

Our Plan for Government 2015-20

Executive Summary





Our Plan for Government



Introduction

This paper marks a significant moment for the 23 million people who live and work in county areas. With the General Election fast approaching and sustainable economic growth not guaranteed, CCN believes all political parties need to seriously consider the role of counties in delivering better quality public services for our communities and residents, based on our vision of **One Place, One Budget**.

Over the past few months we have been consulting with counties over how best we can work together to unlock their vast potential. Counties want to support whichever Government is in place after May 2015 to transform public services and deliver sustainable and balanced economic growth – reducing costs to the Treasury and delivering a more cost-effective and efficient service to our residents.

Our Plan for Government sets out a number of radical, yet practical, policy proposals across five areas. These will deliver tangible benefits for residents and communities up and down the country, while helping the Government reduce public expenditure and rebalance the UK economy.

At the centre of this Plan is our belief that we must fundamentally **reform the provision of public services** in our areas and deliver a new **English Devolution** settlement between Whitehall and the counties of England.

In exchange for the comprehensive package of reforms, counties will commit to delivering an ambitious range of outcomes that are essential for the enduring success of the UK.

Counties have the scale, ambition and potential to secure the long-term economic recovery. We can ensure all children and young people in county areas fully realise their educational and career potential. We can work with our partners to realise our vision of a person-centred, fully integrated and sustainably funded care system. And, most importantly, we can drive cost savings and improved outcomes across the full range of public services, with our vision for **One Place, One Budget**.

This document provides a brief overview of what counties are well-positioned to help Government deliver, and of what tools they need to ensure the job gets done. All points are explored in greater detail in the main paper.

This is just the start of the conversation. This is a real opportunity for Members of Parliament and a wide range of stakeholders to be at the forefront of radical improvements in public services by engaging with counties on the ideas in Our Plan for Government.

We look forward to developing and discussing this Plan in greater detail with all those who can help us ensure our proposals become a reality for the communities we serve.

Public Sector Reform



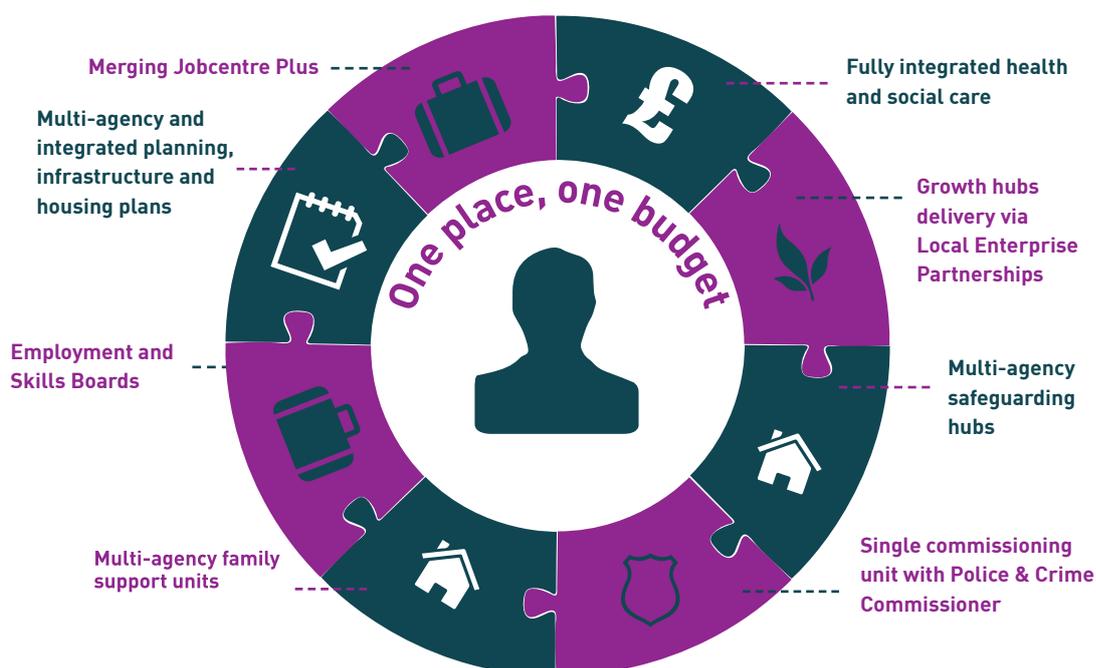
CROSS-CUTTING THEME

At a time when the UK continues to face financial challenges, Government and all public service providers need to think innovatively about how they work together to deliver high-quality services that meet the needs of the entire population, based on a **One Place, One Budget** vision.

Our Plan for Government argues that the only sustainable way forward is for counties to drive efficiencies in other parts of the public sector, lead integration across all local services and break down Whitehall silos. Underlying this, there must be a radical **English Devolution** settlement for the County and City Regions of England.

This settlement must be a comprehensive offer. Over time, it will prove fundamental to the implementation of the specific reforms outlined in our key policy areas of economic growth and prosperity; children and young people and learning; health, social care and wellbeing, and local government finance. Counties believe that, over the course of the next Parliament, these reforms will ensure a truly **One Place, One Budget** approach becomes a reality.

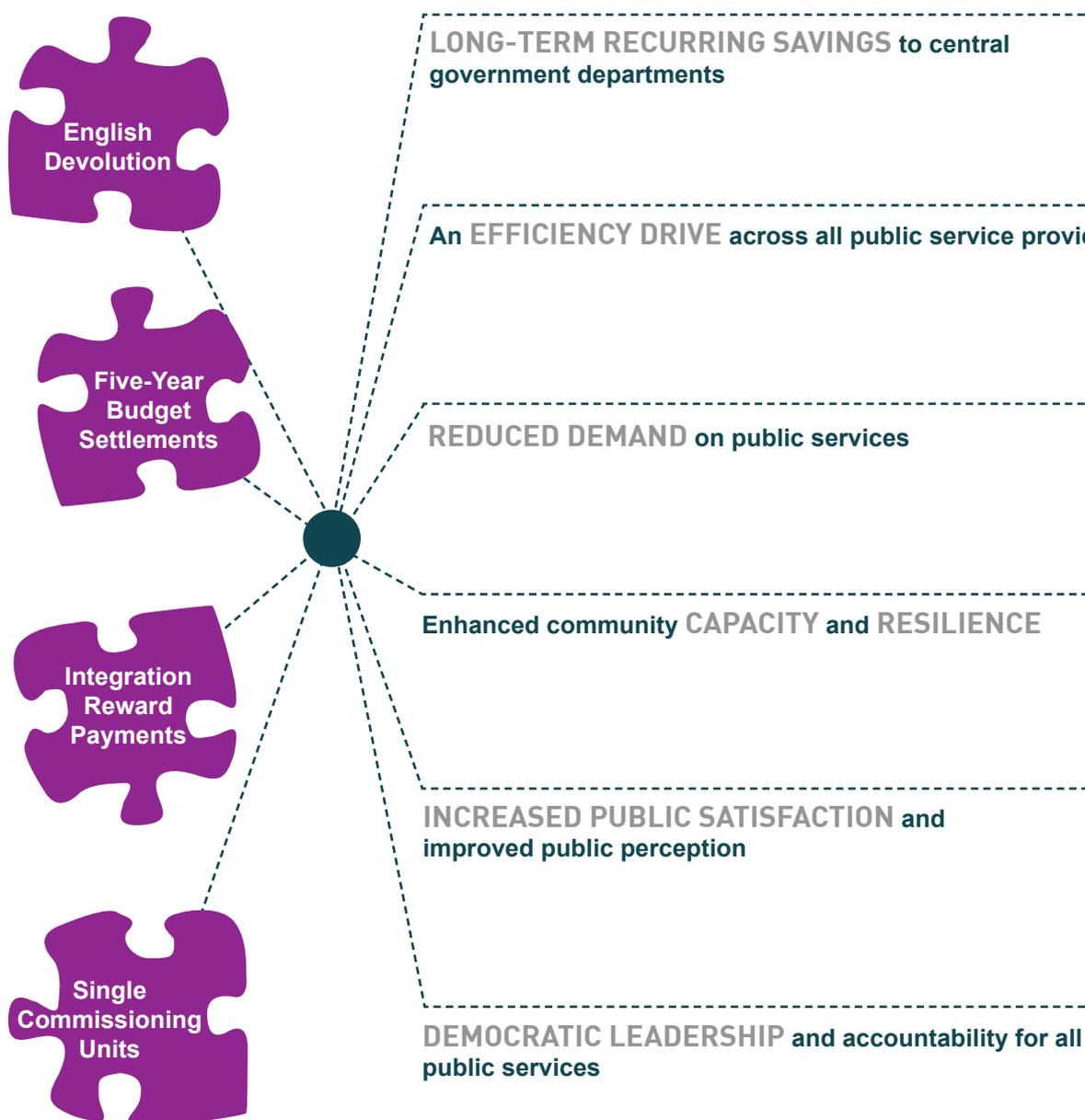
Counties could coordinate a whole-place approach, delivering a much simpler, better resident experience



Our Plan for Government

Key Policy Proposals

Delivering Better Outcomes



Economic Growth and Prosperity



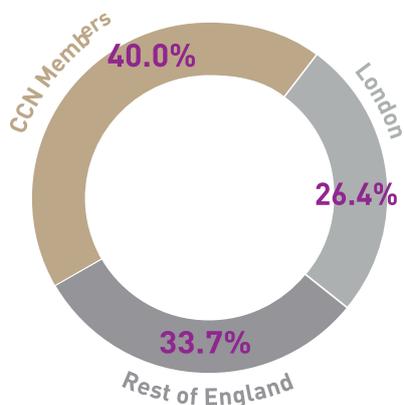
POLICY PRIORITY

If the UK's economic recovery is to endure, it needs to take root across the country. Counties have a key role to play in ensuring this happens, but despite on most scales outperforming other components of the UK economy, they remain largely disempowered – especially when compared with the funding, freedoms and flexibilities accorded to the Core Cities.

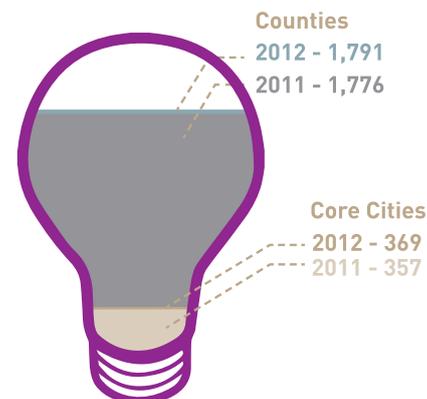
From May 2015, counties need a new deal. They need the power to knit together skills, training, employment schemes and investment strategies so that all activities are aligned to local economic priorities. Investment in new homes must be matched with new strategic planning powers, infrastructure, and transport links tied to the needs of local enterprises. Most of all, counties need a new settlement on fiscal devolution in county areas – one based around freedom and flexibility.

Economic growth

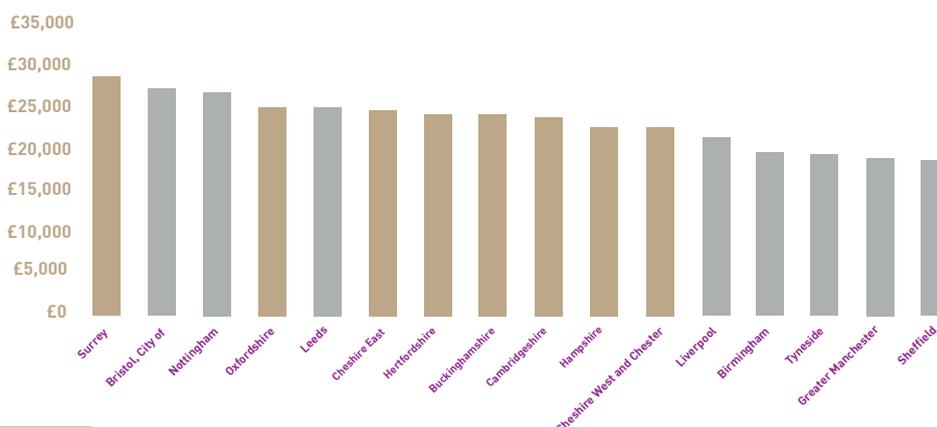
Share of National GVA 2012



New business registrations per 10,000 population



GVA per head in Counties and Core Cities 2012



Our Plan for Government

Key Policy Proposals



Delivering Better Outcomes

A balanced, sustainable and **PRIVATE SECTOR-LED RECOVERY** across all parts of the UK

A national **RETURN ON EVERY POUND INVESTED** in county economies and a commitment to reinvest in growth

More **QUALITY HOMES** for ownership and rent

INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE to support housing economic growth

REDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS, particularly youth and long-term unemployment

A more **DIVERSE AND HIGHLY SKILLED LABOUR FORCE**

IMPROVED public transport networks and business **INFRASTRUCTURE**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY for all devolved **FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE**

Children, Young People and Learning



POLICY PRIORITY

Counties want to ensure that, regardless of where they live, children are safe and cared for, healthy, and have a good education that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Through a range of services, including early years, school admissions and transport, and, from next year, health visiting services, counties play a major role in children's lives. For a minority of children and families, counties also need to target additional early intervention, family support and social care services to protect the vulnerable and tackle complex problems.

Over the past four years, counties have delivered Government reforms to the education system and major initiatives such as the Troubled Families Programme. We believe a comprehensive reform programme should build on established success while offering new opportunities to progress the principles of fairness, accountability, democratic leadership and innovation.

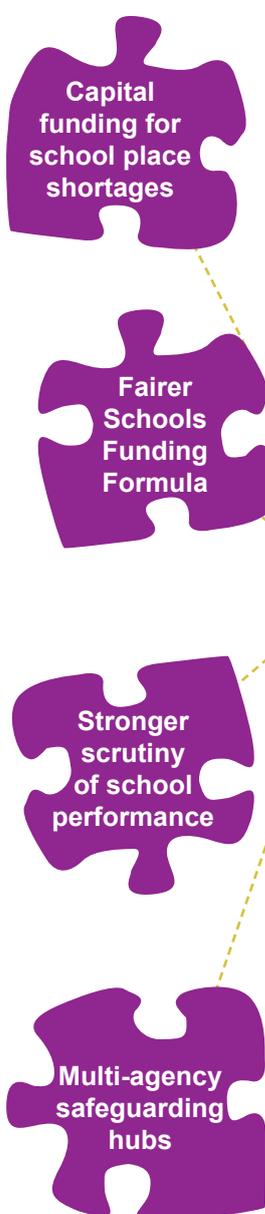
Securing a good education for all, while protecting at-risk and vulnerable children, will remain a top priority for counties over the next five years. We believe the reforms we suggest will help Government deliver a better future for all young people.

Schools funding per pupil 2012/13



Our Plan for Government

Key Policy Proposals



Delivering Better Outcomes

A HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOL PLACE that is close to where pupils live

Robust MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING arrangements that protect vulnerable children

A REDUCTION IN THE DIVIDE IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY, STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES across the board in education and children's services

REDUCTIONS IN THE NUMBER OF NEETs and more highly skilled, work-ready, young people

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing



POLICY PRIORITY

Our health and social care system faces unprecedented strain. Securing its future is arguably the biggest public policy challenge facing our nation. Common problems of large-scale funding reductions are affecting county health and social care systems, which are facing more intense demand-led pressures due to an ageing population, difficulties recruiting an adequate workforce and significantly more self-funders entering the care system.

The Government has made significant steps in reforming our health and social care system. Alongside the transfer of public health back to local government, the passing of the Care Act and introduction of the Better Care Fund has shown a commitment to improving the health and social care services residents receive.

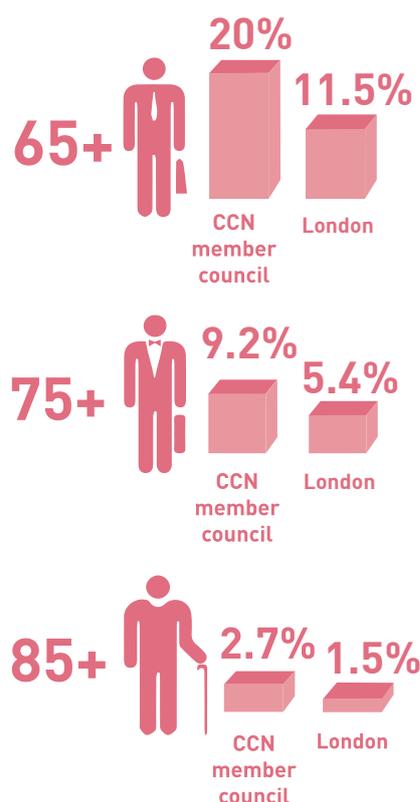
Residents need an incoming government to build on the Coalition's reforms, taking brave and radical steps on the future of our care and support system. Health & Wellbeing Boards must be in the driving seat behind this change, with counties given a fair deal, and empowered to fully integrate health and social care.

Demand pressures

Service user profile



Ageing population



Our Plan for Government

Key Policy Proposals



Delivering Better Outcomes

A **STABILISATION** in adult social care **FUNDING** in counties

OUTCOME-FOCUSED health and social care services

REDUCTIONS in health **INEQUALITIES** across county areas

An **INTEGRATED USER EXPERIENCE** across health and social care services

A **REDUCTION IN RECURRING DEMAND** on acute health services

INVESTMENT in preventative and **EARLY INTERVENTION** services

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP and **DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY** for all health and social care services

A **COMMON WORKING CULTURE** between health and social care services

Local Government Finance



POLICY PRIORITY

Any Plan for Government needs to be built around a sound understanding of the finances available, and focused on how best to fairly and most productively distribute increasingly finite resources.

By 2015/16, core funding for local government will have reduced by 40% in real terms over the course of this Parliament. This has prompted local government to reduce spending and increase efficiency on a scale far greater than any other part of the public sector. Counties have so far proven themselves up for the challenge: making efficiencies, sharing services and increasing commercialism while balancing their budgets and continuing to safeguard key services.

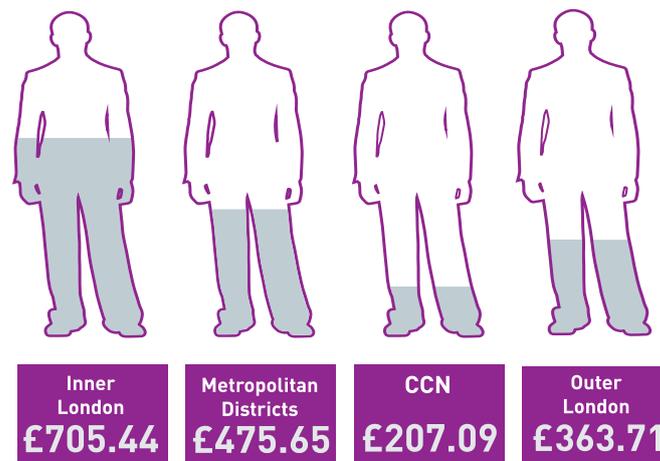
But the limits of this approach are becoming clear, with county resources increasingly stretched. Faced with another five years of spending reductions, we either reform the way we fund and arrange services, or enter a period of sustained uncertainty.

Total revenue expenditure 2013/14



47% of population but only **30.5%** of expenditure

Central Government grant per head 2012/13



Our Plan for Government

Key Policy Proposals



Delivering Better Outcomes

Remain the **MOST EFFICIENT** part of the public sector

A fair and sustainable contribution to **DEFICIT REDUCTION**

A significant **RETURN ON INVESTMENT** and increased tax take to the Exchequer

FINANCIAL COMPETENCE to deliver devolved budgets

Openness and **TRANSPARENCY TO MORE KEY SPENDING DECISIONS** across the public sector

COUNTY COUNCILS NETWORK

Founded in 1997, the County Councils Network (CCN) is a network of 37 County Councils and Unitary authorities that serve county areas. We are a cross-party organisation, expressing the views of member councils to the wider Local Government Association and to central government departments.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on Our Plan for Government.

To discuss any of our proposals in greater detail, please contact:

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If you would like further information on CCN, including the latest policy briefings, publications, news and events, please visit our website at www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk

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