

Hastings and St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership Agenda

Monday, 7 March 2022 at 10.00 am

MS Teams

For further information, please contact Chantal Lass tel: 01424 451483 or email: class@hastings.gov.uk

		Page No.
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence (Chair) 10:00	
2.	Declarations of Interest 10:05	
3.	Minutes and Matters Arising (Chair) 10:10	1 - 44
4.	Chair rotation and thanks to Clive Galbraith 10:20 <i>(Victoria Conheady Assistant Director Regeneration and Culture, HBC)</i>	
5.	Levelling Up white paper discussion 10:30 <i>(Victoria Conheady Assistant Director Regeneration and Culture, HBC)</i>	45 - 54
6.	Youth Futures Bid for Hastings 10:45 <i>(Michael Ratcliffe, Business Improvement Manager CXK)</i>	

7. Community Renewal Funding projects in Hastings

11:05

HVA & VCSE Future Proofing Initiative (*Steve Manwaring*)

Hastings 2066 (*Jess Steele*)

Minding the Gaps (*Jude Day*)

Innovation Masters programme (*Fiona Bennett*)

8. Sussex NHS Commissioners Public Consultations Cardiology and Ophthalmology

11:50

[Improving cardiology and ophthalmology services in East Sussex - Sussex Health & Care Partnership \(sussexhealthandcare.uk\)](https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk)

(*Emma Baxter Public Involvement Manger East Sussex, Sussex NHS Commissioners*)

9. A.O.B

Agenda Item 3 Public Document Pack

Hastings and St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership

Minutes 6 December 2021

Present:

Carole Dixon (Chair)	Hastings Community Network
Chris Broome	Sea Change
Clive Galbraith	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Andy Patmore	Hastings Borough Council
Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group
Darrell Gale	Public Health East Sussex
Dawn Poole	Hastings and Rother Credit Union
Helen Kay	Hastings Opportunity Area
Jan Downie	Department for Education
Alison Jeffery	Children's Services Department ESCC
Jane Hartnell	Hastings Borough Council
Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott	Public Health East Sussex
Mark Turczanski	Hastings Voluntary Action
Sean Dennis	Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce
Simon Hubbard	Hastings Voluntary Action
Teresa Andrews	HARC
Tracey Rose	Hastings Community Network
Tracy Dighton	Hastings Community Network
Vanessa Biddiss	Optivo Housing Association
Victoria Conheady	Hastings Borough Council

Apologies for absence:

Candice Miller	NHS East Sussex CC
Karra Brenchley	DWP
Kevin Boorman	Hastings Borough Council
Sarah Godley	Sussex Police

The chair updated the meeting that there is going to be a change to the agenda. Dan Shelley will give a verbal update on East Sussex College group in the time slot for the DWP relocation item.

18	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>	
	None Received	
19	<u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</u>	
	Minutes of the meeting 23rd September 2021 Accepted as an accurate record. Lords Madigasekera-Elliott gave an update on the meeting of the Health and inequalities working group. A draft term of reference was discussed. The two priorities will be centred around wider determinates of health and	

	wellbeing economies. The final term of reference is planned to be agreed at the next meeting.	
<u>20</u>	<u>DWP UPDATE</u>	
<u>21</u>	<p><u>EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE GROUP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Dan Shelly gave an update on the East Sussex College Group. On the week beginning 22nd November a full Ofsted inspection was completed with the results looking positive with some areas of improvement and will be available next year.</p> <p>In the same week the college launched their new strategic plan which is focused on campus identities. Hastings is green construction, energy and transport which is tied into a town deal bid. Masks and face coverings have been re-introduced in all areas as a result of COVID. The plan is to complete the final week of college online.</p> <p>Tutorials on county lines and consent has been held with 16–18-year-olds as well as work on right wing extremist views. Mental health wellbeing is being supported with concerns around anxiety and COVID-19 uncertainty. Recruitment is down by 450-500 students across East Sussex College Group. This will have a financial impact on next financial year. Hopefully the positive Ofsted result will help rectify this. Face to face events have also started again with year 10 and 11 students. Apprenticeships are at a highest start rate for five years.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Dan for his input at the LSP meetings and wished him well in his new role.</p>	
<u>22</u>	<p><u>ISSUES FOR SCHOOLS AS A RESULT OF COVID-19</u></p> <p>Alison Jeffery spoke to her presentation (see attached slides) Alison advises she has been in post since September 2021 and that there was a county wide agreement with schools not to share GSCE results publicly following teacher assessments.</p> <p>She reported that there is a higher need for free school meals in Hastings than across the rest of East Sussex but the inspection outcomes from Ofsted have been good in Hastings recently.</p> <p>Absence and exclusions from school continues to be an issue with high levels of persistent absence in with children struggling to come back to school following lockdowns. There needs to be a reduction in fixed period exclusions. We need to see children in school and see more supervision rather than part time, timetables and exclusions.</p> <p>Reception and year 1 students have been most disrupted.</p> <p>Key issues in schools during the pandemic have included ensuring the safeguarding focus on vulnerable children. There has been a lot of pressure on school leaders, managing the response to the pandemic whilst also delivering teaching and learning in the classroom and remotely.</p>	

The Excellence for All Strategy' 2021-23 has been refreshed, school improvements strategies are focusing on inclusion and wellbeing, oracy and literacy.

The SEN county wide strategy is being refreshed with a focus on autism taking into account the National Autism Strategy. There is a Sussex wide Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy which has started to map the support that is available and works with the Children's Board for Sussex as part of the new Integrated Care System (ICS) increasing the profile of children's issues within the NHS.

Specific to Hastings

Discussions underway with a range of partners to see how we can all work together more effectively and gain maximum understanding. ESCC wish to apply a therapeutic thinking approach to behaviour challenges including restorative practice.

The Hastings response is to reinforce key messages and focusing some commissioning work on secondary exclusions and how multi agencies work for primary students.

The group discussed students who are elected home educated. Approximately 1000 children in East Sussex are being home educated (the equivalent of a large secondary school).

Darrell Gale advised there are a range of impacts regarding children and safeguarding and that we need to use the funding we have access to, to pro-actively repair the impacts of COVID-19 and continue so that we can maximise the long term benefit of short term funding and initiatives.

There is a rich community and voluntary sector support for children and young people in Hastings – need to make sure this is reflected in the mapping and the support it provides to statutory services.

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HASTINGS OPPORTUNITY AREA OVERVIEW AND THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Jan Downie and Helen Kay presented a recap of Hastings Opportunity Area (HOA). The purpose of the Opportunity Area programme was to focus local and national resources to increase social mobility, especially children and young people. The priorities for Hastings were improve literacy, raising attainment in maths, improving mental health and resilience and broadening horizons and preparing for work.

In 2016 the literacy standard in Hastings's children were significantly behind that of their peers nationally. Actions taken were funding Early Years Projects – to support young children's speech and language development. There was a literacy fund to support improvements in literacy for all pupils and improve teacher skills and confidence. The impact was that all schools in Hastings implemented evidence-based literacy programmes. There are common programmes and sharing learning resulting in greater collaboration across schools. There are significant improvements in literacy at key stage 2.

To help raise attainment in maths there was the funding of the Hastings Maths project, the funding four schools in Hastings to access additional support from Sussex Maths Hub and supporting of schools to deliver a number of maths competitions. Prior to covid there were significant improvements in the number of pupils achieving expected standards in Maths. Schools reported that the Hastings Maths Project had the students enthused and engaged.

To assist with improving mental health all the secondaries and 14 primaries completed a self-review of their provisions. They engaged with a programme of support and training to further develop and promoting children and young people's mental health. Extra funding was used to expand the i-ROCK service to five days a week and a model was developed for an emotional well-being service for 9–14-year-olds. The parenting support work was also expanded with group work and one to one support. The Emotional Well-being key work service was well received by schools, pupils and their families, with almost universally positive around key worker' skills and adaptability.

To assist with broadening horizons there were two enrichment managers appointed to work with schools and local communities to maximise the impact of the broadening horizons strand. Funding was provided to schools so they can expand their extra-curricular offer and a grant program that included summer enrichment programme. Pre covid there was a huge expansion of what is available. Motivational speakers visited 17 schools. Over 50 local employers and businesses took part in the Hastings Opportunity Day offering hands on sessions and discussions relating to routes into employment. The programme was refocused during year 3 to address the impact of covid. Online enrichment activities were provided and an 'on-line' Hastings opportunity Day.

Due to a high rate of exclusion in Hastings a shared approach was developed to prevent exclusions with a focus on pupils engaged in persistently challenging behaviour. There was a reduction across all schools with secondary schools developing 'in-school' approaches to inclusion for core group of vulnerable pupils.

An attendance fund was used to improve attendance used for transport and breakfast clubs. Presently schools are facing high persistent absence rates because of COVID 19.

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LOCAL BUSINESS / CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE

Clive Galbraith and Sean Dennis reported that over 50% of businesses who had responded to their survey had already experienced issues with recruitment. The main reasons were a lack of applications, quality of applicants and skills gaps. Comments submitted are that it's an applicant's market, so that applicants can be choosy, waiting for a better paid role.

Businesses are also impacted by increased staff costs and the impact of rising inflation.

	The group discussed how across the board there are recruitment challenges in all sectors of employment for the town and further afield.	
<u>25</u>	<p><u>LSP BOARD GOVERNANCE - CHAIR ROTATION AND REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD</u></p> <p>Jane Hartnell advised that under governance arrangements of the LSP it would be time to rotate the chair at this meeting. On this occasion it has been decided to delay until the March meeting, to allow time to review the Board membership and ensure it is reflective of what we need to be doing. The public sector, Hastings Borough Council, will provide the next chair when it rotates in March 2022.</p>	
<u>26</u>	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>Victoria Conheady updated the group about a funding stream from the Youth Futures Foundation called the Connected Futures Fund. It will operate in two phases, the first of which will see grants of up to £125,000 handed to six to eight partnerships over 18 months which “focus on bringing people together, with young people facing disadvantage in the lead, to explore the problem and develop a shared ambition for change”.</p> <p>The second phase, which will run from January 2024, will see larger grants of as much as £1.5m awarded to between two and four partnerships initially chosen for stage one to fill service gaps identified by young people in their areas. Hastings has been identified as an area that could receive funding.</p> <p>Victoria suggested working under the guise of the LSP to work with a broader partnership to develop a bid for this grant fund. Interested parties were invited to indicate their interest in taking part. There is a very tight timetable applications need to be received by the 17th January 2002.</p> <p>Action - Victoria Call a meeting of organisations interested in the Connected Futures Fund.</p>	
<u>27</u>	<u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, 7TH MARCH 2022 AT 10AM</u>	
<u>28</u>	<u>FOR INFORMATION: BRIEFING NOTE - LSP HEALTH IN EQUALITIES WORKING GROUP</u>	

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Minute Item 20

DWP update from Karra Brenchley

During Covid and the lead up until where we are now:

- We doubled the number of frontline Work Coaches by March 2021 to support people looking for work including helping them pivot into new sectors and making sure they access any additional support they need including training and work experience. In Hastings we took on 45 work coaches which was roughly an increase of 115%
- We launched our £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, expanded our Youth offer, expanded our Work and health programme, boosted our flexible support funding, increased our contracted provision with 3 new schemes for newly unemployed JETS and JFS and most recently launched Restart for our longer term unemployed
- Opened six days a week to deliver a good customer service for all our customers, re- opened the Youth Hub in Hastings, and relocated our service centre to the town centre

Kickstart has been our main focus with our 18-24yr olds, we acted quickly and decisively to establish Kickstart at the start of the pandemic when it was feared unemployment levels would more than double.

Nationally the scheme has already delivered over 100,000 new life-changing jobs for young jobseekers on Universal Credit who were at risk of long-term unemployment and will continue to deliver opportunities for young people.

At a local level we have run weekly Kickstart recruitment days within our jobcentres and youth hub. Our young people have had the opportunity to meet real live employers, from all sectors including hospitality, all with opportunities and vacancies, undertake interviews and secure employment.

We have supported over 200 young people into kickstart opportunities locally with employers ranging from charitable organisations through to retail, construction, hospitality and care. These ranged from small independents to larger more nationally known employers with the independent really recognising the impact the scheme has in supporting young people and in turn their communities.

The majority of employers are keeping their Kickstarts at the end of the 6mnths, and for those that aren't we're moving them into apprenticeships and further opportunities with our network of partners. And our teams of youth work coaches have ensured each young person has been able to access prioritised targeted support, helping them to find and stay in sustainable work.

Although Kickstart closes for employers on the 17th of December, young people can still access and apply for the roles until March and the partnerships made with between jobcentres and employers can hopefully continue long afterwards

As the economy has opened up, our Plan for Jobs has delivered with unemployment falling – including youth unemployment now below pre-pandemic levels and the number of young employees on payrolls back above pre-pandemic levels.

SWAPS:

The Sector-Based Work Academy Programme sees people moving into work and it is innovative. This is for all ages. Partnerships between jobcentres and employers can allow candidates without relevant experience or training to develop the skills before applying for the positions.

We have been working with a variety of employers to make sure we get people into growing sectors, such as hospitality. We had a skills challenge coming into the pandemic and our Plan for Jobs aims to get the right skills for those vacancies.

During the summer we designed and delivered a hospitality campaign in conjunction with our partners, employers and providers. This was marketed as Hospitality Rocks initially starting within our cluster with an initial focus on our coastal towns and now being rolled out nationally; and the model is now being used to support various other sectors with their recruitment needs.

We ran a SWAP programme which incorporated classroom learning alongside practical training in anything from interview techniques, dealing with customers, bed making and even mixology!

The Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) has been fantastic during the pandemic. It provides up to six weeks training, working with an employer, and there is a guaranteed interview for employers with positions at the end of that training. We ran four courses over the summer and we are looking to expand the offer for SWAP's for varying sectors in the new year

Youth hub:

Mon Weds Fri- Work Coaches are in the HUB running their diaries and the HUB then functions as an extension of the Jobcentre – linking in with college, their courses and accessing their support has been beneficial – sign posting if customers need additional support.

More active engagement in the hub over the jobcentre, employers and customers prefer it- better attendance rate – and although we are appointment based - we're getting drop ins

Every Tues and Thurs –different employers come into the HUB, they have been interviewing and offering jobs on the spot, mainly in regard to kickstart and there's been a bit of healthy competition for our candidatesand we're hoping to continue this level of support from our employers and partners once Kickstart ends

Temporary Jobcentres (rapid estates expansion programme)

DWP is setting up temporary jobcentres during 2021 to deal with increased demand.

The new jobcentres will provide services across the country where they are needed. They will increase capacity to provide tailored face-to-face support in a COVID-secure environment and help support more people back into work and progress into new roles.

Site due to open in early January to deliver a F2F (face to face) Service with approx 25 UC work coaches, 3 teams, initially 1 team delivering F2F, moving to 3 Teams in the near future

What we could with some support with:

Sourcing Disability confident employers, government had a target of 1million companies by 2022

Our contracted Self employment support goes next year so any links into companies/providers that could help us to support our customers with business plans, provide mentors

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Alison Jeffery

**Director of Children's Services East
Sussex County Council**

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**East Sussex
County Council**



Our children and young people

11,270 with SEN (Jan 2021)

2,178 with SEN (Jul 2021)

6.2% pupils cite English as an additional language. Polish is the most common additional language other than English in all five districts.

8.2% cite EAL in Hastings (July 2021)

14.3% of the school population are Minority Ethnic

16.8% of the school population are Minority Ethnic (Jan 2021)

18.8% of LAC are BME

9.8% of LAC are BME (Nov 2021)

22.6% of pupils have FSM ever 6 eligibility compared to 24.2% in England

33.5% have FSM eligibility (Jul 2021)

1,190 are Elective Home Educated aged 4-17

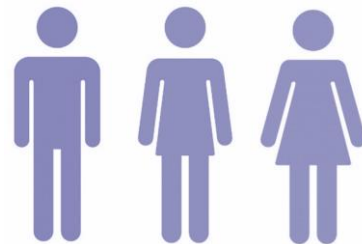
236 are Elective Home Educated aged 4-17 (Oct 2021)

973 open cases of Children in Need

245 open cases of Children in Need (Nov 2021)

622 children were Looked After

204 children were Looked After (Nov 2021)



106,575 children and young people aged 0-17 living in East Sussex

19,155 children and young people aged 0-17 living in Hastings (Jun 2021)

14,100 eligible for and claiming FSM (May 2021)

3,790 eligible for FSM (Jul 2021)

67,974 in school (May 2021)

11,300 in school (Jul 2021)

401 aged 16-17 are NEET

92 aged 16-17 are NEET (Dec 2020)

529 children had Protection Plans

191 children had Protection Plans (Nov 2021)

630 Early Help cases

2122 individuals

189 Early Help cases

668 individuals (Oct 2021)

7,835 households have engaged with the Supporting Families programme (previously Troubled Families) since 2015

2,411 households have engaged with the Supporting Families programme (previously Troubled Families) since 2015 (Nov 2021)

434 19-25 year olds with an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan

81 19-25 year olds with an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan (Oct 2021)

1,303 young carers (Jan 2021)

209 young carers (Nov 2021)

Absence and Exclusions

- Pre pandemic (full academic year 2018/19)

- **Overall absence**

Hastings – primary (4.61%) secondary (6.29%)

East Sussex – primary (4.34%) secondary (6.01%)

- **Permanent exclusions**

Hastings – primary (0.08%) secondary (0.45%)

East Sussex – primary (0.06%) secondary (0.23%)

- **Persistent absence**

Hastings – primary (11.04%) secondary (15.77%)

East Sussex – primary (9.06%) secondary (14.96%)

- **Fixed period exclusions**

Hastings – primary (4.18%) secondary (30.08%)

East Sussex – primary (1.97%) secondary (12.35%)

- Current (part academic year 2021/22 – September & October)

- **Overall absence**

Hastings – primary (5.60%) secondary (10.18%)

East Sussex – primary (5.00%) secondary (7.74%)

- **Permanent exclusions**

Hastings – primary (0.00%) secondary (0.14%)

East Sussex – primary (0.00%) secondary (0.04%)

- **Persistent absence**

Hastings – primary (18.21%) secondary (29.78%)

East Sussex – primary (16.57%) secondary (23.66%)

- **Fixed period exclusions**

Hastings – primary (0.31%) secondary (9.94%)

East Sussex – primary (0.22%) secondary (2.96%)

Impact of the pandemic on children

- Pupils' learning and progress
- Pupils with special educational needs
- Attendance and exclusions
- Pupils' mental health and well being
- Safeguarding concerns for some vulnerable pupils
- Transition between phases, including to post-16

Key issues in schools in East Sussex during the pandemic

- Focus on vulnerable children – ensuring safeguarding
- Staff wellbeing
- Pressure on school leaders
- Managing response to covid whilst also delivering teaching and learning

East Sussex wide response

Excellence for All strategy 2021-23

- strengthen leadership at all levels,
- literacy and oracy
- inclusion and wellbeing.
- Primary Board and Secondary Boards
- Refreshing the SEND strategy
- East Sussex Emotional wellbeing and mental health strategy

Hastings response

- Multi agency discussion about issues at Hollington primary
- Support for the Hastings Opportunity Area
- Discussions with Ark and UBAT
- Focusing some of our commissioning work around secondary exclusions and primary multi agency working specifically on Hastings

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Hastings Opportunity Area – a quick recap

- The purpose of Opportunity Areas programme was to focus local and national resources on a common goal – to increase social mobility
- Each area received a share of £72 million to support targeted local work, as well as an increased share of other Department for Education (DfE) funded activity
- The programme is overseen by a local Partnership Board of individuals with experience across local government, education, business, health and voluntary and community organisations
- Each area published a plan setting out its priorities and key activities to address them
- The priorities for Hastings were: improving literacy; raising attainment in maths; improving mental health and resilience; and broadening horizons and preparing for work
- Two critical underpinning themes were also identified: teacher quality and attendance

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Minute Item 23

The Hastings Partnership Board

Hastings Partnership Board membership

Richard Meddings is chair of TSB Bank, Richard is also a Non-Executive Director of HM Treasury and a Trustee at Teach First.

Board members:





- **Lorraine Clarke**, Regional Director, Ark academies trust
- **Victoria Conheady**: Assistant Director, Hastings Borough Council
- **Carole Dixon**: Chief Executive, Education Futures Trust
- **Graham Peters**: Deputy Lieutenant, Chair of Team East Sussex and Vice-Chair of South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- **Richard Preece**: Executive Headteacher / CEO Torfield & Saxon Mount Academy Trust
- **Mark Talbot**, CEO, Diocese of Chichester Academies Trust
- **John Smith**: University of Brighton Head of School of Education and Academy CEO
- **Jessica Stubbings**: Senior Manager, Partnerships and Governance, East Sussex County Council
- **Candice Miller**, Assistant Head of Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships, Sussex NHS Commissioners, NHS Brighton and Hove CCG | NHS East Sussex CCG | NHS West Sussex CCG

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The meetings are also attended by the Regional Schools Commissioner and by the DfE Head of Delivery.

HOA The priorities

Providing children and young people in Hastings with the essential foundations for success

	Improving literacy	Children and young people in Hastings have the literacy skills they need to make the most of every opportunity and achieve English results in the top half of the country across all key stages.
	Raising attainment in maths	Hastings is known as a centre of excellence for teaching maths and children and young people achieve maths results that place them in the top half of the country at all key stages.
	Improving mental health and resilience	Children and young people experience positive personal and social wellbeing, understand the signs of being emotionally or mentally unwell, and receive excellent support if they need it.
	Broadening horizons and preparing young people for work	Young people are inspired, motivated and equipped for adult life.

Underpinning themes

Quality teaching – recruiting and retaining the best teachers and investing in leadership

Good attendance from early years to further education

In 2016 literacy standards for Hastings' children were significantly behind that of their peers nationally:

- More than half (54%) of disadvantaged pupils were leaving primary school with a reading level below the expected standard
- Only 65% of Hastings' secondary school pupils achieved a GCSE grade C or above in English, compared with 75% nationally. Fewer than half (48%) of disadvantaged pupils achieved a GCSE grade C or above in English
- Some schools in Hastings were using evidence-based approaches which were improving children's literacy levels. Voluntary and community sector organisations were also active in raising the profile of reading for young people in the town
- Our aim was to build on this, ensuring that every child in Hastings would be successful in reading at age-appropriate levels and given opportunities to engage in and enjoy reading regularly

Improving literacy



By 2020, at least 85% of pupils meet the expected standard in phonics

By 2020, pupils in Hastings are in the top half of the country in reading and English at all key stages, with disadvantaged pupils making more progress than disadvantaged children nationally.

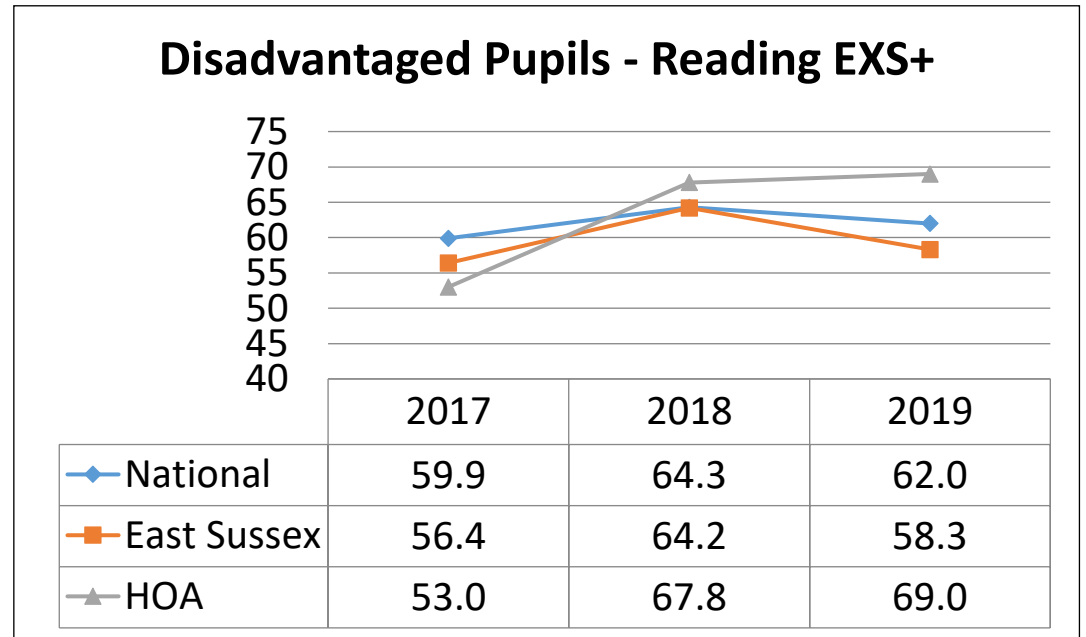
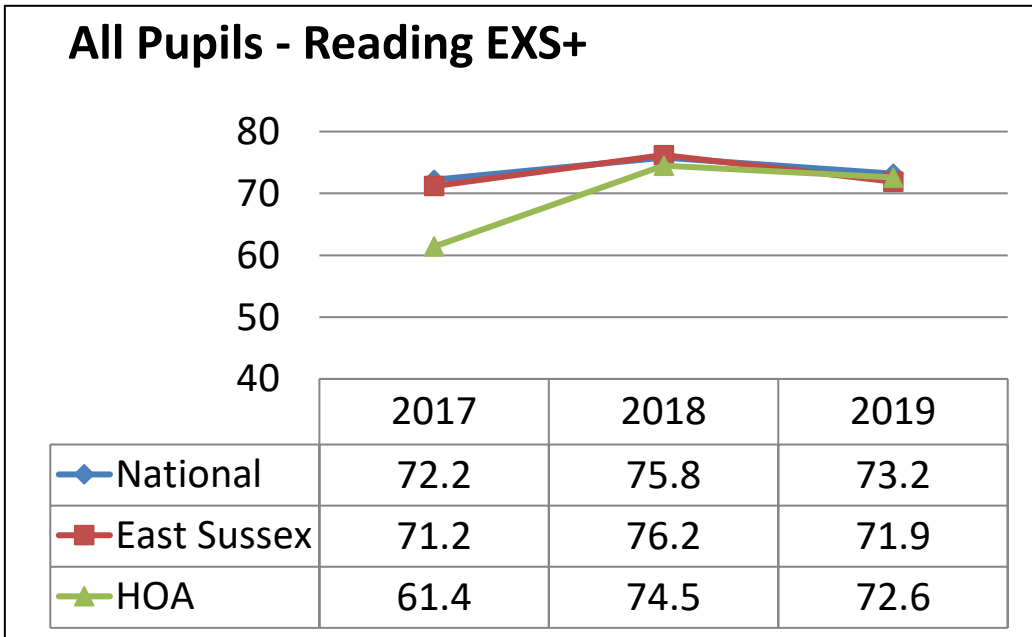
What did we do?

- Early Years Projects – to support young children’s speech and language development
- Literacy Fund – schools to develop evidence based programmes to support improvements in literacy for all pupils, improve teacher skills and confidence
- Funded a Hastings Wide Literacy Campaign

What was the impact?

- All schools in Hastings, are implementing evidence based literacy programmes;
- Trusts/schools in Hastings are implementing **common programmes** and **sharing learning** resulting in **greater collaboration** across schools, pupils experiencing ‘common practices’ across schools and greater focus on literacy
- Improvements in literacy – significant improvements at Key Stage 2

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What was the impact?

- Schools continued to implement programmes, throughout partial school closures
- Schools reporting positive impact of programmes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils e.g.
 - At **Ark Castledown**, children engaged in the programme made on average 4 months progress in their reading levels from term 2 to term 4, with children with reading ages in the lowest 20% making between **5.6 to 12 months** progress. 33% of disadvantaged children made at least expected progress, despite lockdown.*
 - At **West St Leonards**, which began implementing Daily Supported Reader in September 2020, for year 1 pupils 60% of pupils made 6 or more terms progress, with 78% making 4 terms progress or more; the lowest 20% of readers, made 2 or 3 terms progress.*
- Secondary schools reporting positive impact, not just of the programmes, but on the overarching culture of the school regarding reading e.g.
 - Ark Alexandra**: 30 students from Year 7 identified as being in the lowest 20% in respect of reading age. **25 have made at least 6 months' progress in reading towards their chronological reading age** and 2 pupils have made 2 years progress towards their chronological reading age over the year.*
 - 16** students have made such significant progress that by July 21, they were reading at their chronological reading age and able to access the full curriculum.*
- Positive engagement with Get Hastings Reading, which refocused activities due to Covid e.g.
 - 5994 books were distributed to 2956 disadvantaged children and their families .*
 - Secondary schools received visits from two written word professionals who delivered a workshop focused on the world of work and the importance of literacy.*
 - 5 primary schools received Storytelling courses 'Tales from the Tipi' and supporting activities based on texts identified as appropriate to the targeted children*

In 2016, achievement in maths in Hastings was low across all key stages:

- At KS2, only 59% of pupils achieved the expected standard in maths compared with 70% nationally.
- Fewer than half (48%) disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in maths at KS2
- At secondary school, disadvantaged pupils achieved more than half a GCSE grade lower than their peers in maths
- Pupils made less progress in maths than their peers nationally at all four mainstream secondary schools in Hastings

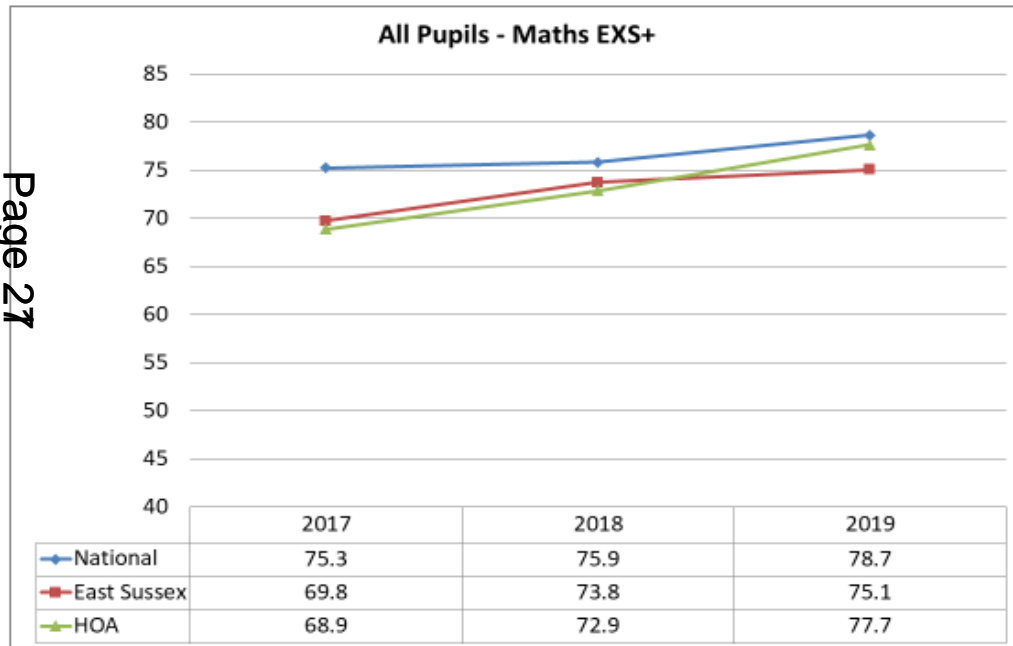
What did we do?

- Funded the Hastings Maths project to work with 16 schools and the College, to provide expert support and coaching in delivering Maths Mastery Approaches
- Funded 4 schools in Hastings, to access additional support from the Sussex Maths Hub, to provide expert support and coaching in delivering Mastery Approaches
- Supported schools to deliver a number of Maths competitions

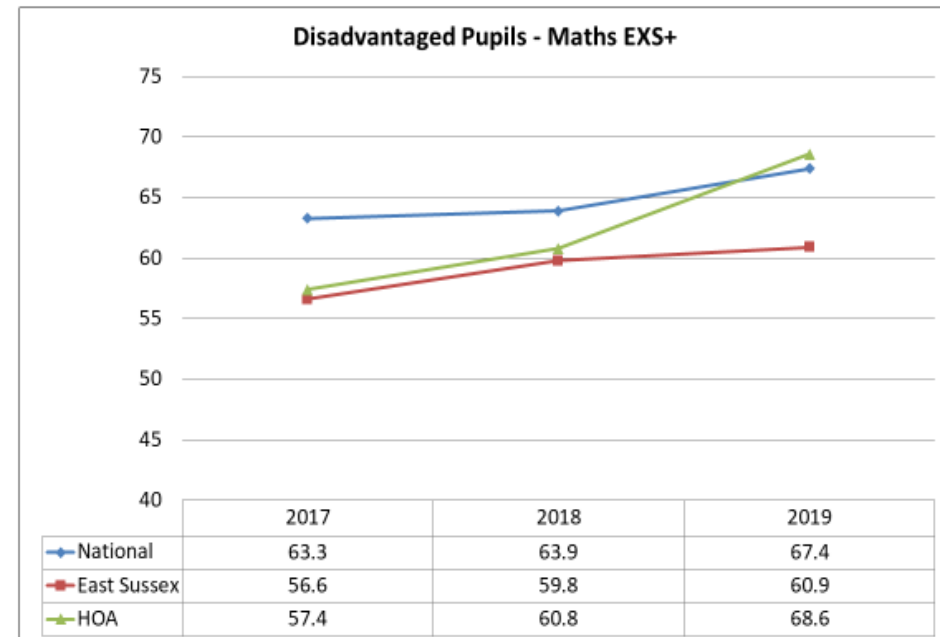
What was the impact?

- Prior to Covid, across Hastings, there were significant improvements in numbers of pupils achieving expected standard in Maths, particularly at Key stage 2

Hastings Opportunity Area – Key Stage 2 results



Hastings Opportunity Area – Key Stage 2 results



- Improvements in secondary demonstrate positive trajectory. In 2017, 55.5% of Hastings' pupils achieved a grade 9-4 in maths at GCSE, below both the East Sussex and national average. This had increased to **60.4%** by 2019, although still below both the local and national average.

- Despite Covid and partial school closures, schools continued to engage positively with the Maths Programmes.
- **The Hastings Maths Project.** In year 4, all 16 schools which took part in the Hastings Maths Project actively participated in the programme. During the academic year, 228 SLE (Specialist Leader of Education) visits took place across the 16 schools.
 - 86% of participating schools reported that they felt very confident or confident (5) in delivering a maths mastery approach in their school
 - 78% of subject leaders said that they and other teachers within their school were confident or very confident in delivering mastery approaches in their schoolsSchools reported that pupils were more enthused and engaged, and loss of learning has been reduced:
 - *“Children maintaining their levels of attainment”* **The Baird Academy**
 - *“The Interventions are more targeted and specific to pupil needs to allow them to reach their full potential”.*
Ark Little Ridge Primary Academy
- **The Sussex Maths Hub.** 3 schools accessed support for Mastery approaches
 - *“Fantastic support from the project, always on hand for advice, support and guidance”.* **Sandown primary school**
 - *“Hastings Maths Project funding has allowed us to invest in more manipulatives, helping all classes follow a ‘concrete-pictorial-abstract’ (CPA) approach”* **St Leonards CofE Primary Academy**
 - *“Staff understand Maths Mastery and its approach. Staff understand the benefits of Teaching for Mastery.”*
Sacred Heart School

What did we do?

- The majority of schools in Hastings (all the secondaries and 14 primaries completed an initial self-review of their provision), engaged with a programme of support and training to further develop and embed whole school approaches to promoting children and young people's mental health
- Funding expanded i-ROCK service from three days a week to five days a week and enabling i-ROCK to deliver interventions with young people. Enhanced service up and running
- Developed a model for an emotional well-being service for 9-14 year olds (key work service) and implementing in Hastings secondary schools and primary schools with greatest level of need
- Expanded parenting support work so that those schools with greatest level of need in Hastings access parenting support (group work, one to one support , seminars on key parenting issues) for parents/carers requiring early support

What was the impact of the Emotional Well-being key work service?

- During 2018-20:
 - 338 pupils accessed additional one to one support from key workers for emerging emotional well-being issues (approx. 17% of the 9-14 age group in the targeted schools).
 - 82% of those accessing this support demonstrated an improvement in previously self-reported anxiety levels
 - 82% reported an improvement in previously self-reported anxiety and depression levels.
 - 206 pupils accessed support through group work
 - 890 (largely secondary school pupils) accessed support through drop-in sessions at their school

The service was well received by schools, pupils, and their families, with almost universally positive feedback around key workers' skills and adaptability, the integration of the service and added value into schools.

- During 2020-21, emotional well-being key work team offered one to one support to 162 children and young people
 - 82 children and young people completed Pre and post RCADs (Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale) between August 2020 and July 21. RCADs is a self-reporting questionnaire relating to anxiety and depression:
 - 71 out of 82 young people showed an improvement in anxiety
 - 73 out of 82 showed an improvement in anxiety and depression

An important focus for the team, as a result of the partial-school closure, was the delivery of virtual support for schools, children and their families. Schools responded well to the virtual offer and in some cases, this was vital, particularly for those children isolating at home with their families. Flexibility was welcomed by schools.

What was the impact?

- 17 schools engaged in work to train and support staff have greater confidence in respect of children and young people's mental health; this included staff resilience training in 5 schools to over 320 staff members, support for Pupil Voice work in 6 schools and staff well-being training in 2 schools.
- Boingboing delivered 11 online twilight training sessions for primary schools on a range of emotional well-being issues, sharing resources with 38 staff members, alongside a tool kit of mental health resources.
- 13 schools engaged with a programme of bespoke support to develop good quality PHSE resources, lessons and learning to promote mental health and emotional well-being.
- Feedback from schools has been very positive.
 - *The training revised what we feel we know. My knowledge and understanding of the subject has been organised and reinforced. I feel more confident now that it is important to support each other at work'* **Dudley Infants**
 - *Thank you so much for your visit this morning - it has really helped me to get some clarity about where we need to go'* **Hollington Primary Academy**
 - *'We now feel more confident to support students that are suffering with issues around food and eating. The session gave us ideas as a school on ways to promote 'body positive campaigns' which will support individuals with coping strategies and provide more education to the wider community. Thank you for informing us of further resources available for us...we will positively put this training into practice on a daily basis'* **The Hastings Academy'**
- MHFA England delivered Mental Health First Aid training at 24 schools and at the college, with 80 Hastings school staff and an additional 7 school support staff now trained as Mental Health First Aiders.

What did we do?

- Appointed two enrichment managers to work with schools and local communities to maximise impact of the broadening horizons strand
- Provided funding direct to all schools and colleges so that they can expand their extra-curricular offer – a number of schools delivered holiday schemes. Funding allocated according to number of children/young people in receipt of pupil premium funding in the schools. Enrichment managers working with schools to implement this
- Delivered grant programmes for Hastings including Summer enrichment programme and Hastings wide programmes, delivered in Hastings' most deprived communities.
- Delivered programme of free activities to schools including Hastings Opportunity Days, Visits to Canary Wharf, Kidzania, Universities, Speakers for schools

What was the impact 2018-20:

- More than 450 programmes involving 42 different activities were delivered across Hastings schools, with over 25,000 places taken up and approximately 6,000 children engaged in additional enrichment activities through schools
- 26 community providers delivered 64 programmes, involving 44 different activities , such as performing and creative arts, sports, cooking, outdoor and adventurous activities
- 900 children from 10 schools visited Kidzania (an indoor careers based theme park for children to try different job experiences)
- 17 schools had visits from motivational speakers (a range of speakers who have overcome barriers to success) who addressed between them more than 6,600 students..
*'It was the best assembly we have ever had' Carly Welsh, Principal, **The Baird***

Hastings Opportunity Days.

- Over 50 local employers and businesses took part in the Hastings Opportunity Day , delivering hands on sessions and discussions relating to routes into employment. Over 680 year 10s and 11s took part in the Day in 2018 and 2019

What was the impact 2020-21

- Programme had been refocused during year 3 to address impact of Covid.
- During year 4 we reprioritised the Broadening Horizons Programme, to enable children impacted by national lockdowns and partial school closures to re-engage with positive activities and with school:
 - We funded 11 schools and 10 community groups to deliver a **transition programme** over the summer.
 - 19 schools and 4 groups accessed funding to deliver **online enrichment activities** and learning for children and young people during partial school closure periods;
 - **6 community providers delivered term time enrichment activities** for pupils in deprived areas
 - HOA supported the delivery of the Holiday and Activity Fund in Hastings and the Summer Holiday Transitions Programme:
 - 5 schools and 12 community organisations were engaged to deliver a wide variety of activities over the Easter period. Over 600 disadvantaged children were involved in programme.
 - 15 providers were also involved in delivering a Summer holiday activities and food fund programme, providing 4 weeks of activities across the town.
 - 1,036 eligible children took part in the programme for at least one week.
 - Supported Summer holiday enrichment in Hastings most deprived wards
 - Delivered 'on-line' Hastings Opportunity Day

What was the problem?

As a town, the number of pupils excluded from school either as suspensions or permanent (PEX) exclusion was much higher than the local authority and national averages.

- In 2016-17, East Sussex had a suspension rate of 11.56%, significantly higher than the national average of 9.4%.
- In 2016-17, Hastings had the highest suspension rate within East Sussex, at 30.73%.
- In 2016-17 22 pupils were permanently excluded from schools in Hastings. This increased to 25 in 2017-18
- In 2018, 67% of all permanent exclusions across East Sussex were from Hastings schools, with one school not carrying out any permanent exclusions that year.

What did we do?

Working closely with secondary headteachers in the town, we developed a shared approach to preventing exclusions across Hastings, with a focus on pupils engaged in persistently challenging behaviour. The HOA working with schools:

- facilitated meetings of secondary school principals to share learning, and develop a shared criteria for permanently excluding pupils, taking forward school to school transfers where appropriate
- provided funding for schools to develop models of 'inclusive practice' for those pupils most at risk of disengagement and exclusions
- provided funding for schools to develop models of pastoral support for pupils at risk of disengagement/non-attendance at school

What was the impact?

- Exclusions data published by DfE demonstrates a significant reduction of exclusion rates in Hastings since the programme began, although rates remain much higher than local authority and national averages.
- Suspensions : In 2017/18, the number of suspensions was 40.45% of numbers on pupils on role in Hastings secondary schools reducing to 30.08% in 2018/19 and to 18.70% in 2019-[20](#) .
- Permanent Exclusions: In 2017/18, 25 pupils were permanently excluded across Hastings schools, reducing to 16 pupils being permanently excluded in 2018/19 and 5 in 2019-[20](#) .
- Hastings secondary schools have developed, innovative, 'in-school' approaches to inclusion for core groups of vulnerable pupils, that offer pupils a bespoke curriculum, focused literacy and maths and a holistic approach to meeting their needs.
- Schools partial closure in February 2020 led to a reduction in the number of pupils both experiencing suspensions and permanent exclusions across all schools.
- However, during this year, the rates of permanent exclusions across Hastings schools continued to demonstrate improvements in comparison with East Sussex and National data. The rates of suspensions across Hastings schools, however remained disproportionately high in comparison to rates in East Sussex and nationally.

Improving Attendance

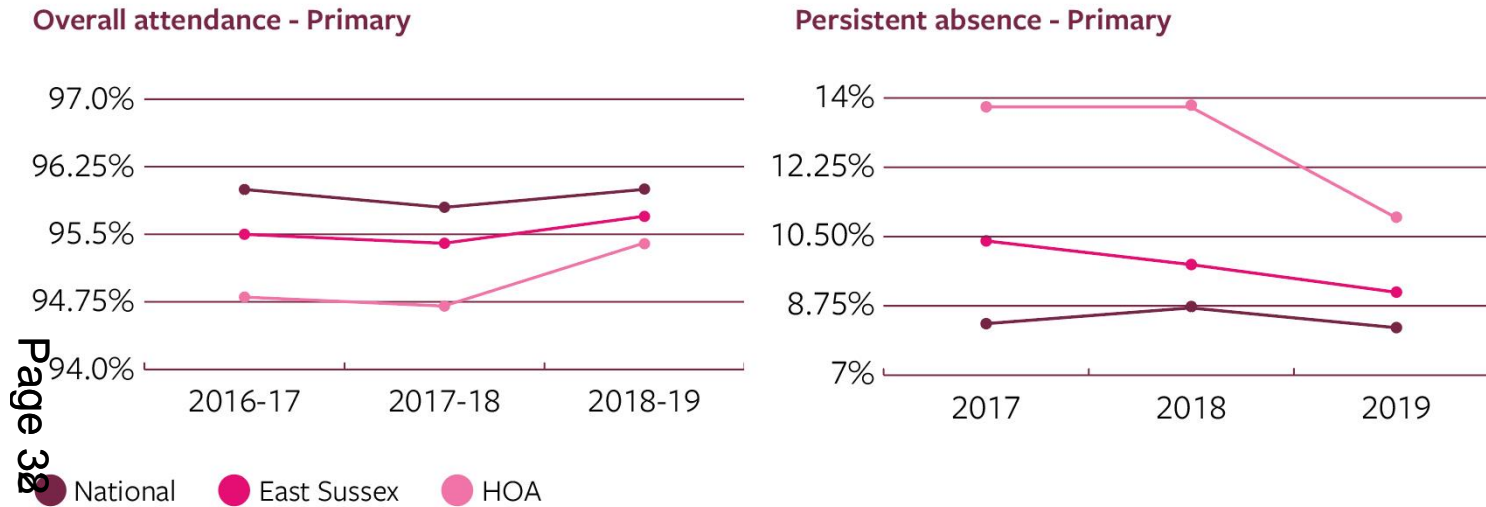
This is an area that was of significant concern across Hastings schools. Primary schools in 2016 had lowest level of overall attendance across any LAD. A number of schools have very high persistent absence rates and lower overall attendance rates

What did we do?

- Developed a Hastings Wide Approach to promoting attendance including a Hastings Wide Charter that all schools have signed up to
- Implemented an Attendance Fund, for schools and partnerships to implement projects to improve attendance which included:
 - transport and breakfast club projects (3 schools),
 - attendance key workers (5 schools),
 - additional pastoral staff in schools, including family mentors and school based social workers to work with and support families who may be struggling (2 schools)
 - additional educational welfare support workers and other specialist staff to support schools promote good attendance (3 schools); and
 - funding towards alternative provision for those children who struggle to attend school (2 schools).
- Additional support for ESBAS, to provide enhanced support for Hastings schools around attendance including rolling out the fast track prosecution pilot across Hastings schools
- Developing with schools and families an attendance campaign, a positive campaign to promote attendance
- Ongoing monitoring, support and co-ordination of the Hastings wide approach, to review impact.

Improving Attendance.

- Prior to Covid, there appeared to be significant improvements in attendance rates and reductions in persistent absence rates across Hastings primary schools in particular:



- And schools were clear that work at an individual school level was having an impact.
 - Christchurch C of E Primary Academy's** overall attendance rates were 93.9% in 2017-18 and persistent absence rates were 20.4%. The impact of their attendance project, which included a school attendance bus and breakfast club resulted in an improvement of overall attendance rates to 95.3% in 2018/19 and a fall in persistent absence rates to 10.3% during this period.
 - St Leonards CE Primary Academy** implemented a HERO Project - an attendance Keyworker assigned to individual families to create bespoke attendance improvement plans. Whole school attendance was 94.40% in 2017/ 18 and rose to 95.3% by term 4 of 2019/ 20.
 - 'Our whole school approach to improving attendance has made a huge difference to a cohort of pupils who needed that little bit of extra support and encouragement to make some positive changes, enabling them now to make the most out of every school day.' Ross Maryan - Deputy Headteacher
- Currently schools are facing significant challenges, with many schools experiencing high persistent absence rates as a result of Covid 19.

What did we do?

- During year 4, we funded a specific programme of work on recovery; Academy Trusts and schools could use this funding, to address the needs within their schools.
- Trusts and schools welcomed the capacity to develop solutions that addressed the challenges of their schools.
- All schools engaged in the programme and used funding to:
 - Deliver one to one and group work support for identified pupils;
 - Deliver 'whole school approaches' to improving literacy, focusing on improving literacy of pupils with low literacy levels;
 - Deliver additional mental health support to pupils;
 - Deliver additional enrichment activities for pupils
- Schools reported the positive impact of these initiatives, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
 - *Sandown Primary school extended their school day for year 4 and year 6 pupils, to provide extra catch-up sessions for children focusing on maths, literacy, transition and anxiety issues. The results of the SATS exams delivered by the school produced results that exceeded their expectations: with 88% of children reading age related expectations in English, 83% in Maths. As the Principal said: 'Surprisingly with everything that has gone on many children have developed far greater independence and attendance has been high. The small groups have created better relationships between children and tutors which we believe has contributed to this.'*

Overall Impact

- Greater collaboration across Trusts, schools and other partners – at all levels:
 - Partnership Board
 - Focused activity around core issues – Attendance, Improving literacy, Inclusion/reducing exclusions
 - Greater partnership between schools and community providers – particularly within most disadvantaged communities
- Focus on improving teacher skills and confidence – improved morale and retention across Hastings schools
- Testing out impact of Place Based Approaches – to challenging issues. Despite challenges, size and make up of Hastings, has enabled and supported focused and ‘sector led’ improvement programme with high rates of sign up and support from schools and partners.

- Focus on sustainability - drawing on and developing existing structures to promote sustainability:
 - **Secondary school programme**, led by 2 mainstream Trusts and Chair of Area 3 Group of secondary schools;
 - **Transitions programme** – led by Ark Alexandra Principal and CEO EFT – linked to wider ESCC programme and testing out new ways of working across Hastings and Area 3 schools;
 - **Emotional Well-being key worker service** – ‘handing over’ to NHSE funded Mental Health Support Teams
 - **Maths and Literacy focus** – on further embedding in schools and building sustainable networks
- Board – reviewing models of sustainability for year 5 onwards
- Significant challenges:
 - Covid
 - Attendance
 - Children and families mental health and emotional well-being
 - Inclusion and SEN
 - Maintaining momentum in a challenging environment

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Minute Item 24

The following is based on the Chamber's recent member survey, anecdotal knowledge and client feedback from Let's do Business advisers plus comments made at the recent Chamber meeting with Sally-Ann Hart.

Recruitment

Over 37% of businesses who responded to our survey advised they had already experienced issues with recruitment

A further 10.5% expected to experience difficulties.

We do not have a breakdown by sector but responses were primarily from business and professional services who represent a wide range of sectors and, hence, were responding both from their own experience and of their clients.

Clearly we know some sectors have been particularly hard hit e.g. hospitality and tourism but construction, manufacturing and professional services all featured and hence we can conclude recruitment challenges are being faced across the board.

Reasons stated for recruitment challenges included:

- A lack of applications ~ 33.33%
- Poor quality applicants ~ 27.8%
- Skills Gaps ~ 27.8%
- Other ~ 16.7% ~ reasons not specified
- 5.6% ~ A lack of access to previous markets

Additional comments on the above included:

- Significant numbers of vacancies are remaining unfilled ~ recruitment agency feedback
- Comments around deferring recruitment due to lack of interest/quality
- Use of freelancers until they can fill vacancies permanently
- Applicants being very choosy ~ employee's market. Applicants waiting for better paid roles.
- As above vacancies being created due to staff moving to better paid roles.
- Many lower skilled/ paid roles mean applicants were still better off on benefits (Comments from recruitment agency)
- A lack of training investment ~ comments from a recruitment firm (specialising in manufacturing/engineering/Administration) an accountancy firm ~ unclear if this relates to them or their clients ~ suspect the latter and a construction firm
- Impact of Brexit and then pandemic sited as some of the reasons for challenges with a lack of or apathy in the labour market.

Other comments regarding Recruitment

Primarily around inflationary impacts due to:

- Increasing salaries to attract/retain staff
- Use of temporary staff/freelancers to fill vacancies adding to inflationary pressures
- Despite rising wages, wages and costs are out of line/not keep pace with inflation

- Employer concerns about future wages cost rises next year due to the National Insurance social care costs

Vacancies

Nearly 90 vacant positions were notified. Mostly from 1 recruitment agency (70). They specialise in manufacturing and engineering but covered unskilled, semi and skilled roles, temporary and permanent posts, manual and technical roles to administration and office based roles.

Other firms highlighting vacant roles were mainly office based and professional services for semi-skilled and skilled positions.

Skills Gaps

Sited by 28% of firms as a reason why they have recruitment challenges. Unfortunately they did not specify what skills but from all the above it seems reasonable to speculate these issues are across the board in terms of roles and skill levels.

Kick Start

Little feedback available as this was not covered in our survey.

Aware of one firm who have utilised and are very pleased.

A further who is after 3 positions but having a torrid time working through the process ~ lack of response, incorrect or conflict information, being passed around the houses ~one minute they are eligible, the next they aren't

A further firm taking on 3 and also finding the process very difficult.

Observations are that many of the difficulties have been due to the scheme being rushed in and developed as it went along. We suspect this will have discouraged some and others may have given up.

The well trailed Levelling Up White Paper was published on 2nd February and confirmed that LEPs would continue to play a key role in supporting the levelling up agenda across England.

While much more work is needed to flesh out the detail of what the LEP role will look like, it is clear that the government values many of the functions we highlighted through the LEP Review, from strategic planning and convening partners through to business support and skills initiatives. This provides a solid platform on which to begin the next phase of our engagement with officials.

The White Paper confirmed:

“Institutions such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) play an **important role** in bringing together stakeholders from local authorities and businesses. According to the LEP Census, the majority of LEPs perceive that they have formed **strong working relationships** with local authorities and higher education providers (shown in Figure 1.61). However, some LEPs perceive that businesses do not play a full and active role. The capacity and capability of LEPs also differs significantly across different parts of the UK.

For the last decade, LEPs have acted as **important organisational means** of bringing together businesses and local leaders to drive economic growth across England. They have also been responsible for the delivery of a number of major funding streams. It is **important to retain** the key strengths of these local, business-oriented institutions in supporting private sector partnerships and economic clusters, while at the same time better integrating their services and business voice into the UK Government’s new devolution plans.

To that end, the UK Government is **encouraging the integration of LEPs** and their business boards into MCAs, the GLA and County Deals, where these exist. Where a devolution deal does not yet exist, LEPs will continue to play their vital role in supporting local businesses and the local economy. Where devolution deals cover part of a LEP, this will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Further detail on this transition will be provided in writing to LEPs as soon as possible.

The UK Government recognises the **convening power** of these groups and is committed to working with stakeholders to strengthen and deepen partnership working to drive local growth. Initiatives such as the Western Gateway, an economic partnership of local authorities, city regions, LEPs and governments in the West of England have demonstrated the benefits that can be achieved through effective cross-border collaboration.

Looking ahead, and supporting these efforts, a number of new UK Government initiatives to support **private sector partnerships and clusters** are underway. For example, the Government is investing £100m to pilot three new **Innovation Accelerators** in West Midlands and Greater Manchester. These are intended to boost economic growth by investing in R&D strengths, attracting new private investment, boosting innovation diffusion, and maximising the economic impact of R&D institutions. Each Accelerator will develop a plan to grow their local innovation ecosystem, receiving bespoke support from the UK Government.”

Turning to the wider White Paper, the document sets out twelve “**clear and ambitious medium-term missions**” with timed target objectives through to 2030 – in the areas of:

1. **Living Standards:** By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each area containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
2. **R&D:** By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.
3. **Transport Infrastructure:** By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.
4. **Digital Connectivity:** By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.
5. **Education:** By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
6. **Skills:** By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.
7. **Health:** By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.
8. **Wellbeing:** By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
9. **Pride in Place:** By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
10. **Housing:** By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government’s ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.
11. **Crime:** By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.
12. **Local Leadership:** By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified long-term funding settlement.

These missions will guide the UK’s approach to levelling up over the **next decade** and set the medium-term ambition of the government and are an anchor for the expectations and plans of the private sector and civil society. An initial suite of headline and supporting metrics for measuring and tracking progress against levelling up outcomes are set out in a **separate document** which is published with the White Paper.

The mission objectives will be governed by four parameters:

1. **Improved transparency about place-based spending:** The spatial pattern of UK Government spending and funding allocations is often unclear due to a lack of high quality, granular data. This means government policy is sometimes acting in a “place-blind” way.
2. **Hardwiring spatial considerations into decision-making and evaluation:** The spatial impact of policy, and the evaluation of those decisions locally, is often not hardwired into central government decisions and processes, sometimes leading to outcomes that are contrary to the objectives of levelling up.
3. **Improved coordination of central government policies at the local level:** Uncoordinated and siloed policy from the centre can complicate decision-making at the local level. This is particularly salient in the case of local growth funding, with multiple pots each with their own reporting requirements.
4. **Greater focus on local places:** The distance between the officials who design policy nationally and those who are affected by them locally, can mean policy is insufficiently place sensitive.

UK Government will create a **new regime to oversee its levelling up missions**, establishing a statutory duty to publish an annual report analysing progress and a **new external Levelling Up Advisory Council**.

The Government has also set up a new **Levelling Up Cabinet Committee** tasked with embedding levelling up across central government policy design and delivery. The committee will work directly with local leaders to improve the clarity, consistency and coordination of policy. It is chaired by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and will:

- embed levelling up policies across government, ensuring these reflect the needs of places and people, and align with the missions;
- work directly with places, putting local ideas and innovations at the heart of government and supporting local leaders to tackle their local challenges;
- deliver measurable change, by monitoring progress on policies that contribute to delivering against the missions, including the policies in this paper and those developed subsequently; and
- drive forward the new framework for devolution, by empowering local leaders and communities and improving accountability mechanisms.

The government is pursuing a new approach to places through **Levelling Up Directors**. Levelling Up Directors will act as a single point of contact for local leaders and a first port of call for new and innovative local policy proposals. They will be based in the areas they have responsibility for and will bring together government policy and delivery, aligning decisions and funding to support local and national strategic objectives. The new Levelling Up Directors will also support the **development of clusters** across the UK, and they will work closely with the **Centre for Thriving Regions**, a proposal recently put forward by the CBI. These roles will have the following objectives:

- building local capacity and capability, especially where it is thin;
- improving the evidence base for local decision-makers, working with the ONS, and evaluating what works using data, statistics and analysis;
- catalysing local change and championing local ideas within government;
- bringing strategic coherence, coordination and flexibility to government intervention in places;
- forming a key bridge between local actors and central government; and
- acting as champions for their places.



The UK Government will set out a plan for **streamlining the funding landscape** this year which will include a commitment to help local stakeholders navigate funding opportunities and reducing the unnecessary proliferation of individual funding pots with varied delivery approaches.

The government will set out a **new devolution framework** for England. The **preferred model** of devolution is one with a directly-elected leader covering a well-defined economic geography with a clear and direct mandate, strong accountability and the convening power to make change happen. However, because this may not suit all areas, the framework sets out a **flexible, tiered approach**, allowing areas to deepen devolution at their own pace. Four principles will define it:

1. **Effective leadership:** Powers should be devolved to authorities which have the necessary structures and leadership for clear, strong local decision-making.
2. **Sensible geography:** new devolution deals will be based on geographies that are locally recognisable in terms of identity, place and community, as well as being sensible economic areas that join up where people live and work.
3. **Flexibility:** Devolution deals will be tailored to each area, with not every area necessarily having the same powers.
4. **Appropriate accountability:** Accountability measures for devolution deals will sit with the broader Local Government Accountability Framework.

Around 40% of the population of England are currently covered by a devolution deal. **Extending devolution in England** means:

- inviting Cornwall, Derbyshire and Derby, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, Durham, Hull and East Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, and Suffolk to start formal negotiations to agree new County Deals, with the aim of agreeing a number of these deals by autumn 2022;
- taking forward negotiations to agree an MCA deal with York and North Yorkshire and an expanded MCA deal for the North East; and confirming that other areas, particularly those with broadly similar circumstances to North Yorkshire and York have the opportunity to consider their interest in an MCA devolution deal – for instance, the UK Government will work to secure a mayoral deal in Cumbria and similar areas.

Deepening devolution in England means that:

- the UK Government will open negotiations immediately on trailblazer deals with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, which will act as the blueprint for other MCAs to follow;
- working with MCAs, initially as part of the trailblazer deals, to explore options to streamline the funding landscape for MCAs; and inviting other MCAs and the GLA to bid for sweeping further powers, through the new devolution framework.

Simplifying devolution in England means:

- setting out the UK Government’s new devolution framework to provide greater clarity on the devolution offer across England; and
- seeking to legislate to establish a new form of combined authority model to be made up of upper-tier local authorities only (e.g. a county council and its associated unitary councils); providing a single, accountable institution across a functional economic area or whole county geography; district councils can be non-constituent members; and county councils will be expected to work closely with their district councils.

The government wants to encourage **private sector-led partnerships** across the UK, especially when these coincide with existing or potential new clusters of business activity. These initiatives should ideally seek to coordinate action not just across the private sector, but in partnership with local and central government, and local education and research institutions. Examples of these initiatives include the proposal being developed by local businesses for the Humber; and a WMCA led public-private sector partnership to realise the ambition of the West Midlands to become a “smart city” region.

The UK Government is establishing a **new independent body in England** focused on data, transparency and robust evidence. This will enhance the UK Government’s understanding of **place-based leadership**, quality of local service delivery and organisational efficacy. Before new devolution deals are agreed, a **new accountability framework** will be finalised that will apply to all devolved institutions in England.

The UK Government is keen to **strengthen the role of local stakeholders** in the broader employment landscape, using local insight and expertise to shape the UKSPF and future national employment provision. This increased partnership working will build on existing work to engage local stakeholders in the procurement and implementation of contracted employment programmes of appropriate scale. Work with local stakeholders to **shape the UKSPF** and with level 3 devolution deal areas to shape contracted employment programmes will help meet local and national priorities.

Reorganisation will remain a locally-led avenue available where there is broad local support, but will not be a requirement for a **devolution deal**. The UK Government intends to follow an **incremental approach**, using existing legislation to work with areas which are seeking to establish reformed local governance structures.

Government will support **private sector clusters**, existing and embryonic, providing an enabling environment within which innovation and business can flourish. That means ensuring the right sets of skills exist, the necessary digital and physical infrastructure is in place, adequate and appropriate financing has been secured, and an appropriate regulatory framework is operating. By providing these foundations locally, government can help to catalyse private sector innovation, job creation and growth.

The role played by government in securing these outcomes needs to be tailored to local circumstances and opportunities. There is a **spectrum of possible interventions** to achieve these objectives as follows:

- **Convening.** By convening and bringing together stakeholders, government can help design and deliver a local transformation plan. It is important to strengthen and deepen these partnerships over strategic geographies.
- **Influencing.** By signalling its support for initiatives, government can encourage private sector stakeholders to take forward investment and financing. For example, pan-regional partnerships provide an extended network of collaborators and a strong regional brand. The Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine have provided an opportunity for partners to collaborate at scale and prioritise areas of common interest. Because these partnerships cover large populous regions, with distinct histories, strengths and challenges, they are an important partnership model for levelling up.
- **Informing.** By providing information, advice, and practical assistance, government can support business clusters.

- **Funding.** By using seed financing, government can de-risk private sector activity and crowd-in private finance. One example is the £5m provided to Northern Gritstone, a ground-breaking new investment company based in the north of England founded by the Universities of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield. This aims to be one of the largest investors in academic spin-outs in the UK and is on track to raise £500m to support commercialisation of projects from northern universities.
- **Business environment.** By creating a streamlined, effective and stable regulatory environment which supports the private sector to invest over the longer term, government can catalyse private financial flows to local businesses and projects.

Over time, the UK Government, through the ONS and the Integrated Data Services Platform (IDSP) will expand its use of **new and administrative data** to improve the timeliness and granularity of **local data** made available to central government departments, including DLUHC local government finance functions.

The UK Government will introduce a **statutory obligation to report annually on progress** towards meeting the Levelling Up missions. The report will draw on the metrics set out in this White Paper and provide rigorous analysis and monitoring of progress in reducing regional disparities.

The government is creating a **Levelling Up Advisory Council**. The Council will be charged with providing independent expert advice on matters relating to the design and delivery of levelling up. Its analysis will be commissioned and published, at the discretion of the Levelling Up Cabinet Committee. The new Levelling Up Advisory Council will **launch an expert sub-committee** on regional adoption and diffusion infrastructure – exploring how to improve the uptake of productivity-enhancing technologies and management practices by businesses.

The Government also identifies four **high-level objectives for public policy**:

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

Government will empower decision-makers in local areas by providing leaders and businesses with the tools they need. A **new framework** will extend, deepen and simplify local devolution in England. Ongoing support will be provided to existing City and Growth deal areas in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, pan-regional partnerships like the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine, and local private sector initiatives. The UK Government will support existing and embryonic private sector clusters of economic activity, which exist in all parts of the UK and are the wellspring of new innovation and job creation.

Relevant policy initiatives include:

A series of new **Research and Development (R&D)** investments will strengthen our science base across the country. The increase in public R&D investment to £20bn by 2024-25 and the target for total UK R&D investment to reach 2.4% of GDP by 2027 must see every region of the UK experience

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

UK Government will target £100m of investment in three new **Innovation Accelerators**, private-public-academic partnerships which will aim to replicate the Stanford-Silicon Valley and MIT-Greater Boston models of clustering research excellence and its direct adoption by allied industries. These pilots will be centred on Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Glasgow City-Region. These new clusters will be our Fourth Industrial Revolution Foundries, leveraging our global lead in scientific research.

They will empower local areas by bringing together national and local government, industry and R&D institutions in a **long-term partnership**. Each Accelerator will see local consortia developing a plan and identifying transformational projects to grow their innovation ecosystem. This may also include working with partners outside of the immediate geography as is necessary. They will receive bespoke support from the UK Government, led by BEIS in partnership with other departments and their regional teams. BEIS will work with the pilot places, and central government departments to design this support, so it aligns to the characteristics and needs of each individual pilot place.

The government will support all LTAs by publishing **new guidance on Local Transport Plans**, so that all LTAs can deliver updated plans by the end of this Parliament, with clear project pipelines and comprehensive strategies to improve local transport for people and reduce carbon emissions. The UK Government will also **explore regional centres of excellence** that can provide bespoke support to LTAs. Future funding will be dependent on the delivery of these plans and wider LTA performance.

The government will publish the **Wireless Infrastructure Strategy**. This will review how far the private sector will go to deliver wireless infrastructure – including 5G – across the country, and determine whether there are any market failures in places that need to be addressed.

The UK Government continues to work with local leaders to develop **Local Digital Skills Partnerships**. These collaborative partnerships are now operating in seven regions across England, with an eighth formally launching in Hull and East Yorkshire in early March. The UK Government will work with devolved administrations to consider how best to share the insights and evaluation of the programme to help build digital skills capability across the UK.

The government will roll out **employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)** across England, together with supporting funding, looking to prioritise areas with the most pressing skills needs. Employers, convened by employer representative bodies, will work with providers, MCAs where relevant, and other stakeholders to develop LSIPs, setting out the key changes needed in a place to make technical skills training more responsive to skills needs. The UK Government is also legislating to put these employer-led LSIPs on a statutory footing through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.

The government also intends to **reform funding and accountability for further education**. The quadrupling of places in England on **Skills Bootcamps**, announced at SR21, will ensure that acute national and local skill shortages can be addressed at speed. The UK Government will bring greater alignment to the delivery of employment and skills interventions in **new Pathfinder areas**. These will bring together local delivery partners from DWP and DfE, including Jobcentre Plus, careers services, local employers, education and training providers, and local government to respond to intelligence about local employers' skills needs,

The government has also announced nine new **Institutes of Technology** (IoT) across England, building on the 12 already established since 2019 and taking the total to 21. The lead organisations for the nine new IoTs and the wider areas they will cover are:

- a. Blackpool and The Fylde College (Lancashire LEP area);
- b. Cheshire College South and West (Cheshire and Warrington LEP area);
- c. Chichester College Group (Coast to Capital LEP area);
- d. DN Colleges Group (Sheffield City Region LEP area);
- e. Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire LEP area);
- f. Solent University (Solent LEP area);
- g. South Essex College (South East LEP area);
- h. University of Derby (D2N2 and Leicestershire LEP areas); and
- i. University of Salford (Greater Manchester LEP area).

The government will proactively identify and engage with **20 places in England** that demonstrate strong local leadership and ambition and where the impact of existing investment can be maximised to catalyse economic transformation. The focus will be on places that will particularly benefit from **regeneration** – where regeneration will lead to increased local prosperity, improved social mobility and bolstered pride of place.

The government has set itself one core mission on **local devolution**. It will support wider place leadership throughout the UK through **private sector-led partnerships** and local growth funds.

Integrated Rail Plan, improving the rail network in the North and Midlands, and investing £24bn in our busiest roads and motorways, £5.7bn in City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements and £5bn for buses, cycling and walking networks.

Government will enhance **digital connectivity** through Project Gigabit and the Shared Rural Network so that by 2030, the UK Government and private sector will deliver nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.

The funding of courses and the **governance of colleges** will be overhauled in line with employers' needs. **Local Skills Improvement Plans**, together with supporting funding, will be set up across England to set out the key changes needed in a place to make technical skills training more responsive to skills needs. Nine new Institutes of Technology with strong employer links will be established in England, helping to boost higher technical skills in STEM subjects.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide £1.3bn over the SR21 period to provide employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. This builds on the **National Disability Strategy**, Health and Disability Green Paper and Health is Everyone's Business consultation.

Government aims to have significantly increased the number of people to have successfully completed **high quality skills training** in every part of the UK, including 200,000 more people successfully completing high quality skills training annually in England, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.

We will also **regenerate 20 of our towns and cities** by assembling and remediating brownfield land and working with the private sector to bring about transformational developments combining housing, retail and business in sustainable, walkable, beautiful new neighbourhoods. These new

developments amongst others will be supported by an Office for Place which will pioneer design and beauty, promoting better architectural aesthetics to ensure they enhance existing settlements, gladden the eye and lift the heart.

Government will publish a second **report on rural proofing** in England this spring. This report will set out how government departments are working to support levelling up in rural areas, through targeted approaches where needed, and how we are strengthening the rural economy, developing rural infrastructure, delivering rural services and managing the natural environment.

Government will deepen and **simplify devolution across England** so that by 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution with a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

Introducing a **new model for counties with mayors or “governors”**. We will open negotiations on **trailblazer deeper devolution** deals with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester combined authorities. These deals will act as the blueprint for other mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) to follow, with bids for more powers welcome. We will likewise recast the geography of MCAs, where necessary, to ensure there is greater economic coherence. We will further invite nine areas to agree new County Deals and seek to agree further MCA deals, extending devolution to much more of England. **A new independent body** will be set up to drive this, empowering citizens, strengthening local leaders’ knowledge of their services, and increasing central government’s understanding of the sector.

The UK Government has put into law a **Net Zero** emissions target by 2050. This structural shift could have large and long-lasting effects on virtually every aspect of the economy, including jobs and skills, infrastructure and technology, and investment and innovation. The Net Zero transition could create huge opportunities for many of the UK’s left-behind places, but also poses risks for them which, if unmanaged, could be damaging.

Past policy initiatives have not been sufficient to arrest the rise in geographic disparities over the second half of the 20th century in the UK. HMG identifies five key shortcomings in policy:

1. longevity and policy sufficiency;
2. policy and delivery coordination;
3. local empowerment;
4. evidence, monitoring and evaluation; and
5. transparency and accountability.

Resolving geographic disparities will require a fundamental rewiring in the system of decision-making, locally and nationally, across the UK. Learning the lessons of past experience, the following five pillars should underpin this policy regime:

- a) medium-term missions;
- b) reshaping central government decision-making;
- c) empowering local decision-making;
- d) data, monitoring and evaluation; and
- e) transparency and accountability.

Next Steps

The government will put in place a comprehensive process of **engagement and informal consultation** to inform levelling up delivery and future policy-making. Some of the key elements of this process include:

- a structured process of **visits, at ministerial level**, across the whole of the UK in the months following publication of the White Paper, to discuss how levelling up can be successfully achieved in that area and to gather feedback;
- an ongoing, long-term **commitment for further ministerial visits** across the whole of the UK, to update on progress on the policy programme and missions;
- setting up **local panels**, drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, to serve as a sounding board on levelling up delivery and implementation, working closely with the new Levelling Up Directors once established;
- **annual reports** summarising the key messages from these local panels, which will feed into the UK Government's Cabinet Committee on Levelling Up; and
- an **online space** where local ideas, proposals and initiatives around levelling up can be heard and co-ordinated, to spread knowledge and understanding of what has worked locally and to foster innovation and experimentation.

This document provides many opportunities for LEPs and given the fresh mandate we have now been given, the LEP Network will begin the next phase of discussions with officials on the role we can play in the Levelling Up agenda.

February 2022