



Levelling Up and SPF Agenda and what it means for rural areas





LEVELLING — UP —

Levelling Up the United Kingdom
Executive Summary

Not everyone shares equally in the UK's success. While talent is spread equally across our country opportunity is not.

Levelling up is a mission to challenge, and change, that **unfairness**. Levelling up means giving everyone the opportunity to flourish. It means **people everywhere** living longer and more fulfilling lives, and benefitting from sustained rises in living standards and well-being

This requires us to **end the geographical inequality** which is such a striking feature of the UK.

For levelling up to mean something to people in their daily lives, we need to reach into **every** community in the country, from city centres to rural areas, in order to start to rebuild social capital and self-reliance in our most abandoned neighbourhoods.

RURAL LENS REVIEW



Levelling Up White Paper

Chapter 1
The UK's Geographical Disparities:
Drivers and Potential Policy Approaches

Published March 2022



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Chapter 2
Systems Reform

Published March 2022



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Chapter 3
The Policy Programme
Chapter 4
Next Steps

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Levelling Up White Paper

CRITIQUE: Overarching rural issues,
plus actions proposed by the RSN

Published March 2022



Rural Lens review of Levelling Up White Paper

Most proposals for targeted interventions appear to be major town or city focused with rural areas, people, communities and businesses overlooked. A key question across all of the Policy Programmes is whether they will reach rural areas and designed (and funded) to reflect rural issues and circumstances?

A graphic featuring a dark blue silhouette of the United Kingdom map. The map is set against a background of radiating light beams in shades of blue and red. The words 'LEVELLING UP' are written in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the map. The word 'LEVELLING' is on the top line, and 'UP' is on the bottom line, with two horizontal white bars on either side of 'UP'.

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The 'Improving Public Services' outcome sought will **never** be equitably achievable in rural areas unless and until all the funding formulae for the allocation of national funds to local authorities (and other public service organisations) are **fair and reflect the addition costs of service delivery in rural areas.**



It would be more appropriate for funds that are part of the Levelling Up agenda to assess the **standards of living** achievable in different locations given local labour market.

The cost of living in rural areas is generally higher than in urban.



An aerial photograph of a suburban residential area. The foreground shows a mix of green fields and a residential neighborhood with many houses. The houses are mostly two-story buildings with brown roofs. The fields are lush green, and there are some trees scattered throughout. In the background, the landscape is hazy, showing more fields and a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Words such as 'local',
'place', and 'area' are
made throughout but
without any definition.

Very urban focused.

All the analysis is a
regional level.

Sometimes the
regional level data is
built up from
county/unitary
council level and
sometimes from
district (although
the data is only
given aggregated
for the region)



- A lot of retrofitting policies and programmes already decided on, spending decisions already made and labelling them as Levelling Up.
- In terms of reviving high streets government must address the fact that rural towns and high streets serve exactly the same function as urban towns to the residents and businesses in the town and their rural hinterlands

Guidance

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus

Published 13 April 2022

“It is about levelling up opportunity and prosperity and overcoming deep-seated geographical inequalities that have held us back for too long.”

“This is our vision and ambition for the new £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which succeeds the old EU structural funds. This money will go straight to local places right across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to invest in three local priorities; communities and place, support for local businesses and people and skills.”

Rural Lens review of SPF Guidance

- The RSN will be working hard to influence the funding formula for the fund to ensure it is fit for purpose in the rural context and reflects delivery costs in rural settings, (existing funding formulae do not reflect these aspects and disadvantage rural areas).
- This is a key rural proofing point and a major test for Government.
- Capacity remains an issue of real concern across rural authorities. Realistic and workable timescales for the required Investment Plans are essential.
- Fewer outcomes can be achieved in rural areas for a given amount of funding when compared to urban. That must be acknowledged from the outset.
- Given the large geographical size of rural District and Unitary authorities, they cover very many separate communities separated by distance. This presents many challenges in programme design and delivery.

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

