KEYNOTE MINUTES

East of England Inquiry into Levelling Up in the Eastern Engine for Prosperity
Evidence Session I: East of England's Coastal Communities – Regeneration, Tourism and Trade
10:00 - 11:30 Wednesday 7th July
REWATCH THE SESSION: https://youtu.be/rY-fQj23yEM

Welcome and introductions
Daniel Zeichner MP

- Agreement of minutes of last meeting
- This is the first evidence session of the Levelling Up Inquiry. This meeting will focus on the East of England's coastal communities which, as you will know, share some socio-economic characteristics and concerns which are quite different to the more prosperous inland cities and town.

Part One: Overview and key issues regarding Levelling Up in the Eastern Engine for Prosperity
Sasha Morgan, Director, Social Mobility Commission

- Before I took on my role within the Social Mobility Commission, I was working as COO at the National Infrastructure Commission. And I think one of the big reflections that I have is that we need to think about the long-term transformation that we need in particular parts of our country.
- Social mobility at its heart is about ensuring that where you start off in life doesn't determine where you end up. It's saying that knowing who your parents are isn't essentially 100% predictor of your life outcomes.
- Covid-19 is both a challenge and opportunity. The way society views social mobility has changed. The pandemic has exposed inequalities and what for some people were invisible barriers in our society. And I think there's a broader public awareness and there's a growing appetite for action.
- It's about addressing these kinds of geographical inequalities that we've identified through a long history of our work - relevant when you talk about a region being the East of England or focussing on the coastal communities, that this is not just about a very small number of disadvantaged kids getting into elite and better jobs
- Being able to find the right opportunities in place rather than necessarily having to shift is important. That is not saying that people should be prevented from moving to get opportunities. We're not stopping anyone getting on the bike, but there is something about saying, if I wish to stay rooted in community and in family and in local networks, there is a useful opportunity for me to do so.
- We've got to look at highly localised interventions if we can level up. Levelling up isn't just about a question of a simple North-South divide. There is a narrative that talks about the overly blessed south of the country or southeast the country with juxtapose between and under invested and undisputed north. Much of that is substantially true, but the picture is much more complex about that.
- There is no simple North-South divide. Instead, a divide exists between London and some of its affluent commuter belt and a lot of the rest of the country. Yes, London accounts for nearly two thirds of all social mobility hotspots. But that said, even within London boroughs, there are pockets of entrenched deprivation.

- What about the East of England itself? We established an index with social mobility that looked at the differentiated outcomes for different local authorities in 2016. And we've built on that in2017 & 2021. What we found is that EE, shows about 14 percent of the distribution for social mobility hotspots.
- There were several parts in the EE that are really generating high returns for people who live there and their life outcomes. We include Great Yarmouth and Cambridge, as places that do significantly worse than expected given the level of deprivation.
- East of England makes up about 50% or half of the lowest 20% of areas on our 2016 index.
- There is a distinction between different parts of EE, the highest performing areas which we might anticipate of those closest to London while the areas around Norfolk perform less overall. So, you see that East Hertfordshire being the best performing area in the region at number 14, whilst Waveney is coming in at 314 out of 324 local authorities. The anxiety we have about our coastal regions is justified.
- Even the voluntary living wage in North Norfolk, Forest Heath, Norwich, many residents are earning a lower-than-average wage, and as few as one in five people in a top job in some of these areas, are up to as many as four in 10 are earning below the living wage.
- We need to have that conversation with employers about what we can do to improve low pay, what we can do within these organisations to build a culture of better progression, how we can make sure that people in these communities are getting the skills that they need to move on. Also, about how we can target apprenticeship opportunities in a way that really reaps returns for the disadvantaged and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Part Two: the critical role of fishing, ports and tourism
Paul Davey, Head of Corporate Affairs, Hutchison Ports

- The region has some of the most important ports in the country, including Felixstowe and Harrich, operated by Hutchison Ports
- Each port is very different, and it is a function of each local geography, its local resources, labour force and its connectivity. However, I think one thing that almost all ports have in common is that they're rarely located in the most sought-after parts of town.
- We are in a diverse area and there are pockets of significant income and employment deprivation. We've already heard a little bit about sort of tendering in areas, but 80% percent of the neighbourhoods in tendering and indeed 14% in Ipswich, which is where we draw about half of our employees, were ranked amongst the top 10% most deprived in England in 2019.
- The economic and activity, skills, deficiencies and suppressed household incomes are concentrated in and around sort of climate change, which is we've heard about the southern part of Felixstowe where the port is located also. A part of Ipswich wage growth has also been particularly weak in these areas. Data shows that the average weekly earnings are £527 in Ipswich. This is below the UK average of £580. Even more surprisingly, they're below average in locations such as Liverpool and Leeds as well, which are sort of where the perception certainly is much more widely held that the deprived areas, not those in this region.
- We're hoping to attract businesses that will want to capitalise on the benefits of a UK location. The tax incentives on offer in a Freeport will enable them to do that and avoid paying this with a double duty that they would do now bringing goods into the UK and then shipping them to Europe.

- The second area where we're going to be focussing is really building on the offshore wind sector and the fact that about 50% of all consented offshore wind farm activity is in the southern North Sea, right on our doorstep here. That gives us the opportunity to create a bit of a green energy hub, which will contribute in a variety of ways to PM's 10 point-plan.

Rodney Anderson, Special Adviser to the Renaissance of East Anglian Fisheries Steering Group

- The questions need to be asked about, well, why are we investigating fishing, why do we actually care about the fishing industry? Why does it matter? And if you look at it in nationally in terms of the UK's GDP is very small. But fishing is, by its very nature, is coastal and it's highly localised. What happens to the industry can be very noticeable locally and have very substantial impact.
- It's often lumped in by commentators with other UK industries that rely upon raw resources, especially those that have been associated with lack of profitability and decline, industries like textiles, coal, ceramics and, more recently, steel. But fishing is different
- The resources are renewable. If well managed fish stocks offer a permanent harvest capable of substantial growth. There is strong demand globally for the product which outstrips supply, and aquaculture is increasingly filling that gap. Unlike some other industries the UK will capture, industry is not competing with low-cost competition from elsewhere in the world. It mainly competes with developed countries in the case with the UK, Scandinavia, Iceland and other actually high cost, low subsidy countries.
- If we look at it from point of view of wealth generation, fish stocks can generate substantial returns. Perennially for modest investment. It's an industry that provides jobs in areas where jobs are can be hard to find, where young people, as we've heard, moving away to find employment and where a growth industry would make a real difference.
- Another characteristic of the industry, particularly the catching sector, it's a great leveller if if you're joining from a quality and a higher education, successful higher education career or you're coming straight out of school with few qualifications and the basic skills and knowledge that you require to gain are the same.
- The UK is a fishing nation, we still have the second largest fleet in Europe. It's part of the identity of many coastal towns and villages, the businesses are rooted in the community, they're part of the community they belong, and they can be a pride in belonging to be part of this. And then, of course, the fishing harbour is always of interest - it is a place to visit, and they became part of the attraction.
- There are principal problems that have been identified by the Fishers: the lack of fishing opportunities and their access to fish. That that could be changed by changing the way in which the fishing opportunities are distributed and changing the management system, improvements to the port and road infrastructure, because those fish must be transported.
- There's a lack of facilities to repair boats to lift boats for maintenance. And these limited access to specialist engineers and equipment supplies and like.
- What needs to be done is that there needs to be a clear plan - so recommendations that we would like to see delivered, which would transform actually the local fisheries.

Pete Waters MBE, Executive Director, Visit East of England

- In 2019, the visitor economy of Essex, North and Cambridge combined, evaluated by the Cambridge Mobile, was over 11 billion pounds. Visit Britain forecast that the value of tourism in 2020 would have been just 37% percent of the 2019 figures

- The value of tourism would have declined by £7 billion pounds. The worldwide pandemic has clearly impacted on that, and it will take time to recover. Nonetheless, we must highlight the importance of travel and tourism to the overall economy and especially employment.
- In 2019, 246,000 people in the region were dependent on a thriving travel and tourism sector that livelihoods
- Around a 1/3 of travel and tourism jobs are held by young people aged 16 to 24, compared to just 12% of all jobs in the wider economy - that's mostly seen in coastal resorts in Great Yarmouth.
- We must remember that while tourism reopened slowly from March, businesses have been operating under capacity, detrimentally impacting cash for many accommodations.
- Bookings have held over from last year, which is not new revenue. Also, we expect the flurry of cancellations when overseas travel begins again.
- In the East of England's recent research, although 76% percent of respondents said they want to come to the region on holiday this year, 56% said they would go abroad as soon as they could.
- We have massive staff shortages, particularly in hospitality and we must not be lulled into thinking the visitor economy out of the woods, far from it.
- Tourism can build back better, faster. It can grow employment and value quickly. Latest tourism business survey, more than 60% of estimates suggest the biggest barrier to productivity is the absence of a year-round visitor. If we develop that, we don't burden ourselves of zero hour contracts a year-round industry will encourage businesses to invest in full time employment and higher wages and on the job skills. Not least, it will prevent youngsters becoming economic migrants, as Sasha mentioned earlier, forced to move to larger urban centres but worthwhile work by developing the sector.
- We can also level up tourism both geographically and seasonally, not by displacing businesses, but growing the number and value. This is linked to the necessity of changing the narrative that tourism is seasonal, low skilled and low paid.

Conclusions

- Reminded all attendees the next meeting will be on Wednesday the 8th September.
- This will be followed by the Parliamentary Reception – a physical event on the Terrace of the House of Commons to launch the Green Recovery and Levelling Inquiry Findings – which will now take place on Tuesday 19th October from 12:30 to 14:00

Other Attendees (apart from Speakers, Co-Chairs and Secretariat)

First Name	Surname	Job Title	Company
Christine	Abraham	Chief Executive	Community Action Suffolk
Esther	Blaine	Public Engagement Manager	Historic England
Robert	Bush	Operations Manager	East of England Energy Group
Michael	Chapman	International Trade Manager	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Simon	Darby	Head of East of England	PLMR
Cheryl	Davenport	Managing Director	East of England LGA
Linda	Haysey	Leader	East Herts District Council

Ivan	Henderson	Councillor	Essex County Council - Tendring District Council
David	Hutt	Director	GLEEDS LIMITED
Simon	Papworth	Economic Analyst	New Anglia LEP
Richard	Robertson	Councillor	Cambridge City Council
Cllr Peter	Schwier	Deputy Cabinet Member to Leader of Essex Council	Essex County Council
Ed	Shorthouse	Skills Data Analyst	New Anglia LEP
Rebecca	Stephens	Regional Partnership Director	CityFibre
Emma	Stewart	Account Manager	cofinitive
Andrew	Walker	Head of Policy & Public Affairs	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce