of population across ITL3 areas,⁸⁹ while the stalks show the figures for the Core Cities. Levels of investment in the Core Cities pale in comparison to certain parts of London and the south east. For example, Camden's £54,000 investment per head is more than 15 times Tyneside's £3,525 per head. Investment even differs significantly across the UK's Core Cities, with Manchester's investment per head, at £9,250, over 2.5 times that of Tyneside's. Given the relationship between investment and productivity, it is unsurprising that a similar pattern exists across the UK for GVA per head, although the differences are not as stark.

⁸⁹ International Territorial Level 3. This is a statistical geography that is the successor to NUTS3 regions. It comprises small groups of local authorities and so is in general larger than the local authority for each Core City, but smaller than the primary urban area.

The composition of investment is as important as the quantity. Figure 3.16 shows how investment across all the UK's Core Cities is distributed by category, from education to construction. Investment is heavily skewed towards real estate. While real estate investments are valuable, housing businesses and people, resilient, regenerative cities rely on investment in a more diverse range of economic assets (not to mention across social and ecological systems as well). For example, within the economic sphere, there is growing evidence that acquiring knowledge (or 'intangible') assets, through conducting research or purchasing software, is key for driving higher productivity.⁹⁰

A comparison with French and German cities helps put the investment story for UK cities into context. French and German cities average around £14,500 of investment per head of population, compared to £9,500 for the Core Cities. Figure 3.17 shows the extent of skew of investment towards real-estate in UK cities compared to European peers. Considered alongside data showing UK cities are less productive than these peers (Figure 3.1), this adds to the weight of evidence suggesting the quantum and mix of economic investment in UK cities is sub-optimal.

⁹⁰ Becker, M and Martin, J (2023) New insights on regional capital investment in the UK, 1997 to 2019. Productivity Insights Paper No 016, The Productivity Institute.

Figure 3.16: Composition of investment in the Core Cities (2016-20) by category

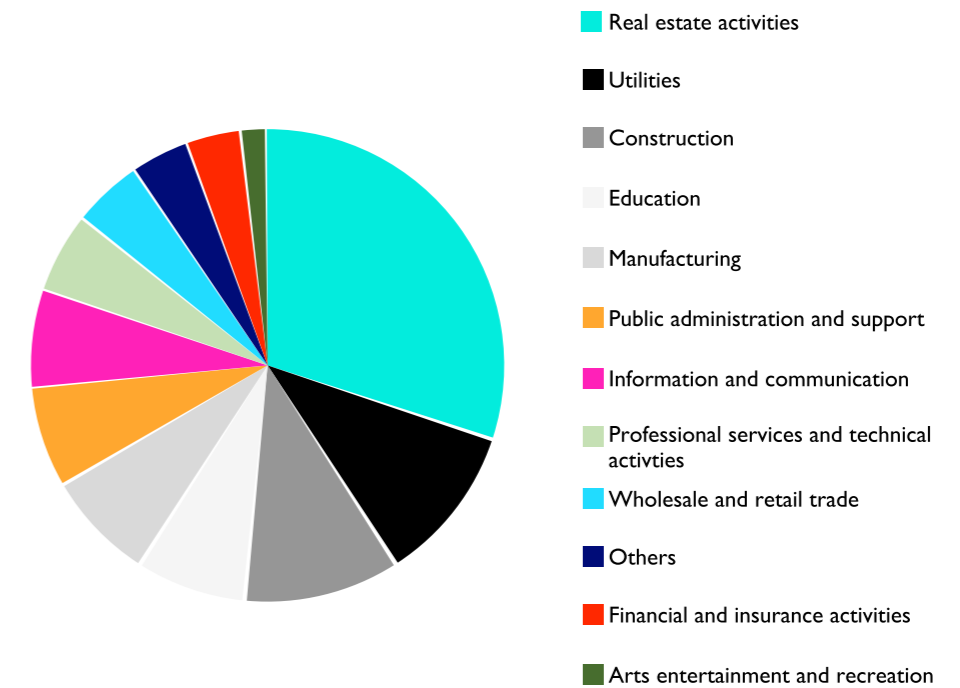
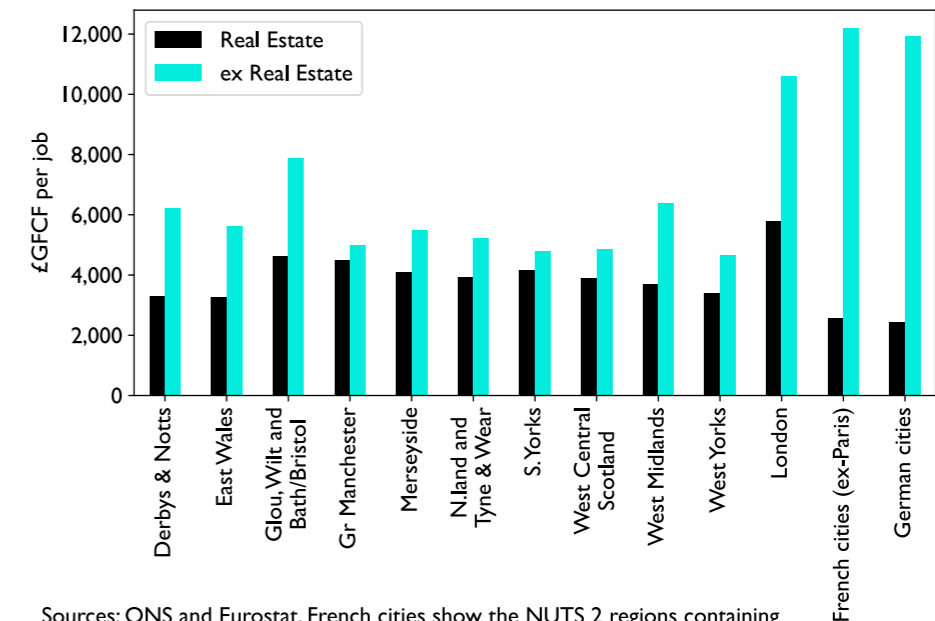


Figure 3.17: Investment per job – Core City regions vs French and German comparators (with and without real-estate)



Sources: ONS and Eurostat. French cities show the NUTS 2 regions containing the top 8 cities by population after Paris. German cities show NUTS 2 regions for the top 10 cities by population. Investment is GFCF for all sectors. London combines the two NUTS2 regions of Inner London.

There is substantially less focus on investment in non-economic capital as drivers of unrealised potential across the UK's Core Cities. In large part, this is because accounting frameworks and data across social and natural capital are less well evolved. This means we can only paint a partial picture of capital stocks across the nested systems.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) measures social capital across four categories:⁹¹ personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement and trust and cooperative norms. From a spatial perspective, the sample sizes of surveys are not large enough to support mapping social capital on a city-by-city basis (except for London). However, Figure 3.18 captures the headline measure for each category across several types of area on an aggregated basis. It shows that urban areas (and especially London) underperform on some measures relative to rural areas in particular; a pattern that is replicated in the more detailed underlying metrics. Nevertheless, it is the absolute levels of the metrics that are more striking, with around a third of people not thinking that others can be trusted or meeting friends or family at least once a week, and a quarter feeling they don't have people who would be there for them if they needed help. This suggests that there is a deficit in social capital in our cities, and rectifying this starts with making it a higher priority than is currently the case.

The ONS has made significant progress in setting up a natural capital framework, but like social capital, it is a lot earlier in its evolution than the measurement of economic capital.⁹² The accounts are complex, using 275 datasets from 67 different providers, however these data are only consistently available at the

91 Office for National Statistics (2022) Social Capital in the UK: April 2020 to March 2021. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/socialcapitalintheuk/april2020tomarch2021

92 Office for National Statistics (2022) National capital accounts roadmap: 2022. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/naturalcapitalaccountsroadmap/2022

national level, so it is not possible to paint a consolidated spatial picture of our natural health. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern some insights from the accounts. Figure 3.19a shows the mix of provisioning services⁹³ flowing from the UK's natural capital stock. Where this was once heavily dependent on fossil fuels, it has moved more towards renewables in recent years. Figure 3.19b shows a breakdown of the number of people gaining health benefits from recreation in different environments, which is a key contribution to the cultural services flowing from the UK's natural capital. It highlights the importance of the urban environment, due to the large number of people that use natural spaces in urban centres for recreation.

Drawing on the mantra of 'what gets measure gets managed', the underdevelopment of social and economic capital frameworks relative to the economic sphere is symptomatic of insufficient value being attached to these systems historically. It tallies with the fragmented pieces of evidence presented earlier in this chapter that suggest comparatively low and unevenly distributed investment in non-economic capital in the UK's cities over time.

However, understanding why investment has been low and imbalanced requires us to identify the underlying drivers. The Commission's work points to three key barriers.

Short-termism

The UK's cities have been buffeted by repeated changes in both national and regional policy, in particular, around funding arrangements. Figure 3.20 highlights frequent shifts and reversals over the last 60 years, but with increasing regularity

93 The ONS classified the 'services' provided by the UK's natural capital stock to society into three categories. 'Provisioning services' are products from nature, such as energy, food and water; 'regulating services' help to maintain the quality of the environment, such as by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere; and 'cultural services' cover the non-essential benefits accruing from nature, such as to our health, recreation and aesthetic experience.

Figure 3.18: Headline ONS social capital measures for urban areas relative to benchmarks

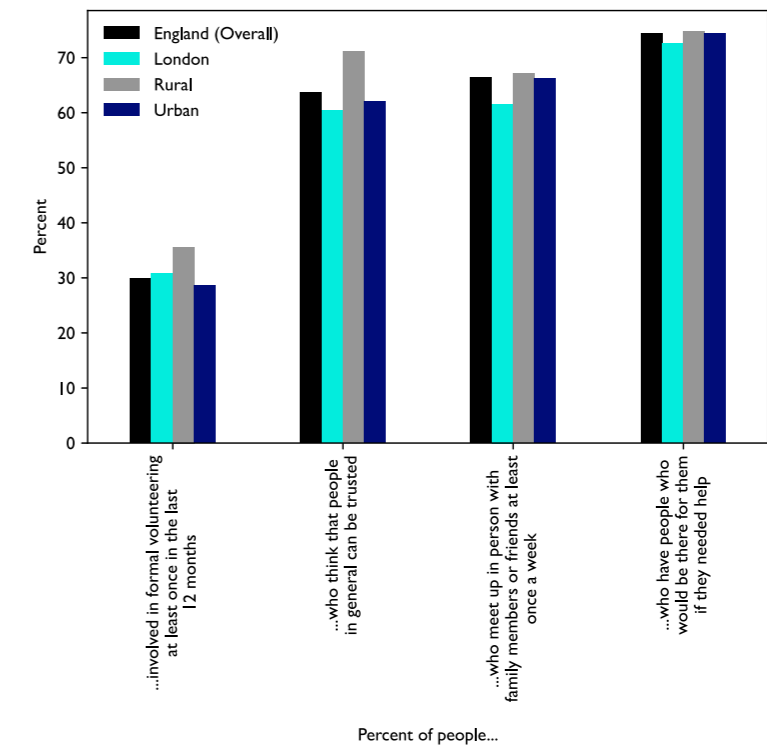


Figure 3.19a: Provisioning services from the UK's natural capital stock

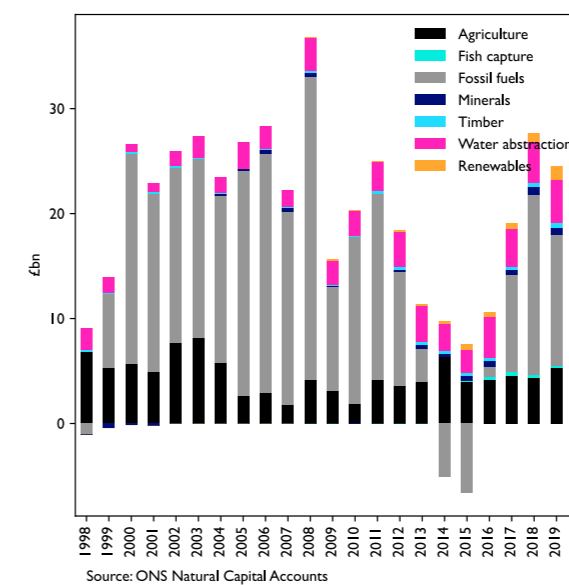
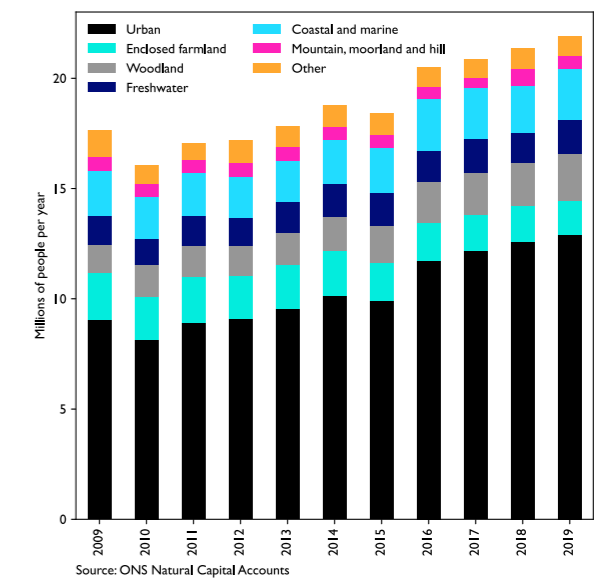


Figure 3.19b: Number of people receiving health benefits from recreation, by environment



over the past 10.⁹⁴. This has made it difficult for cities to anchor themselves in a long-term strategy and line up resources and delivery mechanisms accordingly. The UK's approach to industrial strategy, especially at the local level, is a clear example of this policy churn. This churn is inimical to long-term investment.

UK policy has tended to operate in silos, failing to integrate for example the ecological, social and economic dimensions of policy. Currently, industrial strategy – characterised by five 'high growth sectors' – is distinct from the mission to achieve net zero by 2050 which is in turn distinct from the Levelling Up missions.⁹⁵ This is not just a problem at national level. Siloed thinking and political churn within city leadership can also be a problem at the sub-national level.

Balanced investment across the three systems also requires a step-change in measurement. At both national and local levels, and despite rapid progress over recent years, the social and natural dimensions of investment are not well understood or measured, certainly relative to their economic and financial counterparts. Certain forms of economic capital are also better understood than others – for example, physical infrastructure or financial assets relative to intangible assets like patents and copyrights. And what is measured well tends also to be managed well or at least more actively, attracting greater amounts of attention and investment. None of this is easy to shift without an investment in capability and capacity at the local level. One Core City shared that they have less than one staff member on a full-time equivalent basis dedicated to economic analysis.

Inadequate powers and tools for delivery

Cities being able to play their full role in any plan for the UK's regeneration relies on the powers and tools to do so. As is well recognised, the UK is one of the most centralised countries in the developed world in terms of local areas' ability to make decisions about policy and to raise and distribute the necessary resources (as we see in Figure 3.21). Central government allocates around 80 percent of local funding within England and – owing in particular to legal requirements around delivering services such as social care – exerts significant control over how that money is spent in place.

Not only do cities have limited influence over the resources at their disposal, but what discretionary funding they can direct has been squeezed over time. Cities shouldered a disproportionate burden of the cuts in local government spending in the 2010s: 74 percent of total local government cuts compared to their 55 percent share of the population⁹⁶. (see Figure 3.22). Rising demands among legally mandated services added to these pressures. Figure 3.23 highlights the high and rising share of spending these services now occupy. Where other funding is awarded, it is often short-term, ring-fenced or comes from bid-based grant pots like the Levelling Up Fund. The very act of bidding for these pots is expensive, with an estimated £27m spent by local authorities on Levelling Up related funds alone.⁹⁷ This approach also tends to advantage already well-resourced councils.

Figure 3.20: Simplified timeline of major UK industrial policy developments (taken from Coyle and Muhtar, 2021)

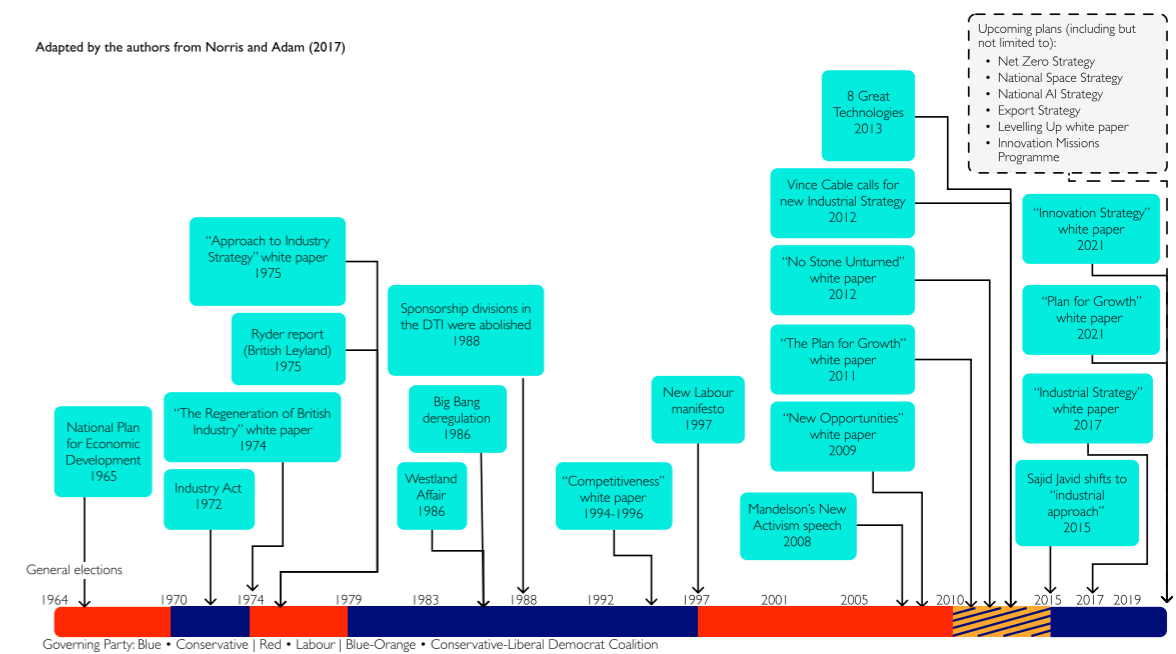
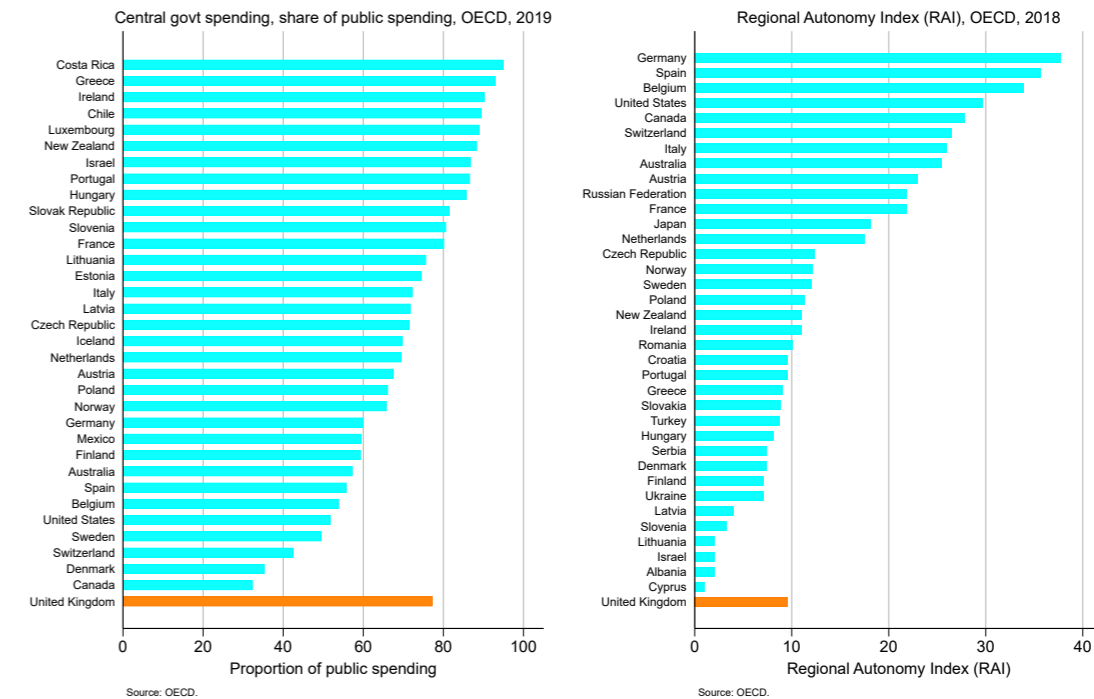


Figure 3.21: UK fiscal and political centralisation



94 Coyle, D and Muhtar, A (2021) UK's industrial policy: Learning from the past? UK's Industrial Policy: Learning from the past? Available at: www.productivity.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PIP002-UKs-Industrial-Policy-Learning-from-the-Past-FINAL-v2.pdf

95 Wilkes, G (2023) Rishi Sunak should drop his apologetic approach to an industrial strategy, Institute for Government. Available at: www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/comment/rishi-sunak-industrial-strategy

96 Centre for Cities (2019) Cities Outlook 2019. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/reader/cities-outlook-2019/a-decade-of-austerity/

97 LocalGov (2023). Councils spend millions on levelling up bids, new figures show. Available at: www.localgov.co.uk/Councils-spend-millions-on-levelling-up-bids-new-figures-show/55395. Largely reflecting expenses incurred by hiring in external consultants, and not including many of the indirect costs of Local Authority officers' time and trade-off with other work.

Figure 3.22: Change in total spending on a per capita basis (2009-10 to 2017-18, 2017-18 prices), cities vs rest of Britain⁹⁹.

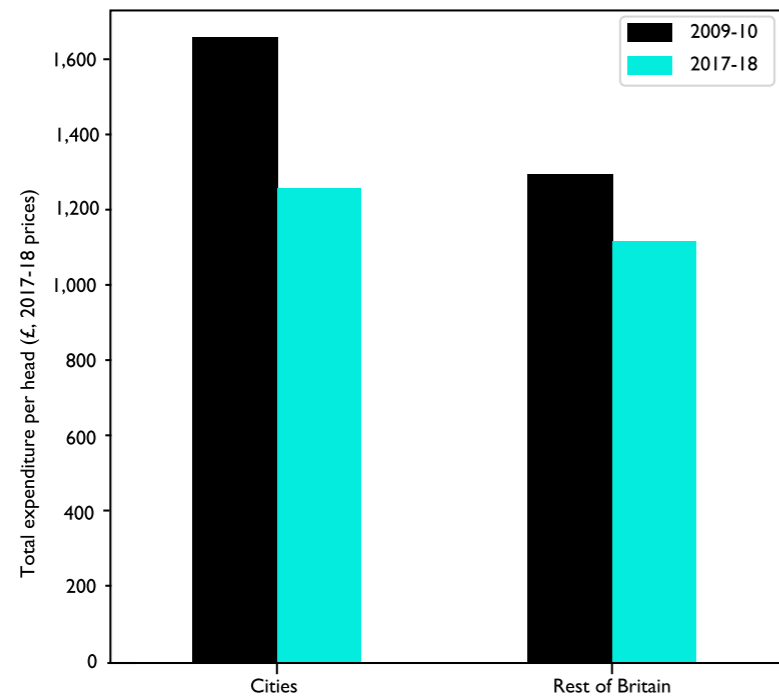
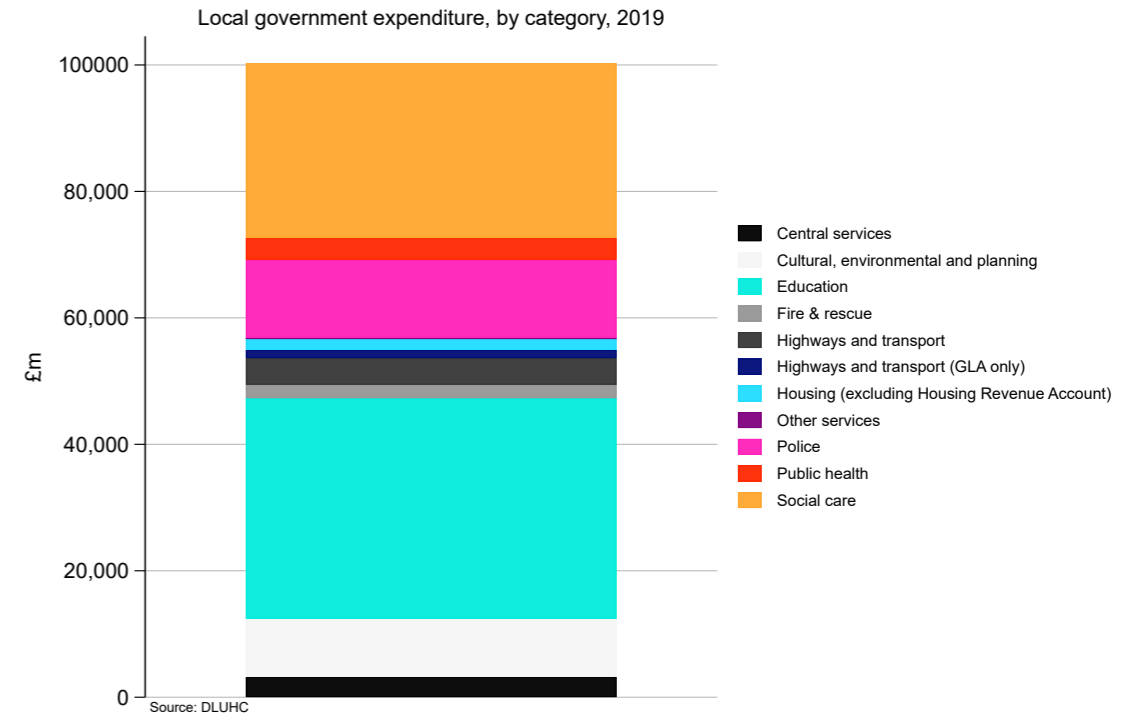


Figure 3.23: UK local government spending, by category



One of the side-effects of these financial pressures has been to cut councils' 'back-office' capabilities, from strategy and analysis through to delivery functions like finance, procurement and programme management. These are the functions which might enable cities to develop and deliver on a plan to grow their assets and build their long-term resilience. The incentives to do so are also blunted when rising tax revenues from a regenerating economy or improved health or educational outcomes are captured nationally rather than locally.

There have been recent examples of irresponsible local government borrowing and spending.⁹⁸ But these are in some ways a symptom of a broader problem, with many of these debts taken out to finance purchases of retail and commercial properties in a bid to improve council

revenues (see Figure 3.16). Without access to more diverse income streams, it is not surprising to see some local authorities pursuing narrow portfolios of riskier investments. And some of the resulting responses from national government - for example, tightening Public Works Loan Board lending guidance for local authorities or reducing DLUHC's capital spending powers - could, in the longer term, compound these problems.

A more resilient and regionally balanced approach to the UK's future will almost inevitably require local leaders having greater room for fiscal manoeuvre. It will require a re-setting of the relationship between central and local government to allow greater local self-determination and self-financing. The trailblazer devolution deals recently agreed with the Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities, and their associated single financial settlement model, are indicative of the needed direction of travel, if not the final destination.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ For example, OBR issued a warning in their 2023 Fiscal Risks and Sustainability Report around over increases in local authority debt - from £77bn to £96bn - to the Public Works Loan Board since 2019. See more here: obr.uk/docs/dlm/uploads/Fiscal_risks_and_sustainability_report_July_2023.pdf

Access to funding and finance on the scale required

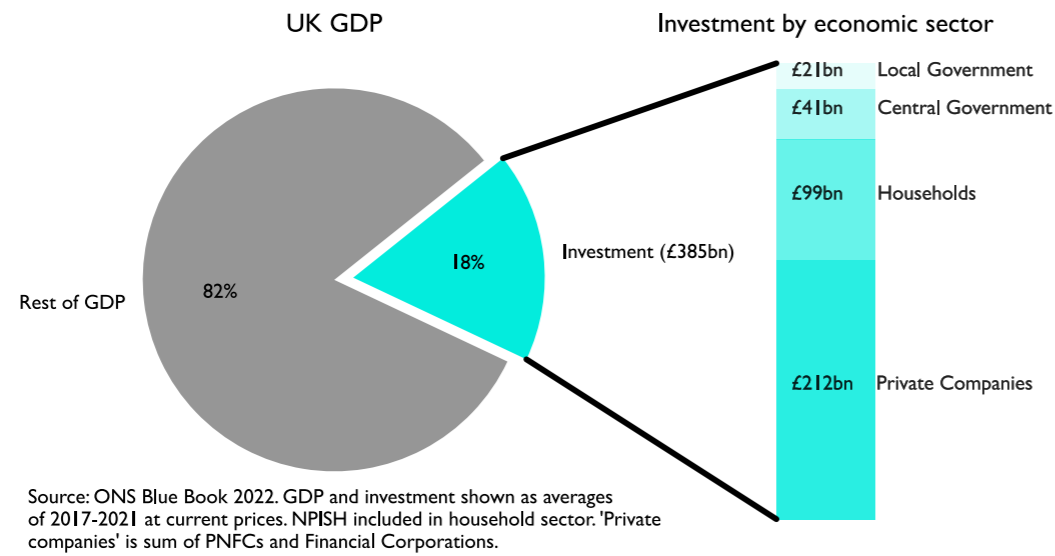
The two previous barriers hinder city leaders' abilities to deploy the funding they have and to crowd-in private investment to meaningfully regenerate their places. It is worth noting the significant role private capital currently plays - and the greater role it will need to play in future - in cities' regeneration. As Figure 3.24 shows, private investment (£311bn) significantly outweighs public sector investment (£62bn), by a factor of five. That said, public and private financing are often intimately connected, with public monies providing the anchor financing for large-scale projects from which private capital then flows to filling any financing gap.

The way public funding is allocated centrally, however, can sometimes inhibit this approach to local financing. Of the revenue funding that does reach local government, this often bears little resemblance to places' economic needs, much less their ecological and social needs or potential. The formulae that determine funding allocations to different local authorities is over 10 years out of

date. As Figure 3.25 shows, this correlates poorly with need, at least as measured by deprivation.

Similar issues arise in the distribution of capital spending for longer-term investment. At the local level, this capital allocation is not based on the capital stocks of places, which typically differ by huge amounts. And at the national level, the UK's fiscal rules do not prioritise or protect capital spending and also have a short-term (five year) horizon. Central decision-making and forecasting tools - from the Treasury Green Book to the national accounts - take little account of different types of capital - especially those less easily measured or monetised. They also skew spending towards where it can be confident of success (low risk, low return), rather than where it may be most needed (high risk, high return). National investment agencies, such as Homes England, the British Business Bank and the UK Infrastructure Bank, also offer additional capital to correct for market failures and catalyse projects that would otherwise not have taken place. However, their efficacy is mixed in practice with, for example, the UK Infrastructure Bank

Figure 3.24: Share of UK GDP represented by public and private investment ¹⁰¹.

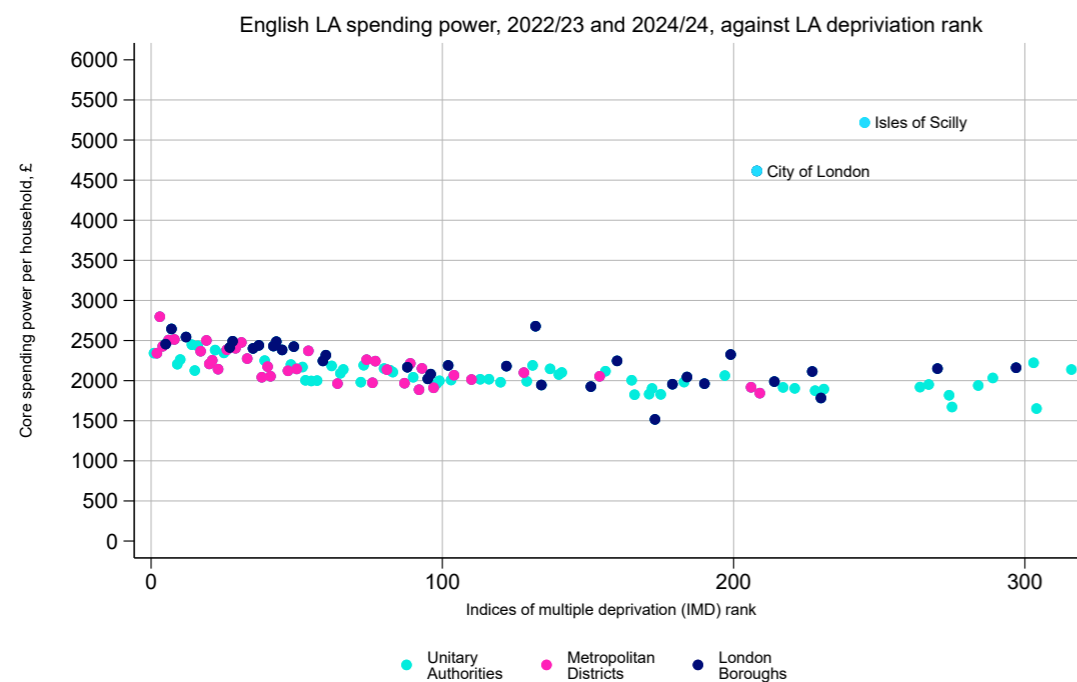


struggling to deploy its £22bn endowment.¹⁰¹

These financing problems are not confined to public finance. UK capital markets do not always lend themselves to long-term, illiquid investments at scale. And this is particularly true of projects that have an unconventional, or less easy to identify, future income stream. This is true of a great many investments which support social or ecological objectives, the like of which cities need every bit as much to support their transformation. Even here, however, the ground is shifting favourably. The growing influence of environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing is spurring a rethink of investor appetite for 'S' and 'E'-related projects.

These problems do not only relate to the supply of finance for local projects. There is also a problem in the supply of these local projects themselves in the first place, in a form and at a scale that is financeable in particular by the private sector. Many of the UK's cities do not have the in-house capacity and capability to serve up a portfolio of local projects that would potentially unlock private capital, as well as, and alongside public finance. This problem is particularly acute when it comes to overseas investors whose knowledge of local projects is likely to be low.

Figure 3.25: Local authority core spending power and deprivation



100 Source: ONS, 2016-20 average.

101 House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2023) The Creation of the UK Infrastructure Bank. Available at: committees.parliament.uk/publications/33633/documents/183968/default/

CHAPTER 4 OUR CITIES AS THEY COULD BE

4 Our cities as they could be



Great cities are the uncontested homes of progress; it is in them that ideas, fashions, customs, new needs are elaborated and then spread over the rest of the country... Minds naturally are there oriented to the future



(Excerpt from *The Division of Labour in Society* by Emile Durkheim)

Chapter 3 highlights the Core Cities' significant unrealised potential, arising particularly from a lack of adequate and balanced investments in economic, social and environmental regeneration. Before turning to our recommendations on how to address the key barriers to that investment, it is useful to scale the size of the potential prize on offer. Doing so also helps in sizing the investment required, from both public and private sectors, to unlock those place-based returns.

What do we need our cities to be?

If the UK's Core Cities are to realise their potential, with high stores of natural, social and economic capital, what are the key shifts in policy and priorities we would need to see? A non-exhaustive list, and moving through each of the three systems in turn, would include:

Table 4.1: Policy priorities for regenerative cities

Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Densifying and upgrading housing for energy efficiency. • Expanding and electrifying public transport, reducing car use and air pollution. • Investing in physical and natural defences against extreme weather. • Localising supply chains and food production.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More preventative and community-based public services. • Expanding housing supply to improve quality and affordability. • Restoration of social infrastructure and community assets.
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, sustainable rates of innovation, business creation and growth in productive sectors. • Robust programmes of reskilling and upskilling – including through lifelong learning. • Significant upgrades to inter- and intra-city connectivity.

Together, this model of how the UK Core Cities might be is well summarised in our Commissioners' vision for cities set out in Box 4.1.

Box 4.1: Our Commissioners' vision for regenerative cities

When we asked our Commissioners to describe their vision for success, they described cities that were regenerative by DESIGN:

Dynamic: invested with entrepreneurial spirit, brimming with creativity and innovation, and with a healthy appetite for risk and experimentation.

Empowered: endowed with powers that reflect their role in the local, regional and national economy, and proudly independent in asserting their unique assets and identity.

Social: embracing their social and cultural role as much as their economic function, with places to connect, collaborate and create.

Inclusive: where the quality and distribution of economic outcomes is front and centre, and citizens actively participate in the governance of the city.

Green: determinedly efficient in their use of energy and natural resources, while promoting the green space and biodiversity needed to adapt to climate risks and boost wellbeing.

Networked: led by a diverse range of place actors across sectors, and deeply connected at local, regional, national and international levels.

Sizing the prize

How large might the benefits be if the Core Cities were to regenerate their stocks of natural, social and economic capital in this way? To size the potential benefits of regenerating our stocks of social, natural and economic capital, we would ideally have a well-calibrated model of the relationship between those capitals and the other variables in which we are interested. Our interest in this Commission isn't at the national level, but in much smaller spatial units. We are interested in the Core Cities, but also in the spatial distribution of outcomes within them – improving the lives of people in a city on average could comprise making those in well-off neighbourhoods better off still, while doing nothing for, or worsening by a lesser amount, the lives of those in neighbourhoods that start in a poorer position. To address this challenge, we would like to be able to model not just the interrelation between the capitals and other variables of interest, but how those interactions take place across ever more granular units of people, place and planet.

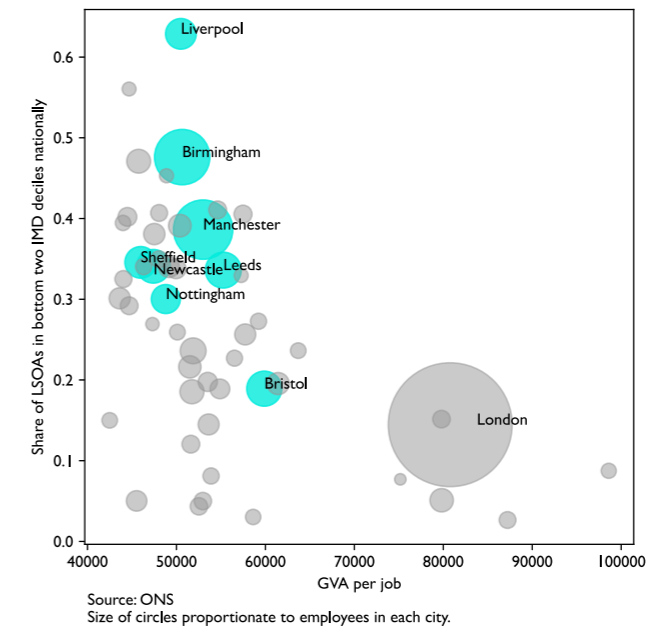
This goes well beyond current capabilities, a shortcoming that the recommendations in Chapter 5 seek to redress.

Nonetheless, in the absence of such models, we can provide illustrative guideposts to the size of the potential prize. One common approach is to consider how our Core Cities would look if they 'caught up' with cities that currently have higher stocks of economic, social and natural capital.

Regenerating the Core Cities' economic capital

Larger stocks of economic and social capital, including deeper pools of skilled labour, connected together with efficient transport systems and using modern production technology, would bring a material boost to labour productivity in the Core Cities and their surrounding regions. Similar to an exercise undertaken by the OECD for the Core Cities in

Figure 4.1: Deprivation and productivity



2019,¹⁰² we can imagine the impact of raising labour productivity to a benchmark level that represents them meeting their agglomerative potential. Figure 3.1 showed that not only is productivity generally higher in Northern European cities beyond the UK, but also that there is a stronger relationship with city size, as those cities take better advantage of their agglomerative potential. Were the Core Cities and their hinterlands to match the performance of their European peers, it would boost economic activity by over 20 percent, adding £100bn per year (or around 5 percent) to the UK economy in perpetuity.¹⁰³ This is a huge potential economic dividend.

Regenerating the Core Cities' social capital

We can draw on the approach taken for economic capital and consider potential impacts on social capital. Social capital refers not only to individual level outcomes – in terms of wellbeing, say – but community-level ones, like trust, belonging and civic participation. As described previously, the literature on the relationship between economic capital and these community level outcomes is still in its infancy. Instead, we focus on some indicative individual measures, like deprivation and health.

While the relationship is not deterministic, Figure 4.1 shows that higher levels of productivity – like that modelled in the previous section – can be associated with lower levels of deprivation. Among UK cities, London simultaneously exhibits much higher levels of productivity than all the Core Cities but also a much lower share of neighbourhoods in the bottom two deciles for deprivation. We can also draw on associated levels of unemployment and healthy life expectancy at these levels of deprivation to capture a wider set of impacts on social capital.

¹⁰² OECD (2020) Enhancing Productivity in UK Core Cities: Connecting Local and Regional Growth [online] Available at: www.oecd.org/cfe/cities/UK-Core-Cities-PH-Final.pdf

¹⁰³ This would be the case if the Core Cities' productivity was raised to be in line with the relationship between productivity and size shown in Figure 4.1 for Northern European city regions, as shown in the black line, rather than the current relationship for UK cities, as shown in the teal line.

By way of illustration, levelling up social outcomes in the Core Cities to those currently seen in London would lift 250,000 people out of unemployment, 1.2 million people out of income deprivation and increase healthy life expectancy by one to eight years for a future generation of residents of our Core Cities.¹⁰⁴

Regenerating the Core Cities' natural capital

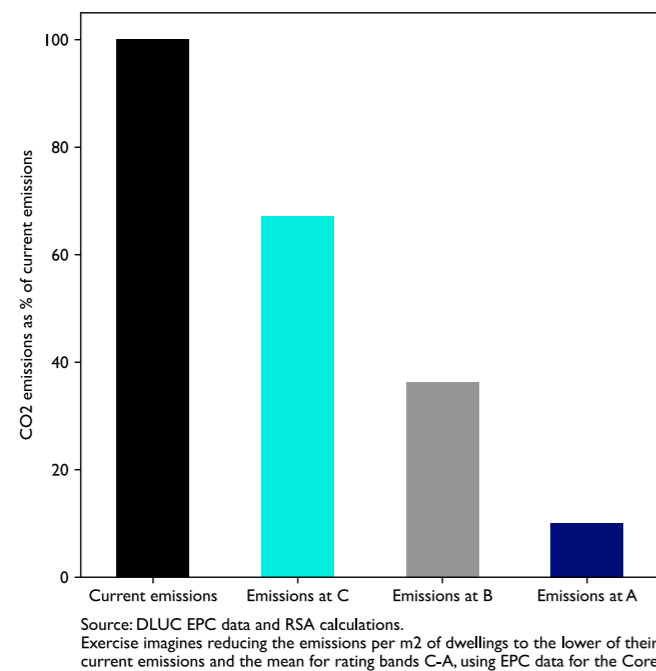
Cities' contribution to regenerating natural capital will be felt both within the city boundaries and beyond. Estimating these impacts is complicated and requires detailed modelling of the specific initiatives undertaken. Figure 4.2 shows estimates of the reduction in carbon-equivalent emissions that could be achieved in the

Core Cities by retrofitting residential buildings to improve their energy efficiency at different levels. While this would impact natural capital globally, contributing to the UK's fight against climate change, other aspects of regeneration would be felt more keenly locally, like initiatives to improve air quality and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Estimating the impacts of regenerating cities' natural capital is complicated by the fact that the condition of our ecosystems is dependent on variables far beyond their, or even the UK's, direct control. The extreme weather conditions our Core Cities will face in future are the result of global – rather than merely local – trends in emissions.

104 For unemployment and income deprivation, this is calculated by reducing the proportion of people below these benchmarks in the English Indices of Deprivation to London levels. It is calculated for primary urban areas for the eight Core Cities in England. For healthy life expectancy (HLE), it is calculated by raising HLE to London levels for all 11 Core Cities, again using primary urban areas for population figures.

Figure 4.2: Emissions reductions from improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock



Sizing the gap

These would all be significant gains that would accrue in perpetuity. But they would not come for free. Chapter 5 lays out a suite of actions, which go well beyond the need for financial resources. Nonetheless, substantial investment is at the cornerstone of the plan to regenerate stocks of economic, social and natural capital. As with the size of the prize, modelling the amount of investment required is not straightforward but some illustrative estimates are possible.

Catching up

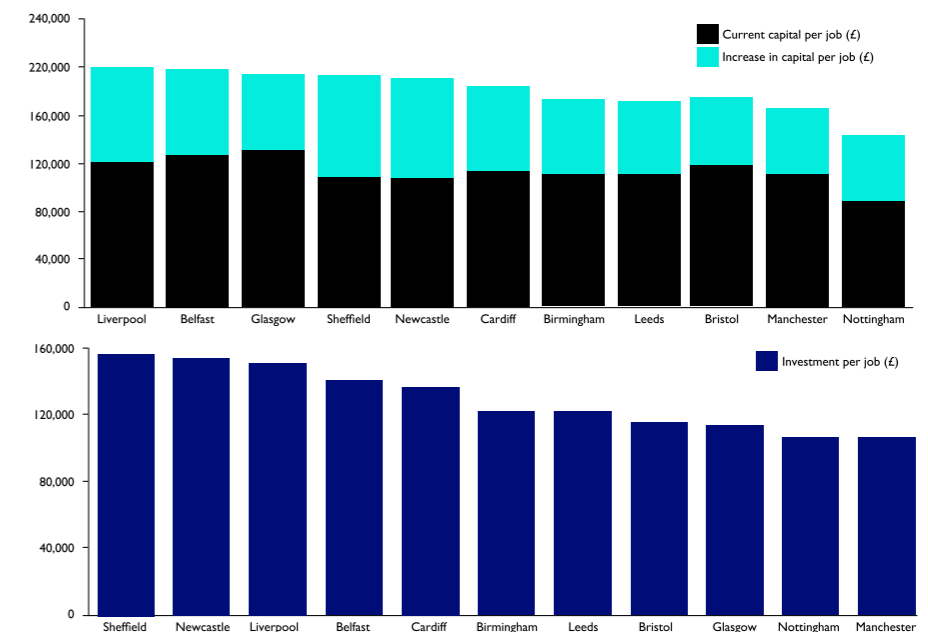
Like the size of the prize, we start by considering what it would cost to 'catch up' to comparator cities. For this, we can draw on recent research undertaken as part of the Economy 2030 Inquiry by the Resolution Foundation and Centre for Economic Performance at the LSE.¹⁰⁵

105 Brandily P et al (2022) Bridging the gap. The Resolution Foundation [online] Available at: economy2030.resolutionfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bridging-the-gap.pdf

This explained the historical differences in productivity between 43 UK cities between 2002-19 based on: size of the economy, skills and stocks of particular kinds of economic capital (eg buildings, intangibles, transport infrastructure). Again – for reasons already mentioned – these kinds of analyses are much more readily available for economic forms of capital than they are social or natural. However, we can expect them to have social and ecological spillovers: for example, in levels of deprivation (as above) or in lower emissions from green public transport.

These data on capital stocks can in turn be used to estimate the additional investment needed to narrow the gaps between the Core Cities – included amongst the 43 – and a more productive city like London. Figure 4.3 shows how much additional economic capital per job it would take to close 50 percent of the productivity gap to London by 2050 (top panel – current economic capital levels shown in black). The lower panel in turn shows the investment required per job achieve those increases.

Figure 4.3: Additional economic capital and investment required across the UK's Core Cities to half the productivity gap to London



Source: Brandily P. et al (2022) Bridging the gap and PWC calculations. See footnote 106

Table 4.2 in turn shows the level of investment required for each Core City, and the Core Cities altogether, to narrow the gap with London to differing degrees.

Table 4.2: Additional investment needed to narrow the productivity gap between each Core City and London by 2050

Note: All figures £bn. Column headers refer to the respective narrowing of the productivity gap in percentage terms.

City	Target % reduction in productivity gap compared to London									
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Belfast	6	19	33	47	60	74	87	101	115	128
Birmingham	10	34	57	81	104	127	151	174	198	221
Bristol	4	17	31	44	57	70	83	96	110	123
Cardiff	5	15	26	36	47	57	68	78	89	99
Glasgow	6	22	39	56	73	90	107	124	141	157
Leeds	5	18	31	43	56	69	82	94	107	120
Liverpool	8	23	38	54	69	84	100	115	130	146
Manchester	11	44	77	110	142	175	208	241	273	306
Newcastle	9	25	40	56	72	87	103	119	135	150
Nottingham	4	13	22	30	39	48	57	66	74	83
Sheffield	7	19	32	44	57	69	81	94	106	118
Core Cities	76	251	426	601	776	951	1,126	1,302	1,477	1,652

Taking the central target of 50 percent, this sums to nearly £780bn of additional investment required by 2050, or £29bn per year. To close the gap entirely, it would be nearly £1.7trn. (More details on this exercise can be found in the technical annex).

Adapting to future challenges

The economic, social and ecological shifts our cities face requires them to do more than merely ‘catch up’. There are also new challenges they will need to meet, going beyond where other cities are today.

Table 4.3 reflects the results of an exercise to cost the interventions required for particular social, economic or ecological challenges. Each of these relies on detailed existing studies of investment requirements - from public and private sources - to meet the objectives described. Understandably,

such work does not exist for all of the (non-exhaustive) goals set out in Table 4.1, which means that these estimates should be interpreted as a lower bound to the true cost.

More detail on each of these exercises is given in the technical annex and the sources from which they derive are footnoted. A brief explanation of each is given below:

- Reaching net zero by 2050: this is based on a joint UKRI and PwC report¹⁰⁶ that explores the investment required to decarbonise transport, domestic buildings, and public and commercial buildings. The original estimates, calculated for the city-regions, have then been scaled to the Core Cities by

¹⁰⁶ UKRI and PwC (2022) Accelerating Net Zero Delivery. Available at: www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UK-090322-AcceleratingNetZeroDelivery

population share, housing stock and commercial floorspace.¹⁰⁷

- Delivering 394,000 homes: this is based on estimates by Crisis and the National Housing Federation¹⁰⁸ of the rate of new housebuilding – including affordable housing - required by 2030. A total produced for the whole of the UK (£170bn) – based on average costs of new homes – is then scaled to the Core Cities’ forecast share of the UK population by 2030.
- Upskilling and reskilling the workforce due to automation: this is based on analysis by the CBI and McKinsey¹⁰⁹ in 2020 that estimates the cost of UK-wide retraining and upskilling needs (£13bn annually), scaled to the Core Cities’ share of the population by 2030 as above.
- Reducing the risk of flooding and drought: this is based on estimates by the National Infrastructure Commission on the investment needed in a) effective drainage infrastructure to reduce the properties at high risk of flooding and b) enhanced management and storage of water supply to protect against drought. Total costs for the UK (£4.1bn and £25.bn respectively) are then scaled based on the Core Cities’ share of a) high-risk housing stock and b) land area share within regions at the highest risk of drought.

Caution must be exercised when comparing the figures for the ‘size of the prize’ with the ‘size of the gap’, given the different methodologies. However, the headline finding is that a c£40bn per year cost has the potential to yield a significant dividend in both monetary and non-monetary terms. This investment would move our Core Cities and hinterlands closer to their Northern European counterparts, adding £100bn per year in income, over a million people removed from poverty and tens of millions of years gained in improved health. Finally, while the gains from carbon negative cities have not been quantified here, we need only think of the costs of inaction. Various estimates have put the costs of unmitigated climate change in the UK at multiples of GDP by 2100.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ One of the notable aspects of this report is its comparison of two different approaches to implementing low-carbon measures: 1) a place-agnostic approach, with uniform implementation across the UK city-regions, or 2) a place-specific approach, with measures tailored to the places in question. The report finds the latter represents significant cost-savings. However, it should be noted that the place-agnostic and other comparator estimates – detailed in the technical annex – are higher, with ranges from up to £235bn by 2050.

¹⁰⁸ Crisis and The National Housing Federation (2018). Housing supply. 394,000 new homes in the UK annually by 2030? requirements across Great Britain. [online] Available at: www.crisis.org.uk/media/239700/crisis_housing_supply_requirements_across_great_britain_2018.pdf

¹⁰⁹ CBI and McKinsey (2020) Learning for Life: Funding a world-class adult education system. Available at: www.cbi.org.uk/articles/learning-for-life-funding-a-world-class-adult-education-system/

¹¹⁰ OBR (2021) Fiscal Risks Report [online] Available at: obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Fiscal_risks_report_July_2021.pdf

Table 4.3: Additional investment required to achieve the selected measures of success and some of the associated economic, social, ecological impacts

Objective	Areas of investment	Total additional investment	Additional investment per annum
Reach net zero by 2050	Buildings (energy efficiency) Transport (electrification)	£23bn-£70bn (by 2050)	£0.8bn-£2.5bn (to 2050)
Deliver 394,000 homes in the UK annually by 2030	Housebuilding programmes	£35bn (by 2030)	£4.4bn (to 2030)
Upskill / reskill the Core Cities workforce due to automation	Workplace and publicly provided training	£29bn (by 2030)	£3.6bn (to 2030)
Reduce the risk of surface water flooding and drought	Climate adaptation measures	£6bn (by 2048-55)	£0.3bn (to 2048-55)
	Total:	£123-170bn	
	Total including catching up:	£900-950bn by 2050	~£40bn per year

Plugging the gap

Having gauged the scale of investment necessary, it is worth considering where this investment might come from. The state of the public finances, and the fiscal rules determining their future course, are both flexible feasts, ones which we argue can and should be reshaped by policy. Even with these policy changes, however, it is that this scale of investment cannot, and should not, come from the public sector alone. As we saw in Chapter 3, private investment typically accounts for around 80 percent of total investment at a national level.

Looking at the types of investments required, we can expect many to be privately profitable – for example, investments in promising new businesses or real estate development. Nonetheless, the role of the public sector may be pivotal even in these cases, serving a catalytic or de-risking role. The public sector can also help in coordinating disparate actors, reducing private barriers to investment (such as through planning) and by reducing uncertainty about future policy environments.

Meeting the investment requirements particularly of cities' social and natural capital stocks will likely require deeper public sector involvement. Some investments may be profitable, like improving the energy efficiency of privately-owned buildings, where the cost of the investment in some cases will be more than compensated by lower costs from heating or cooling. But in other cases, the return will be a non-financial one. In these cases, a larger share of the investment may need to come from the public sector or through policy interventions that change private returns to better account for the impact on social or natural capital.

CHAPTER 5 UNLEASHING OUR CITIES' POTENTIAL



Make a plan, any plan, just make a bloody plan



Advice given to Co-chair Marvin Rees by a British Army Officer

The Commission has set out a vision for the future of cities, one capable of delivering significant returns – economically, socially and ecologically – on investment. But the purpose of this report is to make this vision a practical reality. In this final chapter, we set out a **three-point plan to unleash the potential of the UK's cities**. These correspond to each of the three key barriers set out in Chapter 3.

Given the urgency with which action is needed, the recommendations focus on steps cities can take today. The majority of these actions lie locally and could be taken forward by local leaders with immediate effect. There is an important role too, though, for national government in enabling and empowering local leaders, and in catalysing private financing of local plans, if the potential in cities is to be unlocked.

These recommendations are intended to serve as a toolkit rather than a blueprint. Some cities will already have implemented elements of them, and all would need to tailor them to fit their local context. This, we hope, would represent the next phase of the Commission's work.

Recommendation 1: Cities need a plan to replenish and grow their natural, social and economic assets.

Past efforts at regenerating cities have tended to run aground due to lack of longevity and their piecemeal and partial nature. If future efforts are to be more successful, this needs to change. What is required is a single, long-term integrated strategic plan to deliver prosperity to city residents and beyond through the regeneration of its economy, society and environment. We might call this a Local Prosperity Plan. This calls for clarity and surety of purpose and objectives, alongside well-defined delivery mechanisms. This recipe is a golden thread running through international case studies of successful cities (see Case studies annex).

This conclusion is also broadly in line with several recent commissions and reports, including Gordon Brown's Commission on the UK's Future.¹¹¹ It called for every town and city to develop a bespoke plan for local economic growth. But the work of this Commission has highlighted that it is not sufficient to focus on the economy alone. Instead, any such plan must have at its core a holy trinity of objectives – social and environmental as well as economic. In its approach, this is closest in spirit to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales)

¹¹¹ Labour (2023), 'A New Britain: Renewing our Democracy and Rebuilding our Economy Report of the Commission on the UK's Future', Available at: labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Commission-on-the-UKs-Future.pdf

Act,¹¹² where 'prosperity' is defined in ecological, social and economic terms.¹¹³

As we have highlighted throughout, better management of those different sources of value requires better measurement. This requires cities to invest in identifying appropriate indicators of broad-based prosperity and to strengthen capabilities in understanding their interdependencies. There would be merit in the Core Cities doing this on a collaborative basis – for example, by agreeing a shared set of indicators and success metrics. This would streamline and harmonise efforts among cities to track success, and would also help guide external partners like investors when engaging with cities' Local Prosperity Plans (see Investment Playbook). The Local Prosperity Plan should be a complement to the statutory Local Plan, that would identify where in the city this investment in natural, social and economic assets should take place, including plans for housing and infrastructure development.

UK and international case studies also suggest that a successful plan for city prosperity relies on it being designed and delivered collaboratively, drawing on a wide cross-section of partners with a stake in a city's success. This includes businesses and other anchor institutions, such as universities and colleges, schools and hospitals, alongside residents and community groups – a 'City Coalition'. A collaboratively-designed plan gives it the best chance of collective buy-in and, thereby, longevity irrespective of the volatility and short-termism of local or national politics.

Finally, plans at the city level need to be joined-up with those of neighbouring authorities to acknowledge interdependencies and maximise synergies between them. This calls for plans to be part of an integrated strategy across the

¹¹² or more information see: www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

¹¹³ Under one of the seven wellbeing goals – 'a prosperous Wales' – prosperity' refers to economic conditions that promote not only innovation and productivity but do so firmly within planetary limits and in ways which share the gains from wealth equitably with individuals and communities.

entire city region. There are also benefits in nesting Local Prosperity Plans within a broader national strategy for regeneration, in particular as regards industrial strategy, levelling up and net zero.

Where they do not already do so, we would call on cities to:

1a Recommendation 1a – Form a 'City Coalition'. This should reflect the plurality of leaders in a city, with actors from local government, business, anchor institutions, and the community. Not least given the multiple iterations of such governance structures in the past – from Local Strategic Partnerships in the 2000s to Local Enterprise Partnerships in the 2010s – the Coalition need not have a prescribed structure; rather, it should seek to harness the unique features, networks, and individuals in a city. Where the city sits within a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), it should consider how to integrate leadership structures at the city level with governance arrangements at the city-regional level, including whether to form a 'City Coalition' at the MCA level where they feel that this would work more effectively. (see Box 5.1)

1b Recommendation 1b – Develop a Local Prosperity Plan. Cities should have a single long term strategic plan for delivering 'prosperity' for their citizens and beyond, co-developed by the City Coalition. Features of a successful Local Prosperity Plan include:

- Articulation of the city's unique story and assets across the three systems.
- Clear definition of measurable natural, social and economic goals, with accompanying theory of change and plans to monitor progress (see Recommendation 1c).

- Explicit identification of delivery and investment vehicles.
- Direct links to the Local Plan, ensuring that the Local Prosperity Plan is translated into an integrated set of spatial interventions (including for housing and infrastructure development) and agreed by the City Coalition.

1c Recommendation 1c – Strengthen data and modelling capabilities, with a view to better measurement of economic, social and natural value, and modelling of the interconnected effects of interventions across the three systems. This could be achieved by agreeing a City Data Covenant with City Coalition members, pooling analytical capacity and facilitating data-sharing. In time, these enhanced datasets across the Core Cities could be hosted in an urban observatory, pooling data to allow analysis of city-level performance.

With the appropriate data, the aim should be for each city to develop a so-called 'digital twin' (see Box 5.2), a digital replica of the city that can be used for highly granular and dynamic spatial modelling and planning. The Core Cities agreeing to share a small suite of common indicators across the three systems would also help leaders to benchmark themselves and learn from others. It would also support external partners, and in particular outside investors, in engaging with cities' Local Prosperity Plans (see Investment playbook).

1d Recommendation 1d – Increase citizen participation through Residents' Councils and Juries.

Ensuring the voices of different interests are heard is important for governance and decision-making purposes. Citizen bodies like Residents' Councils (standing) or Juries (issue-specific) can supplement the electoral mandate of city councillors and other political representatives, helping strengthen the legitimacy of decision-making by ensuring citizen priorities are recognised. (see Box 5.3).

Box 5.1: A City Coalition in practice – Bristol

The notion of a 'City Coalition' (Recommendation 1a) – a more plural, cross-sectoral model of city governance - will be familiar to some Core Cities already. For example, Bristol's overarching 'One City Plan' is co-developed with and overseen by the 'City Office'.

The City Office brings together public, private and third sector partners and is funded by the City Council and key anchor institutions (universities, colleges and NHS trusts).

Together the City Office oversees the One City Plan, which is split across six themes (Economy and Skills, Children and Young People, Transport, Homes and Communities, Environment, and Health and Wellbeing). Each of these themes is then overseen by board of various cross-sector partners. For example, the Environment Board includes the council, government agencies, environmental charities and engineering firms, among others.

Box 5.2: Digital twinning

Recommendation 1c calls for a step-change in cities' data and modelling capabilities, with the ultimate aim of creating a 'digital twin'.

Digital twins - a virtual representation of an object or system -- rely on real-time data to simulate its behaviour in response to a given scenario or intervention before real-world implementation.

A digital twin of a city therefore offers the opportunity to visualise its assets in 3D - from buildings, bridges and bus routes to poverty and pollution levels – and dynamic interactions between them. Advanced modelling and machine learning would enhance the sophistication of these simulations over time.

Through access to a digital twin, cities could be governed in more effective and efficient ways. For example, new infrastructure or housing developments could be optimised for their impacts on productivity, social mixing or emission reductions. If made open and interactive they also offer the opportunity to increase citizen engagement, allowing people to see the impact of policy options and enhancing how they interact within their city. Digital twins would require significant new investment and commitment to data-sharing, but the pay-off would be considerable in benefits and savings.

Box 5.3: Citizen participation in cities

Recommendation 1d calls for increased citizen participation in city governance. While it is the formal duty of local councillors to capture and represent the views of their communities, experience from the Core Cities and from other countries shows this can be supplemented through both standing Residents' Councils and issue-specific Residents' Juries.¹¹⁴

Not only would this bolster accountability for plans delivering on citizen priorities and

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Glover, B (2019) People Powered Planning: How to better involve people in planning to get more houses built. Demos. Available at: demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/People-Powered-Planning.pdf; Bailey, N., (2010). Understanding Community Empowerment in Urban Regeneration and Planning in England: Putting Policy and Practice in Context. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), pp317-332; Lawson, V et al (2022) Public participation in planning in the UK: A review of the literature, s.l.: UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence; OECD (, 2020). Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave. Available at: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/339306da-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/339306da-en.

give decisions even greater legitimacy, but – recruited on a representative basis through sortition – could provide more rounded perspectives than vocal minorities often associated with obstruction to much-needed housing or infrastructure projects.

An effective Residents' Council or Jury should be:

- Recruited on a representative basis by sortition.
- Rotated at regular intervals, distributing responsibility for city leadership more widely across the citizen body, akin to jury service.
- Informed by the provision of expert evidence and contrasting opinions, which expose the trade-offs and complexities of different decisions.

Several European cities have embedded citizen participation into their governance, with positive effects on the representativeness and legitimacy of decisions. For example, Paris' Mayor Anne Hidalgo introduced participatory budgeting in 2014, with projects crowdsourced from residents and selected for funding by public vote. Its success has led to an increase in the share of Paris' budget allocated in this way rising from one percent to 5 percent. Meanwhile in Brussels, petitions accruing 1,000 signatures prompt a 'deliberative commission', convening parliamentarians (1/4) and citizens chosen by lot (3/4) to determine the outcome of complex or controversial debates.

At the national level, there is a strong argument that Local Prosperity Plans would be enhanced as part of a coordinated, long-term UK-wide industrial strategy.¹¹⁵ The UK has suffered from a series of false starts when attempting to implement industrial policy, whether at the national or local level. The latest attempt in 2017 saw national and local industrial strategies being drawn up, the latter by local leaders, but was finally abandoned in 2021. The lack of a consistent national industrial strategy has inhibited attempts to regenerate the UK's cities and city regions.

As with Local Prosperity Plans, a clear long-term and integrated national industrial strategy would bring considerable benefits, both nationally and locally. Given the case laid out by this Commission, it is critical that our major cities sit at the heart of this industrial strategy. The development of a national industrial strategy should be done in conjunction with Local Prosperity Plans – they need to be developed iteratively, helping inform each other, rather than being developed in sequence.

The UK government should support and enhance actions at the city-level by:

1e Recommendation 1e – Reinstating a national industrial strategy with our largest cities at its heart. Mirroring Local Prosperity Plans, this should take account of outcomes across economic, social, and natural systems. It must also articulate cities' contribution, both individually and collectively, and be developed iteratively with Local Prosperity

Plans so that it is both informed by the identified strengths of our cities as well as providing mission-based guidance on future priorities in places. To insure against further disruption, efforts should also be made to institutionalise the UK's national industrial strategy, for example by putting it and associated oversight bodies on a statutory footing.

¹¹⁵ For example, see: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/57b3dae2-en.pdf?expires=1694873431&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=23EEBF27D78CAB1FD2053F4F12523CD2

Recommendation 2: Cities need the powers and tools to execute the plan.

For local leaders to develop and deliver a plan, especially an ambitious and multi-faceted one, it will require them to have both the powers and the resources to execute on it. Neither currently exists on an adequate scale to meet the ambitions for transformation envisioned in this Commission. Inevitably, some of the solutions to this will require action from national government (see Recommendations 2d-f), but the majority of the new infrastructure needed for delivery would lie at the local level in the hands of local leaders.

Building the capacity and capability within local government

Building capacity and capability at the local level is essential for design and delivery of the Local Prosperity Plan, in particular when developing a portfolio of local, regenerative projects for investment. One way of doing so is by working in partnership through the City Coalition to release capacity and skills from beyond local government - for example, those housed in local business, universities, or community organisations. Sharing skills and capabilities across MCAs and equivalent city region partnerships is also increasingly prevalent and welcome. These collaborations can, in turn, build a community and pipeline of future leaders through training and secondment opportunities between institutions within the city. To supplement that, there is a good case for the Core Cities setting up an urban leadership scheme or academy – whether individually or through pooled resources as a collective - to nurture a pipeline of local government talent.

Given the financial constraints our cities face, it is useful to explore avenues for pooling resources. A consistent finding of the Commission has been the benefits that could be delivered through a pooled central hub of advisory capacity,

working with cities to develop investable propositions to regenerate their places – a Cities Investment Hub (see Box 5.4). This hub could also help market and mediate with private investors and major investment agencies like the UK Infrastructure Bank, British Business Bank, Innovate UK, and Homes England and equivalent institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where relevant. This would offer economies of scale savings for cities and reduce discovery costs for investors. As it would be in financial services institutions' interests for them to help expand the pipeline of investable opportunities, there is an opportunity to supplement cities' pooled resources with additional financial or in-kind support through partnering with banks, pension funds, insurers, and advisory firms.

Better management of a city's publicly owned assets could transform its regenerative capacity. Local authorities often own substantial real estate and infrastructure assets whose value – if fully unlocked – could offer opportunities for redevelopment and revenue streams to serve local citizens. However, recent analysis of the UK's approach to public sector asset management has identified outdated accounting methods, for example based upon historic transaction values or cash accounting. This underplays the potential value of assets were they to be used commercially, with valuations then better captured by private sector methods of accrual accounting.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, most local authorities are not professional asset managers and therefore do not always have the capacity to recognise assets of potential commercial value, nor to fully realise that value in practice.

Non-financial holdings of local government, excluding council housing, were estimated to be £448bn in 2021.¹¹⁷ The IMF estimates that the loss to the global economy caused

¹¹⁶ Accrual accounting encompasses all assets and liabilities, revenues and expenses, rather than just cash flows and balances.

¹¹⁷ Office for National Statistics (2020) National balance sheet estimates for the UK: 2020. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/releases/nationalbalancesheetestimatesfortheuk2022.

by the inefficient use of government-owned assets is around 1.5 percent per annum of the total value of those assets.¹¹⁸ On that basis, a rough calculation would put revenue currently forsaken by local government at approximately £7bn per year. These are revenues that could otherwise be put towards delivering services and investing in projects that serve local residents, to say nothing of the longer-term benefits that redeveloping those assets could have in terms of attracting further investment and creating opportunities for local businesses, tourism and leisure.

There is yet more potential to be unlocked from assets not owned by local authorities, but by the broader public sector. The non-financial holdings of central government were estimated at £535bn in 2021,¹¹⁹ even based on existing, historic valuation methods. Transferring some fraction of these public assets located within cities to the relevant local authority would open up huge potential for redevelopment and future revenue generation. The transfer could involve revenue-sharing between central and local government as the value of redevelopment was released and would be conditional on the city having a well-articulated and costed Local Prosperity Plan.

Once released, the aim should be for cities to put these assets to work in pursuit of their long-term regenerative plan, rather than selling them off for short-term revenue generation.¹²⁰ This calls for a more effective means of managing these assets, on a professional, long-term basis, than has been the case in the past. One potential means of doing so is to create

¹¹⁸ Detter et al (Forthcoming). Public Net Worth: Accounting, Government and Democracy.

¹¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (2023) The UK national balance sheet estimates. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/datasets/thenationalbalancesheetestimates

¹²⁰ This is, of course, in stark contrast with the approach over the last decade, with recent IPPR research suggesting £15bn worth of council assets have been sold off since 2010. For more information, see: www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/revealed-an-estimated-15-billion-local-public-assets-sold-since-2010

new structures, managing these assets professionally and at arms-length, such as the Urban Wealth Funds that already exist in some cities around the world (see Box 5.5).¹²¹

Where they do not already do so, we would call on cities to:

2a Recommendation 2a – Develop urban leadership schemes. To build and retain the skills needed to transform our cities, educational institutions within the City Coalition (as well as others) could collaborate in developing bespoke courses or secondment opportunities. This could take inspiration from leadership schemes – like the Civil Service Fast Stream or National Graduate Development Programme for Local Government – through a series of rotations, but with the important difference that placements are cross-sectoral and city-specific.

2b Recommendation 2b – Co-fund the establishment of a Cities Investment Hub. This would serve as a central spine of specialist expertise available to all cities, delivering economies of scale to help develop Local Prosperity Plans and associated investment propositions (see Box 5.4). If possible, the hub should be established in partnership with private sector institutions that have a mutual interest in expanding the pipeline of investment opportunities.

¹²¹ Detter et al (2020) Public wealth funds: Supporting economic recovery and sustainable growth [online]. Available at: www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/sites/public-purpose/files/final_pwf_report_detter_folster_ryan-collins_16_nov.pdf

2c Recommendation 2c – Consider establishing an Urban Wealth Fund to manage and increase local revenues from public sector assets. Cities are replete with publicly owned assets that have commercial value. There is strong case for central government augmenting this pool by releasing their own assets for redevelopment where cities have a well-articulated Local Prosperity Plan. Professional long-term management of these assets through an Urban Wealth Fund would incentivise their valuation and development in line with commercial best practice (see Box 5.5). This has the potential to generate a substantial revenue stream in urban areas that can be reinvested in delivering the social, economic and ecological aims of the Local Prosperity Plan, as well as boosting the long-term attraction of a city.

Box 5.4: A spine of capacity – a Cities Investment Hub

Recommendation 2b proposes the pooling of resources to support city leaders in generating investment propositions through a Cities Investment Hub.

Its purpose would be to bolster local capabilities in key commercial, financial and legal skills with more specialist and technical expertise that is not required on a day-to-day basis in each city. As well as providing expertise to develop investible propositions, it would also help cities to navigate relationships with the major investment agencies like UK Infrastructure Bank, British Business Bank, Innovate UK and Homes England, and equivalent bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where relevant.

In designing a Cities Investment Hub, the following features should be considered:

- Be owned and funded primarily by cities, ensuring that it is a primarily place-facing organisation, rather than an arm's length body of government.
- Receive some support or funding from both HM Treasury – for example, the cities element of funding that currently goes to Local Partnerships – and the investment community, for example in-kind support through a standing secondment scheme.
- Provide an equal offer of support to all cities based on their shared subscription cost and operating on a free-at-the-point-of-use basis. More ongoing and specialist support could then be procured, either from the investment hub or external consultancies on the usual competitive basis.
- Be led and staffed by people that are trusted by local places and form supportive relationships with key leads in the cities, and who have similarly strong networks with the investment community, understanding their needs and priorities.

Box 5.5: Urban Wealth Funds – lessons from Hamburg and Copenhagen

As defined in this report, an Urban Wealth Fund refers to a local government-owned company that owns, manages and develops the assets held within a city. Recommendation 2c calls for greater use of Urban Wealth Funds as a means of generating stronger, long-term revenues for the city councils by harnessing their – often substantial – existing wealth, from real estate to operational assets like utilities or transport infrastructure.

The basic premise is two-fold:

- Many councils do not capture the full value of their existing assets, due to outdated accounting techniques.
- Many councils also struggle to identify opportunities to maximise the value or revenues of those assets, in the absence of professional asset management expertise.

Urban Wealth Funds are established to retain those assets in local ownership but to have them administered by independent asset managers. Specialist management should, in turn, increase the revenues generated from those assets on a long-term and stable basis.

This potentially confers significant advantages for citizens, for example by enabling city councils to increase their investments and revenues. Through independent management, their focus on preserving assets and maximising local wealth in the long-term stands in contrast to trends, seen over the last decades, of councils needing to sell off assets to resolve short-term issues of liquidity and debt. IPPR's recent research suggests over 75,000 such assets – worth around £15bn – have been sold since 2010.¹²²

Lessons can be learned from other countries where Urban Wealth Funds have been successfully established in cities like Hamburg and Copenhagen:

- Hamburg: Hafencity Hamburg GmbH (a holding company and UWH) developed a 2.4km² inner city district to produce 7000 residential units and offices for some 35,000 people, while paying for schools, universities and kindergartens.
- Copenhagen: By & Havn – the largest UWF and urban development project in Europe – developed a 5km² plot to produce 33,000 new residential housing units, 100,000 workspaces and a new university for more than 20,000 students, as well as new parks, retail and cultural facilities. With the financial surplus, the UWF has funded part of the extension of the local metro system and other infrastructure investments.

Alongside new capacity and delivery vehicles at the local level – Urban Leadership schemes, Cities Investment Hubs, Urban Wealth Funds - there is more the UK Government can do in parallel to empower cities to succeed. An important element of this would be to put local authorities' responsibilities to grow prosperity in their city on an equal footing with the provision of core services on care,

waste, and public safety. The aim here is to recognise in statute councils' critical role as stewards and shapers of places, rather than simply as providers of legally mandated services.

¹²² IPPR (2023) Parallel lives: Regionally rebalancing wealth, power and opportunity [online] Available at: www.ippr.org/research/publications/parallel-lives

This should be framed explicitly as an enabling purpose – akin to that in the Future Generations Act¹²³ – that stipulates the long-term duty of places to serve both current and future generations' social, economic and ecological needs. Legislation could also set out the supporting roles to be played by other place-based actors as well as key national and regional authorities, including agencies like Homes England. The national governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may wish to explore similar arrangements, recognising their respective different constitutional arrangements with local government.

In parallel, the UK Government also needs to overhaul their mechanisms for funding local authorities for economic development. The current plethora of short-term, unpredictable competitive bidding pots is anathema to the needs of a long-term strategic city plan. It is also a chronic waste of resources – estimated at £27m since 2019. The recent steps towards 'single settlement' negotiations in the trailblazer devolution deals for Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities, alongside plans to streamline competitive pots, is a step in right direction. But more ambitious steps are needed. Both upper tier local authorities and MCAs need to be provided with long-term, flexible funding, ending the era of competitive funding pots. For local authorities in England, the resource and capital funding for economic development should instead be allocated through the Local Government Finance Settlement on a multi-year basis.

Alongside this, there would need to be a fundamental recalibration of local government funding formulae to better reflect the regenerative potential of cities. Existing funding formulae are already chronically outdated in reflecting even a narrow definition of the social and economic needs of our cities. But while a

switch to a fair funding formula is overdue, a different calibration of the determinants of the formula for allocating economic development funding to that being used to provide services is needed. Specifically, this element should be configured to reflect current deficiencies and growth potential in the stocks of natural, social and economic capital if cities are to reach their regenerative potential.

In parallel to this shift in resources to the local level needs to be an accompanying shift in local powers. There has been significant progress towards devolving more powers over the past decade, both at the national and regional level. The recent trailblazer deals for Greater Manchester and the West Midlands are a sign of further incremental progress that needs to be mirrored in other Combined Authorities. However, the most important shift needed is towards a more permissive approach to devolution, switching the presumption towards local leaders being given whatever powers are needed to make good on their Local Prosperity Plan, unless there are compelling reasons not to. This is particularly important when it comes to meeting cities' social and ecological needs, which may call for new powers and greater local control over the integration and delivery of public services.

The UK Government should support and enhance actions at the city-level by:

2d Recommendation 2d – Introducing a new statutory purpose for city councils and other place-based actors to generate prosperity in their place, defined by social and ecological as well as economic health. This new statutory purpose would place generating local prosperity on an equal footing to core services, providing the City Coalition with a strong mandate for action.

¹²³ Welsh Government (2015), Well-being of Futures Generations (Wales) Act. [online] Available at: www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html

2e Recommendation 2e – Granting local authorities and mayoral combined authorities in England more streamlined, long-term and flexible funding. In practice, this means putting an end to all current competitive economic development funding pots, and rolling those that are delivered at a local authority level into an integrated revenue and capital allocation for 'prosperity' in the Local Government Finance Settlement, operating on a multi-year basis. Not only should the funding formulae be updated – in line with the Fair Funding Review – but allocations for economic development should be granted according to a new Regenerative Funding Formula based on places' current levels of economic, social and natural capital and their growth potential.

2f Recommendation 2f – Accelerating progress on the devolution of powers to local government in England, broadened out to incorporate social and environmental policy levers. This more comprehensive approach to devolution will require a change in mentality, moving away from the incremental trailblazer approach of advancing devolution deals with a small number of places and with no promise that this will be extended to others. Instead, we need to move to the default presumption being in favour of powers and assets being devolved to all cities and city regions unless the UK Government can provide a strong rationale not to do so. This would be particularly important in bringing into focus the devolution of labour market policies, public service integration and environmental powers that have largely been absent from devolution deals in the last decade.

Box 5.6: A Regenerative Funding Formula

As we saw in Chapter 3, the current funding formulae are now over a decade out of date and do a poor job of allocating according to deprivation or service need as intended. Government has been proposing to adjust these formulae – implementing the findings of the Fair Funding Review – since 2016. Meanwhile, the gap between funding allocations and the demographic information on which they are based continues to widen.

There is no question that the Fair Funding Review needs implementing as soon as possible. Revenue components of the Local Government Finance Settlement will need to continue to be allocated based on demographic characteristics which drive demand for revenue-funded services like social care. Given the share of local authority budgets consumed by these demands, it is essential that allocations are accurate.

But there is also an opportunity to go further on capital allocations (and the supporting revenue funding), especially if more capital pots are rolled into the Local Government Finance Settlement (see Recommendation 2e). Basing these on a regenerative metric that captures places' current stores of social, natural and economic capital and their growth potential would help to reset decades-long patterns of imbalanced investment. The RSA would happily work with central and local government to devise this new funding framework.

Recommendation 3: Cities need to secure investment to finance the plan.

UK cities' underperformance relative to European peers largely reflects persistent underinvestment. This Commission has estimated that at least £1trn of additional investment may be required between now and 2050 (see Table 4.1) across our Core Cities alone for them to play their full part in regenerating economic, social, and ecological systems. This scale of investment gap cannot, and should not, be filled by the public purse alone. Based on historical trends at the national level, the public sector only accounts for a fifth of total investment.

If the investment gap in the Core Cities is to be filled, this means private capital will need to mobilise at scale and for the long term. This will be easiest for well-established projects with a clear commercial return and income stream – for example, business and real estate investment and some infrastructure projects. Even there, some public money may be required to de-risk and catalyse private finance. For other projects, particular those with high social and ecological rather than commercial returns, the need for anchor finance from the public sector is stronger still.

Mobilising private capital

A number of cities are already looking to use their existing capital funding allocations more creatively to catalyse private investment in a blended financing model. Special purpose vehicles and joint ventures are key tools for making cities' capital investment go further. They involve creating a new entity with a separate balance sheet, which can house large investment projects. Setting projects up in this way helps manage risk, making it easier to attract both public and private sector funding for activities such as revitalising city centres or building new transport infrastructure. Ideally, these schemes would be anchored in the Local Prosperity Plan,

providing investors with clarity on their role as part of the wider plan for the city. Deals can be structured such that public funds assume greater risk to make the proposition more attractive to private partners, helping support crowding-in of private finance.

Not all private investors are seeking large exposures to single projects. Instead, some prefer the opportunity to commit smaller amounts and diversify exposure across a portfolio of investments. Public Investment Funds are publicly seeded place-focused funds, professionally managed and often segmented by sector or business type (such as commercial real-estate or small/medium sized businesses). Some cities, either individually or as part of their wider city region arrangements, already have versions of these funds (see Box 5.8), although many have not yet shown a track record of returns sufficient to open them up at scale to private investors. We believe that there is merit in further exploration and deployment of this approach across our cities to mobilise new sources of private finance on a long-term basis.

Critical to generating additional investment will be nurturing long-term strategic partnerships between cities and investors, recognising the mutual benefits of working together to identify and finance investment opportunities in our cities. The recent Mansion House Reforms called for stronger incentives for pension fund investment in innovative, early-stage venture capital and private equity businesses. They were silent on where this investment should happen, however, and it is possible much of this financing may gravitate towards new and existing investments in the south east. In the interests of the prosperity of the whole of the UK, there needs to be a step change in investment in our major cities, outside of London and the south east, by the UK's pensions fund industry and private investment community generally.

There is already significant leadership in this space from some major investors including Lloyds Banking Group, Legal & General and Aviva. The case studies in the supporting document show what is being

achieved so far. The 3Ci programme that Core Cities are sponsoring with London Councils and the Connected Places Catapult is further evidence of partnership working with the financial services sector, exploring opportunities to aggregate and innovate in bringing institutional investment into the net zero transition in our cities. While welcome, these initiatives on their own will not close the Core Cities' investment gap.

We therefore call on senior representatives of all the major UK financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact. In a similar spirit to the Mansion House Reforms, and working with the Core Cities, this would seek to invest 5 percent of assets into local investments by 2030, to plug the investment gap identified in this report. This could deliver up to £200bn of incremental investment at the local level.¹²⁴ Institutions making up the Cities Investment Compact might usefully convene annually to track progress in developing the pipeline of investable opportunities and the potential financing of them. The ambition would be to build market confidence in the quality of the investment pipeline among investors.

At the same time, UK cities will need themselves to improve the quality and visibility of their project pipeline. Large-scale events such as sporting or cultural events – from Eurovision to the Commonwealth Games – have provided opportune moments to do so. And some fora for this already exist, such as MIPIM and UKREiIF, though these are predominately real estate focused. There is the potential to broaden and deepen these investment showcases, building on the soft power relationships that our cities have with other cities around the world and the global recognition of our Core Cities, to accelerate foreign direct investment, in particular, into our cities.

¹²⁴ Based on 5 percent of total holdings of insurance companies, pension firms and trusts taken from Office for National Statistics (2019) investment by Insurance Companies, Pension Funds and Trusts time series dataset. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/economy/investments/pensionsandtrusts/datasets/fundedoccupationalpensionschemesintheuk. This data series was discontinued in 2019. Latest data available is for 2017.

Where they do not already do so, we would call on cities to:

3a Recommendation 3a – Catalyse private investment in support of a Local Prosperity Plan through deployment of joint ventures and special purpose vehicles.

These should use public sector assets to leverage expertise and capital from private sector partners in support of complex projects, sharing risk and rewards. The value of these schemes to local citizens should be articulated through the objectives set out in the Local Prosperity Plan. It is likely public capital allocations will assume greater risks to incentivise private partners to join.

3b Recommendation 3b – Set up publicly capitalised investment funds.

These funds should explicitly seek to advance social, economic and ecological objectives in the Local Prosperity Plan. Citizens should expect to benefit through activities such as capital funding for early-stage businesses and investments in clean energy. They should be professionally managed and run with a view to achieving returns across the portfolio that, in time, achieve match funding from the private sector.

3c Recommendation 3c – Join with senior representatives of financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact of 5 percent of asset holdings directly contributing to filling the investment gap in the Core Cities by 2030.

This would be a collaborative endeavour between financial institutions and the cities themselves, working together to develop a pipeline of investment opportunities and have them funded. If realised, this would unlock up to £200bn of investment into local projects across the UK.

3d Recommendation 3d - Host investment showcases to advertise investable, regenerative programmes to both domestic and foreign investors. These should include a greater range of investment options relative to existing showcases, to mobilise funds for a more diverse range of opportunities such as cultural assets.

Box 5.7: Joint ventures and special purpose vehicles

Mayoral Combined Authorities and local authorities need to find ways to work alongside private sector partners. Many choose to enter bespoke partnerships through special purpose vehicles such as joint ventures. These structures can be set up for different purposes, ranging from drawing on specialist capacity to securing the funding necessary to deliver complex projects. Typically, however, they involve sharing of risk and reward, with the public sector entity leveraging its assets (often land) to draw in resources from private sector partners.

The redevelopment of Kings Cross is a JV that was cited repeatedly during the Commission. It transformed an underused industrial site into a hub of squares, parks, offices, cultural attractions, homes and schools. Catalysed by the decision to move the Channel Tunnel Rail Terminal from Waterloo to St Pancras, it demonstrated many of the advantages of JV schemes offer.¹²⁵

- Overcoming fragmented land ownership through consolidation into a separate entity, Kings Cross Central Limited Partnership. This reduced risks to private entities involved in the project, for example ensuring that site infrastructure for amenities like energy could be delivered in a joined-up way.
- Long-term institutional investors reduced pressures to make immediate returns associated with some types of debt financing, allowing for a more considered approach to the development.
- Several years of work went into developing a vision¹²⁶ for the development, which brought together the expertise of landowners, developers and Camden Council. Crucially, this put principles that safeguarded the interests of the local community at the heart of the vision, such as accessibility and heritage.
- Camden and Islington Councils showed flexibility around planning, working with the developer to meet help meet conservation requirements and moving away from overly prescriptive designations of land use.
- The public sector de-risked the project, by bringing HSI rail to St Pancras and investing heavily into Kings Cross Station, meaning developers benefited from improvements in the public realm. Further, the public sector placed several institutions, such as the Crick Institute on the site, to further remove uncertainty over demand for space.

¹²⁵ This draws extensively on Centre for Cities (2002) Making places: The role of regeneration in levelling up. Available at: www.centreforcities.org/reader/making-places/learning-from-kings-cross-regeneration/.

¹²⁶ Argent St George, London and Continental Railways, and Exel (2001) Principles for a human city. Available at: www.kingscross.co.uk/media/Principles_for_a_Human_City.pdf.

Box 5.8: Public Investment Funds

Public Investment Funds are pots of capital managed on a commercial basis in support of objectives contained in the Local Prosperity Plan. They are overseen by professional fund managers, including through contracting third-party private sector firms on behalf of a local authority or Mayoral Combined authority.

Some city region governments already have the Public Investment Fund model in place. For example, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) operates a number of funds that serve to finance activity in support of an overarching strategy.¹²⁸ These include:¹²⁹

- A Business Investment Fund that funds businesses from a variety of sectors and requiring match funding from the private sector.
- Commercial Property Funds, Evergreen 1 and Evergreen 2, worth £60m and £45m respectively, which provide debt funding for commercial property and regeneration projects within the north west between £3m and £15m. Managed by CBRE Capital Advisors on behalf of GMCA.
- The Greater Manchester Housing Investment Fund which provides loans between £1m and £30m (and potentially equity investment) to support residential housing growth across Greater Manchester.
- A Low Carbon Fund established to promote the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources through debt and equity funding of up to £5m for a maximum term of 15 years. Managed by CBRE Capital Advisors on behalf of GMCA.
- A Life Sciences Fund supporting life sciences entrepreneurs through seed and early-stage funding between £50,000 and £2m. Managed by Praetura Ventures on behalf of GMCA.

In support of these recommendations at the city level, the remits of the UK's national investment agencies¹²⁹ might also usefully be revisited. These central government-sponsored arms-length bodies aim to solve market failures that hold back investment into crucial parts of the economy like housing, small and medium sized enterprises, and infrastructure.

To work most effectively, agencies need to partner with places to understand their challenges and help develop propositions to solve them. Consequently, national

agencies will need to get actively involved with City Coalitions and the Cities Investment Hub to help develop the pipeline of investible opportunities. As things stand, they have varying abilities to do so. For example, Homes England has set up a Local Government Capacity Centre to work closely with local areas in developing and delivering investment opportunities.¹³⁰ But agencies such as the UK Investment Bank are more constrained in their ability to provide capital and expertise at the early stages of projects.¹³¹ Bringing these agencies into the scope of

¹²⁷ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2021) The Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031: Good lives for all. Available at: aboutgreatermanchester.com/media/1slgby/greater-manchester-strategy-our-plan.pdf.

¹²⁸ For more information see www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/investment/.

¹²⁹ Namely, UK Infrastructure Bank, British Business Bank, Homes England, Innovate UK, and UK Export Finance.

¹³⁰ Homes England (2023) Strategic Plan 2023-2028 [online] Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1159274/Homes-England-strategic-plan-2023-to-2028.pdf.

¹³¹ UK Infrastructure Bank (2022) Strategic Plan [online] Available at: www.ukib.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/UKIB%20Strategic%20Plan%202022%20-%20Full_1.pdf.

a new statutory purpose for prosperity (Recommendation 2c) would be one route into standardising and strengthening their approach to investing in local projects.

Solving market failures also means supplying capital that changes the risk-reward dynamics of investment opportunities such that they become attractive to holders of private capital. The agencies' strategic plans all include aspirations to rebalancing economic activity across the UK, but there are few references to how they will work in partnership to do so. Investors are more likely to invest in places with a coherent strategy, so agencies should also coordinate approaches as well. This is particularly important when they serve a catalytic role in city-based joint ventures, special purpose vehicles and Public Investment Funds. Further, if a core purpose of the agencies is to crowd in private capital this needs to be a more prominent success metric. Currently, for agencies such as the British Business Bank and the UK Infrastructure Bank, disproportionate weight is given to realising returns on investment, which in turn constrains the riskiness of the projects the agencies are prepared to invest in.

National government can also support funding of Local Prosperity Plans through encouraging responsible local borrowing for regenerative ends. This requires a combination of sufficient oversight and sensibly calibrating incentives. Oversight of local government borrowing falls to the new Office for Local Government, which should aim to reflect on the functions of the now defunct Audit Commission. While incentives for borrowing for regenerative ends, from either the UK Infrastructure Bank or Public Works Loan Board, could be set by offering discounted interest rates for projects that generate significant social and environmental returns that are harder to capture financially.

Changes to the national macroeconomic framework

While crowding-in private investment is vital to bridge the investment gap, there is a strong case for a more targeted long-term use of the public sector balance sheet to promote place-based investment. This is particularly important in areas where the returns on investment are harder to monetise, such as growing skills and capabilities, improving intra- and intercity transport connectivity, investing in the cultural or social infrastructure of a place or improving the biodiversity and air quality of cities. This requires two fundamental changes in approach to the management of the public finances.

First, we need to think more imaginatively about fiscal devolution. The arguments in favour of devolving more control over the tax base are well-established. This provides local leaders with greater flexibility and with a stronger set of incentives to invest in the projects most likely to boost local prosperity, economic, social and environmental, as defined in their Local Prosperity Plans. If successful, this investment also provides the local stream of revenues that can be used to finance future investment.

Fiscal devolution has made limited progress over the past 20 years. There have been some incremental changes to tax-raising powers, including as part of the devolved nation governments' devolution deals and the recent trailblazer devolution deals for the West Midlands and Greater Manchester. But this piecemeal and incremental approach needs to be given a jolt if the potential of cities is to be unlocked. One way of doing so would be to set HM Treasury a target for devolution of the tax base – for example, to bring it in line with the OECD average. This would put the onus on the UK government to come forward with propositions on how to decentralise the tax system while still giving local leaders the discretion to determine which taxes would best fit their particular circumstances.

The second area requiring a fundamental rethink is the treatment of investment in the macroeconomic and fiscal framework. The key elements of the UK's macroeconomic and fiscal framework are 50 years old. While it has been updated and tweaked, it has been largely preserved through that time in its fundamental design. The work of the Commission has highlighted several areas where change is needed to correct persistent regional inequalities in investment across a balanced set of social, economic and ecological outcomes: Adapting its fiscal rules from a focus on declining net debt over a five-year horizon to maximizing net wealth – defined broadly across social, economic and natural capital – over a longer-term horizon.¹³² Current rules promote short-term decisions to balance the books rather than the long-term investments needed in social, natural and economic capital. A new set of regenerative fiscal rules - broader in scope, longer in duration - would rewire incentives across all of government spending to replenish regional capitals.

- Accounting for the differential growth effects of different types of capital investment. Different types of capital spending yield different returns (economic, social and ecological) over different time horizons. The macroeconomic framework used by HM Treasury and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has a single aggregate variable for general Government Fixed Capital Formation with no such distinctions.¹²¹ A more differentiated approach to growth accounting is needed to ensure a balanced and regenerative allocation of capital spending, at the national and regional level.
- Broadening the definition of capital

¹³² Both Australia and New Zealand have a similar 'net worth' rule. The Resolution Foundation – including now Chair of the OBR Richard Hughes – advocated moving from a narrow focus on net debt to a broader suite of assets and liabilities in new fiscal rules for the UK in their paper 'Britannia waives the rules'. Resolution Foundation (2019) Britannia waives the rules [online] Available at: www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/10/Britannia-waives-the-rules.pdf

investment, in particular to recognise social and natural capital. The wider prosperity of citizens relies on the strength of its people and communities and on the protection and restoration of the natural environment. The UK's macroeconomic and fiscal framework fails to take proper account of these, leading to underinvestment in social and community infrastructure and climate and nature assets. Approaches such as Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act or New Zealand's Living Standards Framework provide useful international case studies.¹³³

- Recognising the limitations in the traditional appraisal of spending decisions through the Green Book. The current approach leaves too much discretion over whether social and ecological factors in particular weigh on investment choice. Elements such as distributional weighting or ecological net gain are treated as optional rather than integral. There is an in-built bias towards monetised benefits and towards incremental projects rather than those that are non-monetary, transformational or multi-dimensional, which have higher levels of uncertainty and are harder to model. The shortcomings of this approach are clear in the UK's rail infrastructure, where existing connectivity and housing density in London and the south east gives additional projects a higher benefit-cost ratio. Appraisal methods are less good at modelling the new transport, housing or other amenities that might be spurred by improved connectivity where it is most needed in the regions of the UK.

The UK government could support and enhance this approach by:

¹³³ Adopting the approach in Wales of the Well-being of Future Generations Act or the New Zealand Living Standards Framework would be a marked improvement.

3f Recommendation 3f – Revising the remits of UK’s major investment agencies to allow them to better support cities.

All remits should facilitate working in partnership with cities to develop investment opportunities, including as part of City Coalitions and the Cities Investment Hub. Agencies' remits should also detail expectations for working in partnership with each other (see Box 5.9). Success metrics for investments should capture their catalytic intent to crowd in private capital alongside more traditional measures covering returns on investment.

3g Recommendation 3g – Supporting responsible local borrowing for regenerative projects.

Trust needs to be rebuilt in local authorities' ability to borrow responsibly and for projects of considerable public value. This should be achieved by:

- Deploying the Office for Local Government to offer better oversight and regulation, akin to the previous functions of the Audit Commission, and ensure that not all local authorities are tarred with the brush of a select few who have borrowed irresponsibly.
- Encouraging investment in social and environmental capital through either the UK Infrastructure Bank or the Public Works Loan Board offering discounted interest rates for projects that meet regenerative criteria.

3h Recommendation 3h – Enhancing fiscal devolution through a target for HM Treasury to bring the share of taxes controlled locally to the OECD average by the end of the next parliament. This work should be led by HM Treasury but its practical implementation at the local level should be decided by local leaders as part of future

devolution deals. This might include localised land value taxes, devolved shares of income taxes, reforms to local property, transport and business rates, and tourism levies. We should also learn lessons from other countries, particularly in how they tackle the need for geographical redistribution while retaining localised incentives. Meeting the OECD average would see an additional £169bn of tax revenue controlled by subnational governments.¹³⁴

3i Recommendation 3i - Rewiring the UK’s macroeconomic and fiscal framework in service of a regenerative economy. In practice this means:

- Adapting the UK’s fiscal rules from a focus on declining net debt over a five-year horizon to maximising net wealth (broadly defined in terms of social, economic and natural capital).
- Broadening the definition of capital investment to include social and ecological dimensions.
- Better accounting for the differential growth effects of different types of capital investment.
- Recognising – and adjusting for – the limitations of the Green Book, in particular the weighting of distributional effects or non-monetisable impacts of spending.

¹³⁴ Based on OECD calculations of tax take controlled subnationally, including for the UK, and HMRC data for the total UK tax take. See: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/government-at-a-glance-2023_7a3acl69-en and www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmrc-tax-and-nics-receipts-for-the-uk/hmrc-tax-receipts-and-national-insurance-contributions-for-the-uk-new-annual-bulletin#:~:text=Total%20annual%20receipts%20in%20the,for%2056%25%20of%20annual%20receipts respectively.

Box 5.9: The UK’s investment agencies

Investment agencies are arms-length bodies sponsored by central government departments. Their role is to act as a catalyst by correcting market failures, through supplying some combination of capacity or capital. There are five key investment agencies for the purposes of this report. Each has its own sponsor and is focused on a specific sector of the economy:

- **Homes England:**¹³⁵ sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, its objectives include building new homes and supporting the wellbeing of communities. It also has an explicit regional remit to bring its resources to bear around place, and this remit will be extended to include commercial real estate. It has £16bn of capital spend to place by 2028.
- **UK Infrastructure Bank:**¹³⁶ sponsored by HM Treasury, its objectives are to increase infrastructure investment to help to tackle climate change and promote economic growth across the regions and nations of the United Kingdom. It has an initial £22bn of financial capacity to deploy over the next five to eight years.
- **British Business Bank:**¹³⁷ sponsored by the Department for Business and Trade, its objectives focus on increasing the supply of finance available to smaller business. There is an explicit spatial element to the bank’s work, primarily through £1.6bn of regional funds. In 2022 it had extended £12bn of finance through its core programmes.
- **Innovate UK:**¹³⁸ sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, its objectives are to support a vibrant innovation ecosystem, in part by investing in innovation that will have a positive impact on the UK’s economy and society. Levelling up is one of its key foundations alongside crowding in private investment. In 2020 to 2021 Innovate UK funding amounted to £885m.
- **UK Export Finance:**¹³⁹ sponsored by the Department for Business and Trade, its purpose is to help exporters access finance and insurance when there is a lack of private sector risk appetite or capacity. It has a strategic objective to support levelling up, with a maximum exposure limit of £60bn.

¹³⁵ Homes England (2023) Strategic Plan 2023-28. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1159274/Homes-England-strategic-plan-2023-to-2028.pdf.

¹³⁶ UK Infrastructure Bank (2023) Strategic Plan. Available at: www.ukib.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/UKIB%20Strategic%20Plan%202022%20-%20Full_1.pdf.

¹³⁷ British Business Bank (2023) Annual Report and Accounts 2022. Available at: www.british-business-bank.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BBB_Annual_Report_2022_TAGGED.pdf.

¹³⁸ UK Research and Innovation (2022) Innovate UK strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025. Available at: www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-strategic-delivery-plan/innovate-uk-strategic-delivery-plan-2022-to-2025/#section-our-purpose.

¹³⁹ UK Export Finance (2023) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23. Available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166621/UK_Export_Finance_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2022-23.pdf

Box 5.10: A new macroeconomic framework – lessons from Wales and New Zealand

A nation's macroeconomic framework encapsulates both its broad objectives for the economy and a set of assumptions about how different parts of the economy interact to achieve those objectives. For example, the UK's macroeconomic policy goals revolve around targets for inflation, financial stability and debt. Fiscal rules set constraints on spending and taxation in line with those goals. Currently, the UK's rules target debt falling as a share of national income or keeping borrowing below 3 percent of GDP.

These policy frameworks have a significant influence on decisions across government. A narrow focus on debt minimisation has crowded out the long-term investment sorely needed in all three capitals. While UK borrowing is still high – at 5.5 percent of GDP – it has come in below OBR forecasts in the last financial year. A different, more comprehensive measure of the UK's net worth – rather than net debt – includes both sides of the ledger: its liabilities and its assets. In this measure, the UK is performing significantly worse with a negative net worth of £605bn (down from negative £530bn last year). This continues a long-term trend of significant decline in net worth.¹⁴⁰

If we are to deliver the step-change in investment the UK needs, this more rounded measure of economic performance should be the central target for UK macroeconomic policy. This is not without precedent or highly credible advocates: Australia and New Zealand have successfully incorporated a net worth principle into their fiscal rules. It was also the subject of a 2019 Resolution Foundation paper co-authored by now Chair of the OBR Richard Hughes.¹⁴¹

There are also opportunities to go further, broadening out our macroeconomic policy frameworks to hardwire their social and natural – as well as economic – aims. Rather than financial net worth, the aim should be to generate more broadly defined 'net wealth', defined in terms of social, natural and economic forms of capital. This would require changes to how capital was treated in the macroeconomic model and more consistent application of all of the tools in the Green Book and a less reductive approach down to a simple benefit-cost ratio.

This relies on the substantial upgrades in measurement of non-economic forms of capital, already described. It could also be supplemented by setting – and agreeing across government – a set of policy aims for the Treasury and other public bodies to embed in decision-making. This could take inspiration from New Zealand's Living Standards Framework¹⁴² (see Figure 5.1) or Wales' Seven Well-being Goals¹⁴³ (see Figure 5.2). The latter has the advantage of being a legally binding duty on all public bodies – including the Welsh Revenue Authority. Combined with complementary fiscal rules, a similar framework in the UK would have much greater power to increase and diversify investment where it is most needed.

Figure 5.1: New Zealand's Living Standards Framework

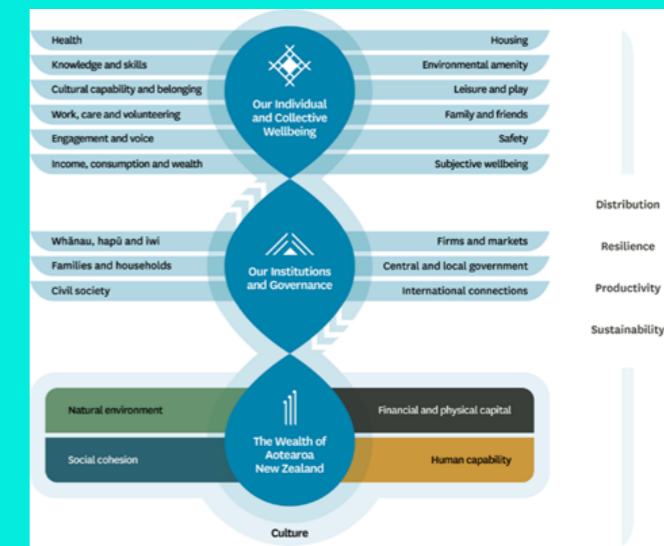


Figure 5.2: Wales Seven Well-being Goals



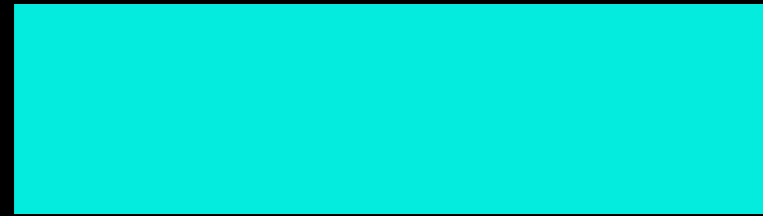
¹⁴⁰ Resolution Foundation (2023) Britain is borrowing less than forecast, but its growing net worth deficit shows that it is failing to invest in its future [online] Available at: www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases/britain-is-borrowing-less-than-forecast-but-its-growing-net-worth-deficit-shows-that-it-is-failing-to-invest-in-its-future/

¹⁴¹ Hughes, R, Leslie, J, Pacitti, C and Smith, J (2019) Totally (net) worth it. Resolution Foundation. Available at: www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/10/Totally-net-worth-it.pdf

¹⁴² Treasury New Zealand (2021) Our Living Standards Framework [online] Available at: www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework

¹⁴³ Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2023) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 [online] Available at: www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

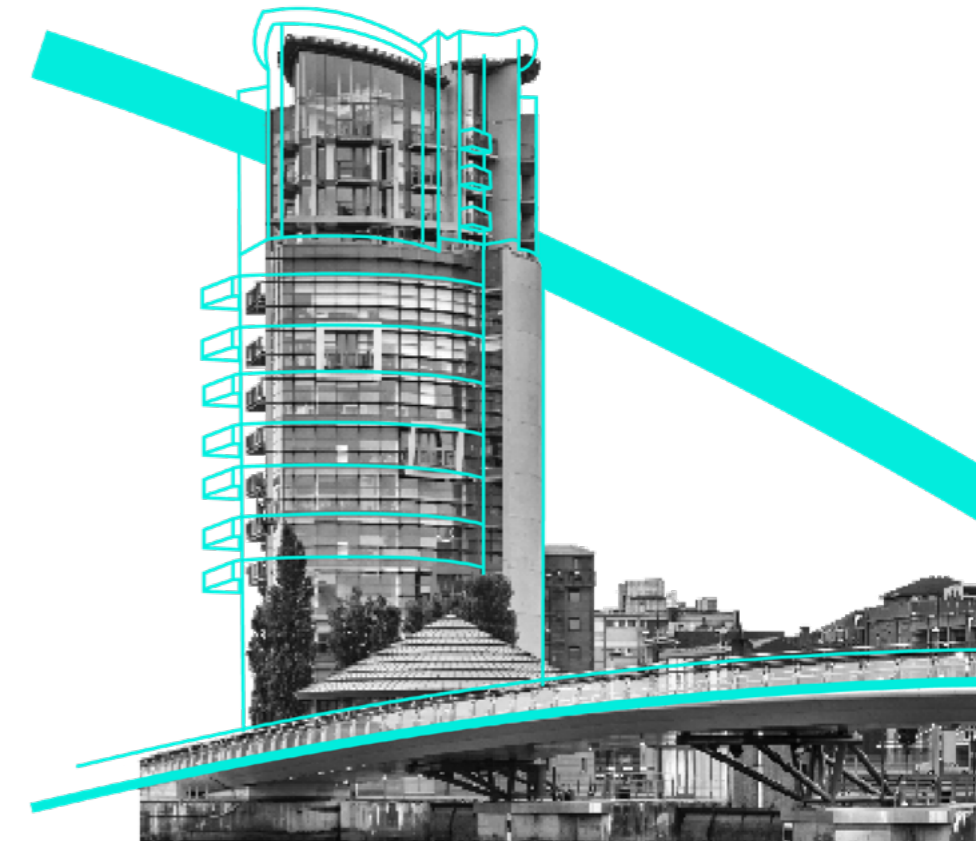
AFTER WORD



WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

This Commission has been the result of an intensive year-long period of research and engagement. As with all such processes, it can neither be perfect nor entirely exhaustive. It was never the plan for the Commission's findings to live only on the pages of a report, but to be translated into transformative action in practice.

So, following the launch of this report, we will be taking the Commission's recommendations and creating partnerships with major cities to apply them in situ. Conversations and plans are already afoot to that effect, but if you'd like to find out more, please contact the RSA's Head of Policy and Participation, Amy Gandon (amy.gandon@rsa.org.uk) or Chief of Staff, Tom Stratton (tom.stratton@rsa.org.uk).



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**We are committed to regenerate
our world through collective action.**



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Subject:	Visit Belfast - Management Agreement; and Renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast
Date:	20 October 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager Culture and Tourism Pièr Morrow, Tourism Development Officer

Restricted Reports													
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 													
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future		<input type="checkbox"/>	Never		<input type="checkbox"/>
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee to provide a management agreement which gives Visit Belfast reassurance of Council commitment to continued

	support of the organisation as a strategic partner, subject to an annual funding agreement; and to approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area at Belfast Welcome Centre.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approve the provision of an agreement that provides Visit Belfast with the reassurance that Belfast City Council is committed to supporting the organisation up to 15 July 2033; albeit subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget provision; ii. Approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North, up to 31 March 2026.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Visit Belfast serves as the official DMO for Belfast, successfully promoting Belfast as a vibrant tourist destination to out of state, international & business tourism markets and managing various aspects of the tourism and visitor experience.
3.2	On 21 April 2023 committee approved the continued occupation of premises at 8-9 Donegall Square North by Visit Belfast to operate the Welcome Centre in the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and to extend the term of the existing Management Agreement for a period of 1 year from 16 July 2023 and year to year thereafter until a date no later than 15 July 2028, which is in line with the lease expiry held by BCC.
3.3	The Management Agreement is subject to an annual review of Visit Belfast's annual business plan and project plan and approval of funding by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
3.4	Visit Belfast have advised council officers of unfortunate unintended negative consequences to business and planning challenges that the 5 year stop date on the current management agreement poses.
3.5	In order to continue to work with Visit Belfast as our strategic delivery partner, which will assist in achieving the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda; the provision of a ten year agreement for the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and Belfast City Region creates greater confidence, stability and a level of security for staff retention and recruitment; generation of income from the private sector, other sources and from commercial activity; and reassurance to our wider tourism partners and industry.

	Rationale for Extension:
3.6	Positive Track Record: Visit Belfast has a proven track record of effectively promoting Belfast as a tourist destination and managing critical functions such as marketing, visitor information, and event coordination.
3.7	Consistency and Stability: A 10-year long stop date will provide stability and consistency in planning and executing long-term tourism strategies, helping to maintain and enhance Belfast's reputation as a world-class destination.
3.8	Long-Term Investment: Encourage sustained investment in the city's tourism infrastructure, including the development of new attractions, improved visitor services, and enhanced marketing efforts.
3.9	Economic Impact: Tourism plays a significant role in Belfast's economy, and a long-term commitment to Visit Belfast will help ensure continued economic benefits, including job creation and revenue generation.
3.10	Based on the rationale and considerations outlined above, committee are asked to consider the recommendations to review and progress amending the existing management agreement for Visit Belfast from July 2028 to July 2033. The management agreement will remain subject to annual review against annual business and project plans
3.11	<u>Translink Sharing Agreement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Approval of renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North up to 31 March 2026.
3.12	There has been a partnership agreement in place since 2017 with Translink and Visit Belfast to operate a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre. The agreement is due for renewal for a further three years, the extension of which will ensure that there is continued ticketing services being provided at this key location in Belfast and Translink has indicated it wishes to continue to provide that service.
3.13	Subject to Members approval, officers will work to make the relevant changes to the current management agreement and any resultant modifications to the lease agreement if required; and the Sharing Agreement with Translink will be renewed.

3.14	<p><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></p> <p>No financial implications – Visit Belfast funding is subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.15	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 9 th October 2023
Date:	20 th October 2023
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 9 th October 2023.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve and adopt the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 9 th October 2023 including:
2.2	<p><u>Belfast Stories</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Members note the Belfast Stories presentation to the Shared City Partnership which is attached in Appendix 3.
2.3	<p><u>Shared City Partnership Membership (Verbal Update)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That members note the verbal update and agree the approach provided by the Good Relations Manager detailed in the minutes attached in Appendix 1.
2.4	<p><u>Good Relations Quarterly Programme Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.
2.5	<p><u>PEACE IV Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report and related appendices.
2.6	<p><u>Peace Plus Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request that the partnership agree the PEACE PLUS plan detailed in the presentation; and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to agree the outlined Peace Plus Plan in the Presentation (included in Appendix 2) and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body, and agree delegated authority to Officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.</p>

3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the 9th October 2023 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Belfast Stories Unit • Verbal Update on SCP Membership • Good Relations Quarterly Update • PEACE IV Programme Update • Peace Plus Update
3.3	<p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1, the Peace Plus Presentation is attached in Appendix 2 and the Belfast Stories Presentation attached in Appendix 3.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 9th October 2023</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Peace Plus Presentation 9th October 2023</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Belfast Stories Presentation 9th October 2023</p>

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SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 9th October, 2023

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Duffy (Chairperson);
Councillors Lyons, McLaughlin and Smyth.

External Members: Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Trust;
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross; and
Mr. G. Walker, North Belfast Community Representative.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. J. Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Mr. S. Lavery, Good Relations Programme Manager;
Ms. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer;
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer;
Ms. E. Henry, Strategic Lead, Belfast Destination Hub; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor McMullan, Ms. B. Arthurs and Mr. P Anderson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th September 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

Belfast Stories Presentation

The Members welcomed Ms. E. Henry, Strategic Lead from the Belfast Stories team, who had been invited to present an update on this new experience in the city centre which would share the stories of the people and the place (past, present and future), told through exhibitions, screen and social spaces.

The Strategic Lead advised that since the last Belfast Stories presentation in September 2022 to the Shared City Partnership, the consultation report had now been

completed and was presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2023.

The Strategic Lead outlined the strategic context of the Belfast Stories project and informed the Partnership that its involvement would be needed in bringing actions forward. She provided details of specific findings of the public consultation exercise and the key milestones throughout 2023/24.

The Strategic Lead outlined the consultation findings, engagement, and stories audit and actions as detailed in the presentation. She took the Members through the 3 stages of Inclusive Growth (Pre construction, Construction and Operational) and the Governance structure, and advised that she would be working with Democratic Services over the coming months to establish a Members Working Group.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Lead for her presentation and opened up the floor to questions.

A Member asked if there had been Irish language community engagement. The Strategic Lead advised that an Irish language expert would be brought onboard to ensure the community would be engaged and there would now be a standing item on the Irish Language Forum.

A Member asked where the gaps were in the city. The Strategic Lead agreed to share this information which would be available in an end of project stage report.

Mr. M. McBride asked about plans to share information with young people. The Strategic Lead advised that there were plans to undertake a formal schools' project and intergenerational stories programme over the next 12 months.

There was discussion around the spend of tourism in the east and west areas of the city. A Member asked for it to be noted that West Belfast should receive the same resources as other areas in city to promote tourism. A Member asked for the tourism investment information to be shared to understand where the funds are being spent.

Noted.

SCP Membership (Verbal Update)

The Good Relations Manager welcomed Mr. G. Walker to the Partnership as the community representative for North Belfast. He advised that the Church of Ireland had not responded in terms of nominating a faith representative. He had scheduled a meeting with Bishop McClay and he would raise this matter.

A representative from the Chamber of Commerce had also not been nominated. The Good Relations Manager advised that he would bring this to the attention of the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

He advised the Members that Mrs. A. Tohill, TEO, was currently off on extended leave. In this case, the Executive Office would like to nominate a representative to attend the Shared City Partnership in her absence. The Partnership agreed with this approach.

Good Relations Programme Update

The Senior Good Relations Officer updated the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 2 (Q2) which covered the period July – September 2023.

The Members were reminded, as reported at its August meeting, the total Good Relations budget for programme, staffing and administration for 2023/24 was £714,857.38. This figure comprised £413,320.10 from the Council and £301,537.28 from The Executive Office. The Executive Office contribution was cut by 47% compared with the allocation awarded for 2022/23. Of this total, £294,644 had been allocated towards programme costs and the remainder allocated towards salaries and administration costs.

The Members recalled that during Q1 a total of £184,644 was allocated to projects across the City.

Work continued on the delivery of the Action Plan during Q2.

While no financial allocations had been made in Q2, officers had been mobilising projects for delivery in Q3. This process was only possible following the final confirmation of budgets in August. The Senior Good Relations Officer referred to the summary in the report which provided a status update on the individual projects.

The Members noted the contents of the report and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.

Peace IV Update

The Peace IV Programme Manager provided the Shared City Partnership with a progress update in respect of the Shared Space and Services (SSS) activity and Secretariat associated with the implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

- **SSS Update - Programme Implementation**

Both programming and capital works for the SSS theme had now been completed.

- **PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works**

All snagging and health and safety checks had been completed in early September 2023, and Section 2 opened to the public on Wednesday 13th September 2023.

The Programme Manager advised that, to mark the completion of all works, the Forth Meadow Community Greenway had opened to the public on 16th September 2023. People could now travel uninterrupted along the full 12km route. The opening of the Greenway was co-designed with the local community through the Advisory

Group, with fun days in Glencairn Park and Springfield Dam, bird ringing at Bog Meadows, tree planting at Springvale and volunteer led walks and cycles between the 2 sites along the greenway. The community celebration was well attended and encouraged people to move along the route.

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space**

The compendium of narratives, Proud of Our Past, Confident for the Future had been received from the Delivery Partner and distributed during the Community Open Day as referenced above.

- **SSS Financial and Resource Implications**

The final claim and report for Period 36 (Aug-Sep 23), valued at £1.088m, had been submitted to SEUPB. That brought the total value of claims submitted under the SSS theme to £6,012,710, against a revised Letter of Offer award of £6,432,705. The underspend within the theme was approximately £467k, which was attributable to the signage / language decision. To date, claims valued at £2.273m had been reimbursed and outstanding claims were now £3.691m.

The Partnership noted that SEUPB adherence to the timeframe for reimbursement had slipped, as such a formal request for an updated payment schedule would be progressed by officers.

- **PEACE IV Programme Closure**

A celebration event marking the closure of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan and International Day of Peace took place at the City Hall on Thursday 21st September 2023. The event outlined the achievements and impacts of the Programme. The funding body, SEUPB, and representatives from TEO, as the Accountable Department, had attended the event and acknowledged the contribution to peacebuilding. A representative from DCRD, the Irish Government Accountable Department, was included and the event had also showcased the Belfast Peace Journey video.

The Members noted that post project evaluations for the CYP and BPR theme, including the impact analysis, had been completed as outlined in Appendices I and II. Key highlights of impacts released showed that:

- 86% of participants within the Children and Young People theme believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics would be somewhat / much better in 5 years, a 13% increase from the start of the project.
- Within the Building Positive Relations theme, 79% of participants believed that relations between Protestants and Catholics would be somewhat / much better in 5 years, a 17% increase.
- Understanding of the culture of minority ethnic communities had increased from 24% of participants to 51.2% on completion of projects, within the Building Positive Relations Theme.

The post project evaluations for the SSS theme, including the impact analysis, was currently being compiled and would be presented to the Members in a future report.

The Peace IV Programme Manager reported that SEUPB had reimbursed £64.2k of claims during September 2023 in respect of NIHE CYP P32 (£16.7k) and BPR P33 (£47.5k) expenditure.

Following submission of the final SSS claim, the total value of claims awaiting SEUPB verification was now £4,899,442. The Peace IV Programme Manager advised that an updated payment schedule for claims and request for a timeframe for reimbursement would be requested from SEUPB.

All costs relating to PEACE IV were claimed for reimbursement from SEUPB. Following submission of the final claim, the total expenditure across the PEACE IV Programme was £12,972,748, against Letters of Offer valued at £14,574.876. The Programme Manager referred to the breakdown below.

Theme	Budget	Expenditure	Underspend
CYP	£ 2,965,421.49	£ 2,335,888.87	£ 634,362.25
BPR	£ 5,176,749.33	£ 4,624,148.86	£ 553,321.22
SSS	£ 6,432,705.31	£ 6,012,710.35	£ 467,937.75
TOTAL	£ 14,574,876.13	£ 12,972,748.08	£ 1,655,621.21

The Programme Manager advised that, as previously reported, all funding under the PEACE IV was fully committed. The underspends within CYP and BPR were a result of reduced staff costs and reflected the level of delivery by NIHE, and the signage / language decision for the SSS.

The Members noted that future reporting of the PEACE IV Programme would be as required and focused solely on final evaluations and the claims position.

Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan
(Presentation with Recommendation)

The Good Relations Programme Manager delivered a presentation on the Local Action Plan with the purpose of:

- Providing a final updated overview of projects to be included in the PEACEPLUS 1.1 Local Community Action Plan.
- Requesting that the Shared City Partnership agree the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation;

- Recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to agree the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body; and
- Agree delegated authority to officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided a recap on the PEACEPLUS Action Plan which had a budget total of €17,437,277 / £15,162,85, and a target of 17,437 participants to be engaged. He outlined the peacebuilding elements of the plan and the current status as of October 2023 and the current budget position. He emphasised the significant amount of work that the project had involved.

Theme 1 Community Regeneration & Transformation

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided the Partnership with details of the capital proposals and projects across the city and the participant numbers.

- Approx £4.4m (minus fees) for 5 projects across the city
- Projects of a scale of approximately £500k-£600k
- Animation budget will accompany projects

There was discussion around minorities in the city and hate attacks. The Good Relations Programme Manager advised that there were plans to address such matters as part of the Local Area Plan. A Member advised that there were data sets available that could inform the plan. The Good Relations Programme Manager stated there might be a need to go into specific areas and he confirmed that that the Members' points would be taken on board.

The Good Relations Programme Manager provided a Member with clarity around the Annadale project in the context of the plan.

The Peace IV Programme Manager responded to Ms. A M White's comments around agility in respect of ethnic minorities and confirmed that an agile response would be taken to emerging issues.

Theme 2 Thriving & Peaceful Communities - Final Concepts

The Programme Manager outlined the key objectives across Capacity Building (Neighbourhood Empowerment Programme), Health and Wellbeing, Youth, Sport, Employability and the Arts.

Theme 3 Celebrating Culture & Diversity - Final Concepts

The Good Relations Programme Manager outlined the key objectives across Faith and Church/Religion and Belief, Ethnic Minority, LGBTQAI+, Ex Politically Motivated Prisoners Community and Culture & Heritage.

He provided details of potential future development and preliminary feedback received from SEUPB and the timeline of key milestones and next steps up to 7th – 13th November 2023.

On behalf of the Shared City Partnership, the Chairman acknowledged the level of work which had gone into the project.

- The Members of the Shared City Partnership agreed to the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation; and
- Agreed to recommend to the Special Policy and Resources Committee to approve the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body; and
- Agreed that authority be delegated to officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

Chairperson

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Belfast

PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

SCP Meeting

9 October 2023

Debbie McKinney / Stevie Lavery



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie



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City Council

Purpose of today

- To provide a final updated overview of projects to be included in the PEACEPLUS 1.1 Local Community Action Plan.
- Request that the Shared City Partnership:
 - Agree the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation; and
 - Recommend to the SP&R Committee to agree the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body.
 - Agree delegated authority to Officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

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Belfast
PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan



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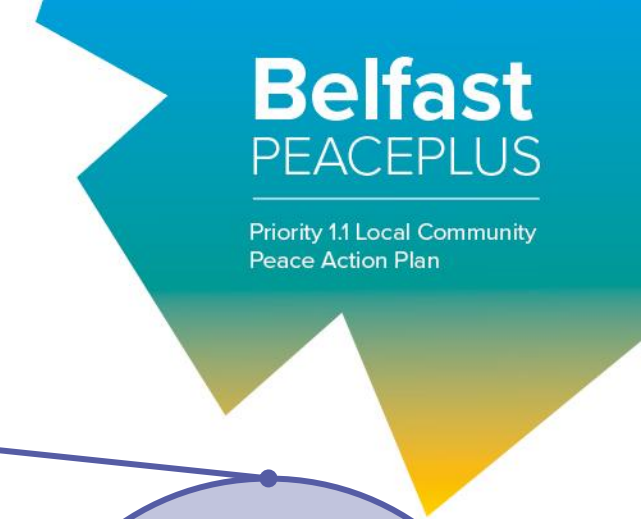


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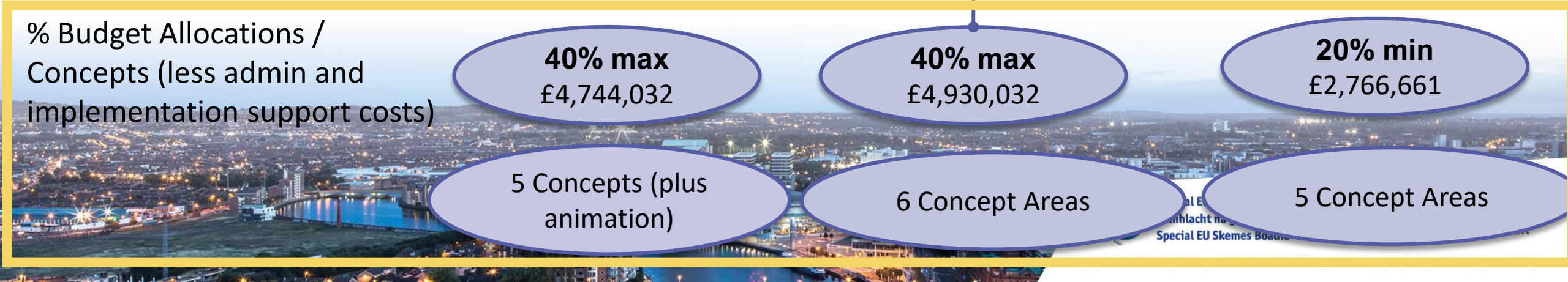
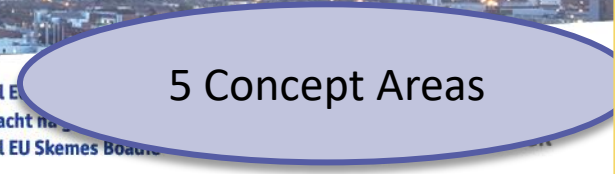
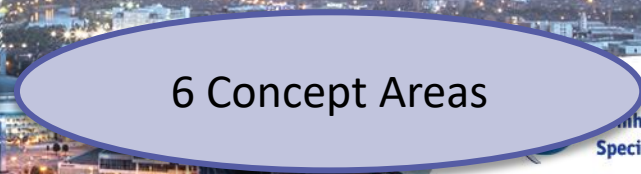
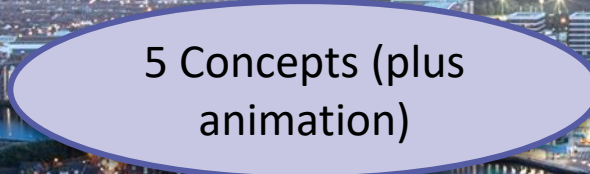
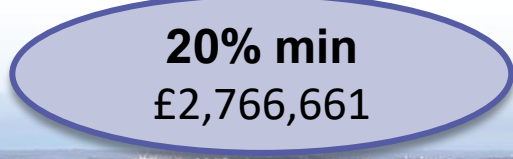
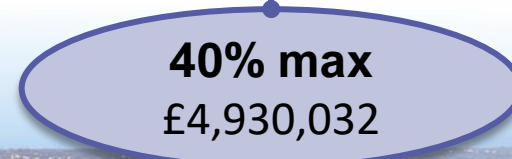
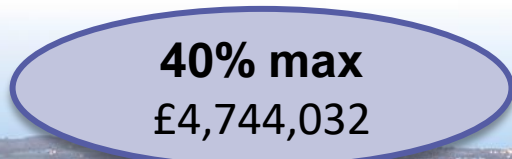
Recap - PEACEPLUS Action Plan

Total €17,437,277 / £15,162,850

Target of **17,437** participants to be engaged



% Budget Allocations /
Concepts (less admin and
implementation support costs)



Peacebuilding elements of the Action Plan

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Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

- Creation of sustainable, inclusive and cross-community partnerships;
- Inclusion of all local areas across the City, including those who may not previously have participated within PEACE Programme activities;
- Focuses on activities that include: youth development programmes; health and wellbeing initiatives; community regeneration projects; redevelopment and re-imagining of existing community facilities for shared usage;
- Address issues of racism and sectarianism, increase social inclusion and promote civil leadership;
- Builds positive relations; social innovation; social enterprise; community education; and rural inclusion;
- Community ownership of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan through the co-design process;
- Co-design and ongoing community engagement continues throughout delivery phase;
- Complementarity and evolution from PEACE IV;
- Includes significant and sustained cross-community collaboration at the local level to deliver established development priorities;



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Current Status – Oct 23

- Initial Approval Sept 23 via SCP, SP&R, Council.
- Final Working Group Meetings.
- Internal Review of concepts, budgets and participant numbers.
- Alignment to requirements of SEUPB requirements.
- Consolidation of detailed budgets and activities.

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Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

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This project will be funded by the European Union's PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

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Theme 1 Community Regeneration & Transformation



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Theme 1.1 Community Regeneration & Transformation

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Capital proposals

- Approx £4.4m (minus fees) for **5 projects across the city**
- **Projects of a scale of approximately £500k-£600k**
- Animation budget will accompany projects

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This project will be funded by the European Union's PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

Theme 1.1 – Capital Projects

<i>Project idea</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
CITY WIDE PROPOSALS – Facilities to be used by people from across the city		
LGBTQIA+ Hub page 136	Redevelopment of the first floor of 2 Royal Avenue to provide a dedicated space for organisations representing the LGBTQIA+ with a shared services approach to the ground floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study previously completed and forms the basis of the project – ad hoc steering group continuing to meet. • Floor plan and concept designs being produced.
SOUTH		
Annadale Open Space	Transformation of a former bonfire site into a gated play / training pitch. A purpose-built Men’s Shed facility using modified shipping containers, located in the garden area of the Hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project developing from PEACE IV project which co-designed a concept master plan, following community consultation. • Discussions with stakeholder groups and identification of current priority areas. • Updated designs and costs initiated

Theme 1.1 Capital Projects

<i>Project idea</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
WEST		
Distillery Street redevelopment scheme	Creation of a new natural Play Area, Pathways, Wall Upgrades (including opening) and lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with stakeholders initiated • Updated designs and costs initiated • Meetings held with potential project partners
NORTH		
Access to the Hills	Building upon the Forth Meadow Community Greenway proposed extensions to the routes at Glencairn and Ligoniel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the routes and feasibility being undertaken • Discussions around prioritisation in stakeholder workshops • Updated designs and costs initiated • Discussions started with National Trust as main landowner
EAST		
Sanctuary Theatre	The Sanctuary Theatre and the Big Umbrella Drama Group are based in the church at the interface of the Castlereagh Road and the Short Strand. Provide services for all communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants appointed for concept design and costs • Meeting held with Group & Consultants to discuss process. • Stakeholder engagement to commence

Community Regeneration & Transformation

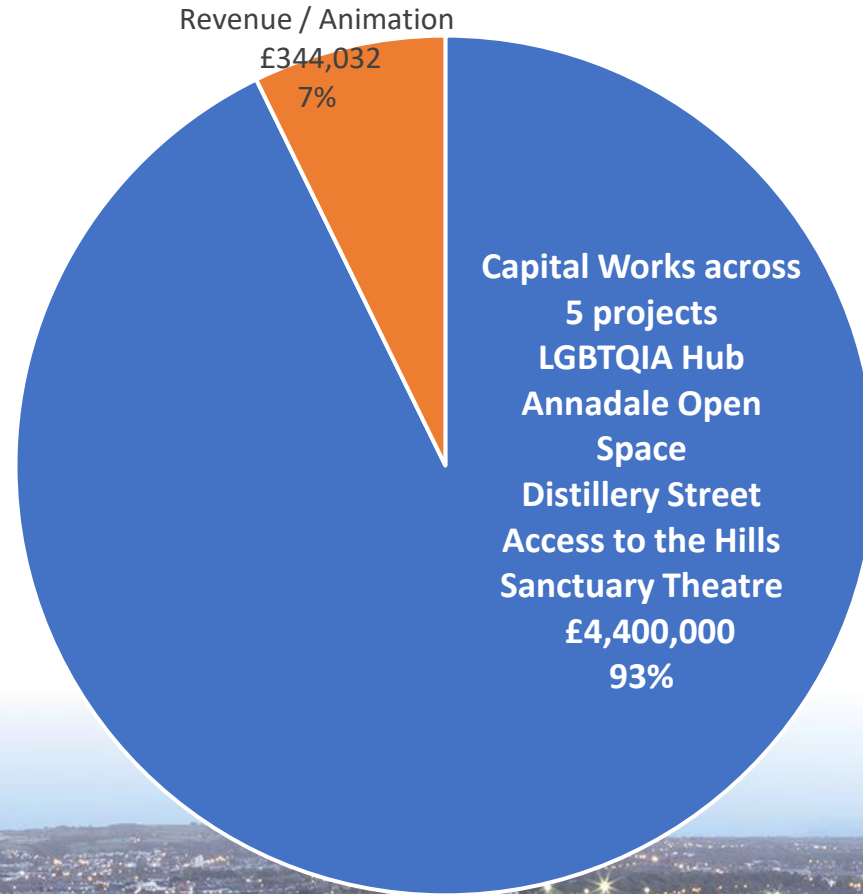
Belfast
PEACEPLUS

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Peace Action Plan

Available Budget - £4,744,032
Budget Allocated - £TBC

Participants To Achieved - 4,258
% Achieved 24% of 17,437

Budget Allocation



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Theme 1 – Co-Design

- BCC significant capital programme in Local Action Plan
- Scope to further evolve projects through co-design
- Animation Programme Development to achieve 4,258 participants
- Affordable, achievable, value for money and meet the Peace & Reconciliation criteria



Belfast | Theme 2 Thriving & Peaceful PEACEPLUS Communities Final Concepts

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan



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Theme	THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES			
Concept	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget	
Capacity Building (Neighbourhood empowerment programme)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To deliver 10 local community empowerment programmes across N, S, E, W Belfast by 2027 2. To establish and facilitate a city wide Community Capacity Building Forum over 3 years 3. To deliver 2 city wide Community Leadership accredited training programmes annually for 3 years 4. To deliver 6 non accredited capacity building training workshops per annum over 3 years 5. To facilitate 3 best practice and networking events per annum over 3 years 6. To facilitate 1 cross border shared learning event per annum over 3 years 	1,000	£903,578	

Theme	THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES		
Concept	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Health & Well-Being Page 142	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To deliver a cross community programme of activities to addresses mental health and wellbeing issues associated with the conflict 2. To deliver Therapeutic and support services such as counselling, life coaching and mentoring services at Tier 1 and 2 – delivered by local community. 3. To establish a cross community Working group in each of the 3-4 areas and meet 6 times per annum 4. To establish a cross community city-wide shared Learning Working Group and meet four times per annum 5. to host 1 conference/ seminar per annum 	1,600	£853,000

Theme	THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES		
Concept	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Sport Page 144	<p>To promote positive relations and attitudinal change through sport and physical activity and build lasting partnerships between sports clubs, Schools and community groups across the city</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting Communities through Leadership - engages young people aged 16-18 years old to become Young Leaders and take part in a structured OCN training to become Peace Plus Sports Ambassador. 2. Connecting Communities through Community Activity/Participation – involves young participants aged 11-16. Includes local summer schemes with city wide / cross community celebration events; Personal Development / Good Relations / Mutual Understanding Programmes 3. To establish and facilitate a city-wide Sports consortium 4. Deliver a city-wide Community Leadership accredited training and mentoring programmes over 3 years 5. To facilitate 2 best practice and networking events per annum x3 6. To facilitate 3 cross border shared learning event per annum x3 	1,600	£711,646

Theme	THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES		
Concept	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Employability	<p>Focus on specific ethnic minority communities, linked with employers in the city, including language and childcare support services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community provision of flexible language courses - To provide community based / delivered flexible language classes across the city for ethnic minority groups and offer wrap around supports such as childcare and/or travel to address barriers to maximise participation and engagement of the most vulnerable 2. Community Programme of Activities - To include tours to practice English language whilst learn about NI culture and local sights. Community events where local volunteers and participants can practice language, information sessions to support inclusion and integration, awareness talks on hate crime, housing rights, 3. Recognition events co designed by participants. 4. Explore facilitating a pilot bespoke employment academy (based on existing model via current BCC offering) 	816	£447,513

Thriving and Peaceful Communities (TPC)

Belfast
PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

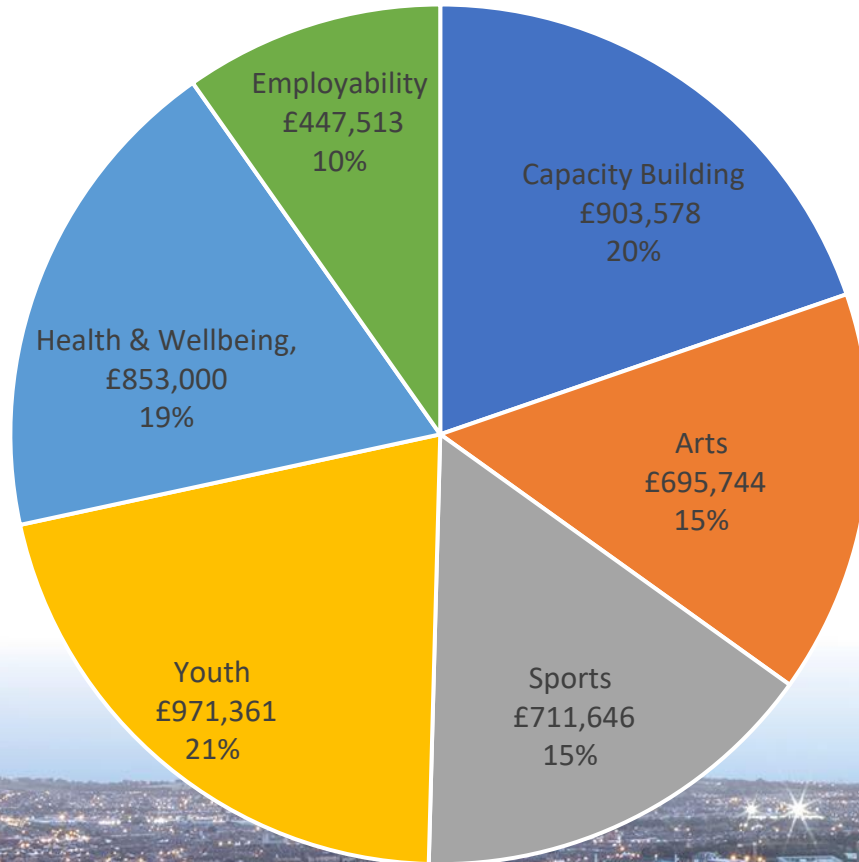
Available Budget - £4,950, 032

Budget Allocated - £4,582,842

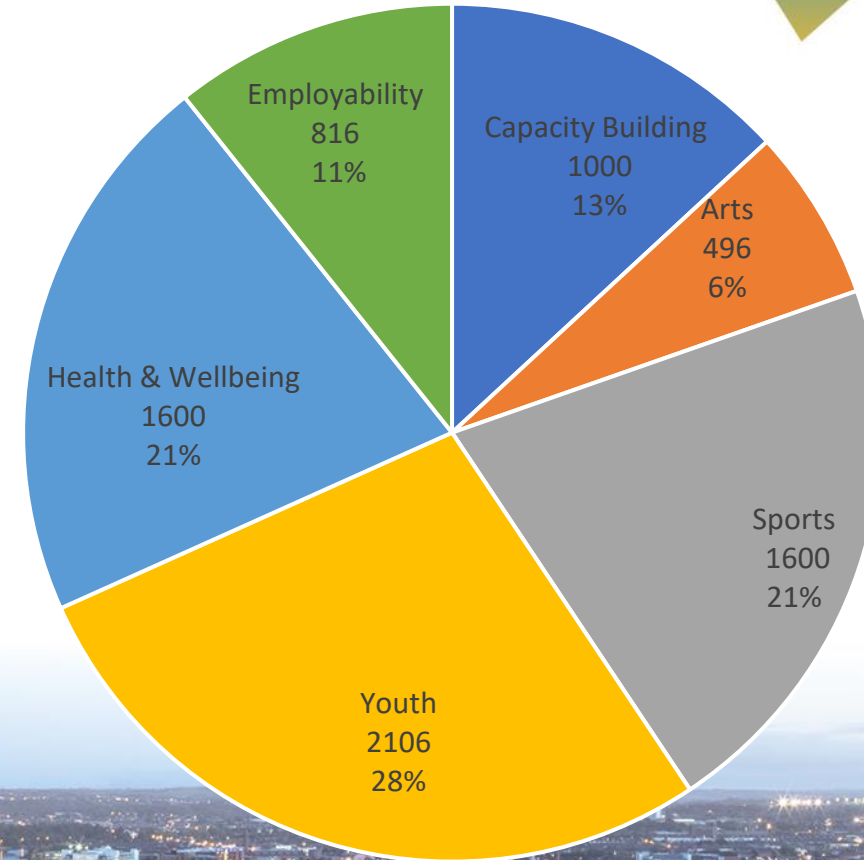
Participants Achieved - 7,618

Achieves 44% of 17,437

Budget Allocation



Participant Nos



Page 147

Belfast

PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

Theme 3 Celebrating Culture & Diversity

Final Concepts



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie



Belfast
City Council

Theme Concept	Celebrating Cultures and Diversity		
	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Faith and Church / Religion & Belief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and Awareness (3-year programme) Increase knowledge and awareness about different faiths &, beliefs across Belfast and as a result improve relations between people of different religions and non-religious backgrounds and build trust and respect through the development of educational materials. 2. Unity and Peace- Welcoming Programme (18-month programme) - Increase awareness of the physical, human and community assets within different interfaith and belief organisations across Belfast with a view to seeing how these can best be utilised within Belfast’s vision of a shared society and city to help achieve the outcomes within the Belfast Agenda. 3. Celebrating Faith Festivals in the City (3-year programme) Celebrate and showcase the diversity of faiths & beliefs across Belfast through a range of different events and activities with a view to building Belfast’s vision of a shared society and city, that respects all and challenges prejudice, hatred and discrimination. 	870	£304,564

Theme Concept	Celebrating Cultures and Diversity		
Ethnic Minority	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 150</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="394 274 1939 625">1. Community Leadership and Mentoring Programme - Intensive coaching to grow the confidence and familiarity of the participants, building their leadership potential and personal growth, providing personal learning, mentoring and action learning as well as opportunities for public life mentoring. Accreditation (eg OCN) will be an option for participants. <li data-bbox="394 625 1939 976">2. Belfast Community Orientation and Cultural Facilitators - Training and support to develop 20 community orientation and cultural facilitators, that have lived experience of the asylum system or navigating life in Belfast. The facilitators will lead localised orientation programmes providing vital information to newcomers. <li data-bbox="394 976 1939 1310">3. Community Connectors Programme - To develop a community connectors programme, with 60 trained volunteers, (20 per year) that know Belfast well, skilling them with the capacity to become befrienders and community connectors, that have the confidence to link with people from new communities <li data-bbox="394 1310 1939 1426">4. Community and network building - identify and agree 3 council community spaces to operate a Belfast welcome hubs, providing a weekly 	752	£638,135

Theme Concept	Celebrating Cultures and Diversity		
LGBTQAI+	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 151</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration and Strategic direction for the sector - A strong communications strategy will be pivotal to raising awareness of the PEACEPLUS support for the LGBTQIA+ community and will be critical to supporting the message of inclusion, respect and cultural diversity. Communications and awareness raising activities will: 2. Outreach activities programme - between LGBTQIA+ support organisations and local community organisations. To educate local groups on the importance of inclusion, fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community; build outreach networks for signposting; facilitate safe spaces in local communities for LGBTQIA+ to engage and participate in community based activities and services. 3. Research - At the outset of the project a qualitative research project will be undertaken to record the life experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in Belfast. 	624	£391,672

Theme Concept	Celebrating Cultures and Diversity		
	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Ex Politically motivated prisoners community Page 152	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="394 274 1939 706"> 1. Welfare and health and Well-being Programme - to improve the welfare and health & well-being of former politically motivated prisoners Train 25 former politically motivated prisoners, or individuals nominated by currently established prisoner support groups, in Counselling. Facilitate locally available programmes on mental health, addictions and relationships. <li data-bbox="394 706 1939 1235"> 2. Interactive engagement activities - that engages the families of former politically motivated prisoners e.g. develop a number of Men’s and Hen’s Sheds to reduce the prevalence of social isolation. Develop an outlet for the families of former politically motivated prisoners to speak and listen to their own stories of the challenges, difficulties and trauma that they suffered, including a history project to assist former politically motivated prisoners and their families. <li data-bbox="394 1235 1939 1426"> 3. Practical initiatives to support the inclusion, participation and equality of former politically motivated prisoners, such as advocacy and lobbying. This will include opportunities to train people on Advice 	750	£493,006

Theme Concept	Celebrating Cultures and Diversity		
Culture and Heritage	Key Objectives	Participants	Est Budget
Page 153	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Language and Cultural Access Programme – to highlight the indigenous linguistic heritage and new languages that are present within Belfast on a cross community basis through 1.1 Irish Language and Ulster Scots Heritage project and 1.2 New Languages Programme 	2,565	£949,990
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Cultural Spaces Programme to increase awareness of the different culturally significant spaces across Belfast through inter community connected neighbourhood and city wide venues programme 		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Festivals and Flagship Events Programme to help flagship events become more accessible. This will include capacity building programme, Flagship events cultural connector programme and marching in step to different tunes and a fusion of Belfast Sounds Programme 		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Culture and Built Heritage Programme – to develop and enhance public space availability, usage and capacity, including showcasing our historical built environment, walking tours, 		

Celebrating Cultures & Diversity (CCD)

Belfast
PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

Assigned Budget - £ 2,319,471
 TPC Reallocation £ 347,190
 Available Budget - £ 2,766,661
 Budget Allocated - £ 2,777,367

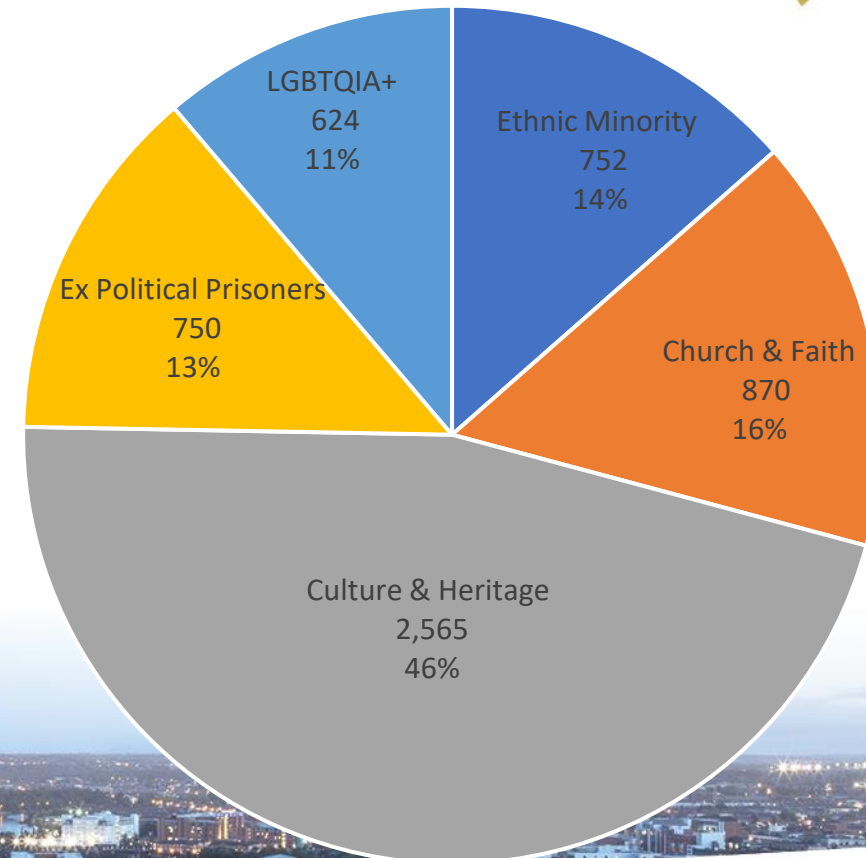
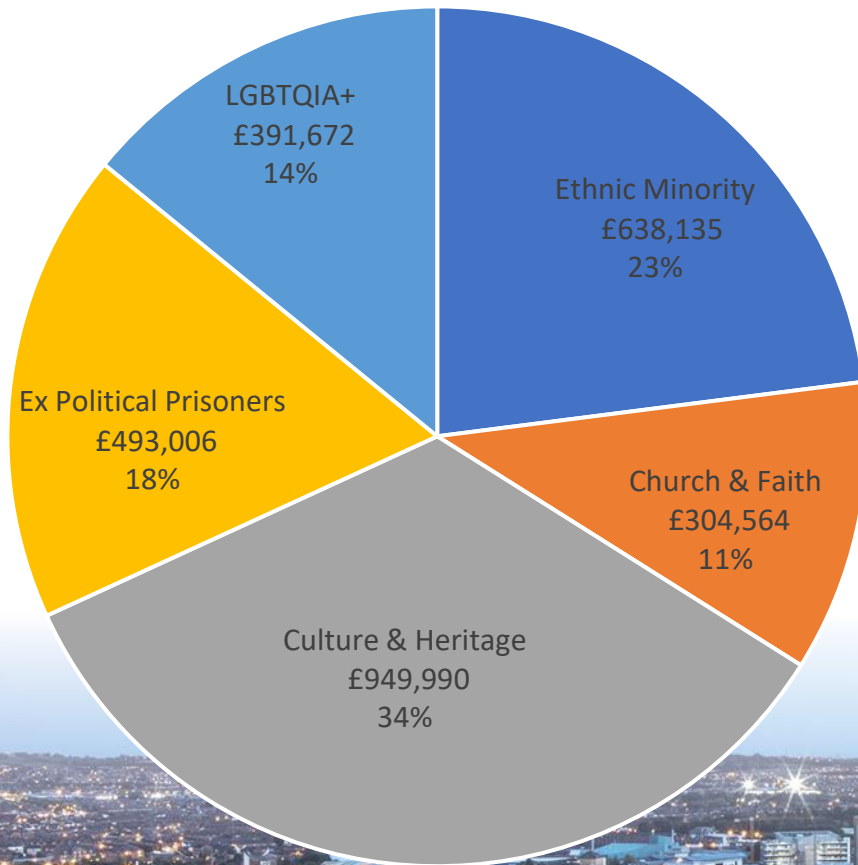
Shortfall -£10,706

Budget Allocation

Participants Achieved - 5,561
 Achieves 32% of 17,437

Participant Nos

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Special EU Programmes Body
 Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
 Special EU Skemes Boadie



Belfast
City Council

PEACEPLUS Administration Costings

Belfast
PEACEPLUS

Priority 1.1 Local Community
Peace Action Plan

Costings for key elements

1. Management of the overall plan, governance, compliance, financial claims and reporting – 7 Secretariat Staff - £1.4m (10%)
 2. Project delivery and implementation – 6 Implementation Staff – £1.2M (8%)
- Page 455
- Overhead Flat Rate for Office & Admin Costs - £432K
- Financial Controller - £209K (2%)

Programme Rules allow up to 20% project costs + 15% Office & Admin Flat Rate



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie



Belfast
City Council

This project will be funded by the European Union's PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

Potential Future Development

- Concepts finalised based on prioritisation by working groups
- Additional projects in reserve
- Engagement with working groups on current position
- SEUPB Feedback



Preliminary Feedback - SEUPB

- Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan is above delegation
 - Subject to more intense scrutiny – Economic Appraisal
 - Complexity in scope and scale of the Plan
 - Approach different from all other Councils
- Page 157 Strong mix of concepts that link to key strategies / policies
 - Legacy Issues, Mental Health, Youth, LGBTQIA+, Employability
 - Co-design remains strong throughout delivery of the Plan
- Clear evolution of peace initiatives and complementarity with PEACE IV
 - Includes activities for traditional, marginalised and new communities



Timeline	Key Milestone / Next Steps
15 Sept	Finalise draft concepts with working groups
9 Oct	SCP agree action plan in principle
20 Oct	SPR agree initial action plan in principle
1 Nov	Council agree initial action plan in principle
2 Nov	Plan submission commences
6 Nov	SCP Final update on action plan and Submission
7/13 Nov	Public Engagement Workshop(s)

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Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadie



Belfast
City Council

SCP Decision

- Request that members of the Shared City Partnership:
 - Agree the PEACEPLUS Plan detailed in the presentation; and
 - Recommend to the SP&R Committee to agree the outlined PEACEPLUS Plan in the presentation and for this to be submitted through the application process to the Special EU Programmes Body.
 - Agree delegated authority to Officers to make minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

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Shared City Partnership
09 September 2023
Eimear Henry, Strategic Lead



Report Overview

- Update on progress against the delivery of the Belfast Stories programme.
- Findings of the public consultation exercise, the Equality Impact Assessment and the Rural Needs Screening.
- Actions as set out in the Engagement Plan.
- Findings of the Stories Audit.
- Actions as set out in the Stories Action Plan.
- Inclusive Growth and Social Value Action Plan.
- Setting up of Members' Working Group.



Strategic context

Programme for Government - New Decade, New Approach

Regional



Belfast Region City Deal

NI Tourism Strategy



Delivering a 21st Century High-Street (Taskforce)

Culture, Arts, Heritage – A Way forward)



10X Economy – a decade of innovation

Green Growth Strategy (Draft)



Employability NI

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City

Belfast Agenda



The Belfast Agenda

Council



A City Imagining – Cultural Strategy 2020-2030

A Bolder Vision for Belfast



Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy

Good Relations Strategy



Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-30

Tourism Plan 2022-2030



Net Zero Roadmap for Belfast

Local Development Plan



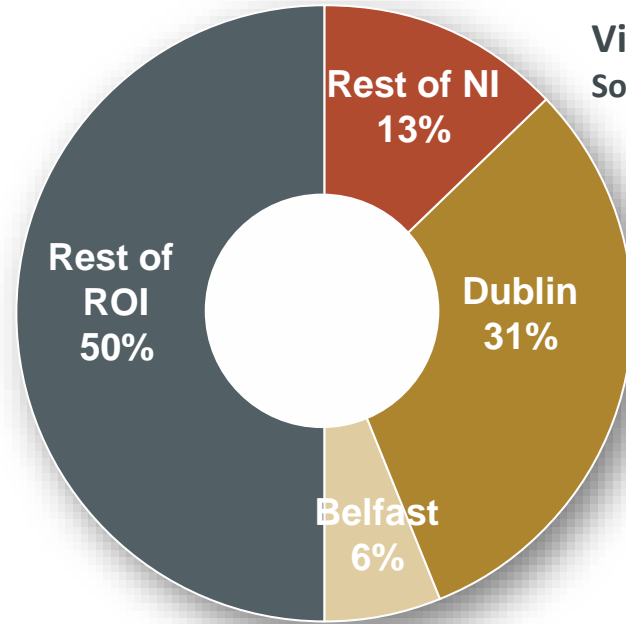
Corporate plans, investment and programmes

BRCDC challenge

Projects should strive to be of world class quality:

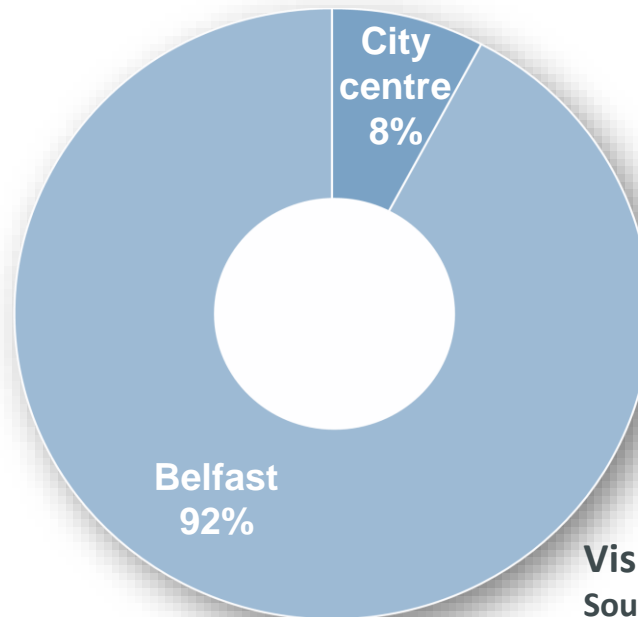
- Innovative & participatory
- Engage the senses & imagination
- Authentic to the place and connect with local communities
- Produced by local people and provide a sense of place
- Provide a new perspective and understanding of the destination
- Be unique and original
- Available year round, day through to evening and weekends

**BELFAST
STORIES**



Visits to Island of Ireland
Source: NISRA, FAILTE Ireland, 2018

Belfast Stories...A **cultural beacon** for the city; an **anchor for the wider Belfast experience** and a place of orientation for visitors...



Visits to Attractions in Belfast
Source: NISRA Visitors to Attractions 2011-2018

The 3 'S's

Belfast Stories, in the heart of the city, the place where local people and visitors meet.

Stories
Screen
Social Spaces

A world class experience with animated outdoor and indoor spaces and the best of NI's food and drink.

A unique insight into Belfast's people and the city, as the stories of Belfast unravel through all areas.

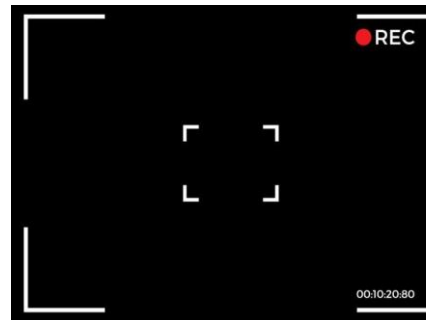
Innovation, education and creative learning programme.

Rooftop with 360 degree city views is the perfect starting point for a visit to Belfast and beyond...

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Springboard

Story-lines become city-lines.

Skills

Capacity building
Neighbourhood tourism

Stories ~ Products

Geographic clustering
Thematic and story-based connections

Servicing

Wayfinding
Signage

BELFAST
STORIES



Why

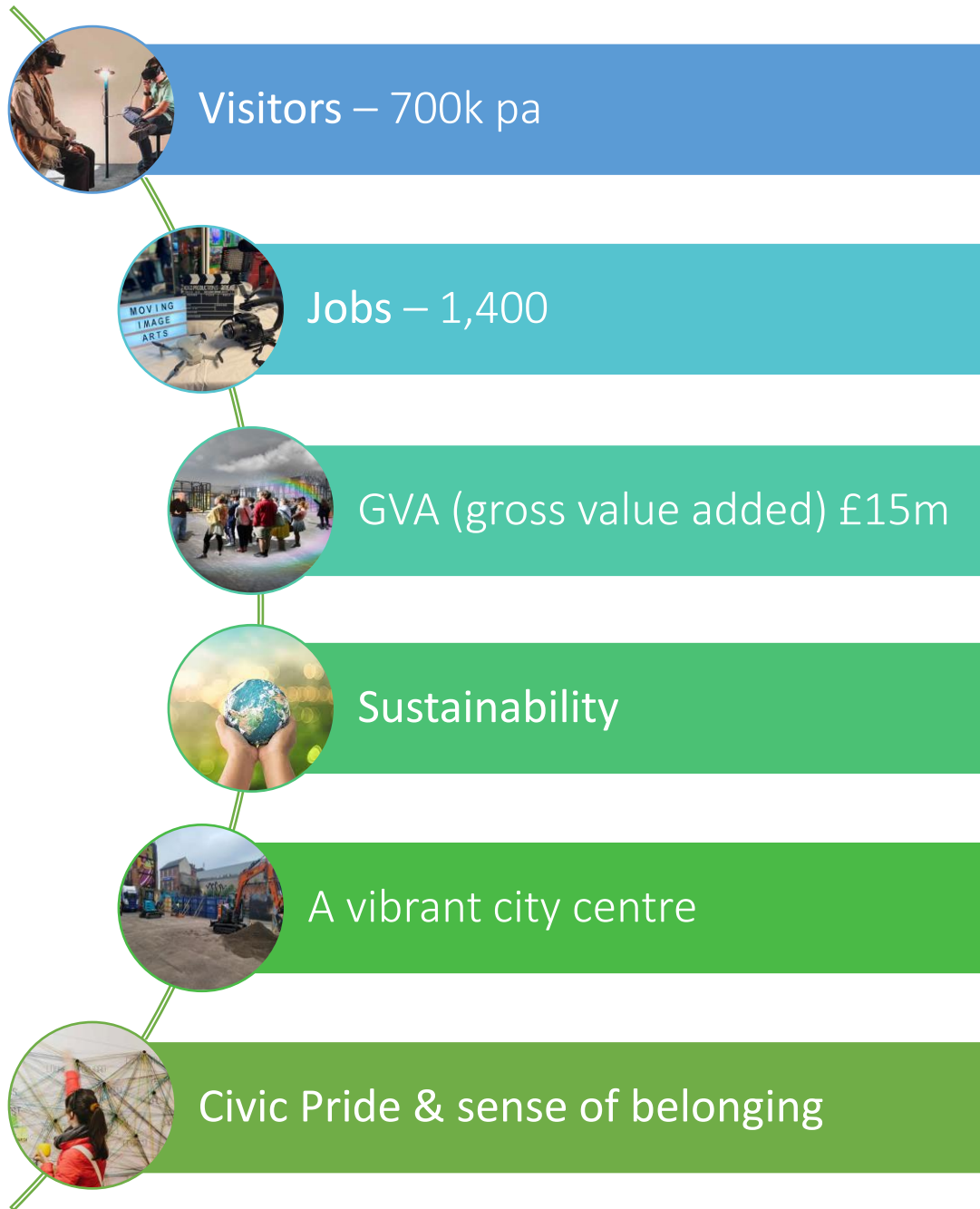
Vision

Belfast will be a caring, vibrant and more visited city; transformed by the power of stories of past, present and future generations.

Objectives

- Grow Belfast's economy through tourism led regeneration and support for screen-based creative industries.
- Create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city where people want to live and work, visit and invest.
- Engender a greater sense of connection and belonging.

BELFAST
STORIES



Sustainability

Social

- Regenerative - placemaking
- Wellbeing
- Connection and belonging
- Inclusion - collaboration

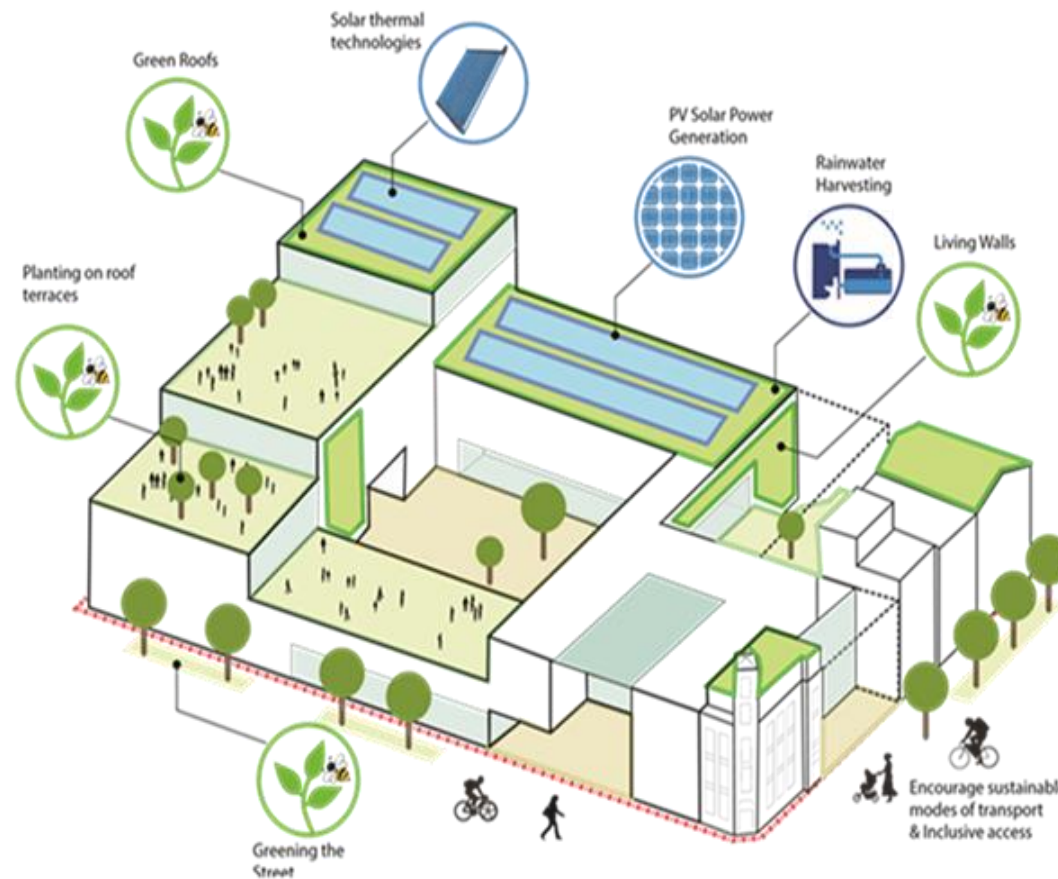
Economic

- GVA – more people, more time
- Inclusive Growth:
 - jobs, skills, support SMEs, VCSE
- Strengthen the brand

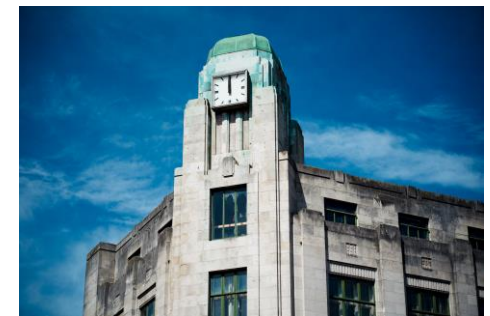
Environmental

- Net zero exemplar for the city
- Sustainability assessments (e.g. BREEAM outstanding, Passive House plus, CEEQUAL outstanding).

**BELFAST
STORIES**



**Inclusive
Design
Principles**



Location

Optimal site.
Belfast Stories design
needs to draw people
in and breathe new life
into the destination.

Page 169

**A recognisable
window to the city -
accessible, bold,
inclusive, respectful
and responsive to its
context.**

**BELFAST
STORIES**



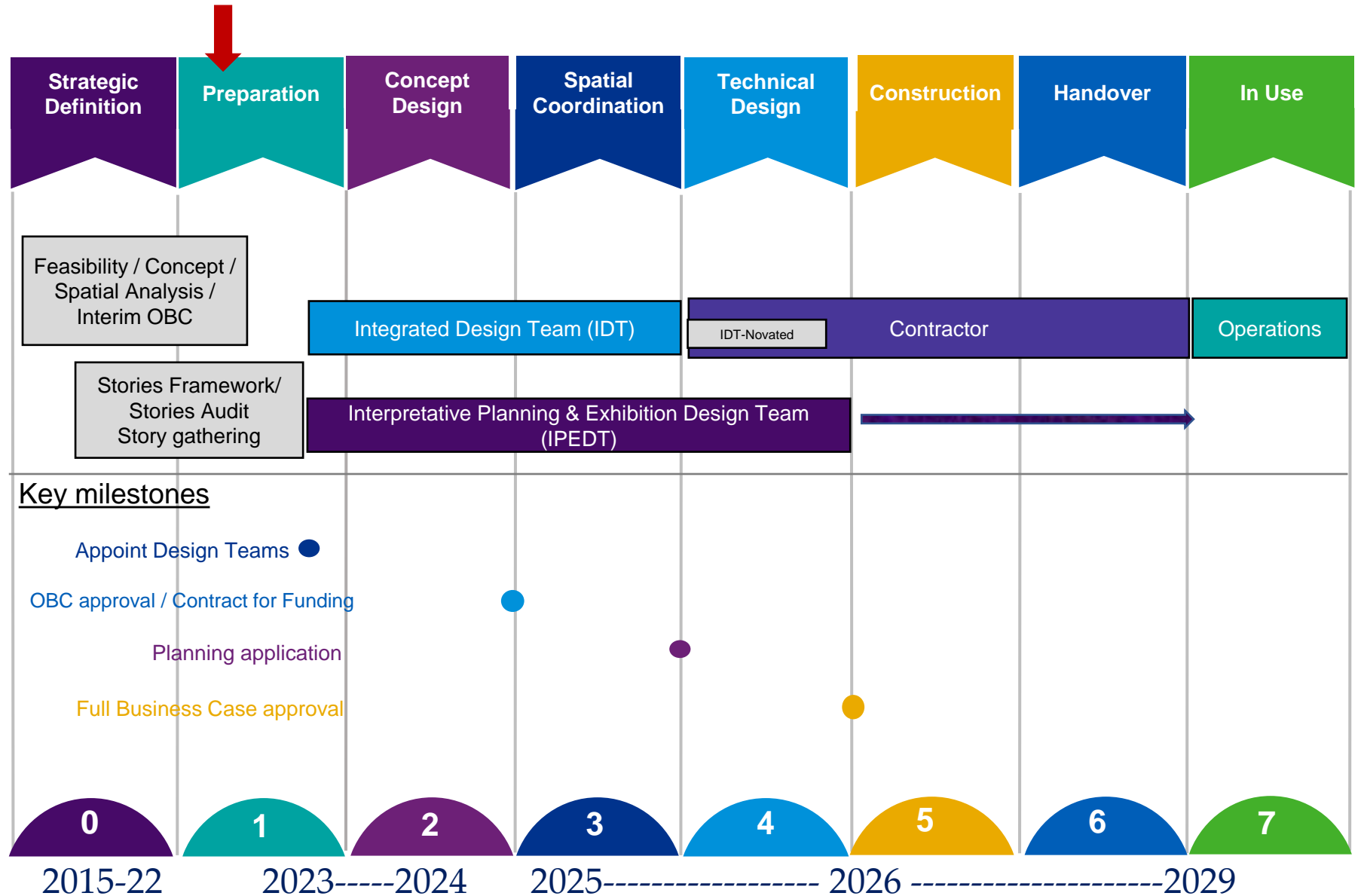
RIBA Project Stages 1 - 7

Integrated Design Team (IDT)

Interpretative Planning & Exhibition Design Team (IPEDT)



Page 17



Key milestones

2023-2024

Design - Appointment of the professional services teams is underway:

- Integrated Design Team
- Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team
- Project Management and Design Assurance Team.

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**BELFAST
STORIES**

1

Design - Teams appointed - October 2023

2

Develop concept design RIBA 1 & 2 Nov 2023 - May 2024

3

Gather - commence stories gathering pilot - Q3 2023

4

Engage - set up Stories Network & Stories Panel - Q3 2023

5

Develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) Nov 2023 - May 2024

6

Consult on the concept designs Feb 2024 - April 2024

7

Submit OBC for BRCD funding approval - June 2024

Design

Produce RIBA 2 designs that:

- meet BRCD challenge evidenced through consumer testing.
- resonates with the people of Belfast evidenced through public consultation.
- create a model of storylines to city-lines that supports hub and spoke model evidenced through neighbourhood tourism.

**BELFAST
STORIES**

Engage

Deliver against principles of inclusion and diversity:

- reach voices previously marginalised or at risk of missing out.
- develop capacity across city to tell their story and community story connected to cultural heritage.

**BELFAST
STORIES**

Gather

Gather stories that represent:

- authenticity of stories.
- multiplicity of perspectives in the city.
- world-class approach to presenting a city's stories through first person accounts.

**BELFAST
STORIES**

Consultation findings

- Overall very positive response to plans and enthusiasm about being involved and contributing.
- Positive feedback on regeneration and restoration of heritage building.
- Concerns over divisive 'us' and 'them' perspectives on one hand or the 'sanitisation' of the city's stories on the other hand.
- Concerns over displacement and/or lack of in existing infrastructure.

Page 17 of 19



What we did

2,755 visits and 2,495 unique visitors

234 views or downloads

149 responses to online survey and polls

65 workshops reaching **1,148** participants

How well we did it

100% enjoyed the consultation

96% felt listened to

60% of survey respondents were female

21% of survey responses from LGBTQ+ community

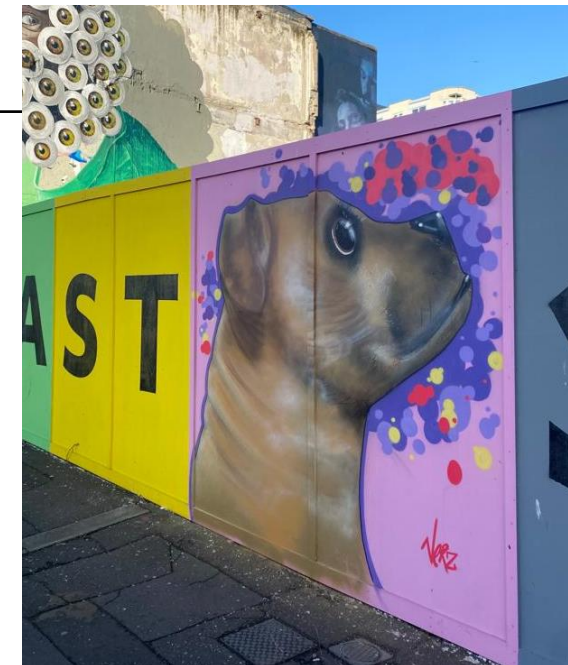
20% of survey respondents had caring responsibilities for an older person or disabled person

What difference it made

82% - now excited by the concept of Belfast Stories

58% - offered stories, experiences, knowledge and networks they could share to help develop

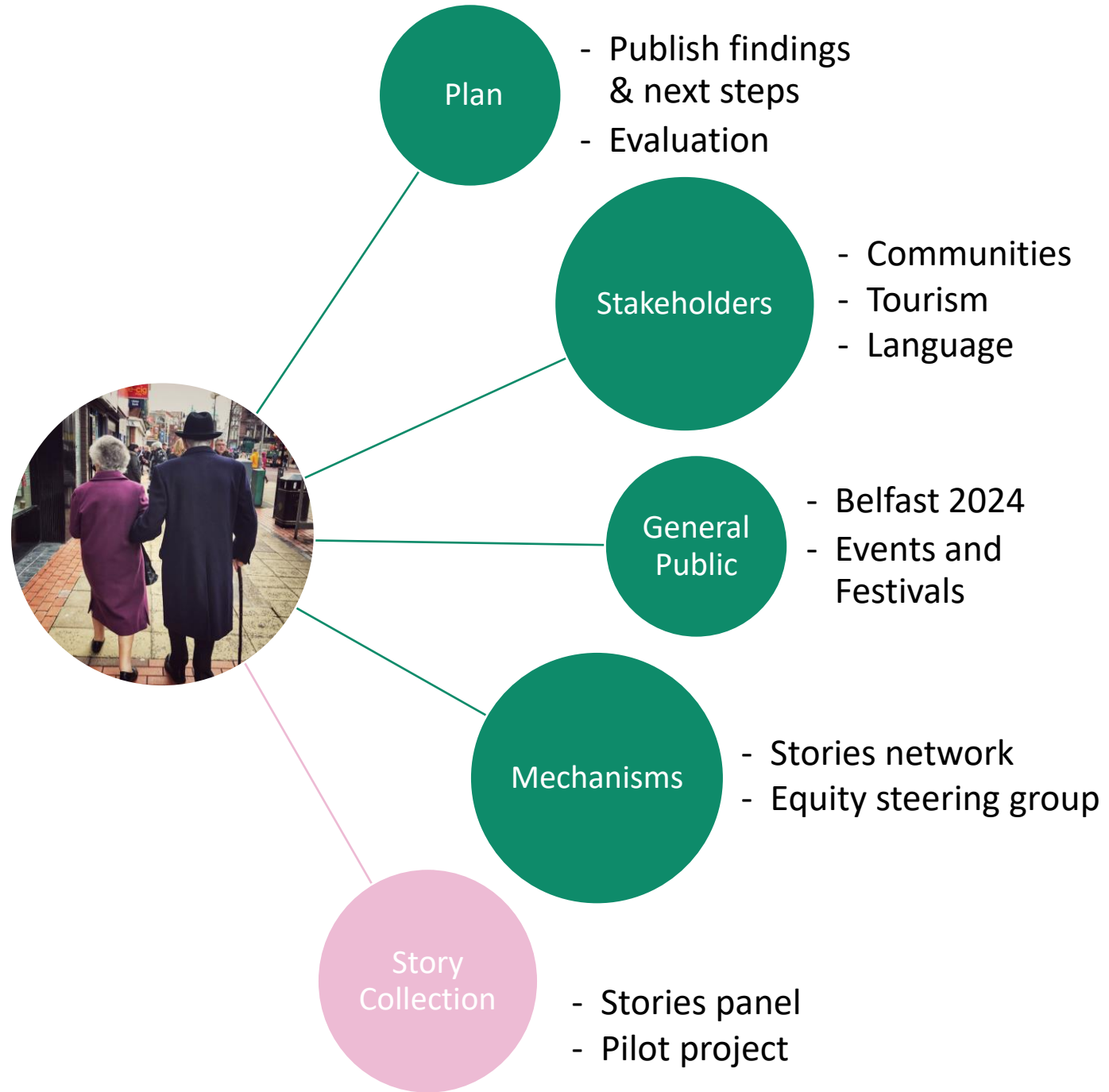
Belfast Stories



Engagement actions

The purpose of the engagement plan is to help make Belfast Stories a destination that resonates with local people, captivates visitors and is welcoming of all.

Our mission is to bring Belfast Stories to life through the knowledge, insight and ideas of its people and stakeholders.



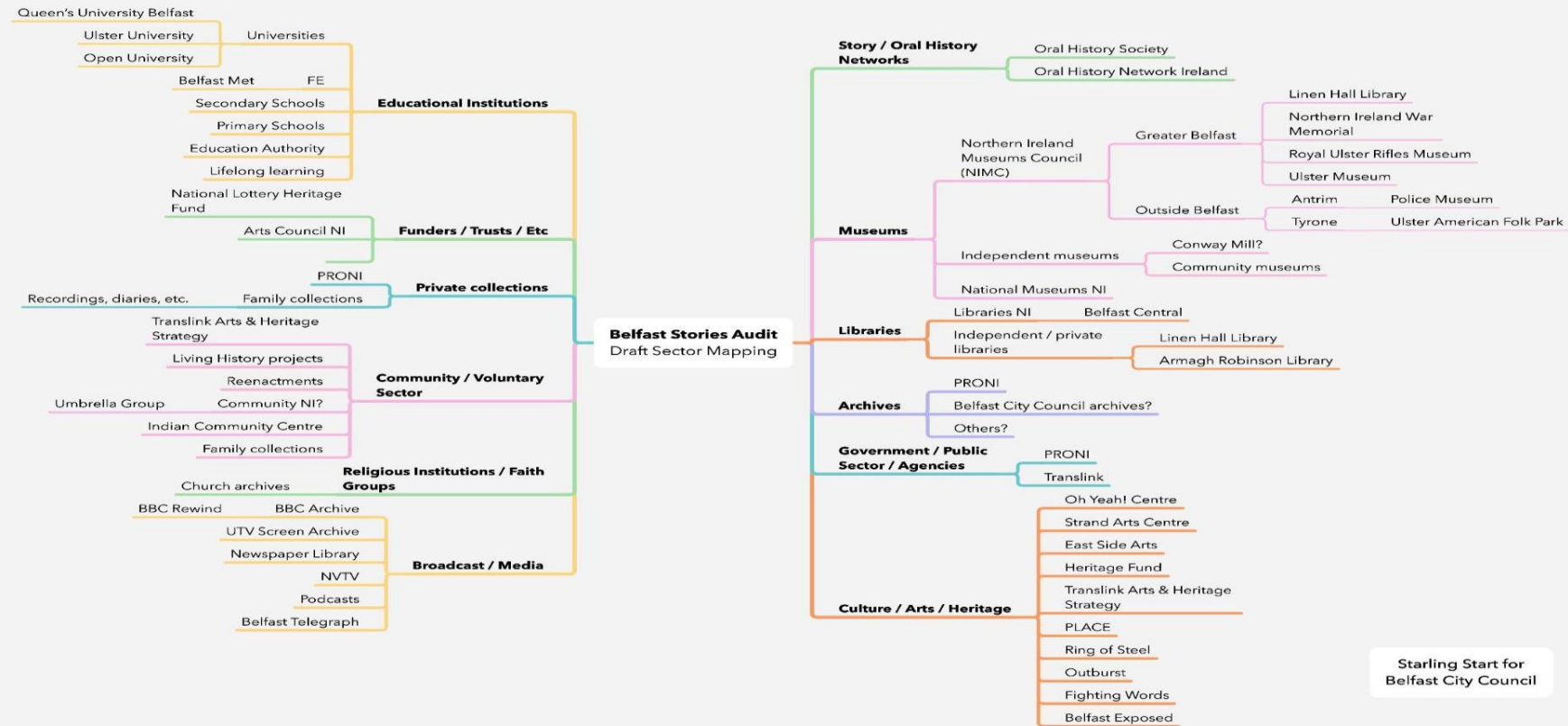
Public consultation at end of design stage

Stories audit

The audit produced a **catalogue of 100 story collections and projects**, the majority of which are held by independent organisations working in the community / voluntary sector or in culture, arts and heritage.

This is the first phase completed of ongoing work. The catalogue accompanies the main audit report as a searchable tool which can be used in ongoing research and updated as plans for Belfast Stories develop further.

“A free person tells her own story. A valued person lives in a society in which her story has a place.” Rebecca Solnit (2017)



Stories actions

- Explore new ways of telling the stories and different perspectives.
- Bring the people of Belfast into the heart of the initiatives.
- Increase accessibility of existing collections.
- Identify and address gaps in stories that have not been collected or that lack visibility.
- Encourage long term active engagement with partners creating a network across the city and beyond that will increase opportunities to participate in the cultural life and support neighbourhood tourism.
- Identify sustainable ways of sharing and putting collections to their best use.

BELFAST
STORIES

Story Collection Framework

- Guiding principles
- Ethical parameters
- Themes
- Partnership model

Stories Audit – ongoing
updates and additions

Stories Action Plan

- Set up Stories Panel (specialists)
 - Pilot project
- Best practice including language and missing voices

Link to other Council programmes:

- Heritage plan for city including attracting external funding for skills development and partner projects
- Neighbourhood tourism investment

Inclusive Growth

3 Stages:



Provide New and Better Jobs

- Over 200 permanent jobs to be created
- Over 1,000 jobs created during the construction phase

Reduce Economic Inequalities

- Offer above average salary in the sector
- Increase accessibility to jobs
- Support inclusion - employment academies

Support Access to Training

- Offer apprentice opportunities
- Work experience for the next generation of talent

Foster Business Growth

- SMEs and VCSE sector to access supply chain opportunities
- Community tourism capacity building*

Skills for life

- Capacity building & training through stories
- Heritage skills
- Digital/ Screen Industries – Creative Learning Centre

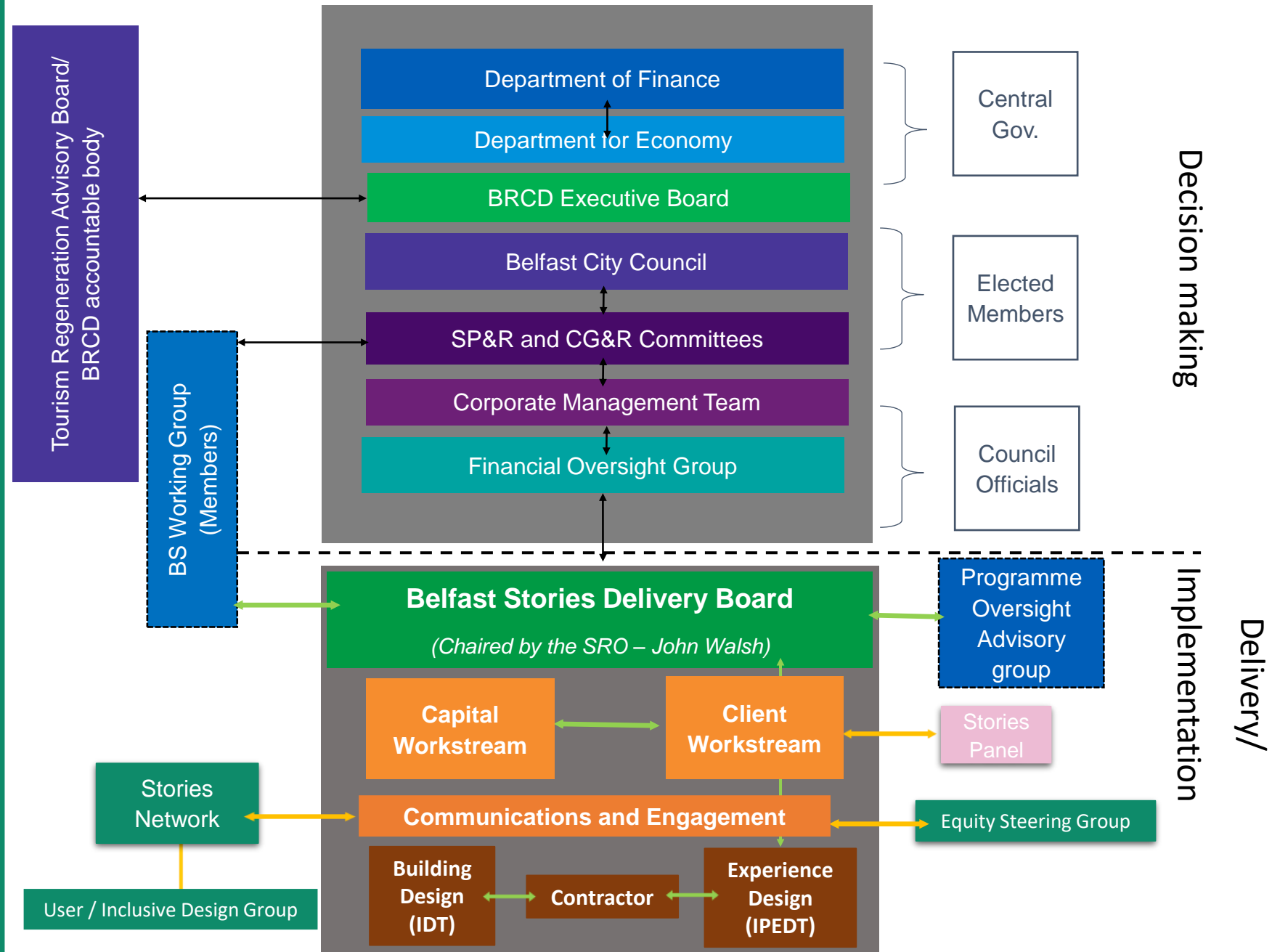
Belfast Stories aims to deliver inclusive growth through:

- **employability and skills**
- **education**
- **increased social value for communities**

Governance

- Stage 2 recommendations agreed by CGR Committee:
- Members' Working group
 - Stories Network (open and citywide)
 - Stories Panel (specialists including ethics)
 - User/ inclusive design group (following design team appointments).

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BELFAST STORIES

The life and times of a city,
in its own words.



@belfaststories



@belfast_stories

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Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 12th October 2023

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor Brian Smyth
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor Christina Black
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Paul Doherty

Apologies: Councillor Séamas de Faoite,

Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive
Sharon McNicholl Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item 1)
Kate Bentley, Director of Planning & Building Control (for Items 3 & 6)
Mark McCann, Smart Belfast Programme Lead (for Item 4)
Shauna Murtagh, Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager (for Item 5)
John Greer, Director Economic Development (for Item 8)
Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources (for Item 8)
John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy (for Item 8)
Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty (for Item 8)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Finance Update

The Director of Finance provided an update on the setting of the district rate for 2024/25. He outlined the work undertaken to date and Members noted the timeframe. Although it was agreed that Members receive monthly rate update reports to enable the striking of the district rate by February 2024 it was agreed there would be no update to the October meeting in order to allow work to progress and a detailed update will be brought in November.

The Director also provided an update on the review undertaken in relation to the criteria for the management of discretionary payment requests as requested by Members at September SP&R Committee. He outlined for Members the detail of the current requests received and it was agreed that a due diligence process begins imminently in advance of these requests

being considered by Members at SP&R Committee. The Director also outlined emerging proposals for subsequent requests and the proposed criteria to allocate funding from underspends to groups/organisations. A number of suggestions/recommendations were made by Members and it was also highlighted that timely communications to organisations/groups was crucial. The Director to consider the feedback provided and incorporate into a report to be brought to November SP&R for consideration.

2. Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Signage

The Chief Executive provided an update for Members in relation to the erection of dual language signage at the Forth Meadow Community Greenway. He advised that the revised equality screening had now been undertaken following the recent decision at September SP&R Committee. There was detailed discussion on the screening outcome presented and an alternative proposal was made by a Member in relation to considering interpretive panels along the greenway linked to place names within the Springfield Park/Dam section of the greenway. Party Group Leaders to consider the proposal outlined and to be further discussed at the next meeting of Party Group Leaders. It was also noted that the counsel opinion in respect of this matter will be considered at November SP&R Committee.

3. Sunday Trading Hours

The Director of Planning & Building Control provided further information as requested by Party Group Leaders in relation to requests received for extended trading hours this Christmas Eve, given it falls on a Sunday. Members noted the requests and the current legislative powers in relation to the extension to Sunday trading hours. The Director to follow up with those businesses that had made the request to reiterate that the legislative powers did not allow for this request to be considered.

4. Belfast Regional Innovation Hub Bid

The Smart Belfast Programme Lead provided an update on the recent Council bid to the DSIT Advanced Wireless Innovation Region funding. Members noted the timeline in relation to decision making and that a report to include the detail discussed will go to November SP&R Committee.

5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager provided a briefing for Members on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund project and outlined the status of the applications currently at Stage 2 – Development. Whilst the majority of applications were progressing it was noted that 3 business cases were outstanding for various different reasons. It was noted that the state of readiness of the 3 outstanding business cases should not hold up the decision making for all other schemes. Members agreed that Officers continue to move to Stage 3 Delivery for all other schemes. The pre-arranged November Area Working Group meetings will therefore be used for this purpose.

6. Planning Update

The Director of Planning & Building Control updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months. There was a number of queries raised by Members for which the Director provided clarity. In relation to a specific query on short term lets it was agreed that the Director would circulate the current policy to Party Group Leaders. It was also further agreed that an invitation be extended to all Members to the special planning committee on enforcement that was being arranged.

7. Illuminate Requests

The Chief Executive outlined for Members a number of illumination requests received namely:

- **World Menopause Day** - 18th October 2023
- **Child Brain Injury Trust GloWeek 20023** – 3rd November
- **Holocaust Memorial Day** – 27th January 2024
- **Gort na Móna – 50th Anniversary** – 1st June 2024

Members noted the requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority. Councillor Long requested that a further illuminate request be considered for the MS Society with a date to be confirmed. There was consensus to add this request under the City Solicitors delegated authority. Councillor Long to forward date once confirmed.

8. AOB

European Football Championships 2028

The Director Economic Development provided an update for Members following the announcement by UEFA that the UK and Ireland had been successful in their bid to host the UEFA European Football Championships in 2028. He advised that the transitional period would begin from January 2024 in order to establish governance structures and arrangements for staffing, finance and allow project planning to commence. He stressed that final clarification on all is to follow, and updates will be brought to SP&R Committee in due course as this work progresses.

Members also noted the update in relation to future upcoming major events and thanked the Director and his team in the success of hosting the recent One Young World Global Summit.

Illuminate Request

Councillor Bunting made a request for a City Hall Illumination for which no consensus was reached. A Member suggested an alternative option for the requested illumination. Party Group Leaders to further consider and to provide a response to the Chief Executive.

Request for Letter of Support

The Chief Executive advised that a request had been made via Councillor De Faoite in relation to issuing a letter of support to Sólás Special Needs Charity with regards to Sólás acquiring Cregagh medical centre in a land transfer between the charity and the Department of Health. There was consensus from all that the Chief Executive proceed and issue a letter of support as outlined.

Holiday Pay Agreement

The Director of Human Resources provided an update on the outcome of the Supreme Court case related to Holiday Pay. Members noted the council position specifically in relation to conciliation agreements signed for which the cost had already been accounted for and noted the challenges that may occur as a result of this case.

Hardship Scheme 2023/24

The Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty presented the emerging proposals in relation to the development and implementation of a Hardship Scheme for 2023/24 which seeks to help alleviate the impact of the cost of living on vulnerable people across the city. He outlined the detail of the proposed cohorts and the proposed funding model. Members welcomed the proposals discussed and thanked the team for all the work that had gone in to redesigning the Hardship scheme for this year based on lessons learnt from the previous year. It was noted that time is of the essence and effective communications is essential around the scope of the scheme, what support may be available and how applicants can access this support. A report with the detail discussed will be submitted to October SP&R Committee.

Review of Summer Community Diversionary Festival Fund

The Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive referred to the review of the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Fund that had recently been undertaken. She advised that it was anticipated that this would be brought to October SP&R Committee. However there were some issues raised by Members in relation to the outcomes of the review and it was agreed that further discussion by Party Group Leaders was needed. Further discussion to take place and the review to be brought to the November Forum meeting in advance of submission to November SP&R Committee.

St George's Market

The Director Economic Development provided an update for Members in terms of some ongoing compliance issues with Traders at St George's Market. A number of queries and concerns were raised by Members for which the Director provided clarity and he stressed that engagement processes were fully implemented. Members noted the update.

A separate issue was raised by a Member in relation to ventilation in the Market and the increasing number of visitors specially at the Saturday/Sunday markets. The Director advised that options are being considered with the Physical Programme Team to ascertain how this could be best addressed given that the building was a listed building.

Shared Island Funding

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy outlined the details of an upcoming workshop on Monday 16 October for the Shared Island Civic Society Fund. It was noted that the details had been circulated to Members. He also advised that a composite funding update report would be considered by Members at October SP&R Committee.

Disability Working Group

Tuesday, 10th October, 2023

DISABILITY WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Doherty, McAteer and McMullan.

Also attended: Councillor Bunting.

In attendance: Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;
Mr. R. Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer;
Ms. J. Beck, Sign Language Interpreter;
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Working Group agreed, after discussion, that Councillor McMullan be elected to serve as Chairperson.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor R. Brooks.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd November, 2022 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Disability Action Plan – Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a background to the work related to disability and an update to the Disability Working Group on the progress of the Disability Action Plan.

2.0 Main Report

2.1 Background

The Council is subject to a several different duties in relation to disability. As both a service provider and employer it must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 which outlines measures aimed at ending the discrimination faced by many disabled people.

It gives disabled people rights in:

- employment
- access to goods, facilities and services, including transport
- the management, buying or renting of property
- education

The Council, as a designated public authority, is also subject to two further inter-related duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Section 49A places a duty on designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

1. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and
2. Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

Section 49B places a duty on each designated public authority to prepare a Disability Action Plan outlining how it proposes to fulfil the Section 49A duty. The Council's [Disability Action Plan 2022-2025 \(belfastcity.gov.uk\)](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk) was agreed in March 2023.

However, disability awareness has increased significantly in recent year with increased awareness of different types of disabilities and the need for the promotion of access and inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of life.

2.2 Key Issues

Our current approach to disability

The Council's Equality & Diversity Unit, currently with limited resources, oversees the development and implementation of the Disability Action Plan; deals with an increasing number of queries from departments due to the increasing awareness of the needs of disability which ranges from language to mobility; and co-ordinates consultation with relevant organisations through the external Equality Consultative Forum, the Disability Advisory Panel and the Sign Language Forum.

The increasing volume of work in this area will be addressed in the planned service review of the Equality & Diversity Unit which is currently in progress. Following the implementation

of this review it is aimed that the Unit will be able to dedicate more resources to the support of the work related to disability in particular the development and promotion of access and inclusion across the organisation.

2.3 Achievements to date

With limited resources, under the previous Disability Action Plan the following actions were achieved:

Promoting access to services

- SignVideo facilities in City Hall, Cecil Ward, Belfast Zoo, Tropical Ravine, and at all leisure centres (apart from Templemore Baths)
- New website which meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)
- City Matters magazine which is accessible in alternative formats
- Partnership with Accessible, the national app in place for accessibility information
- New hearing loop systems in City Hall, Malone House and Belfast Castle
- Funded a braille menu in the Bobbin Café at the City Hall
- Assisted with disability communication requests including alternative formats
- Sign Language translation videos in place at City Hall Visitor Exhibition and Tropical Ravine

Training

- Training for managers to manage stress and mental health issues
- Disability Awareness training
- British Sign Language training

Events

- Host annual 'International Day for People with Disabilities' event
- Promotion of annual disability days on Interlink

Engagement

- Disability Advisory Panel – met four times per year
- Disability Staff Network – met four times per year

2.4 Disability Action Plan 2022-25

A new Disability Action Plan 2022-25 was developed and approved by Council in March 2023 after being issued for

public consultation (Appendix 1). The plan sets out in detail what actions will be taken across the organisation over the three-year plan under the two strategic priorities of promoting positive attitudes and encouraging participation as required by the DDA. It is proposed to report progress in the plan under the following sub-headings:

1. Training
2. Raising Awareness
3. Communications
4. Encourage Others

2.5 Reporting and Monitoring

A short update report on progress in relation to the Disability Action Plan will be brought to the Working Group every quarter with a detailed update report brought every six months. The Council is required to prepare an annual report for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) each August.

2.6 Update on the Disability Action Plan

A short update on the work to date from April 2022 to date is set out below.

1. Training

Complete / ongoing

In September 2023, an Autism Impact Award Champion training programme was delivered to identified staff from the City Hall, Belfast Castle and Malone House. The three venues are now developing a three-year action plan to achieve the Award.

Twenty-one staff members completed a Level 1 unit in British Sign Language in June 2023. Further training including the completion of the Level 1 course is being explored.

Planned

We are planning to sign up to become a JAM Card partner. This is an arrangement to enable staff to complete an e-earning programme and for the Council to receive marketing material to support people with learning disabilities. Arrangements are being finalised with the NOW Group.

27. 2. Raising Awareness

Complete / ongoing

We continue to promote annual disability days on Interlink.

The Disability Advisory Panel continues to meet on a quarterly basis to consult and provide feedback on council projects and programmes. The last meeting was held on 27th September 2023. Arrangements are made for the Disability Advisory Panel to visit Templemore Baths and to meet the GLL management, to provide feedback on accessibility at leisure centres in Belfast.

Planned

Plans for the next 'International Day for People with Disabilities' event is underway. The event will be held on 4th December 2023 at the City Hall.

2.8 3. Communications

Complete / ongoing

Equality & Diversity Unit continues to assist with disability communications requests including documents provided in alternative formats e.g. Braille, Audio and Easy Read.

The Video Relay Service continues to be in demand. This is a service regularly used by Sign Language users to contact the Customer Hub.

Planned

A Making Communications Accessible guide has been developed to support staff on how to carry out language and communication requests. The guide will be uploaded on Interlink. Training and support will be provided.

2.9 4. Encourage Others

Complete / ongoing

Careers/employability events/activities are targeted towards disabled people i.e. careers fairs, mock interviews, site visits, employability talks

Planned

Through the Disability Advisory Panel and the Disability Staff Network which meets four times a year, people with disabilities are encouraged to raise issues on barriers they face.

3.0 Financial & Resource Implications

This work will be covered by existing budgets.

4.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications

The implementation of the Disability Action Plan will help to contribute to meeting the Council's section 75 duties."

A further Member stated that existing legislation did not go far enough and that the Council's Disability Action Plan should seek to go further and address the issues of access, inclusion and participation.

In response to a Member's query, the Governance and Compliance Manager advised the Working Group that a Service Review of the Equality and Diversity Unit was ongoing and she outlined that she hoped to create a number of new Equality and Disability Officer posts to ensure that the issues within the Action Plan could be adequately addressed. She explained that a staff consultation was ongoing in that regard and that she hoped that the posts could be recruited as soon as possible.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to incorporate "inclusivity and access for people with disabilities" within the recent Belfast Business Promise pledges. The Governance and Compliance Manager stated that she believed it had already been agreed and adopted by a number of large corporations within the City but agreed to investigate and report back to the Working Group in that regard.

A further Member stated that EY had recently highlighted that it had matched neurodivergent people with non-neurodivergent people within their company and that there had been significant benefits from the scheme.

She suggested that, perhaps in the future, the International Day of People with Disabilities Event at the City Hall could focus on the benefits that people with disabilities bring to organisations and that it could be sponsored by a major employer.

After discussion, the Working Group thanked the officers for the update which had been provided.

Noted.

Motion - 'An inclusive Covid-19 pandemic response and long-term recovery' – Update

The Governance and Compliance Manager presented the following report to the Working Group:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a further update on a Notice of Motion raised by Councillor Ross McMullan at Strategic Policy & Resources in June 2020.

2.0 Main Report

2.1 Background

The Council is subject to a several different duties in relation to disability. As both a service provider and employer it must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. As a designated public authority, the Council is also subject to two further inter-related duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Section 49A and B.

However, disability awareness has increased significantly in recent year with increased awareness of different types of disabilities and the need for the promotion of access and inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of life.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 Councillor Ross McMullan raised a Notice of Motion at Strategic Policy & Resources in June 2020. The full Notice of Motion is set out in Appendix 1. An update has been provided below for each of the of the points with the exception of point 1 which is complete.

4.0 Notice of Motion

4.1 2. Create a Reference Group for Disabled People. This will provide a forum for councillors, our Disability Advisory Panel, council officers as well as other relevant stakeholders and experts from time-to-time, to discuss and progress actions on Belfast City Council's commitment to becoming an accessible city for all by 2035.

Further to this Notice of Motion, the Council agreed at Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to establish an elected member Disability Working Group in September 2022. The agreed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 2.

4.2 3. Create an 'Access and Inclusion' senior staff role. This role would act as both an internal focal point for council staff to improve access and inclusion in the delivery of Council services and have a key role in strategic policy making to deliver a common vision of disability inclusion. It would also act as an external point of contact for residents, disabled people and external stakeholders on day-to-day queries on improving access and inclusion in the city, working with external stakeholders to deliver a more inclusive city.

Strategic aspect

The City Solicitor is the Council's internal Equality Champion with the Equality & Diversity Unit overseeing the disability-

related work of the Council and can assume a lead as strategic Accessibility champion role.

Information and day-to-day queries

The Council has a dedicated webpage 'Supporting people with disabilities. The Equality & Diversity Unit provides support to staff who receive the day-to-day queries which often relate to specific council facilities and are dealt with by staff managing those facilities. Since this Notice of Motion was agreed, the Council has rolled out the Customer Hub which has received training and support on various disability and language communication tools including SignVideo. Further training is being arranged including JAM Card telecoms training.

The Council has also committed to signing up to become an Autism NI Impact Award Champion with training already underway for identified staff at the City Hall, Belfast Castle, and Malone House. Each venue will implement a three-year action plan to achieve this award. Other council venues will follow suit.

- 4.3 **4. Undertake an independent consultation report on models of best practice of accessibility and inclusion from other cities that will provide recommendations on how these could be applied within Belfast through this Council and its NI Executive partners.**

Following the implementation of the service review and there is a manager in post to oversee the scoping and development of this work, the Equality & Diversity Unit could scope the options and resource implications for this piece of work and bring back into the Disability Working Group for consideration. This would look at accessibility from a corporate perspective, identify what is currently place and where there are gaps, and make recommendations for a strategic approach to accessibility for the organisation.

- 4.4 **5. Develop a strategic roadmap for delivering an accessible city for all by 2035 that leaves no one behind that provides a common strategic vision of disability access and inclusion across all its strategies and plans, and outlines how we will get there.**

Based on the completion of the piece of work in point 4, an outline business case setting out a strategic roadmap could be developed for consideration by the Disability Working Group to recommend to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to be considered in the context of the Belfast Agenda, the Local Development Plan and other strategic initiatives. Again, this would need to be scoped to set out options and resource implications.

A meeting with Cllr McMullan and the Director of City & Organisational Strategy has been arranged for later this month to discuss the Belfast Agenda and disability.

5.0 Financial & Resource Implications

5.1 Following the implementation of the service review of the Equality & Diversity Unit, most of this work will be covered by existing budgets however while some of this work can be funded through the retention of underspend in the departmental budget, further consultancy work will require a budget to be identified.

6.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

6.1 The recommendations outlined above will demonstrate the Council's commitment to access and inclusion, in addition to the legislative compliance defined for disability. Any equality, good relations or rural needs implications will be identified through the Council's screening process."

In response to a Member's suggestion, it was agreed that all Members of the Working Group would be invited to attend the meeting, which had been scheduled with the Director of City and Organisational Strategy for later that month, to discuss the Belfast Agenda and disability.

A Member stated that he would like to see more of a focus on City-wide improvements rather than from an internal, corporate perspective. A further Member agreed but stated that it was important to begin with Council-wide improvements. A Member stated that it was important that those with lived experience of disability were leading the conversation. The Governance and Compliance Manager stated that officers would look at best practice in other cities and, resource dependent, they would aim to use the Council's influence to highlight important issues both across the City and regionally.

The Working Group noted the work which was planned and the update which had been provided.

Draft Changing Places Policy

The Working Group considered the undernoted report with the accompanying Policy:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update the Disability WG Members on the development of the draft Changing Places Toilet Policy for Belfast City Council.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report including the draft Changing Places Policy which has been updated further following comments from officers across the council.

Once endorsed by the Disability Working Group, the next step will be for the draft policy to be brought to SP&R Committee for approval to go out to public consultation.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

A motion proposed by Councillor Ross McMullan calling for the introduction of a Changing Places Toilets Policy for Belfast City Council was referred to the SP&R Committee by the Council on 1 September 2021. The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report be brought back to Committee providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

An update report was brought to the Disability Working Group in February 2023 summarising the motion and the proposed approach.

A Changing Places Toilet Policy officer working group has met regularly over the past few months and their input has helped inform the various factors which the policy must consider including how it will be facilitated, resourced and managed.

3.2 Draft policy and key issues arising

The final draft policy is attached for the Disability WG endorsement. A summary of the policy is included below.

Buildings

- The Working Group will note that the requirement to provide Changing Places Toilet (CPT) facilities in all large new builds of a certain size is enforced through the amended Building Regulations rather than through this policy.
- The policy restates this requirement but goes further by adding consideration of CPTs where we extend or refurbish existing buildings, even if the provision of CPTs were not required by the amended building regulations.

Council Estate

- The policy as drafted would also commit the Council to carrying out a review of where CPT facilities could be installed on the council estate.
- When reviewing the provision of any future CPT facilities within the Council estate we will consider the existing level of provision on the Council estate and also the availability of CPT facilities in non-Council assets.
- Whilst cost alone will not be the deciding factor in any decision, the cost of installing any specific Changing Places facility will need to be carefully considered in conjunction with all of the other capital programme priorities identified by the council.
- The management and maintenance of any such CPT facility will need to be carefully considered when examining any proposal. Following installation there will be ongoing costs associated with cleaning, checking and maintaining the equipment within the facility.

Events

- The draft policy extends to events, and creates new requirements upon both the Council and external events organisers.
- When organising public events, the Council will consider if it can take place at a venue that already has a Changing Places facility or will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that customers have access to either a fixed or portable Changing Places facility as part of the design of the event.
- The Council will require external organisers of all large-scale public events (e.g. concerts, festivals) on council property to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that customers have access to either a fixed or portable Changing Places facility as part of the design of the event.
- It will be a condition of hire that any large-scale event (whether it needs an entertainments licence or not) must have a Changing Places facility. This should be included in the lease agreement between council and the event organiser. It should also be a condition of hire that event organisers must complete the Planning Checklist at Section E of the Council's 'Inclusive Events Guide' for review by the EDU team.
- As a further step we will consider the requirement to include an access audit within the Event Management Plan which is submitted in support of the event. It would then be for the organiser to justify why they would not be required to include a CPT as part of their

site set-up. An officer of the Council involved in management of the land for hire must ensure these steps are followed.

- The Council when organising smaller public events, will encourage small scale events organisers to undertake an accessibility audit and provide a Changing Places facility where possible.
- The Council's 'Inclusive Events Guide' has been updated and includes a new Small Scale Events Checklist (see Appendix 2)

Responsibility

- Legal & Civic Services Department will be the corporate lead for this policy however actions will be required across different departments including Place & Economy and City & Neighbourhood Services.

It is proposed that an application is made to the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme in 23/24 to secure funding which could contribute towards the purchase of a mobile changing places unit which could be used at events.

3.3 Financial & Resource Implications

There are there are potential resource implications associated with this policy and its implementation may result in the need for future capital funding by Council.

3.4 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications

A Changing Places Toilet Policy may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and will be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.

The introduction of such a policy will present an opportunity for the council to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life."

The Governance and Compliance Manager explained that large scale events were classified as those with over 5,000 people attending and that there were approximately ten per annum held within the Council's estate.

She pointed to an error within the report, at 3.2, and clarified that it was planned that an application would be made to the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme in 2024/2025 to secure funding which could contribute towards the purchase of a mobile changing places unit for such events.

In response to a Member's question regarding the potential purchase of mobile changing places units for use at smaller scale public events, the Policy Research and Compliance Officer explained that it was his understanding that it could be problematic to determine which of the hundreds of small-scale events would be provided with the mobile units and which would not.

During discussion a number of Members stated that the legislative requirements were minimal and that the Council had to be ambitious and lead in order to make progress on the issue.

In response to a further Member's question, the Governance and Compliance Manager agreed to provide information to the Working Group in respect of the recently refreshed "Inclusive Events Guide", particularly who had been involved in the consultation and what changes had been made.

The Working Group thanked the officers involved for their hard work on the issue and adopted the recommendations within the report.

Disability Advisory Panel - Update

The Governance and Compliance Manager outlined that the Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) had been established in 2017 to advise, guide and support the Council in responding to the needs of Deaf and disabled people who lived, worked or visited Belfast. The Panel was made up of individuals with knowledge and personal experience of different types of disability.

She explained that the Panel met quarterly, where key Council consultations were presented to it by the relevant officer. As a result, the Panel could provide feedback based on their personal experiences and of other people with disabilities, thereby enabling officers to take away ideas and recommendations to identify solutions to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

The DAP had requested that Council officers would consider how best they could engage directly with Elected Members. It was suggested that the Members of the Disability Working Group be invited to attend the first item of the next meeting of the DAP, scheduled for Monday, 4th December at 2pm in 9 Adelaide. The meeting would follow an International Day of People with Disabilities event at the City Hall, to which both Disability Working Group members and the Disability Advisory Panel would be invited.

It was also suggested that a standing agenda item be added to the Disability Advisory Panel's agenda to allow for its members to raise any disability-related issues in the City. Officers would then follow up on those issues and would provide a summary and update to the Disability Working Group.

The Governance and Compliance Manager explained that, if Members were agreeable to the above two suggestions, a proposal would be made to amend the DAP's Terms of Reference.

During discussion, the Working Group agreed that it would be pleased to accept the invitation to join the Disability Advisory Panel for the item at its December meeting and that perhaps it could do so twice per annum going forward. A number of Members stated that it was also important that the Panel would retain its right to meet privately to discuss the rest of its agenda, without any elected Members present.

In response to a Member's question, the Language Officer explained that while no theme had yet been chosen for this year's International Day of People with Disabilities event in the City Hall, there would be a mix of presentations and performances and that they were working in conjunction with Disability Action to create another fantastic event.

In response to a further Member's question, he confirmed that he had useful data in relation to disability across the City and that he would share that information with the Members of the Working Group in advance of their meeting with the Director of City and Organisational Strategy on 16th October.

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations within the report.

Chairperson

City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 11th October, 2023

THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor Beattie (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillor Flynn.

In attendance: Mr. M. McCann, Belfast City Innovation Programme Lead,
Ms. B. Murphy, City Innovation Broker,
Ms. K. Mullen, Client Manager;
Mr. M. Doherty, Programme Delivery Manager;
Ms. A. Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Beattie be elected to serve as Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in June 2024.

(Councillor Beattie in the Chair.)

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Murray.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd February, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Presentation - Immersive Experience at City Hall

The City Innovation Broker provided an overview of the Smart Belfast Project, which was to establish a world class emotionally engaging immersive experience in the City Hall exhibition to complement and enhance the existing exhibition. She highlighted that this would contribute to the wider aims of Belfast 2024 and be focused in three rooms

of the current exhibition: City Speech, City Streets, Child at Play. She pointed out that this would be delivered in collaboration with BT and was scheduled to open in April 2024.

The City Innovation Broker advised that 500 visitors to the City Hall had been surveyed during June 2023 and she provided a breakdown of the demographics and analysis. She pointed out that satisfaction overall was very high and explained that, although pre-planning to visit the exhibition was low, with 76% respondents finding out about the exhibition while in the building, curiosity was the primary purpose of 58% of the respondents and 51% had spent greater than 30 minutes in the exhibition.

She outlined the progress towards delivery of the experience included internal workshops to agree the Creative Brief and finalising the agreement with BT, with a view to commence work early in the new year, subject to approval from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

During discussion, the officers explained further that the new immersive experience intended to complement the current exhibition and its narrative and would not disrupt the previous agreements surrounding the artefacts currently exhibited.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information provided and welcomed the forthcoming immersive experience.

City Hall Conservation Update

The Functions and Exhibition Manager provided an update on the City Hall Artworks and Artefacts conservation project and projects that had been completed to improve the Visitor Exhibition.

During discussion, the Functions and Exhibition Manager described the use of different language audio headsets to supplement the exhibition and advised that statistics on the Lord Mayor Portraits could be provided to the Working Group.

Noted.

Exhibition Artefact and Memorabilia Update

The Functions and Exhibition Manager reported that approval was sought for two new artefacts to be added to the City Hall Visitor Exhibition, namely: an Olympic Medal won by boxer John McNally in 1952; and an official invite to the opening of the City Hall in 1906. She also informed the Working Group of the proposal for the relocation of the artefacts cabinet currently situated in the Reception Room to a location on the City Hall East Exhibition Area.

During discussion, the Chairperson raised a query in relation to updating the 'City Celebrates' part of the exhibition on a regular basis. The Functions and Exhibition Manager advised that a list of potential changes has been maintained and would be updated in the future, however, short-term changes to the theme would also be explored.

After discussion, the Working Group approved the inclusion of the two artefacts in City Hall Visitor Exhibition and approved the relocation of the artefacts cabinet from the Reception Room.

Frederick Douglass Update

The Working Group was reminded that the unveiling of Frederick Douglass took place on 31st July, 2023 in Belfast City Centre. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Professor Kinealy, Takura Donald Makoni (ASCONI) and Alan Beattie Herriot had formally unveiled Frederick Douglass at an event which had been well attended.

During discussion, the Chairperson thanked the Client Manager and the Project Team for their hard work and accomplishments.

The Client Manager advised that, following the event, ACSONI (African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland) had requested a meeting with the Lord Mayor at which there had been a request that Frederick Douglass was highlighted and promoted by the Council. She advised that it had been suggested that a 'SEE More Belfast' marker was located on 'A Trade Too Far' panel within the City Hall exhibition.

She stated that a further proposal would be that a QR code be placed on or near the Frederick Douglass statue which would link back to information on Council's website and suggested that the QR code be placed on the services box to the front of the statue. She advised that the information on Council's website would be based on the booklet produced for the launch.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Noted the feedback received on the commissioning, installation and unveiling of Frederick Douglass on 31st July, 2023;
- Agreed to the inclusion of a SEE More Belfast pointer at a relevant location with the City Hall exhibition; and
- Agreed to the installation of a QR code on or near the Frederick Douglass statue linking back to the Council's website.

#Douglass Week 2024

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To consider a request from The Globe Lane Initiative (a US non-profit organisation) to act as partner with events for #DW2024 (#Douglass Week 2024).

To include:-

- **Promotion of their events on Council's website, reposting social media posts**
- **Provision of venues for events during #DW2024**
- **Financial support for specific events (to be confirmed once event calendar has been firmed up)**
- **That the Lord Mayor of Belfast give a speech and hold a reception as part of #DW2024**

- That Council host and event as part of #DW2024
- To identify a lead Department/Officer to work with the Globe Lane Initiative to put in place plans, identify budgets for consideration by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

2.0 Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to:

- Give consideration to a request to act as partner in the development, programming and financing of #Douglass Week 2024
- Host a reception part of #Douglass Week 2024
- Identify a lead department/officer to take the work forward, identify financial asks for consideration by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
- Give consideration to a request from Anti-Slavery Belfast to borrow the Frederick Douglass maquette to promote Frederick Douglass Week at the Black History Month Expo to be held in St George's Market on Wednesday 25 October 2023
- Give consideration to an invitation which has been extended to Lord Mayor and Councillors by 'Anti-Slavery Belfast' to take participate in a walking tour on a date to be agreed with Members

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

The fourth annual #Douglass Week will take place in Belfast Spring 2014. The #Douglass Week event series celebrates and advances the legacy of Frederick Douglass around the world. The week includes discussions, performances, exhibitions and events designed to promote collaboration and engagement and to highlight and further the influence of Douglass and other changemakers.

#Douglass Week is organised by The Globe Lane Initiative, a US non-profit organisation. Belfast Partners confirmed as of September 2023 are Queen's University, Anti-Slavery Tours Belfast, Craft NI, The John and Pat Hume Foundation, Northern Ireland Bureau and the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

The Globe Lane Initiative have advised discussions are underway with ASCONI, PRONI, JoinHer, National Museum NI, University of Ulster, Maynooth University, Thomas Annang Drumming, Clifton House, Linenhall Library in relation to potential partnership opportunities.

A scoping call took place early September 2023 with Belfast City Council Officers to explore the opportunity for partnership working, to host and stage, events as part of #Douglass Week 2024. In previous years the event has been hosted in Cork and in Boston. The week's core events are centred around a number of strands, literature, history, creative, education, sporting, with 'Douglass Dialogues' for each.

The Globe Initiative have now formally requested that Council act as partner to host, promotion and financially support events to be held in Belfast Spring 2024. This requires Council to identify a lead department and officer to work with The Globe Initiative to develop a fully costed event plan for consideration by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

In addition, a request has been received from Anti-Slavery Belfast (a group who are working in a voluntary capacity with Global Lane to promote #Douglass Week 2024) to borrow the Frederick Douglass maquette. They plan to use the maquette at their stand at the Black History Month Expo to be held in St George's Market on Wednesday 25 October 2023 to promote #Douglass Week. Should members be minded to accede to the request, officers will confirm with Legal Services should a loan agreement be required. The maquette is a one off piece and any damage requiring repair would incur cost.

Anti-Slavery Belfast have also extended an invitation to Lord Mayor and Councillors to participate in one of their Frederick Douglass Walking Tours on a date to be agreed. services box to the front of the statue. The information on Council's website would be based on the booklet produced for the launch

Members are asked to:

- Give consideration to a request to act as partner in the development, programming and financing of #Douglass Week 2024
- Host a reception part of #Douglass Week 2024
- Identify a lead department/officer to take the work forward, identify financial asks for consideration by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
- Give consideration to a request from Anti-Slavery Belfast to borrow the Frederick Douglass maquette to promote Frederick Douglass Week at the Black History Month Expo to be held in St George's Market on Wednesday 25 October 2025
- Give consideration to an invitation which has been extended to Lord Mayor and Councillors

by 'Anti-Slavery Belfast' to take participate in a walking tour on a date to be agreed with Members

Financial and Resource Implications

Budget – costs to be brought back through Committee as event planning is finalised and venues sourced.

Resources – Officer time as required to work up proposals

Equality or Good Relations Implications

As required.”

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to the recommendations, in principle, subject to a defined programme of events and funding requirements.

The Working Group also noted that the lending of the Frederick Douglass maquette would be subject to a loan agreement.

City Hall Statues Update

The Working Group was provided with an update on the current status of the design, manufacture and installation of the City Hall statues: Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken. The Client Manager described the plans for the unveiling of the statues and the supporting programme of events.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Noted the progress with the design and manufacture of the City Hall Statues: Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken;
- Agreed that International Womens' Day – Friday, 8th March 2024 would be an appropriate date for the unveiling event; and
- Noted the intended programme of events and required budget, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval.

Fire Service Blitz Memorial City Hall

The Working Group was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in March, had agreed that a permanent memorial to all of the Fire Services efforts during the Belfast Blitz be included as a Stage 1 Emerging Project on the capital programme.

The Client Manager advised that discussions had previously taken place with representatives from Fire Brigade Unions, both Belfast and Dublin, and it had been suggested that a permanent piece in the form of a resin cast of a fire brigade helmet be procured and installed.

During discussion, the Client Manager answered questions in relation to the Stained Glass Window Projects and advised that a further update would be submitted to the Working Group for consideration in December.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to progress the installation of a permanent memorial to all of the Fire Services efforts during the Belfast Blitz and move it to Stage 2 (Uncommitted) on the capital programme.

Chairperson

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