



Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

2 Marsham Street London

SW1P 4DF

19 September
2023

Dear Michael,

I am writing to you regarding the recent Government response to our report into *Funding for Levelling Up* (26 May 2023).

We are grateful to the Government for its response. However, we have significant concern that many of our recommendations have not been fully addressed and engaged with. These are set out as follows:

The Government's approach to Levelling Up (Recommendations 1 and 3):

We had recommended that the Government set out which funds contribute towards levelling up and that the Department for Levelling Up should also have strategic oversight of cross-departmental work contributing towards Levelling Up. Despite the Government's response we are still concerned about the Government's ability to move the goal posts when determining whether Levelling Up has been a success if we do not know which funds are intended to contribute to towards Levelling Up objectives. **Please could you explain the reasoning for no longer wishing to the map funding streams across Government which contribute towards the Levelling Up policy?**

Revenue funding for local authorities (Recommendation 2): We concluded that Local Government revenue funding has reduced significantly since 2010. For Levelling Up to be a success, we recommended that the Government address the financial pressures faced by Local Government. However. The Government's response only referred to the Local Government Financial Settlement for 2023-2024 which does not address the recommendation which specifically refers to the periods from 2010 onwards. **Please could you respond to the recommendation by including the funding reductions for the whole period from 2010-2023?**

Feedback (Recommendations 8 & 9): We recommended that the Department provides a standardised approach to feedback for local authorities who bid for funding. In its response, the Government did not engage with the possibility that the feedback process might benefit from being standardised across the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.



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We also recommended that the Government make publicly available its feedback to local authorities who bid for such funding. The Government has not responded to our recommendation to make feedback publicly available for communities. **Please could you respond to the recommendation in full including specifically stating whether you believe that communities should have sight of feedback for Levelling Up funding please explain why?**

Data and Metrics (Recommendations 18, 19, 20 and 21): We raised concerns regarding the Department's lack of "sufficient data". We consequently recommended that the Spatial Data Unit (SDU) provides a forward plan of work which includes information on departmental expenditure and data on combined authority income for us to consider.

However, there are several issues with the Government's response in this area including:

- The data sets that the Government has highlighted in its response does not contain any analysis which means that we cannot understand how the data has been used and for what purpose. The website which contains the data sets states that it "discourages comparisons between data at the most granular level".¹ **Please could you provide us with information relating to how this data was used and what policy decisions it was used to inform, if any?**
- There are also no planned publications or information for the Spatial Data Unit publicly available. **Please could you share the SDU's forward plan of work with us?**
- The Government highlights the 'Subnational Indicators Explorer' for council areas in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but most of the indicators are unavailable. **Please could you explain why this is the case and where such information could be obtained by us?**
- The Government also highlights the 'Subnational Statistics service'. **However, this does also not appear to be publicly available and therefore of no use, please could you share this with us?**

¹ [Disaggregating annual subnational gross value added \(GVA\) to lower levels of geography - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/disaggregating-annual-subnational-gross-value-added-gva-to-lower-levels-of-geography)



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Finally, there were an unfortunate number of typographical errors as well as formatting problems within the Government's response. Although some progress was made at correcting these errors, at our request, this remains a concern.

We kindly request a full response to the questions we raise above by the 15 October 2023.

Best wishes,

Mr Clive Betts MP
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee