



**BUILDING THE
FUTURE ECONOMY**
RESILIENT CITIES AND
CITY REGIONS FOR
NATIONAL PROSPERITY

FOREWORD

COVID 19 is accelerating transition to a different future economy, confronting the UK with a choice – deal with persistent challenges and grow, or risk entrenching inequality and low productivity.

The opportunity is to address not just the direct effects of the pandemic, but the structural problems within our society and economy that blight the lives of too many of our citizens.

Our vision is for a fully modernised, resilient UK economy and population that trades powerfully on the global stage, grows business and quality jobs, improves social mobility and achieves Net Zero. Our offer to Government is to work jointly to deliver this vision, based on five building blocks that will help the whole of the UK Level Up.

Cllr Judith Blake CBE,
Chair of Core Cities UK,
Leader of Leeds City Council



OUR KEY MESSAGES

01

HARNESSING THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF CITIES TO INNOVATE CAN HELP THE ENTIRE UK 'LEVEL UP' AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19.

02

CITIES' SUCCESS RELIES ON SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SERVICES THAT HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS TO DO THE JOB. PROPERLY FUNDED LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS A BASIC BUILDING BLOCK OF SUCCESS.

03

WE MUST GIVE PLACES THE ABILITY TO CREATE LOCAL GROWTH BY CREATING NEW FUNDS AND RE-INVENTING THE ONES WE HAVE.

04

THIS CRISIS CREATES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS LONG TERM ISSUES, INCLUDING CENTRALISATION AND LOW PRODUCTIVITY, THAT HAVE HELD THE UK BACK.

05

WE NEED TO BETTER CONNECT OUR CITIES TO THE WORLD AND EACH OTHER, INVESTING IN BETTER TRANSPORT LINKS AND ENHANCING OUR CITIES' GROWING GLOBAL REPUTATIONS.

OUR IDEAS

IT IS TIME FOR
A BETTER, LOCAL
APPROACH

01

LEVELLING UP BY HARNESSING LOCAL INNOVATION

It is time to re-think policy along the lines of place, harnessing local innovation by giving places the freedom to adapt and grow to new challenges.

This should include aligning services to get better results and save money in the long-term.

- **Increase capacity in local government** to deliver and direct public services in a co-ordinated and efficient way
- **Pool economic and infrastructure funds** and resources locally
- **Deliver national funds** to support city and city region recovery
- **Increase focus on prevention**, cutting waste and duplication

02

COMMUNITY

We can help to build united and resilient populations with a sense of shared civic purpose and pride, supported by sustainable public services. We also need to make sure lockdowns and Test and Trace are locally led and delivered.

- **Work with us to create a sustainable local government finance model** and three-year settlement
- **Support joint working** between universities and city authorities to develop a locally-led Test and Trace system.
- **Commit to a fundamental reform** of Business Rates model, helping places respond to the rise in online shopping
- **Widen the future income base for local government**, de-risking future potential crises for public services, including greater local fiscal powers.

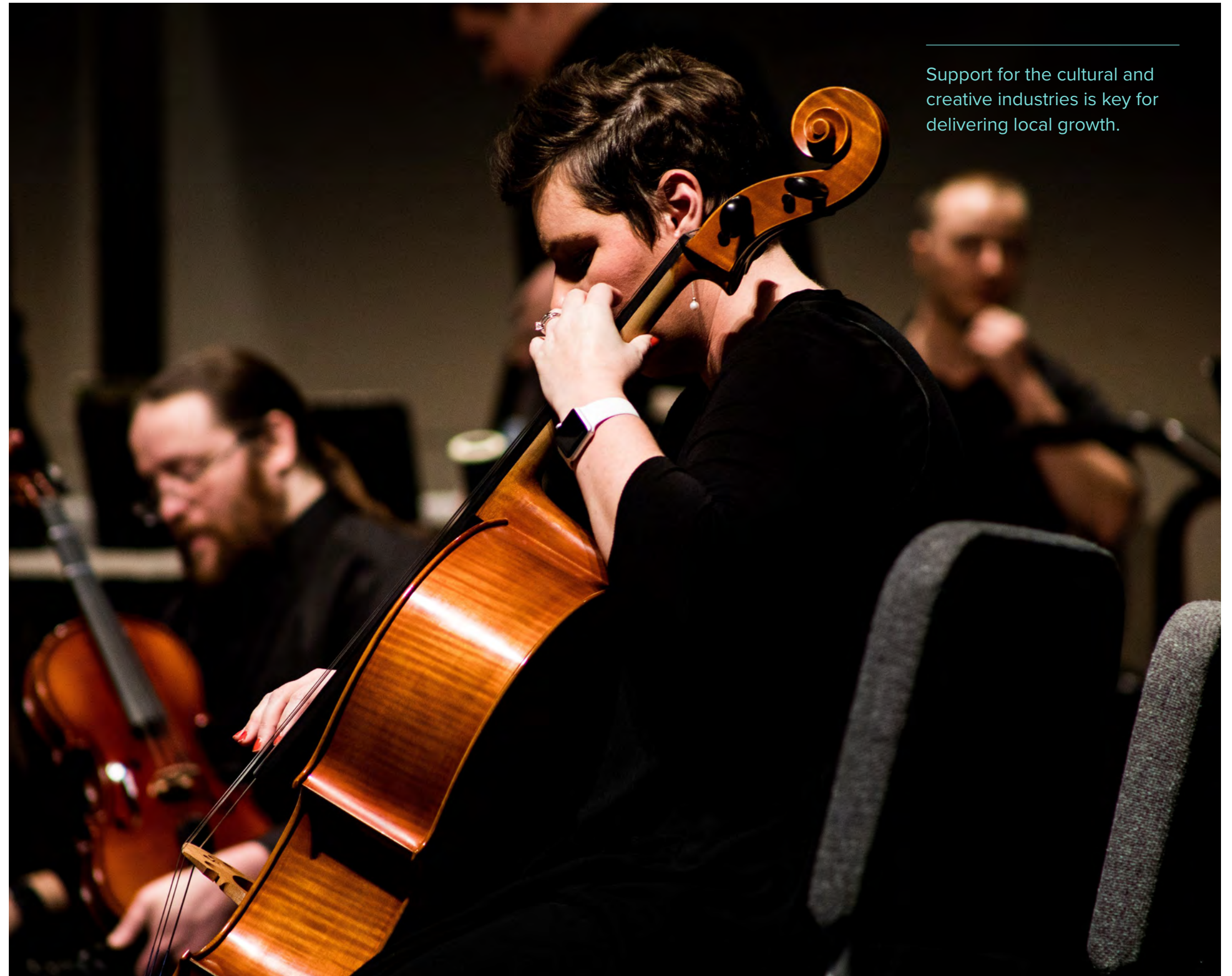
03

INVESTING FOR GROWTH

It is time to give places the ability to create local growth by creating new funds and re-inventing the ones we have to make them more suitable for a post Pandemic world.

- **Create recyclable local investment funds** and devolve the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- **Reform existing Enterprise Zones and similar investment models like Tax Increment Financing** and extend the retention period from 25-40 years.
- **Make sure any changes to planning laws provide cities and city regions with the flexibility** to ensure good quality buildings that are suitable for a post Covid world.
- **Maintain support for crucial but hard hit sectors** like hospitality and culture, so city centres can reopen quickly and remain attractive.

Support for the cultural and creative industries is key for delivering local growth.



04

OPPORTUNITY

If we are to avoid the mass unemployment levels last seen in the 1980s we need to revitalise education and skills, making them more relevant to the future economy. A locally joined up skills and employment offer should be the goal.

- **Work with us to tailor the ‘Plan for Jobs’ package** to improve impact and outcomes
- **Facilitate the sharing of post-code specific data** of trainees, apprentices, job seekers and jobs
- **Further devolve** Adult Skills Budgets
- **Repurpose existing funds** with maximum flexibility including Skills Fund, ESF and unspent Levy.
- **Create a Green Industrial Growth Package** including housing retrofit, mobility, energy, accelerating Net Zero.
- **Reform the Apprenticeship Levy**, so that the cultural and creative industries sector can help deliver government’s ambitions in the Plan for Jobs.

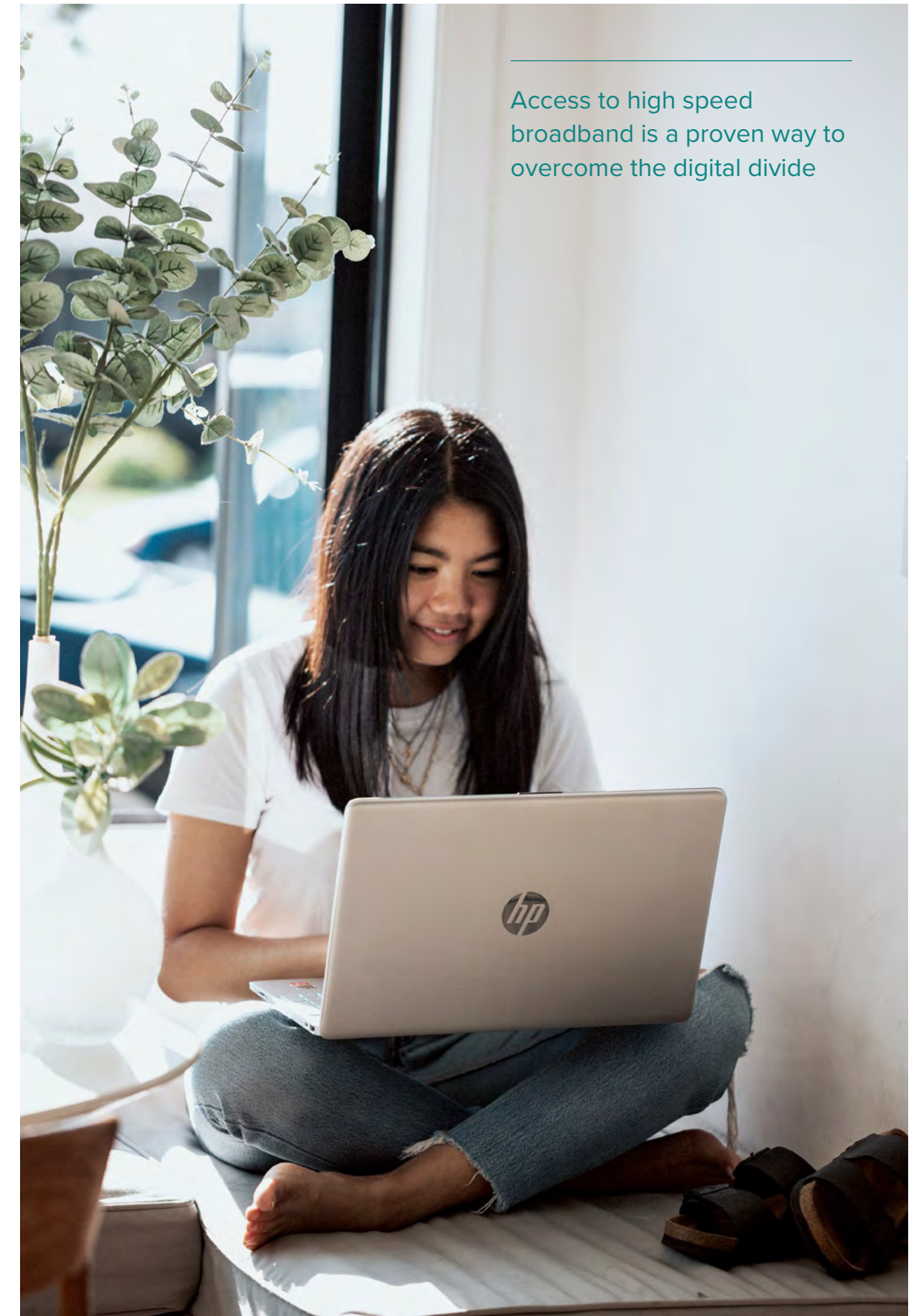
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CONNECTIVITY

Despite the pandemic our citizens still need to travel to work, education and leisure. Digital infrastructure is also growing in importance. At the same time our cities and city regions can play a role in boosting international trade.

- **Radically improve fixed and wireless access**, rolling out full fibre and 5G across urban areas alongside digital inclusion programmes
- **Devolve and pool infrastructure funding**, in line with National Infrastructure Assessment Recommendations
- **Create a Green National Bus Strategy**, including re-regulation where needed
- **Government should co-author the UK Urban Trade and Investment Strategy** with cities and city regions using local knowledge to identify growth sectors and aligning them to global markets.

Access to high speed broadband is a proven way to overcome the digital divide



ABOUT US



Core Cities UK is an alliance of 11 cities – Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. Our mission is to unlock the full potential of our great city regions to create a stronger, fairer economy and society.

The text in this document is based on our submission to the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review. Read it in full at corecities.com