

Wellbeing Board

Date	22 nd February 2022
Report title	Levelling Up the United Kingdom. The Levelling Up White Paper, Health and Wellbeing Opportunities
Portfolio Lead	Izzi Seccombe, Wellbeing Portfolio Holder and Chair
Accountable Chief Executive	Laura Shoaf, Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority
Accountable Employees	Stacey Gunther, Health and Wellbeing Programme Manager, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities/WMCA
Report has been considered by	Ed Cox, Director, Inclusive Growth and Public Service Reform Mubasshir Ajaz, Head of Wellbeing and Prevention

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- To consider the opportunities within the Levelling Up White Paper for WMCA, WMCA health and wellbeing priorities and the Wellbeing Board

1. Background

- 1.1 The term Levelling Up was initially introduced pre the Covid-19 pandemic, following this £4 billion was announced via the Levelling Up Fund in the November 2020 spending review, other funding has since been earmarked. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government then evolved to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in September 2021 and on 2nd February 2022, published the Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper¹.
- 1.2 The timeline provides an overview of the development of the Levelling Up White Paper. The funding and Levelling Up White Paper have developed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹ [Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom-white-paper)

2. **Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper overview**

- 2.1 The Levelling Up White Paper is intended to tackle the stark geographical inequality in the UK and focuses on economic between and within area data. It is founded on the principle that to achieve this the programme will need to be broad, deep, and long-term. It provides significant critique of failure of past policies and recognises that the centralised nature of decision-making has hampered past efforts to level up.
- 2.2 The paper defines six 'capitals' that will drive levelling up:
- Physical capital
 - Human capital
 - Intangible capital
 - Financial capital
 - Social capital
 - Institutional capital
- 2.3 The White Paper introduces five mutually reinforcing pillars that are designed to mitigate against issues identified in policy. The five pillars are:
- A mission-oriented approach to setting policy. Twelve missions mapped to four overarching objectives are set out in section 2.6.
 - A reorientation of central government decision making to align policies with the levelling up agenda and hardwire spatial considerations across Whitehall
 - Greater empowerment of local government decision-making by giving leaders and businesses the resources that they need
 - A revolution in data, evaluation, and transparency at the sub national level to make local decision-making better. The Office for National Statistics Subnational Data Strategy aims to improve the UK's subnational data, mapping local economies geographies and helping improve transparency to the public
 - Enhanced transparency and accountability of this new for example creating a duty to publish an annual report which will analyse progress and a new Levelling Up Advisory Council
- 2.4 The paper includes twelve ambitious medium-term missions which aim to provide consistency and clarity over levelling up policy objectives. Their inclusion provides an anchor for policy across government and a catalyst for innovation and action by the private and civil society sectors for example Combined Authorities and Local Government. The missions are deliberately ambitious and will require collaborative work. It is intended that progress will be reviewed annually by the UK Government.
- 2.5 The twelve missions have been aligned to four objectives and are split by focus area:
- Objective 1: Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging. Focus areas are living standards, research and development, transport and infrastructure, digital connectivity.

- Objective 2: Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are the weakest. Focus areas include education, skills, health, and wellbeing.
- Objective 3: Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost. Focus areas include pride in place, housing, and crime.
- Objective 4: Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency. The key focus area within this theme is local leadership.

2.6 The table below details the four objectives and twelve focus areas and missions.

12 Levelling Up Missions	
Focus Area	Mission
<i>Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging</i>	
Living Standards	By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each region containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing
Research and Development (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.
Transport Infrastructure	By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares, and integrated ticketing.
Digital Connectivity	By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population
<i>Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest</i>	
Education	By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increase. 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.
Skills	By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every areas 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.
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.

Well-being	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
<i>Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost</i>	
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.
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 ² .
Crime	By 2030, homicide, serious violent and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.
<i>Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency</i>	
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.

3 WMCA opportunity

- 3.1 The Levelling Up White Paper makes provision for the new framework to extend, deepen and simplify local devolution in England. This creates opportunity for every part of England to have some form of Mayoral Combined Authority if desired.
- 3.2 WMCA has been identified to be at the forefront of devolution and a model for other Mayoral Combined. WMCA is recognised as a trailblazer and is able to negotiate deeper devolution deal alongside Greater Manchester Combined Authority. These devolution deals will act as a blueprint for other Mayoral Combined Authorities.
- 3.3 Many of WMCA's devolution asks have not been addressed in the twelve missions detailed in 2.6 above. The opportunity presented as a trailblazer Combined Authority means that WMCA can now enter a process of negotiation for new areas of responsibility.
- 3.4 The White Paper details multiple spending and policy commitments. Many have already been announced as part of the comprehensive spending review, however, the white paper provides further detail. Many of the headline commitments link to the health and wellbeing agenda via the wider determinants of health. There are several notable additions of direct relevance to WMCA, the opportunities around smart city regions and health devolution.

² Government will consult on the impact on the private rented market and particularly those on the lowest incomes. Further detail will be set out once the review of the Decent Homes Standard has concluded.

3.4.1 Smart City Region

The creation of a special purpose vehicle (SPV) that brings together the public sector, a range of private sector players and the region's leading research institutions. The SPV will be led by the Mayor. The Government welcomes the innovative partnership approach being taken by WMCA and will provide the necessary financial pump prime funding to support the proposal as part of the deeper devolution deal process. This programme will be developed by partners across the region for discussion through the Deepening Devolution Process to draw together digital opportunities across:

- Scaling-up health tech, future mobility, and smart energy programmes
- Practical business support for digital start-ups and a supply of patient venture capital to attract global innovators.

3.4.2 Health

There is opportunity to explore more health duties for Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) to improve the health of their residents. Such an opportunity could enable health to be proactively considered as part of key strategies and investments. However, we need to clarify what this opportunity or health responsibility will look like, will depend on the local and regional health care system and its interactions with the relevant MCA.

4. Opportunities for health and wellbeing

4.1 The Levelling Up White Paper brings significant opportunity for public health across the WMCA region. The inclusion of missions both directly and indirectly related to the improvement of health are extremely positive for the region. The notable commitments to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce inequality in healthy life expectancy as well as to improve wellbeing are key and chime with local strategy and the WMCA Wellbeing Priorities.

4.2 Within each mission there are policies identified, it is worth noting that the policies included are not necessarily new policies.

4.2.1 For mission 7, Health, the policies identified are:

- Adding to the core health manifesto by upgrading hospital buildings, improved access to GP appointments and preventing up to 150,000 cases of cardiovascular disease a year
- Public Health Grant to be maintained in real terms, as of the 2021 spending review
- Implementation of Long-Term Plan, including social prescribing, with the intention to refer 900,000 people by 2023-24
- Implementation of Drugs Strategy
- White Paper on Health Disparities due 2022
- Tobacco Control Plan for England due 2022
- Better Health: Rewards Piloting a health incentives scheme in Wolverhampton.
- Improving inequalities in screening uptake
- Considering the future of the NHS Health Check programme, and strengthening the prevention offer within the NHS Health Check programme

- Food Strategy White Paper (forthcoming) – to include implementing recommendations from Henry Dimbleby review – including pilot with local authorities on school food standards, cooking education in schools, ‘Community Eatwell programme’ – pilot where GPs can prescribe fruit/vegetable, food education/social support
- 100 Community Diagnostic Centres to be established in England by 2025, most outside of London/South East. Leading to an additional eight million tests each year, and providing 23,000 years of improved quality of life

4.3 For mission 8, Wellbeing, the policies are still to be defined, the Disparities White Paper, due to be published later in 2022, is expected to provide further clarity for this mission. It is understood that the White Paper will focus on prevention of disparities by ethnicity, socioeconomic background and geography.

4.4 The other missions all contain challenges and policies that contribute to the wider determinants of health with policy suggestions across transport, housing, and crime. For example:

- Mission 3, Transport Infrastructure:
 - Bus/active travel funding (pre-existing, including City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement of £1.05bn to WMCA)
- Mission 10, Housing:
 - £1.8bn for brownfield/infrastructure for up to 160,000 homes (SR21), with most outside London/South East.
 - Affordable Homes Programme – up to 180,000 affordable homes – 3/4 outside London.
 - Homes England to have ‘wider role in supporting mayors and local authorities to realise their ambitions for new affordable housing and regeneration in their areas’ Homelessness - £2bn (already committed) – commitment to end rough sleeping. Work on the ‘root causes’ of homelessness
- Mission 11 crime:
 - Drugs Strategy, published in December 2021 to deliver on key recommendations from the Dame Carol Black review

4.5 The commitment to drive health research investment from London, Oxford and Cambridge is outlined in mission 2 and will be positive for the WMCE region:

- Mission 2, Research and Development:
 - Driving investment from the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) outside of London, Oxford and Cambridge and increasing patient recruitment in underserved communities.

4.6 Alongside the missions detailed above it is of note that Integrated Care Systems also make an important contribution to local social and economic development within the wider context of the Levelling up White Paper.

5. Opportunities for WMCA Wellbeing and Prevention Team and the Wellbeing Board

- 5.1 The WMCA Wellbeing and Prevention Team have built strong foundations by working to create narrative, unlocking opportunity within existing devolved responsibilities across the wider determinants of health to create a platform for a coherent regional health inequalities voice.
- 5.2 The Health of the Region Report, 2020, detailed a health inequalities mandate for WMCA, setting out a role for WMCA in addressing health inequalities at a regional level. Following the agreed health inequalities mandate, WMCA have increased system wide involvement of the Wellbeing Board and defined the Wellbeing Board priorities.
- 5.3 The Wellbeing Board priorities create a natural fit to opportunities identified within the levelling up white paper; the priorities defined as:
- Using WMCA's core functions to galvanise action to ensure all economic investment in the region supports better health outcomes
 - Work with partners to attract funding from government and provide a regional voice on health inequalities
 - Work with partners to maximise the economic opportunities created by the West Midlands health and care economy
 - Champion specific issues and deliver grant-funded programmes where there is the clear support of the Combined Authority and its partners to do so
- 5.4 Research from the Combined Authorities Cities Inequalities Programme highlights that regional level support and influence on health and wellbeing priorities and convening and leadership from an elected mayor are advantageous for the system. This combined with WMCA progress to date creates significant opportunity for the region.
- 5.5 As mentioned above, the opportunity for MCA's to play a larger role in the health outcomes of its citizens could include devolution of health responsibilities. The WMCA has the unique opportunity to support the local health and care system, given its nomination as one of two MCA's that can negotiate a trailblazing devolution deal. It will require engagement with the system partners to give shape to this potential ask, to ensure maximum benefit for our citizens.
- 5.6 In summary, the Levelling Up White Paper provides opportunity for the WMCA to build on the foundations in place to continue to galvanise action around the identified and agreed Wellbeing Priorities and to seek opportunity to create a collective narrative and regional voice to the benefit of the health and wellbeing (health and prevention – language) system.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Work across the system, including key partners at OHID, Local Authority DsPH, NHSE/I and the three ICS's, to help define for West Midlands the duties to improve the health of citizens, mentioned within the Levelling Up White Paper.

- 6.2 Initiate work on the trailblazer devolution deal for health, with initial steps expected to include:
- Scoping possibilities, building on the HiAP work under way aligning the existing devolved responsibilities across the wider determinants of health to outcomes and metrics, aligning where additional responsibilities may add the greatest value
 - Stakeholder engagement, the team welcome input from Wellbeing Board members and/or the organisations they represent in addition to input at events. Event details will be circulated to all Board members once confirmed.
- 6.3 To explore opportunities created by the Smart City Region, initially working to identify additionality and then via engagement with key partners.
- 6.4 To explore further at the Health Foundation funded West Midlands Levelling Up workshop.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Currently there are no financial implications for the WMCA as initial scoping and development work will be funded through existing WMCA budgets.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no additional legal implications at present.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 The paper provides an overview of the Levelling Up White Paper, whilst there are equality implications to the work of WMCA around the White Paper, these will be fully considered at policy and programme development stage. The work of the Wellbeing and Prevention Team and the Wellbeing board will continue to maintain a focus on reducing health inequalities. In line with the Health in All Policy approach previously agreed the Health Equity Assessment Tool will be applied and Equality Impact Assessments carried out as a matter of course during the development and implementation phases.

9. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 9.1 At a strategic level, the Inclusive Growth Framework – containing the eight fundamentals of inclusive growth - articulates the region's vision for what good looks like for levelling up. As such, this will have to be used to frame the baseline, monitoring and evaluation of any new activity, in a way which ensures local and regional leadership is recognised alongside national leadership.
- However, the focus of this paper is aligned with the remit of the Wellbeing Board and therefore most closely relates to the Health and Wellbeing fundamental of inclusive growth – the headline outcome of which is reducing inequality in healthy life expectancy. The Levelling Up White Paper and Trailblazer Devolution Deal discussions are an opportunity to create space to intervene across the wider determinants of health, informed by a Health in All Policies approach. Specifically, the Smart City Region and the devolution of health powers could create clear opportunities to explore in partnership.

10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 10.1 The implications and opportunities within the Levelling Up White Paper will be considered across the WMCA geographical footprint.

11. Schedule of Background Papers

WMCA Board Report Pack Tuesday 18th January 2022: Health in All Policy
[HiAP WB Board.pdf \(wmca.org.uk\)](#)

WMCA Board Report Pack, Tuesday 19th October 2022: Wellbeing Priorities
[Report.pdf \(wmca.org.uk\)](#)

WMCA Board Report Pack Friday 16th October 2020: Health of the Region Report
[Agenda for Wellbeing Board on Friday 16th October 2020, 10.00 am :WMCA WB RHIC Discussion.pdf \(wmca.org.uk\)](#)

9. Appendices

N/A