

# RURAL LENS REVIEW



## Build Back Better A Government Plan for Growth

Published May 2021



# At a glance



## Rural Services Network's thoughts on a **Build Back Better**:

- Levelling up must be about much more than Capital Projects
- Productivity in rural areas is weaker than elsewhere and government must take action to address this through targeted action in rural areas across sectors.
- Access to skills support/programmes remains a significant issue across rural areas.
- Unless the Infrastructure Challenges across rural areas are urgently addressed that firms will not choose to locate there and grow. Road maintenance across the rural road network has suffered greatly over the last decade or so. Broadband/mobile connectivity needs serious and urgent action - or rural areas will continue to fall further behind.
- The portion of the UKSPF targeted at bespoke employment and skills support tailored to local need needs to be based on delivery at a very local (not regional) level and address rural concerns including access.



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

# CONTENTS

---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 2.0 BUILD BACK BETTER OVERVIEW

## 3.0 REVITALISING RURAL - REALISING THE VISION, RSN CAMPAIGN

## 4.0 KEY PROPOSALS IN BUILD BACK BETTER - RURAL SERVICES NETWORK COMMENTS

Economic Context

Infrastructure

Skills

Innovation

Levelling Up

The Way Ahead

## 5.0 NEXT STEPS

### APPENDICES

#### Extracts from Build Back Better including:

Pillars for growth

Drivers for growth

Why Government has identified each growth area and what they are doing to deliver



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

---

This document is both a briefing note on the main points in the Government's **Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth** paper; as well as a review as seen from a rural perspective.

**Section 2** provides an overview of **Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth** as well as a link to **appendices** providing detailed information on the *Government Pillars for Growth (Infrastructure, Skills and Innovation)* and its supporting themes of *Levelling Up; Support for the Transition to Net Zero and Support for a Vision for Global Britain* and the more detailed statements from the Government on each of those in the form of *Why it is Important; What this Means and What Government is doing*. It also provides links to other **RSN Reviews through a Rural Lens** of what are referred to here as sub-ordinate government plans and strategies which help **underpin Build Back Better**.

**Section 3** details the RSN's relevant Policy Asks (as updated) from its **Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision** campaign launched on 1 March 2021.

**Section 4** highlights some of the **main issues from Build Back Better**, together with some **key points from a rural perspective**. Generally, we do not include in Section 4 issues we have already referenced in the other Rural Lens Reviews referred to and linked to in Section 2. Note the page numbers referred to in section 4 relate to specific pages in the [Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth](#) paper published by HM Treasury.

**Section 5** details the Government's proposed **next steps for Build Back Better** and associated timeframe.

And finally, **appendices** providing direct extracts from the Government's Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth focusing in detail on the three pillars for growth and Government's rationale for choosing them.



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

## SECTION 2: BUILD BACK BETTER - AN OVERVIEW

---

The Government's document **Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth** [click here to view in full](#) is set out in the following Chapters:

- Foreword
- Plan for Growth at a Glance
- Chapter 1 Economic Context
- Chapter 2 Infrastructure
- Chapter 3 Skills
- Chapter 4 Innovation
- Chapter 5 Levelling Up
- Chapter 6 Net Zero
- Chapter 7 Global Britain
- Chapter 8 The Way Ahead
- Annex Opportunities for Growth from EU exit

The Government states its plan to Build Back Better takes a **transformational approach, tackling long-term problems** to deliver growth that **creates high-quality jobs across the UK** and makes the most of the **strengths of the Union**.

Build Back Better focuses on **three core pillars for growth**:

- Infrastructure
- Skills
- Innovation

With three further **drivers for growth**:

- Levelling up the whole of the UK
- Supporting the transition to Net Zero
- Supporting the vision of a Global Britain

[Click here to read more on each of these pillars and drivers and why they are important to the Government.](#)



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

At the **RSN we will be closely monitoring Build Back Better** as it moves forward and as further detail starts to emerge. We will make representations where necessary – this in line with our Revitalising Rural – Realising the Vision ambitions which we will be keeping current and amending where necessary in the light of government policy documents of one kind or another.

In practice **Build Back Better is an overarching high-level statement of policy intentions rather than a strategy** from which the direct implementation will flow. There is therefore little (if anything) which is specifically rural.

The next level of detail to implement the policy intentions of **Build Back Better** can be found in sub-ordinate plans and strategies. Several of these have already been published and the RSN has already produced analysis and commentary on the issues **Through a Rural Lens**. These Rural Lens Reviews can be accessed by following the links below:

- [Plan for Jobs](#)
- [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#)
- [10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#)
- [National Infrastructure Strategy](#)
- [Spending Review 2020](#)
- [Place Based Funds:](#)
  - Towns Fund
  - Community Renewal Fund
  - Welcome Back Fund
  - Levelling Up Fund
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund

In addition, we have, in partnership with Britain's Leading Edge, English Rural Housing Association and CPRE, researched and made **representations to the Government about the construct and use of the Treasury Green Book from a rural perspective**. [To read more on our thoughts Towards a greener Green Book process click here.](#)

We have commissioned research from a rural perspective into the methodologies etc. underpinning the Place Based Funds referred to above which we anticipate publishing in June 2021.



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

**Build Back Better is described as taking over from the Industrial Strategy.** Therefore, **gone are** the Industrial Strategy's words around - '**Grand Challenges**' of Artificial Intelligence and Data; An Ageing Society; The Future of Mobility and Clean Growth. **Also gone** are that Strategy's words around **Five Foundations of Productivity** of People; Infrastructure; Business Environment; Places and Ideas. **Instead, we have three 'Core Pillars of Growth' being Infrastructure;** Skills and Innovation with supporting themes of Levelling up the Whole of the UK; Support the Transition to Net Zero and Support Our Vision for Global Britain. The future roles, if any, of Local Industrial Strategies and, indeed, Local Enterprise Partnerships themselves are uncertain at this time.

Inevitably there are many aspects across Build Back Better and the sub-ordinate plans and strategies referred to above where the '**devil will be in the detail**' and that detail will need to be available before we can see how the proposals and their delivery will play out in rural areas. **We are left wondering how much of the funding/opportunities will really come into rural areas and benefit rural communities and by when?**



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

## SECTION 3: REVITALISING RURAL: REALISING THE VISION – A RSN CAMPAIGN

In our [Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision](#) campaign our policy asks in respect of the issues specifically or generally related to those covered by the Government’s Build Back Better Plan for Growth are set out below over several tables. That said, the whole thrust of the Revitalising Rural campaign is that urgent action is needed across all of the issues covered in its 14 Chapters which are interconnected and directly, or indirectly, relate to rural economies and the well-being of rural communities. Issues not detailed in the Asks below are nevertheless relevant to overall economic growth – for instance, Rural Planning and the links between health and well-being and productivity.

Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
Rural Fair Funding	Public Sector Funding	Public services should be fairly funded to ensure that additional costs of delivering rural services are recognised and adequately funded to ensure that rural areas are not left behind in levelling up England.
Rural Fair Funding	Recognising Rural Need	Government should take full account of the needs of rural areas, their economies, and their communities and that the impacts of any measures flowing from it are both proportionate to rural areas and properly rural proofed.
Rural Digital Connectivity	Broadband USO	The Government should urgently direct the industry regulator, Ofcom, to review and upgrade the broadband Universal Service Obligation, which (at 10 Mbps) is out-of-date and inadequate for, what have become, some everyday essential uses. To reflect the new normal the USO should be upgraded to superfast broadband download speeds of 25 to 30 Mbps minimum. Costs passed on to consumers seeking a USO connection must be reasonable. This would level the playing field for rural residents and businesses until gigabit-capable connectivity can be rolled out.
Rural Digital Connectivity	Gigabit-capable connectivity	The Government goal for universal gigabit-capable networks, achieved with public investment to ensure their roll out in unviable rural areas, is welcome. However, announcements in late 2020 that 15% of premises will be excluded from the 2025 target and that firm public funding for that period is reduced from £5 billion to £1.2 billion are hugely disappointing. Published procurement plans make clear that it is premises in highly rural or remoter areas which could again be left behind. This effectively abandons the outside-in approach which originally set out by Government in 2018. Government should work urgently with the telecoms industry to resolve any capacity issues and to bring forward the remainder of the £5 billion investment into the period to 2025. Digital connectivity will be key to levelling-up rural areas and their economies. All rural areas need a clear timetable for when they will receive gigabit-capable connectivity and remote areas with the worst connectivity should be first in line for that public investment.



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)



Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
Rural Digital Connectivity	Mobile networks	The Shared Rural Network initiative, to plug gaps in 4G provision, is helpful, if not a total solution. Delivery of this initiative must be carefully and transparently monitored by Ofcom, to ensure that network providers are on track to meet their objectives and targets. Options should also be explored to address any remaining mobile 'not spots' by 2025. Government should announce some further rural trials to pilot 5G connectivity within health and social care provision.
Rural Digital Connectivity	Digital skills and inclusion	Government should announce a fully funded Digital Inclusion Programme, so no citizens (rural or otherwise) are left behind due to their lack of online skills or their inability to pay for basic equipment and connection charges. Key strands are likely to include training and the recycling of IT. As recently highlighted by the Communications Consumer Panel, the Covid-19 experience has brought home just how important this issue now is, with some left isolated and struggling to access basic services, such as shopping, banking, education and health care. Although it will require national resource, this should be a locally delivered programme, involving statutory, private and voluntary sector organisations working in partnership.
Rural Economies	Levelling up	The new Levelling Up Fund, due to commence in 2021/22, needs clear criteria setting to determine eligible areas and these should take account of rural needs. It should fund small as well as large projects and should take a broad definition of infrastructure, which includes investment to support improved local government service provision.
Rural Economies	Local Enterprise Partnerships	every LEP whose area includes rural places (even if these are not many) should have a rural representative or champion sitting on its Board. To harness input from a wider range of rural interests, all such LEPs should also have an advisory rural sub-group or equivalent that helps shape their strategies and programmes. The End of Year reports from LEPs should include information monitoring and publicly presenting their activities and outputs in rural areas
Rural Economies	Local Industrial Strategies	LIS documents now need some repurposing so that a key element becomes supporting the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions. Every LEP whose area includes rural places should demonstrate that it has rural proofed its LIS document to take proper account of rural needs and to allocate a fair share of resources. Those LIS strategies must look to support smaller-scale projects, suited to rural areas, and must not simply focus on large infrastructure projects in or around big urban centres.
Rural Economies	Growth and Diversification	LEPs should consider creating small-scale Local Growth Hubs at a market town level where their economic needs are more acute. More generally, LEPs should support the diversification of rural economies, especially into growth sectors such as creative, digital and green energy. This would tap into their growth potential and create good quality jobs.
Rural Economies	Fund Timing	It is disappointing that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will not commence properly until 2022, leaving a gap after EU funds cease. However, it is now essential that pilots for the fund, due to run in 2021/22, include some rural areas. This will enable rural lessons to be learnt in time to inform the full roll out of the fund.



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
Rural Economies	<b>Covid-19 Support</b>	The Government Plan for Jobs 2020 includes welcome measures to help businesses survive and retain staff, though some of its measures could be more nuanced to better support rural business needs. Many small businesses lack the capacity to withstand a long period of financial hardship and many consumer-facing businesses are greatly impacted by social distancing limitations. Lockdown measures should be withdrawn gradually and taking account of different sectoral needs.
Rural Economies	<b>Targeting Rural Growth Potential</b>	Growth Hubs must ensure that they reach rural based businesses with their advice and guidance, including the self-employed, micro-businesses and social or community enterprises. Their performance metric should not simply be the number of rural businesses supported, but what different that support makes. They should consider having dedicated rural business support officers, who operate locally and have access to a wider network of specialist providers or advisers.
Rural Economies	<b>Specialist Support Organisations</b>	Government should make grant funding pots available to the Plunkett Foundation and Locality, to help them provide specialist advice and guidance to social and community enterprises, many of them in rural locations and delivering valuable local services (such as community-run shops) to rural communities.
Rural Economies	<b>Exploiting Digital Connectivity</b>	Advice and guidance should be widely available so that rural businesses can make better use of digital connectivity. This could help them take advantage of new opportunities and reach new markets. Advice could boost their digital skills, build their online presence, develop online selling, and ensure their online security. This must be backed up by actions to improve rural connectivity.
Rural Economies	<b>Dedicated Rural Funding</b>	Government should create a dedicated rural funding stream of a proportionate size within the overall UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with resources which are ring fenced for use on rural support. This approach will ensure that rural businesses and economies can benefit from the Fund in a way that is fair. It will also enable specific tailoring of that funding to be effective in meeting rural circumstances and needs. The lesson from the past is that without a dedicated rural funding stream larger urban projects are likely to scoop the pot.
Rural Economies	<b>Funding Level and Targeting</b>	Government should commit to matching or exceeding the level of resources that rural areas of England formally received under EU programmes (through ERDF and ESF funds, as well as from rural-specific LEADER and EAFRD funds). Any attempt to allocate funding in rural areas must take account of the scattered nature of their needs and should avoid applying urban spatial targeting approaches (such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation). A low productivity measure may be more appropriate.

Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
Rural Economies	Programme Design	A dedicated rural funding stream should retain the better features of the LEADER approach, which used a locally-led 'bottom-up' economic development approach to ensure that local priorities are addressed and suitable projects are brought forward. To ensure that varied priorities and needs across rural England can be met the funding stream should be flexible in its design. It should be capable of supporting start-up business and existing businesses with growth potential, and it should be open to social and community enterprise.
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	Plan for Jobs	Measures that are being introduced under the Plan for Jobs, whilst broadly welcome, need to be designed more carefully and flexibly so they take account of rural circumstances and are accessible to rural clients.
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	Further Education	For rural young people three linked issues need addressing – travel options to access FE, the cost of that travel and the choice of institutions/courses available. Students aged 17 or 18 should be entitled to statutory free travel to FE colleges or schools, matching the existing scheme for those aged up to 16. This scheme should be fully funded by central Government.
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	Careers Advice	The Government's Careers Strategy has gone some way to improving the advice on offer to pupils. Young people in rural areas need local access to impartial and high-quality careers information and guidance, to help them understand all post-16 opportunities. This will help to raise ambitions and better enable young people to navigate career pathways, so they can acquire the right skills. One challenge is ensuring that careers advisers understand opportunities within the land-based sector.
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	Skills Advisory Panels	These Panels need to recruit businesspeople who have knowledge or experience across a range of sectors and who understand the current skills policy framework. This should include representatives with experience of rural business needs. Their advice to Local Enterprise Partnerships needs to assess and highlight any specific skill needs of rural based businesses. It should support rural objectives within Local Industrial Strategies.
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	Access to training	With no centrally funded adult education budget, some colleges and training providers have been opting out of training provision for that population group. The proposed Lifetime Skills Guarantee should help. Government needs to show how it can financially support provision. It is important that courses are accessible to rural based businesses and their staff. Solutions could include providing outreach sessions at hub locations in market towns and making more training content available online, with rural connectivity a prerequisite.

Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
Rural Further Education, Training and Skills	<b>Plan for Jobs</b>	Measures that are being introduced under the Plan for Jobs, whilst broadly welcome, need to be designed more carefully and flexibly so that they take account of rural circumstances and are accessible to rural clients.
Rural Town Centres and High Streets	<b>Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund</b>	Government should support rural place-making by reviewing and expanding its Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund, so additional places can benefit. The criteria for and flexibility of these Funds should be reviewed to make it easier for small rural town centres to succeed. The funds currently favour larger towns and largely overlook rural needs.
Decarbonising Rural Communities	<b>Economic Growth Programmes</b>	All such programmes should include explicit objectives to support low carbon and net zero growth. Specialist advice and related grant funding should be made available for existing rural businesses to help them reduce their carbon footprint. Government should use its Covid-19 recovery package, <i>A Plan for Jobs 2020</i> , to improve energy efficiency in rural homes, especially off the mains gas grid. This would make them greener and easier to heat, whilst supporting green jobs for tradespeople in rural areas.
Decarbonising Rural Communities	<b>Housing and renewables:</b>	Housebuilders, homeowners and landlords should be incentivised to install or adopt renewable or low carbon energy technologies, which would also help address rural fuel poverty. The target recently set for installing heat pumps is useful, but that technology will not suit some properties, not least many older and hard-to-decarbonise homes in off-grid rural areas which the Government has indicated are a priority. The approach for retrofitting existing homes, including eligibility to access the Homes Upgrade Grant, therefore needs to include other options such as biofuels and heat networks.
Decarbonising Rural Communities	<b>Housing energy efficiency</b>	For maximum effect, the switch to renewables should happen in conjunction with making homes more energy efficient. The technology for housing development to Passivhaus standards exists, but the financial model needs development, not least in rural areas where development sites tend to be small and have fewer economies of scale. Some pilot exemplar rural schemes should be supported to test feasibility and improve viability of the approach, paving the way for commercial provision to such standards in future.
Decarbonising Rural Communities	<b>Electric vehicle charging</b>	The funding recently announced by Government to make quicker progress with rolling out rapid charging infrastructure is welcome. It must, however, be used to improve the network of public charging points across rural areas (including those areas distant from motorways or trunk roads). Drivers in rural areas are more likely to travel further and gaps in the network are a practical constraint given typical ranges of e-vehicles.

Chapter	Title of Ask	Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision at 1 May 2021
<b>Decarbonising Rural Communities</b>	<b>Rural buses</b>	Introducing buses using electric battery or hydrogen fuel cell technologies involves significant investment, both in new vehicles and depot fuelling facilities. This may be hard to justify in rural areas unless bus service patronage grows. Current electric buses also have a limited range that will be inadequate for some rural routes. A comprehensive review is needed of the electric grid and, where appropriate, hydrogen supply to avoid punitive upgrade costs arising in rural areas.
<b>Decarbonising Rural Communities</b>	<b>Electricity network capacity</b>	The path towards net zero will significantly boost demand for electricity, not least to heat homes and charge cars. Government and energy industry must ensure that electricity distribution networks, sub-stations and connections are made fit-for-purpose. This will be particularly relevant in rural areas, where infrastructure is often less robust.
<b>Decarbonising Rural Communities</b>	<b>Local Energy Networks</b>	Government should provide gap funding to kick start the development of decentralised energy networks in rural areas, where they typically face higher costs due to serving low population and housing densities. This would support the growth of networks that are based on local renewable production or combined heat and power technologies. These could also help retain money within local rural economies and support local jobs.
<b>Decarbonising Rural Communities</b>	<b>Local Services</b>	it should not be overlooked that one of the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions in rural areas is to retain and, where possible, grow locally based services, such as food shops, post offices, schools, GP surgeries and transport networks. Equally, that providing good digital connectivity will reduce the need for rural residents to travel and enable home working. Policies for public transport, digital, land use planning, community action, education and health all have a part to play.
<b>Parish Councils and Rural Community Action</b>	<b>Access to Cash</b>	Despite the rapid recent growth in cashless payments, rural people need to have free and local access to cash to go about their lives. Lack of free access to cash can impact disproportionately on certain groups. Many rural businesses are also much more reliant on cash transactions than those in other areas. Whilst proposals to allow businesses to offer 'non-purchase cash-back' are welcome they will not provide 24/7 access to cash in rural areas. Government along with bodies that oversee and manage the financial payments system should urgently consider measures to support this. That may require changes to the way that the free-to-use ATM network is financed to better support less-used rural cash machines.

## SECTION 4: KEY PROPOSALS IN THE BUILD BACK BETTER STRATEGY - RSN COMMENTS

PAGE	TEXT TAKEN FROM BUILD BACK BETTER: OUR PLAN FOR GROWTH	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC CONTEXT</b>	
15	<i>We will carry this out with a relentless focus on delivery, using clear metrics to monitor progress and ensure success.</i>	<p>The metrics and just as importantly the objectives must be at a sufficiently fine grain of detail to see the issues from a rural perspective. For instance, using net household income as the income indicator misses the fact that income earned in the rural economy is substantially less than the nation – or regional averages.</p> <p>The work RSN has commissioned into the methodologies etc. underpinning the Place Based Funds to be published in June 2021 will add more detail to our thinking.</p> <p>On 4 May 2021 the Government announced that it would publish a ‘Levelling Up White Paper’ later this year. The announcement states that the White paper “focus on challenges including improving living standards, growing the private sector and increasing and spreading opportunity.” Publication of the metrics to be used must be published alongside this White Paper.</p>
20	<p><i>The 2017 Industrial Strategy set out a cross- economy approach to boost productivity. But much has changed since 2017, so it is right that we create a new framework for how we will build back better. This document details our focus on infrastructure, skills and innovation.</i></p> <p><i>This plan also demonstrates that we will not pursue growth at the expense of the government's wider objectives - instead we see real opportunities to boost our economic performance while levelling up across the UK and in a way that contributes to reaching net zero emissions.</i></p>	<p>Levelling up must be about much more than Capital Projects. The statement of 4<sup>th</sup> May referred to above infers that the government accepts by referring to improving living standards – but this is open to interpretation and the RSN will have to review the detail in White Paper once published.</p> <p><a href="#">The RSN Rural Lens Review of Place Based Funds is relevant here click to view.</a></p>
	<b>Creating an Environment that Enables the UK to Succeed</b>	
21	<i>Economic growth is driven by increasing employment and productivity. The UK must return to growing employment and take action to address weak productivity in order to secure a sustainable increase in growth.</i>	Productivity in rural areas is weaker than elsewhere and government must take action to address this through targeted action in rural areas across sectors.



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>Creating an Environment that Enables the UK to Succeed continued</b>	
22	<i>In the long run, productivity gains are the fundamental source of improvements in prosperity. Productivity is closely linked to incomes and living standards and supports employment. Improvements in productivity free up money to invest in jobs and support our ability to spend on public services.</i>	Re-enforces the need for specific rural actions and support
	<b>Long Term Investment in the Country's Human and Physical Capital to Increase Productivity</b>	
22	<i>This means investing in people's skills, the knowledge and capital within businesses, and the economic infrastructure that is the backbone of the economy, such as roads and broadband.</i>	Access to skills support/programmes remains a significant issue across rural areas. Road maintenance across the rural road network has suffered greatly over the last decade or so. Broadband/mobile connectivity needs serious and urgent action - or rural areas will continue to fall further behind.
24	<i>Within the UK itself, there are large disparities both across and within nations and regions, with only London and the South East with productivity above the UK average – this has implications for the relative prosperity of people living outside of those regions. Our commitment to Levelling Up means tackling these disparities, which are some of the widest of any advanced economy and have been getting wider over time. In 1998, London accounted for 20% of UK GVA, but by 2018 this had risen to 24%. Important explanations for these differences are the distribution of skills between regions, and cities outside London not fully capturing the benefits of their size.</i>	Not just nations and regions but also within regions as the RSN (and others) commissioned work on reviewing the Treasury's Green Book from a rural perspective has shown.  <a href="#">The RSN Rural Lens Review of the National Infrastructure Strategy is relevant here, click to view.</a>
	<b>Building on the Pillars of Growth</b>	
27	<i>Levelling Up: the UK government's most important mission is to unite and level up the country, improving everyday life for communities throughout the UK and ensuring everyone can succeed regardless of where they live. We will tackle geographic disparities in key services and outcomes, like health, education, and jobs; we will support struggling towns, so they see social, economic and cultural regeneration;</i>	How and when will we see this impacting beneficially in rural areas? The promised Levelling Up White Paper should provide more detail. The statement about ensuring everyone can succeed regardless of where they live is a key policy intention for rural areas.



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)





PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 3 SKILLS</b>	
44	<i>Creating opportunities to improve the skills of people in all regions is critical to the future success of the country and ensuring a strong recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for young people who have lost out on precious learning and employment opportunities. Improving our skills is also central to levelling up opportunity as differences in skill levels provide a key part of the explanation for differing output and wages across regions.</i>	<p>Again, the issues referred to here are not just about regions but also within regions.</p> <p>Access to post 16 training, educations skills and re-skilling opportunities is a major factor in the rural context.</p>
47	<p><i>To ensure that skills provision is aligned to employer needs, the UK Government has published Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth which sets out how we will reform further education in England so it supports people to develop the skills throughout their lives, wherever they live in the country. This reform will be delivered by putting employers at the heart of our skills system, supporting excellent teaching in further education, and reforming funding and accountability to ensure a focus on the needs of local labour markets, enabling flexible employer-led provision, and reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.</i></p> <p><i>Recognising the vital role of training and retraining over the course of an adult's lifetime, and as the Prime Minister set out in his speech in September 2020, the UK Government will help people get the skills they need at every stage in their lives through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.</i></p> <p><i>These reforms are backed by significant investment in adult skills. The UK Government has committed to a new £2.5 billion National Skills Fund over the course of this Parliament to improve the technical skills of adults in England. The UK Government will also introduce the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to help to level up and create opportunity across the UK for people and places. A portion of the UKSPF will be targeted at bespoke employment and skills support tailored to local need.</i></p>	<p>The RSN's Rural Lens Reviews of the Plan for Jobs and Skills for Life White Paper are relevant here. Also see the Revitalising Rural Policy Asks on Further Education, Training and Skills</p> <p>The needs of SME's and rural businesses generally must be reflected in all proposals.</p> <p>The structure of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is massively important.</p> <p>The portion of the UKSPF targeted at bespoke employment and skills support tailored to local need needs to be based on delivery at a very local (not regional) level and address rural concerns including access.</p>

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
48	<p><i>Building on the measures the Government announced at Spending Review 2020 to improve the apprenticeship system for employers, the Budget outlines a £7 million fund from July 2021 to help employers in England set up and expand portable apprenticeships. This will enable people who need to work across multiple projects with different employers to benefit from the high-quality long-term training that doing an apprenticeship provides. Employers themselves will also benefit from access to a diverse apprenticeship talent pipeline.</i></p>	<p>Because of the nature and size of businesses in rural areas there are much fewer apprenticeship opportunities available. Government needs to create a specific rural stand to its apprenticeship proposals</p>
<b>CHAPTER 4: INNOVATION</b>		
<b>Encouraging the Adoption and Diffusion of Innovative Ideas and Technologies Across the Economy</b>		
64	<p><i>At Budget 2021 we are announcing a new UK-wide management programme to upskill 30,000 SMEs in the UK over three years. Developed in partnership with industry, the programme will combine a national curriculum delivered through business schools with practical case studies and mentoring from experienced business professionals, equipping SMEs with the tools to grow their businesses and thrive. Improved SME management is strongly correlated with tech adoption.</i></p> <p><i>We are also announcing Help to Grow: Digital, a new scheme to help 100,000 SMEs save time and money by adopting productivity-enhancing software, transforming the way they do business. Launching later this year, Help to Grow: Digital will combine a voucher covering up to half of the costs of preapproved solutions up to a maximum of £5,000, and free impartial advice delivered through an online platform.</i></p>	<p>Small businesses are especially important in rural economies. Measuring those people who are employed in registered business units, 83% of them in rural areas work for a SME. Indeed, 31% of them work for a micro-business.</p> <p>It will be interesting to see how the programme to upskill 30,000 SMEs in the UK over 3 years and the Help to Grow Digital applies to rural areas and the impact it has.</p> <p>The Schemes relies on sufficient upload and download speeds being available – see the RSN’s Rural Lens Review of the National Infrastructure Strategy and the Revitalising Rural Policy Asks relating to Rural Digital Connectivity and Skills.</p>



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 5: LEVELLING UP</b>	
69	<i>Place matters. Many people are rooted to their local area because of its civic identity and their social and family connections: over 40% of workers have only ever worked in the same local area as they were born. But there are parts of the country where people feel left- behind, that they are not getting fair access to jobs, wages and skills opportunities, and that their local priorities are not being delivered on by government.</i>	People, businesses and communities across rural areas have for decades felt overlooked and left behind.
70	<i>Levelling up is about improving everyday life for people in those places. It is about ensuring people can be proud of their local community, rather than feeling as though they need to leave it in order to reach their potential. This is why the UK Government’s most important mission is to unite and level up the country. We want to improve everyday life for communities throughout the UK. Where people live should not be a barrier to their life chances.</i>	Fair funding for rural public services must be addressed as a basic building block in seeking to achieve this objective. This needs immediate long- lasting resolution – including in respect of social care costs.
71	<i>We will tackle geographical disparities in key services and outcomes across the UK: improving health, education, skills, increasing jobs and growth, building stronger and safer communities and improving infrastructure and connectivity. We will focus on boosting regional productivity where it is lagging to improve job opportunities and wages.</i>	Again, we make the point that inter regional disparities are important not just regional differences.
71	<i>Our city regions are critical for driving economic growth and long-term prosperity. We want to achieve dynamic regional economies with high-value centres of excellence. The success of these are vital to the success of the wider region, including increasing the opportunities available for the towns and communities surrounding these cities. Some communities and towns are struggling, from ex-industrial areas to coastal communities. By improving access to services and the outcomes that matter most for life- chances, they will see social, economic and cultural regeneration.</i>	No mention of rural areas which do not surround cities.  Again, no mention of rural areas.

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 5: LEVELLING UP CONTINUED</b>	
71	<p><i>Fundamentally, we are pursuing a new economic approach. We will: unleash the potential of our great cities, ensuring they drive growth in every region and nation in the UK;</i></p> <p><i>invest in public services – the NHS, schools and colleges – to make them high quality everywhere in the country;</i></p> <p><i>invest in towns across the UK, connecting people and places to high quality jobs, driving private sector investment, and creating places where people feel secure and feel proud to live.</i></p> <p><i>All the themes in our plan for growth play a role in supporting our overarching mission to level up and unite the country.</i></p>	Towns in rural areas, often with populations less than 5,000 serve as service and employment hubs for their rural hinterlands in the same way as larger towns. Their needs are being completely overlooked – including through the Towns Fund.
	<b>Supporting Individuals Across the Country to Reach their Full Potential</b>	
72	<p><i>The most important pillar in our approach to levelling up is supporting individuals across the UK to reach their potential, investing in people in every place and region.</i></p> <p><i>Differences in levels of ‘human capital’ between places and regions, i.e., education, skills, health, are an important explainer of differences in regional outcomes. Research finds that up to 90% of area-level disparities in wages can be explained by the distribution of high-skilled workers. 50% of the population in London have graduate-level qualifications, compared to 33% of the population in the North East of England. But more than this, people’s experience with health and education determine life-chances, wellbeing and social connection. In some places outcomes are poor, and this undermines belief that government can deliver for a community. We will strengthen these vital public services to address disparities in life-chances driven by key public services like health, education and skills. Some of the main themes of this investment are set out throughout this document.</i></p>	The RSN comments to several of the issues referred to above have addressed these generalised statements.

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 5: LEVELLING UP CONTINUED</b>	
72	<i>Regenerating struggling towns People across the UK have lost out from structural economic changes simply because of where they live. Our approach to tackling disadvantage in these struggling towns focuses on a three-pronged approach to support the regeneration of struggling towns, underpinned by world-class public services to drive improved outcomes to improve life-chances and deliver on our vision for every town across the UK to be safe, healthy and prosperous.</i>	See earlier comments regarding small rural towns.
72	<i>First, the UK Government is focusing on supporting individuals in struggling towns to have the best possible life-chances by improving outcomes in education, skills, health, and participation in the workforce. Public services in these places often face more challenges than elsewhere and addressing these requires additional intervention to ensure they can best serve the needs of the community. We will use the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to target particular challenges facing individuals and communities in struggling towns across the UK, in collaboration with local authorities, and in a way that empowers local areas and strengthens local public services.</i>	See earlier comments.
73	<i>Second, we are delivering a step-change in how we support struggling towns by working in partnership with local institutions to invest in local priorities to support the local economy and improve quality of life, showing that government can deliver on local priorities such as improving local infrastructure, driving up the supply of housing where it is needed, and crime reduction. The £4.8 billion UK- wide Levelling Up Fund, will enable places to plan for their future. The Levelling Up Fund consolidates local growth funding streams, reducing the burden on places and breaking down siloes between UK Government departments.</i>	<a href="#">Click here to see RSN Rural Lens Review of Place Based Funds</a>



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 5: LEVELLING UP CONTINUED</b>	
73	<i>The prospectus for the Levelling Up Fund published alongside the Budget sets out how local areas across the UK can apply for funding to invest in local infrastructure priorities, with bids prioritised from places most in need of investment. Through the Towns Fund, we are also supporting the regeneration of towns across England. At Budget 2021, we are announcing 44 new Town Deals with towns across the country, investing in local priorities.</i>	
78	<i>Changing the way, we invest in places. Delivering growth for the whole of the UK over the long-term means doing things differently. We recognise that the existing local institutional framework is complex and fragmented. Working in tandem with local communities and businesses, empowered local institutions will help to drive forward change in their areas, setting strategic direction and delivering for places. Local growth policies must be coherent and coordinated to maximise impact.</i>	Only local delivery can fully understand the local context, barriers and opportunities.  Funding allocations must fully reflect the costs of delivering services in a rural context.
	<b>CHAPTER 8: THE WAY AHEAD</b>	
106	<i>We must ensure our plan is carried through with a relentless focus on delivery. To drive this, the Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary have asked Sir Michael Barber to conduct a rapid review of government delivery to ensure that it remains focused, effective and efficient, and to suggest how it could be strengthened.  This review builds on reforms to the government's planning and performance framework already underway that aim to embed a new focus on the delivery of outcomes. As part of implementing the Public Value Framework (PVF), the UK Government published provisional priority outcomes and metrics for UK government departments alongside SR20.</i>	The framework must be rural proofed.

PAGE	SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL	RSN COMMENTS
	<b>CHAPTER 8: THE WAY AHEAD</b>	
106	<p><i>These outcomes capture the government’s long-term policy objectives, including the people’s priorities of levelling-up, net zero and global Britain. This plan details how the UK Government will deliver them through economic growth.</i></p> <p><i>These outcomes are now being embedded by departments into Outcome Delivery Plans, which will set out strategy and planning information for delivering the priority outcomes and for delivering on strategic “enabling” activities that are crucial to successful delivery. A new focused performance reporting system at the centre will provide an ongoing picture of departmental activity, with regular reporting to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury on progress enabling greater shared understanding of performance and early action where delivery is off track. This information will support decisions made at future Spending Reviews, creating a greater link between financial allocations and the delivery of real-world outcomes that matter to citizens.</i></p> <p><i>A new National Economy and Recovery Taskforce (Public Services) committee chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will focus on public - sector recovery and reform.</i></p>	<p>Departmental Outcome Delivery Plans must also be rural proofed.</p> <p>Rural proofing of proposals is essential.</p>

## SECTION 5: NEXT STEPS

The Government says it will act over the coming months, building on its strong foundation to make real progress. Further details will be set out in forthcoming publications, including:

TIMEFRAME	PUBLICATION
In the next three months...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Getting Smarter: Knowledge Assets Implementation Strategy</li> <li>■ Heat and Buildings Strategy</li> <li>■ Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy</li> <li>■ Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North</li> <li>■ Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy</li> <li>■ National Bus Strategy</li> </ul>
In the next six months...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hydrogen Strategy</li> <li>■ Innovation Strategy</li> <li>■ Lifelong Loan Entitlement Consultation</li> <li>■ National Space Strategy</li> <li>■ Research &amp; Development Places Strategy</li> <li>■ Research &amp; Development People and Culture Strategy</li> <li>■ Transport Decarbonisation Plan</li> </ul>
In the next twelve months...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper</li> <li>■ Digital Strategy</li> <li>■ Export Strategy</li> <li>■ Full Conclusion of the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding</li> <li>■ Net Zero Strategy</li> <li>■ Procurement Reform</li> <li>■ Sector Visions</li> <li>■ Union Connectivity Review</li> </ul>



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)



## APPENDICES

The follows tables are extracts directly taken from Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth in which the **Government states:**

Pillar	Government will:
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stimulate short-term economic activity and drive long-term productivity improvements via record investment in broadband, roads, rail and cities, as part of our capital spending plans worth £100 billion next year.</li> <li>■ Connect people to opportunity via the UK-wide Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as well as the Towns Fund and High Street Fund, to invest in local areas.</li> <li>■ Help achieve net zero via £12 billion of funding for projects through the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.</li> <li>■ Support investment through the new UK Infrastructure Bank which will ‘crowd-in’ private investment to accelerate our progress to net zero, helping to level up the UK. This will invest in local authority and private sector infrastructure projects, as well as providing an advisory function to help with the development and delivery of projects.</li> <li>■ Support productivity growth through high-quality skills and training: transforming Further Education through additional investment and reforming technical education to align the post- 16 technical education system with employer demand.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduce the Lifetime Skills Guarantee to enable lifelong learning through free fully funded Level 3 courses, rolling out employer-led skills bootcamps, and introducing the Lifelong Loan Entitlement.</li> <li>■ Continue to focus on the quality of apprenticeships and take steps to improve the apprenticeship system for employers, through enabling the transfer of unspent levy funds and allowing employers to front load apprenticeship training.</li> <li>■ Support and incentivise the development of the creative ideas and technologies that will shape the UK’s future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.</li> <li>■ Support access to finance to help unleash innovation, including through reforms to address disincentives for pension funds to invest in high-growth companies, continued government support for start-ups and scale ups through programmes such as British Patient Capital, and a new £375 million Future Fund: Breakthrough product to address the scale up gap for our most innovative businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop the regulatory system in a way that supports innovation.</li> <li>■ Attract the brightest and best people, boosting growth and driving the international competitiveness of the UK’s high-growth, innovative businesses.</li> <li>■ Support our small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to grow through two new schemes to boost productivity:</li> <li>■ Help to Grow Management, a new management training offer, and Help to Grow: Digital, a new scheme to help 100,000 SMEs save time and money by adopting productivity-enhancing software, transforming the way they do business.</li> </ul>

Source page 13 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Furthermore, the **Government states** not all growth is created equal and the growth it will **drive** will:

<p><b>Level up the whole of the UK</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regenerate struggling towns in all parts of the UK via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the UK-wide Levelling Up Fund.</li> <li>■ Realise our long-term vision for every region and nation to have at least one globally competitive city at its heart to help drive prosperity. This includes City and Growth Deals, £4.2 billion in intra-city transport settlements from 2022-23, and continued Transforming Cities Fund investment to 2022-23.</li> <li>■ Catalyse centres of excellence, supporting individuals across the country to access jobs and opportunities by ensuring digital and transport connectivity, by establishing a new UK Infrastructure Bank in the North of England and by relocating 22,000 Civil Service roles out of London.</li> <li>■ Strengthen the Union, creating Freeports across the country – including in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and delivering the Union Connectivity Review, reviewing options to improve our sea, air and land-links across the four nations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support the transition to Net Zero</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Invest in net zero to create new opportunities for economic growth and jobs across the country, including supporting up to 60,000 jobs in the offshore wind sector, 50,000 jobs in carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) and up to 8,000 in hydrogen in our industrial clusters.</li> <li>■ Grow our current net zero industries and encourage new ones to emerge. This includes working with industry, aiming to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity and capture 10Mt CO<sub>2</sub>/year using CCUS by 2030, and ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support our vision for Global Britain</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cooperate with partners to inspire and shape international action on our domestic priorities, including through our G7 Presidency and COP26.</li> <li>■ Role-model openness to free and fair trade, working internationally to strengthen the multilateral system and the World Trade Organization and using preferential agreements and bilateral trade relationships to directly expand trading opportunities for UK businesses.</li> <li>■ Develop a new export strategy to align our support for exporters with our plan for growth and sectoral priorities, opening UK Government trade hubs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and increasing UK Export Finance lending capacity.</li> </ul>

Source page 14 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



[Access the full Rural Lens series here](#)

[Back to contents](#)

The Government give the following reasons for why the areas of growth they have identified are important and what they are doing on each:

Why it is important	What this means	What Government is doing
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Investing in infrastructure drives long term productivity improvements, and in the short term stimulates economic activity.	A 10% increase in the public capital stock has been linked to a 1-2% increase in GDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Record investment in broadband, flood defences, roads, rail and cities – as part of our capital plans worth £100 billion next year.</li> <li>- Project Speed established to accelerate and improve delivery, delivering impacts by the end of the Parliament.</li> <li>- £4.8 billion invested at Spending Review 2020 for infrastructure, land remediation and land assembly to unlock housing.</li> </ul>
The private sector has a big role alongside the government in increasing investment and improving economic outcomes	Almost half of the UK's future infrastructure pipeline is forecast to be privately financed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new UK Infrastructure Bank to 'crowd-in' investment and boost the pipeline of projects.</li> </ul>
Boosting infrastructure investment in all parts of the country will help connect people to opportunity across the UK and help areas to level up.	People see tangible improvements in their local area, feel more pride in their communities and believe they can succeed wherever they live.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new Levelling Up Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund, Towns Fund and High Street Fund to invest in local areas.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure investment will be central to meeting our net zero objectives.	Over 80% of UK emissions come from infrastructure sectors: power, heat, heavy industry and transport networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £12 billion of funding for projects through the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills</b>		
Skills and training is central to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting people into work. Access to high quality training is vital to levelling up.	Providing individuals affected by the crisis with the opportunity to build the skills they need to boost their job prospects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanding traineeships and improving their quality and progression to apprenticeships; expanding sector-based work academies; incentivising new apprenticeship hires; and boosting the National Careers Service's capacity.</li> </ul>
High quality education and skills training play a vital role in sustaining productivity growth.	Boosting investment in technical education and adult skills, and reforms to better align the skills system with employer demand will support productivity growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investing additional resource and capital funding in Further Education in England.</li> <li>- Reforming technical education, including aligning the post-16 technical education system more closely with employer demand.</li> <li>- Continuing to focus on the quality of apprenticeships and improving the apprenticeship system for employers.</li> </ul>

Source pages 40 and 49 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

Why it is important	What this means	What Government is doing
<b>Skills continued</b>		
80% of the workforce of 2030 are already in work today, and we need to offer them the opportunity to upskill and reskill over their careers to progress and adapt to changes such as automation.	Providing adults with opportunities to upskill and reskill throughout their lifetime in a way that meets their needs (i.e. is flexible and provides line of sight to a job or career progression).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving the apprenticeship system for employers building on the all ages, all levels approach.</li> <li>- Funding for adults without a Level 3 qualification (A levels or equivalent) to take courses in areas that will help boost their job prospects.</li> <li>- Rolling out employer-led skills bootcamps across England for adults to upskill and reskill in a flexible, bitesize way.</li> <li>- From 2025, delivering the Lifelong Loan Entitlement to make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly throughout their lifetime.</li> <li>- In the interim, consulting on the scope and detail of the entitlement - and taking action to stimulate higher technical and modular provision and encourage more frequent credit transfer.</li> <li>- Skills and Employment funding in the new UKSPF programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>		
Innovation is key to economic growth, and firms that consistently invest in R&D are more productive than those which don't.	Innovation is key to technological change, and technological change accounted for 70% of UK productivity growth between 1960-2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £14.6 billion government investment in R&amp;D in 2021-22, boosting existing and emerging R&amp;D strengths across the UK.</li> <li>- £800 million of funding for the Advanced Research &amp; Invention Agency (ARIA), helping to cement the UK's position as a global science superpower.</li> <li>- R&amp;D Places Strategy.</li> <li>- R&amp;D People &amp; Culture Strategy.</li> <li>- Innovation Strategy.</li> </ul>
A regulatory system for an innovative economy needs to accommodate new processes, products and business models, and needs to provide a supportive environment for dynamic entrepreneurial business.	Adapting our regulatory frameworks to maximise advantage of innovation, especially in sectors such as financial services, health, data, agriculture. The government's regulatory approach should unlock cutting edge technologies, be modern and sophisticated, ease burdens and cut red tape, and boost competition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new ambitious regulatory reform programme to boost growth and innovation led by the Better Regulation Committee.</li> </ul>

Source pages 49 and 65 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

Why it is important	What this means	What Government is doing
<b>Innovation continued</b>		
High-growth firms are disproportionately responsible for economic growth.	22% of UK growth since 2015 has come from high growth small businesses. The UK leads Europe on early-stage business investment, but lags behind the US on a proportional basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The British Business Bank is delivering mentoring and funding for innovative businesses starting up and scaling-up.</li> <li>- Committing £375 million to introduce Future Fund: Breakthrough, a new direct co-investment product to support the scale up of the most innovative, R&amp;D-intensive businesses.</li> </ul>
By embracing new technologies and practices, UK businesses can lower costs and become more internationally competitive.	By adopting common technologies, productivity can be improved by 7% to 18%, and ICT adopted with best management practice can improve productivity by 20% compared to 2% with poor practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new SME management training offer, drawing on the very best from industry and our international peers.</li> <li>- Launching later this year, Help to Grow: Digital, a new scheme to help 100,000 SMEs save time and money by adopting productivity enhancing software, transforming the way they do business.</li> </ul>
<b>Levelling Up</b>		
Where people live shouldn't be a barrier to their life chances: everyone should get a fair chance to get on in life, wherever they live.	Economic, social, and cultural regeneration of struggling towns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investing in local priorities across the UK to increase opportunity in struggling communities, through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Community Ownership Fund, The Community Renewal Fund, the Towns Fund.</li> </ul>
We need to address regional economic disparities.	Boosting growth in our regional cities to deliver our long-term vision to have a globally competitive city in every region and nation of the UK and drive-up prosperity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accelerating funding to City and Growth Deals in Scotland and Wales.</li> <li>- £4.2 billion in intra-city transport settlements from 22-23; continued Transforming Cities Fund Investment to 2022-23.</li> <li>- Investing in housing via the National Home Building Fund and Brownfield housing funding.</li> <li>- Delivering Freeports across the country - including in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>
We need to ensure people can access opportunities.	Backing regional centres of industrial excellence. Connecting people to opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Backing HS2, the Union Connectivity Review, and the upcoming Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North.</li> <li>- Making the largest ever investment in motorways and A-roads worth over £27 billion.</li> <li>- Completing the £5 billion UK Gigabit Programme and the Shared Rural Network.</li> <li>- Establishing eight Freeports in England plus at least one in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>
We need to embed lasting change in outcomes across the UK.	Changing the way we deliver for places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relocating 22,000 Civil Servants outside of London and the South East by 2030.</li> <li>- New UK Infrastructure Bank.</li> <li>- Bringing forward the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper</li> </ul>

Source pages 65 and 80 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

Why it is important	What this means	What Government is doing
<b>Net Zero</b>		
The right transition to net zero will present new opportunities for economic growth and job creation across the country and support our levelling up agenda.	A strong sustainable future economy. Up to 250,000 highly skilled green jobs in stable industries of the future. Net zero clusters in our industrial heartlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aiming for 600,000 heat pump installations per year by 2028, creating jobs as we do it.</li> <li>- Supporting up to 60,000 jobs in the offshore wind sector.</li> <li>- Supporting up to 50,000 jobs in CCUS and up to 8,000 in hydrogen in our industrial clusters.</li> <li>- Building net zero ready homes and expanding the 114,000 jobs already in the energy efficiency sector.</li> </ul>
Building on our current net zero strengths will encourage new industries to emerge, growing demand for low carbon goods and services.	£12 billion to support hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, offshore wind, nuclear, electric vehicles, heat and buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Producing enough offshore wind to generate more power than all our homes use today, a target of 40GW offshore by 2030, including 1GW of advanced floating rigs.</li> <li>- Working with industry to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030.</li> <li>- Working with industry to capture 10Mt CO2 /year using CCUS by 2030, installing four CCUS clusters by 2030.</li> <li>- Ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030, accelerating EV charging rollout and unlocking the potential of the growing UK charge point industry.</li> </ul>
The private sector will lead the transition to net zero, within a policy environment designed to support investment and innovation.	The private sector will be responsible for most of the investment required to reach net zero. The Treasury's Net Zero Review is looking at how the UK Government can reduce policy uncertainty to encourage innovation technological development and investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The new UK Emissions Trading Scheme creates a market incentive for the private sector to invest. We have committed to explore expanding the scheme to new sectors.</li> <li>- Developing other levers such as regulation to 'crowd-in' investment.</li> <li>- Introducing the UK Infrastructure Bank to provide financing support and crowd in private capital to help develop and scale net zero infrastructure.</li> <li>- Issuing a Green Gilt and building a green yield curve to build the Green Finance Market.</li> <li>- Providing a common definition for green investment through a Green Taxonomy.</li> <li>- Requiring firms to disclose the climate risks they face through TCFD.</li> <li>- Ensuring financial regulators take climate change and the environment into consideration in exercising their statutory functions.</li> </ul>

Source pages 90 and 91 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)

Why it is important	What this means	What Government is doing
<b>Global Britain</b>		
Free trade provides UK consumers, businesses and investors with access to cheaper, better quality goods and services.	Creates greater choice and competition, improving productivity, creating jobs and freeing up resources for innovation and investment at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transitioned trade agreements with 64 countries, securing existing relationships.</li> <li>- Pipeline of four new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to reach 80% of UK trade coverage aim by end 2022.</li> <li>- A tailored UK tariff policy.</li> <li>- Engage bilaterally to remove market access barriers overseas.</li> </ul>
Openness to inward investment enables the UK to benefit from international capital and knowledge.	Improved productivity and the creation of jobs across the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for global investment by reaffirming the UK Government's commitment to maintaining the strengths that make the UK an attractive location for investment.</li> <li>- New Office for Investment to land high-value opportunities aligned with key government priorities, including high-growth sectors, net zero, infrastructure and R&amp;D.</li> <li>- New National Security and Investment Bill to provide certainty for investors while ensuring mitigation of security risk.</li> </ul>
UK businesses able to seize the opportunities to sell goods and services around the globe.	More productive businesses that are able to compete and succeed internationally, supporting jobs and UK economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a new export strategy to align our support for exporters with our plan for growth and sectoral priorities.</li> <li>- Opening UK Government trade hubs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</li> <li>- Increasing UK Export Finance lending capacity and introducing new products.</li> <li>- Deepening bilateral relationships outside FTAs: e.g. the Swiss Financial Services mutual recognition agreement.</li> <li>- Internationalisation Fund to support exporters.</li> <li>- Promoting the UK via the GREAT Britain and Northern Ireland campaign</li> </ul>

Source pages 101 and 102 of [Build Back Better – Our Plan for Growth](#) published by HM Treasury March 2021



Access the full Rural Lens series here

[Back to contents](#)