

# LEVELLING UP FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES: OVERVIEW

December 2022

# ADEPT

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

## LEVELLING UP FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES: OVERVIEW

During 2022, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) led a project to explore how local authorities are levelling up through action to address disparities in multiple domains – public health, local environmental quality, exposure to climate risk and socio-economic deprivation.

This project was in collaboration with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Local Government Association (LGA), recognising the synergies between our work areas, and the links between wellbeing and place.

The project included a series of case studies, which look across local government service areas.

The case studies illustrate that every local authority area has disparities within it, and whilst the levelling-up agenda has had a strong focus on inter-regional differences, the need to address inequality is relevant to every place.

Common factors across these case studies show that local authorities are:

- **Leading effective partnerships** across council service areas, with local NHS bodies, businesses, universities, community and voluntary groups.
- **Using local data** on deprivation, health outcomes and access to local services to target and prioritise investment to the areas in most need.
- **Working with local residents**, including those from under-represented groups, to understand their stories and experiences and involve them in service improvements.

The case studies highlight the strong co-benefits of work to address multiple disparities. They also reveal some of the obstacles to progress, with particular reflections around the need for long-term and secure funding for local authorities.

The need to compete for funding is resource intensive and many councils lack the expertise to compile bids. Short timescales for bidding and spending funding also reduces the range of projects coming forward and can inhibit delivery.

Contextual factors, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on staff resource and the impacts of rising costs for labour and materials, are also having an impact on local authorities' capacity to deliver and the success of projects.

We strongly support the government's commitment to streamline and simplify the funding landscape for levelling up. We believe that this is essential to help more local places make progress in this area.

In the current economic climate, we believe the approach to funding should incentivise local authorities to work across services and to seek multiple outcomes from investment. Our case studies provide a series of examples of councils already doing this, but we recognise that some of the projects are at an early stage.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with government to explore how this way of working can be supported and encouraged through the further devolution of funding to local authorities.





## KEY POINTS FROM OUR CASE STUDIES:



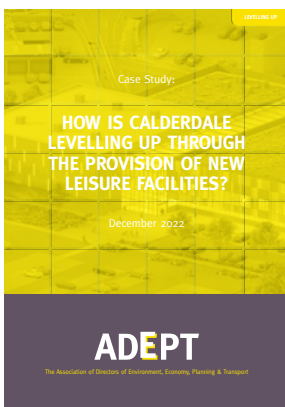
**Birmingham City Council** is investing more in local parks and green spaces to improve both the local environment and people's health and wellbeing. The Future Parks Accelerator Programme was key to supporting and generating Birmingham's City of Nature programme, funding a team of eight people.

Work was led by the public health team with input from planning and operational teams working in parks. They combined public health and environmental data to map environmental injustice.



**Cornwall Council** is leading work to plan for the changing climate, looking at impacts across the council's service areas, and contributing to the development of a new Local Climate Adaptation Tool.

Cornwall Council's environment teams have benefited from long-term funding from the European Regional Development Fund, which will finish at the end of 2023.

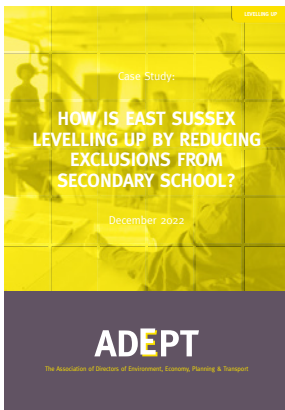


**Calderdale Council** has delivered a series of regeneration projects in Halifax.

In 2021, the Council was successful in bidding for £12.2 million Levelling Up funding to build a new leisure and community health centre, recognising the contribution of health and activity levels to local productivity.

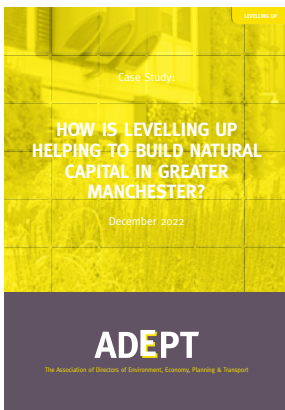
The project has planning permission but is on hold due to rising construction costs, illustrating the current financial pressures on local authorities.





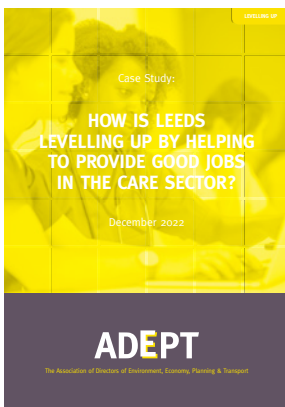
**East Sussex County Council** is leading work to support vulnerable young people, by improving multi-agency collaboration with the aim of reducing school exclusions.

The Council has maintained a focus on the wider contextual factors for exclusions including poverty, poor connectivity and more widespread social and mental health problems exacerbated by the pandemic and has sought to adjust provision accordingly.



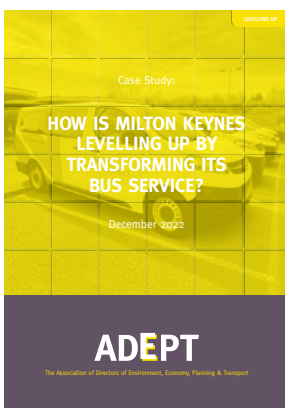
**The Greater Manchester Combined Authority** has led a programme of work to value natural capital across the 11 local authority areas and to identify opportunities to restore and improve the natural environment.

The Combined Authority is supporting local areas by developing a pipeline of projects to contribute to local nature recovery.



**Leeds City Council** is supporting a programme of work to create good jobs in deprived areas. The Good Jobs, Better Health, Fairer Futures programme aims to demonstrate that health inequalities can be improved through a joined-up and targeted approach to economic and health interventions.

This project builds on a legacy of strong partnership work between the Council and anchor institutions.



**Milton Keynes Council** has delivered a new demand responsive transport (DRT) service, replacing the majority of the supported bus services.

As well as saving services, the introduction of the DRT model has created a more sustainable financial model for local supported bus services, securing a net saving of £1 million per year.





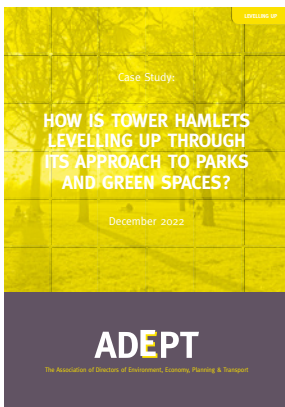


**Surrey County Council** is one of nine test and learn sites for Green Social Prescribing.

The two-year pilot has brought colleagues together across the NHS and the Council's environment, social care and public health teams.

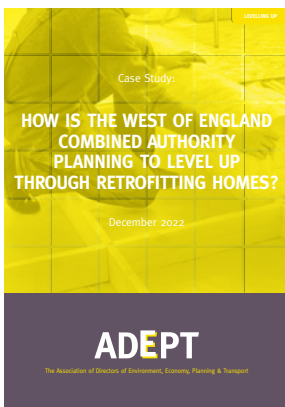
Green social prescribing projects are generating outcomes across the environment sector and public health.

There is an opportunity to do more to embed the learning and build a system-wide approach to green social prescribing.



**The London Borough of Tower Hamlets** is taking an evidence-led approach to parks and open spaces, targeting investment to the areas of greatest need, drawing on evidence about deprivation, physical activity levels and the quality of local spaces.

The Borough is building its corporate research function and is one of 10 areas to receive funding as part of the Health Determinant Research Collaboration initiative.



**The West of England Combined Authority** is establishing a project to provide support for households of all tenures to adapt their homes for energy efficiency.

The Retrofit Accelerator project recognises the co-benefits of energy efficiency, including to tackle fuel poverty and support health and wellbeing, as well as the contribution to the local economy, generating new jobs and training opportunities.



- ADEPT members are the place-making strategists and policy shapers across top tier local authority areas
- ADEPT members are specialists, delivering services and sharing best practice across key sectors including environment, planning, housing, transport and economy
- ADEPT members design strategies for the future, taking communities beyond 2035
- ADEPT members operate in networks, cutting through boundaries to work with partners across the political, public, private and community sectors
- ADEPT members provide opportunities to develop new talent, supporting the place directors of tomorrow

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