



# Levelling Up the Rural Economy Kerry Booth 26.04.23



**The Rural Services Network is fighting for a fair deal for rural communities, in all public sector funding**





We want a fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and for more nuanced national policies that reflect rural circumstances.

# Levelling Up White Paper

“It is vital that we preserve and enhance the economic, academic and cultural success stories of the UK’s most productive counties, towns and cities.

But it is equally **critical that we improve productivity**, boost economic growth, encourage innovation, **create good jobs**, enhance educational attainment and renovate the social and cultural fabric of those parts of the UK that have stalled and not – so far – shared equally in our nation’s success.”

“

**Levelling up  
means giving  
everyone the  
opportunity  
to flourish**

”

# Levelling Up White Paper

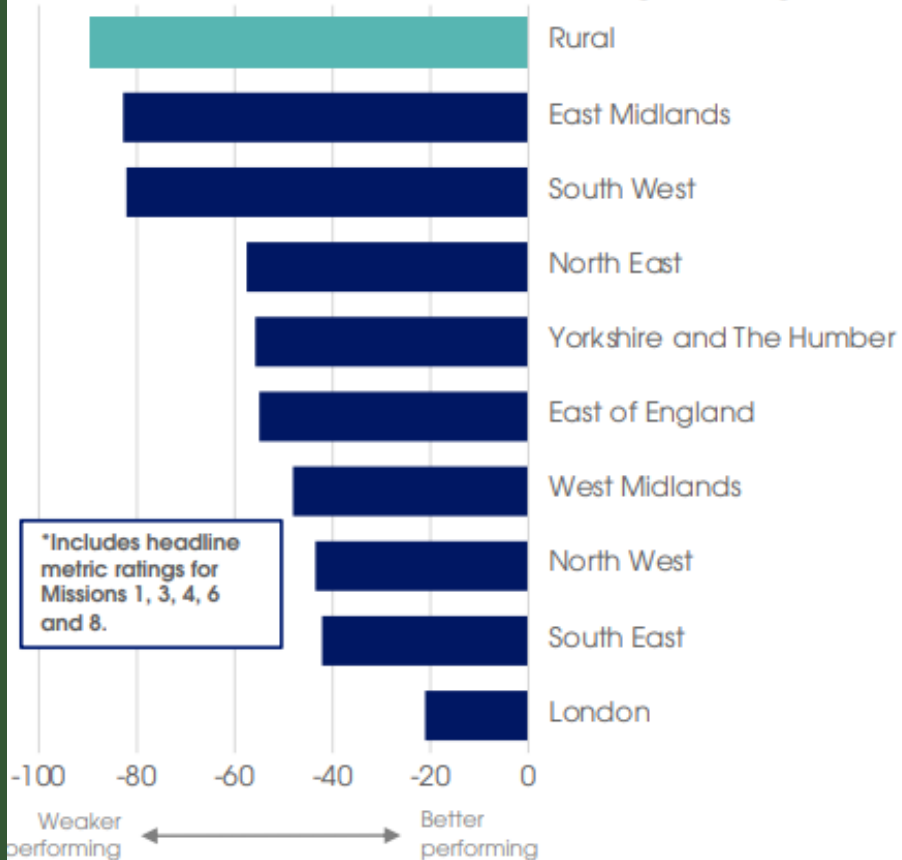
Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging

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

# Does rural need levelling up?

Average rating of all mission headline metrics for which local authority data is available\*

Regions, England



Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data

Were England's rural communities a distinct region, their need for Levelling Up would be **greater** than that of any other part of the country



# Productivity in England



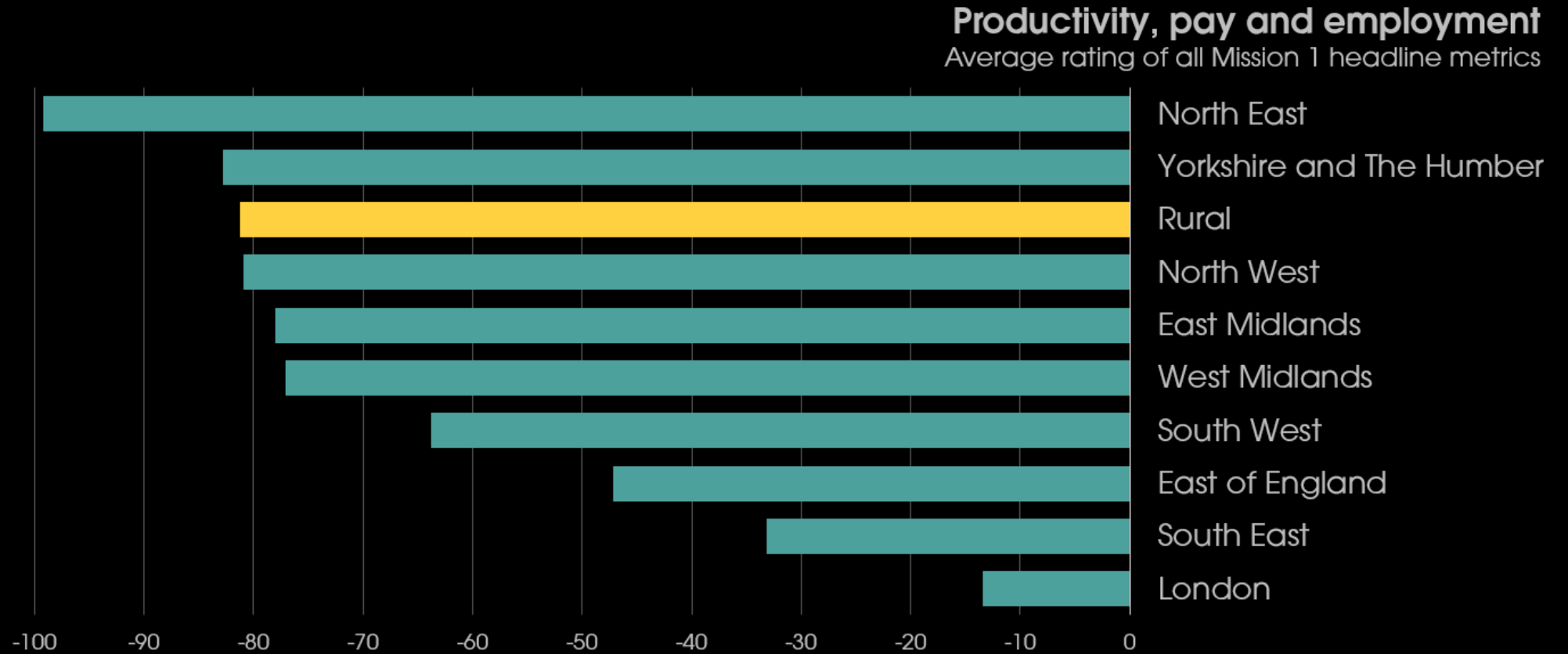
Productivity in England is 23% higher than in rural areas

Productivity in England is £56,000

Productivity in Predominantly rural is £45,400



# But there's also a serious economic gap to close

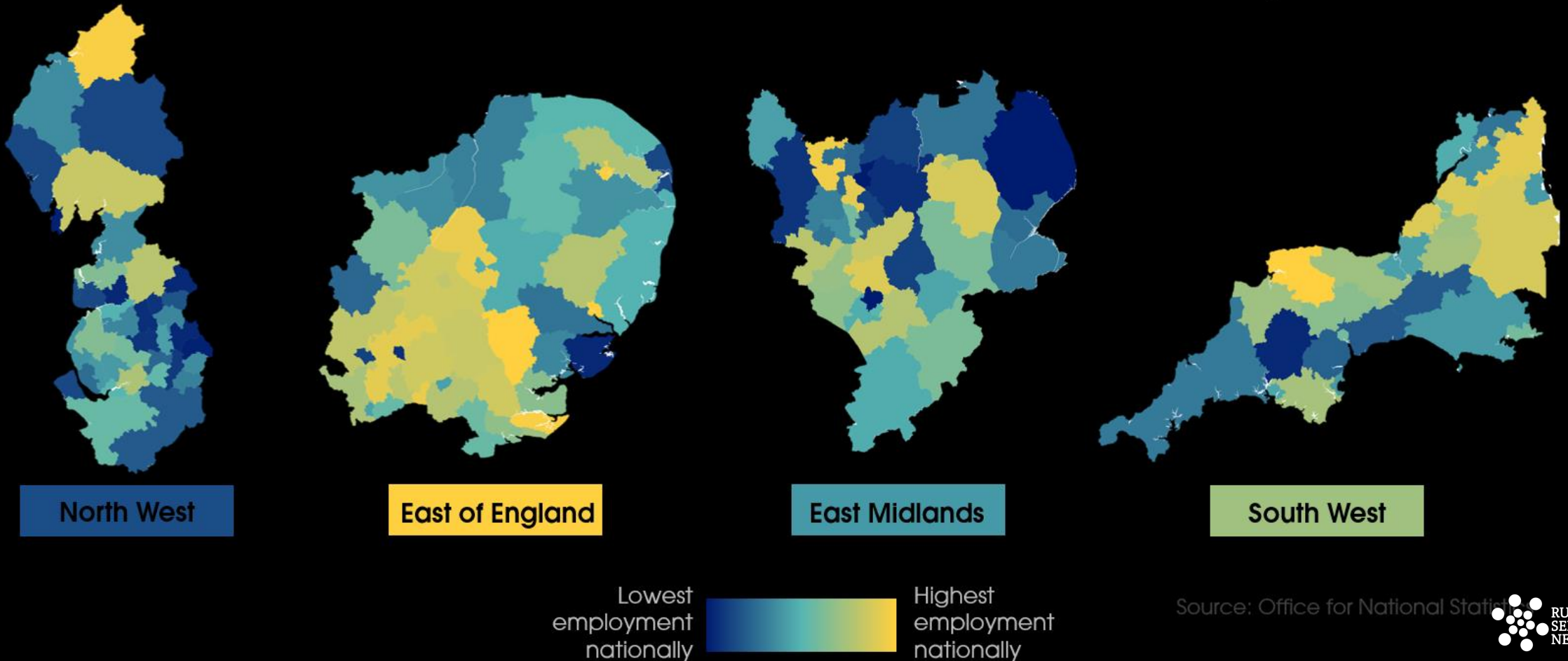


Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data



# Differences within are greater than between regions

Employment rate for 16- to 64-year-olds  
2021, per cent, national scale



# Wages earned in local jobs

In 2020, median workplace-based earnings:

- Predominantly Urban areas (excl London) = £25,400
- Predominantly Rural areas = £22,900.

10% LOWER



# How is this relevant for the Rural Services Network?

RSN is the national champion for rural services, ensuring that people in rural areas have a strong voice.

We are a membership organisation representing rural service providers.



# Rural Facts



**Urban areas get 38% more in Government Funded Spending Power than rural areas.**

Urban areas in 2023/2024 will receive some 38% (£135) per head in Government Funded Spending Power more than their rural counterparts





Urban authorities in 2022/2023 budgeted to spend almost **double** that of rural authorities on discretionary services













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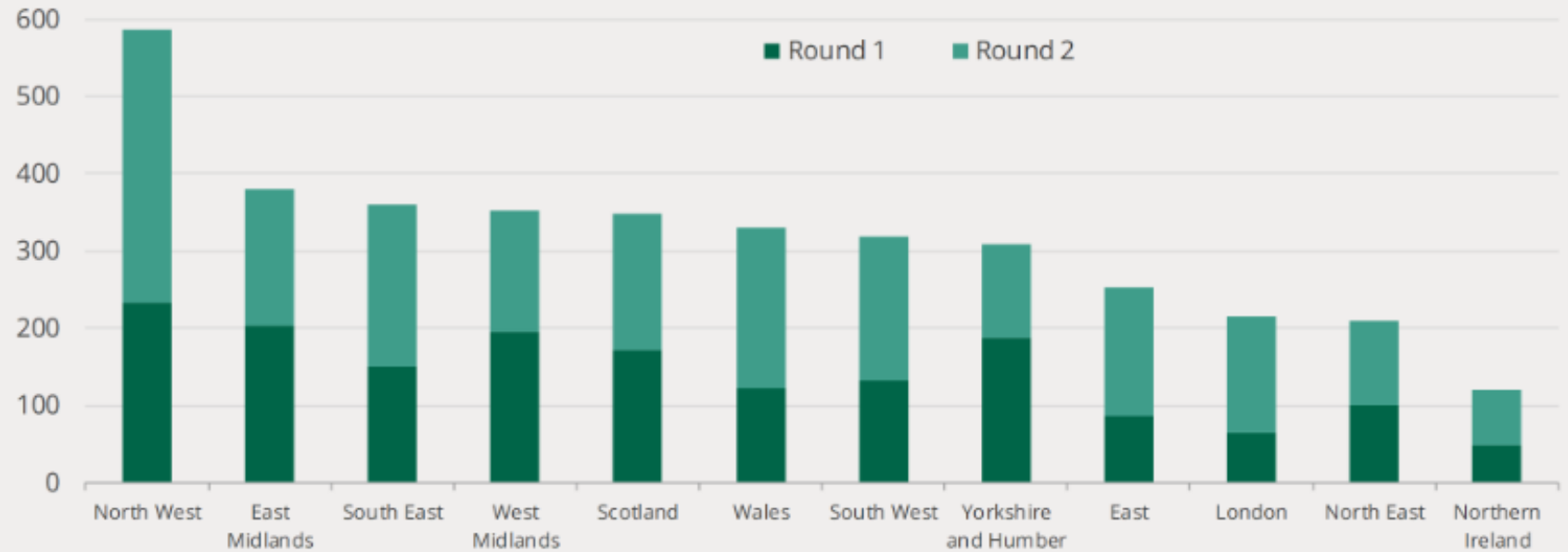
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-  [Application form](https://apply-for-leveling-up-fund-round-2.levelingup.gov.uk/services/dluhc/apply-for-leveling-up-fund-round-2)  
<https://apply-for-leveling-up-fund-round-2.levelingup.gov.uk/services/dluhc/apply-for-leveling-up-fund-round-2>
-  [Levelling Up Fund Round 2: application guidance](#)  
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Reality is Local Authorities are bidding competitively for funds

## The North West secured £586 million across both funding rounds

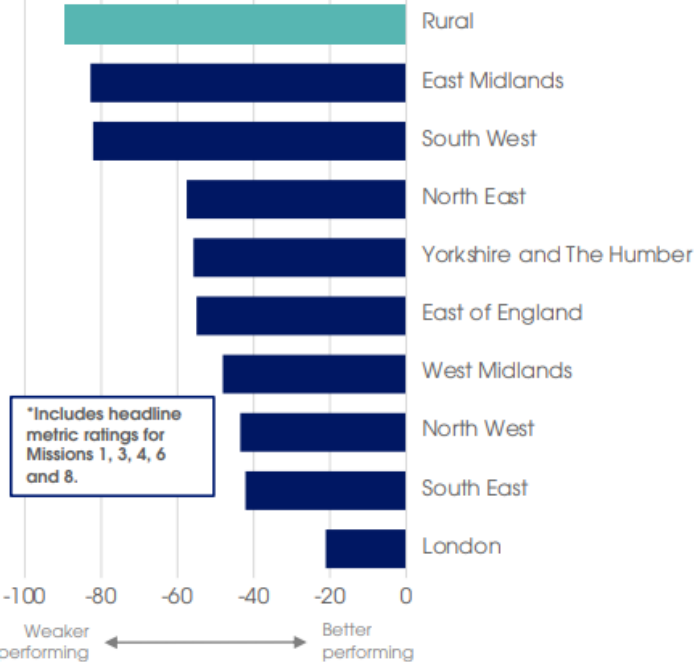
£ millions, Levelling Up Fund, rounds 1 and 2



Source: Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government, First round successful bidders, 27 October 2021 and Round 2 successful bidders, 18 January 2023

### Average rating of all mission headline metrics for which local authority data is available\*

Regions, England



Source: Pragmatix Advisory calculations using Office for National Statistics data

The North West and South East were least in need of levelling up according to the Government's own metrics (excl London)...

...and yet they featured in the top 3 areas for securing Levelling Up Funding



**Election time is  
looming...**





# What do we want for our rural economy to thrive?

- We want metrics used to devise strategies or programmes for growth to reflect disadvantage in rural economies within regions
- We want decision making and resources to be devolved to local areas as far as possible, creating flexibility for tailored solutions to meet local needs
- We want a support programme for rural businesses and community entrepreneurs
- National Programmes should fully reflect the full range of costs in providing support across rural areas

# Priority Areas for the Rural Services Network

Rural Fair  
Funding

Rural Affordable  
Housing

Rural Economy

Rural Health and  
Care

Rural Transport

Rural Net Zero

Rural Connectivity

Rural Planning