Levelling Up Partnerships: Methodology Note

This note sets out the methodology used to select the initial 20 places identified for a Levelling Up Partnership in England. These places can be found in the table below:

Place	Region
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Yorkshire and The Humber
Sandwell	West Midlands
Mansfield	East Midlands
Middlesbrough	North East
Blackburn with Darwen	North West
Hastings	South East
Torbay	South West
Tendring	East of England
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands
Boston	East Midlands
Redcar and Cleveland	North East
Wakefield	Yorkshire and The Humber
Oldham	North West
Rother	South East
Torridge	South West
Walsall	West Midlands
Doncaster	Yorkshire and The Humber
South Tyneside	North East
Rochdale	North West
Bassetlaw	East Midlands

To generate the above list, Lower Tier Local Authorities were assessed according to their levelling up need, region and whether they had already been selected for a Levelling Up Deep Dive.

Metrics

The list was developed in accordance with the Levelling Up White Paper (figure 1.13, page 18) which combines four metrics relevant to understanding place performance. These metrics cover skills, pay, productivity and health.

For each metric, the three most recent UK-wide statistical releases are averaged to reduce volatility in the data and ensure the outputs are robust.

Metric	Source	Dates used	Geographic level
NVQ Level 3+ (% of total population)	ONS annual population survey, Nomis - link	3-year average (Jan- Dec 2019-21)	Lower-tier Local Authority

Healthy Life Expectancy	ONS Health state life expectancy at birth and at age 65 years by local areas, UK - link	3-year average* (2016/18-2018/20)	Upper-tier Local Authority**
Median Gross Weekly Pay (£)	ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - link The equivalent Northern Ireland data can be accessed from NIRSA - link	3 year average (2019-21)	Lower-tier Local Authority
Gross Value Added (GVA) per Hour Worked	ONS Sub-regional Productivity: labour productivity indices by local authority district. - link	3-year average (2018-20)	Lower-tier Local Authority
*Data released in 3-year intervals and used for 2016-2018, 2017-2019 and 2018-2020. **Upper tier local authority data used for all component lower tier local authorities as lower tier data does not exist in a consistent fashion. This affects the 24 county council areas in England ***For Northern Ireland, the national average is used for GVA and NVQs.			

Methodology

1. For each metric all Lower Tier Local Authorities across the UK are ranked and those that fall into the bottom quartile are assigned a value of "1". The number of times each place is in the bottom quartile against each of the four metrics is then summed to give a bottom quartile count out of four.

2. Using the bottom quartile count, a priority list of places in England is generated which includes all the local authorities in the bottom quartile against three or more of the four metrics.

3. To complement the quartiles approach and enable places to be scored within the priority list, local authorities are scored according to their relative performance against each metric to generate an overall score for levelling up need. We score places from 0 to 1 for each metric using a min-max normalisation technique, which reflects an areas performance relative to the rest of the UK, and then average across each of the four min-max normalised scores.

4. The final list of 20 places is then generated by using the min-max normalised score for each local authority in the priority list and filtering by ITL1 region. We group the local authorities by region and select the most in need remaining from each region, and order these based on levelling up need. Where there are no LAs remaining on the priority list in a region (i.e. all local authorities on the priority list in that region have already been selected), we no longer consider that region. We repeat the process until we have a list of 20.

5. To note, at step 4, places where Levelling Up Deep Dives have already been established - Blackpool, North East Lincolnshire and Northumberland - are removed from the priority group and subsequent analysis.

6. Levelling Up Need is measured at a local authority level, which can be large and cover multiple urban areas. Our starting assumption is that we will work with the largest urban area, unless – given the work is undertaken in partnership with a local area – there is a strong local rationale for choosing somewhere else. The largest urban areas will be identified using ONS population estimates for towns and cities (https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/understandingtownsinenglandandwalespopulationanddemography).