

# Equality & Investment

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## The issues:

- Strategic Plan 2022-25: *“advise on measures to rebuild economies after the pandemic and to improve equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups.”*
- Regional inequality in the UK: marked differences in economic performance, productivity, employment rates and household income across UK and regionally – IFS ranked the UK as the country with the greatest regional inequality of the 27 countries it examined.
- Devolution and new funding streams e.g. Levelling Up/Shared Prosperity Funds, City Region Deals etc all present opportunities to regrow regional economies
- Funding can have major impact on communities e.g. by supporting innovation/creating infrastructure/providing skilled workforce but may not benefit everyone equally.

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# Our approach

- The Public Sector Equality Duty places a legal obligation on Local and Combined Authorities to ensure that regeneration policies are not discriminatory. They also need to consider taking steps to advance equality of opportunity.
- Taking proactive approach to ensure that bodies
  - have the skills and abilities to apply the PSED and SED effectively
  - Can maximise equality gains through procurement and benefits realisation
  - Have taken a phased approach, building on work from 2017 with Scottish and Welsh Governments
- Currently working with 7 Combined Authorities and 2 Local Authorities focusing on activities such as equality objectives, EQIAs, targets and benchmarking.

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## Our work to date:

- In addition to working directly with regional/local bodies, have provided training and support to local and national agencies across Britain.
- Published new guidance in August for local authorities and public bodies on *'Advancing equality through major investment projects'*
- Guidance sets out
  - How to assess investment decisions to make sure that they have maximum impact on advancing equality,
  - How to set and scrutinise equality objectives, and
  - Key examples of good practice to follow.
  - Also sets out legal framework and detail on how elected members can effectively scrutinise decision making
  - Will continue to review and share learning from engagement with local and regional bodies

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/advancing-equality-through-major-investment-projects>



Thank you