

HOW GOVERNMENT CAN PARTNER WITH BUSINESS TO TACKLE THE UK'S CHALLENGES

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ABOUT REGENERATE

ReGenerate is a charity that is helping businesses to profitably do good. Our ambition is that the UK is ranked the best place to start a purpose-driven business, and that their contribution to tackling social and environmental challenges is world leading.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To tackle the UK's challenges without putting further strain on the public purse, the UK government needs businesses to profitably do good. Businesses have an unrivalled ability to innovate and scale solutions to complex problems, and – together with investors – they want to help.¹ But previous attempts to create partnerships between government and business have failed to fully tap into their firepower. A key reason for this is that, with policy responsibility spread across Whitehall, businesses often do not know where to turn.²

This is a huge missed opportunity: in the UK, business leaders are as likely to think that their company's purpose is to profitably tackle the problems of people and planet as to maximise shareholder returns, and 80% of businesses would find it helpful to have an easy way to connect with government on addressing social and environmental challenges.^{3,4} Unleashing their power will also support much needed growth and investment, boosting GDP by an estimated £149bn per year.⁵

Based on a review of eight government-business partnership models in the UK and beyond, this report identifies lessons learned for effective government-business partnerships across four key pillars and puts forward some practical recommendations for unlocking their potential.

Building on government-business partnerships past and present, we propose three new partnership models:

- The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts are designed to harness the full potential of business-led innovation by providing a direct channel for businesses and investors to bring solutions to major national challenges to the Prime Minister's attention. This model takes inspiration from the Prime Minister's Business Council, but opens it up beyond the 'usual suspects'.
- The Prime Minister's Business Action Council enables the Prime Minister to identify
 the top three priorities on which the government wants to work in partnership with
 businesses and investors, and put three ministers in charge of overseeing their delivery.

¹ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back Better</u> <u>with Business</u>

² Ibid

³ The British Academy, 15/10/2020, <u>Survey highlights appetite for new definition of corporate purpose among UK</u> businesses

⁴ ReGenerate, 01/06/2021, <u>Helping purpose-driven business thrive</u>

⁵ O'Brien, A., Demos, 11/2023, <u>The Purpose Dividend</u>

This model draws on a combination of the Inclusive Economy Partnership, the Dormant Assets Expansion Board and the Danish Disruption Council.

A people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy Council would come into play should
the UK put in place a new industrial or growth strategy. This model takes on board
lessons learned from the UK's 2018-2021 Industrial Strategy Council, expanding its focus
beyond the 'traditional drivers' of growth and productivity to consider people and planet,
and makes it action focused.

1 THE CASE FOR BETTER PARTNERSHIPS

To achieve policy priorities without putting further strain on the public purse, the UK government needs businesses to profitably do good. Social and environmental challenges are mounting: the cost of living is soaring, over 30% of children are living in poverty, and the effects of climate change are increasingly being felt.^{6,7} Yet, with national debt topping 100% of GDP in 2023, the power of the government to tackle these challenges is constrained.⁸ At the same time, charities and local authorities are facing major funding gaps which threaten their ability to deliver much-needed services.⁹

Businesses have an unrivalled ability to innovate and scale solutions to complex problems, and – together with mission-aligned investors – they are eager to help. A British Academy / ReGenerate poll found business leaders as likely to think that their company's purpose is to profitably tackle the problems of people and planet as to maximise shareholder returns. ¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Impact Investing Institute estimated that the UK's impact investment market stood at £58 billion in 2020 and expected this figure to double to over £100 billion within five years. ¹¹

"Companies cannot solve every issue of public importance, but there are many – from retirement to infrastructure to preparing workers for the jobs of the future – that cannot be solved without corporate leadership." – Larry Fink, BlackRock CEO

Unleashing the power of business to tackle the UK's biggest social and environmental challenges will also support much-needed growth and investment. A recent Demos report found that, by putting people and planet at the centre of their operations, UK businesses could boost GDP growth by 7% (£149 billion per year), while increasing capital investment by £86 billion, and research and development expenditure by £116 billion.¹³ This is in line with strong

⁶ Poverty Strategy Commission, 09/2023, <u>A new framework for tackling poverty</u>

⁷ Office for National Statistics, 11/08/2023, Climate change insights, families and households, UK: August 2023

⁸ Office for National Statistics, 27/10/2023, <u>UK government debt and deficit: June 2023</u>

⁹ The charity umbrella body NCVO has warned that the sector is facing a 'cost of giving crisis', while the Local Government Association has estimated that local authorities face a £4 billion funding gap over the next two years.

¹⁰ The British Academy, 15/10/2020, <u>Survey highlights appetite for new definition of corporate purpose among UK</u> businesses

¹¹ Impact Investing Institute, 03/2022, <u>Estimating and describing the UK impact investing market</u>

¹² Cobley, M., Financial News, 17/01/2019, Purpose and profit: Larry Fink's real letter to CEOs

¹³ O'Brien, A., Demos, 11/2023, <u>The Purpose Dividend</u>

and growing evidence that businesses that profitably do good are more successful and resilient, as more people want to invest in, buy from and work for them.¹⁴ An earlier Harvard Business Review and EY Beacon Institute global survey of 474 executives found that businesses which clearly understood and articulated a purpose benefiting society were not only least likely to experience flat or declining growth, but also most likely to experience +10% growth.¹⁵

Businesses want to work in partnership with the government.¹⁶ ReGenerate's survey revealed that 80% of businesses seeking to profitably do good thought it would be helpful to have an "easy way to connect and coordinate with local and national government on tackling social and environmental challenges," with nearly half saying it would be very helpful.¹⁷ When the government works well with business, the benefits can be huge. One example of this is the Offshore Wind Industry Council's role in securing the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, which signalled a turning point in the UK's shift towards renewables and helped the UK to become the second largest offshore wind market in the world.¹⁸

But previous attempts to create government-business partnerships have failed to fully tap into business firepower. Though there are many reasons for this (see Section 2: Four pillars for effective partnerships), a key one is the lack of a clear 'home' within government for businesses and investors that want to profitably do good. With policy responsibility spread across several departments, businesses and investors that want to help the government to tackle societal challenges often do not know where to turn and are increasingly calling for a clear focal point within central government.^{19,20,21}

In this respect, the UK is lagging behind its peers. As noted by Colin Mayer CBE, Emeritus Professor at the Saïd Business School, the UK government's relations with business often "meddle at the side", focusing on tax and regulatory change, whereas for countries like the United States, France and Japan, the "benefits that will come out of partnerships with business

¹⁴ ReGenerate, 17/07/2020, <u>The case for purpose-driven business</u>

¹⁵ Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 20/04/2016, <u>The Business Case for Purpose</u>

¹⁶ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back</u> Better with Business

¹⁷ ReGenerate, 01/06/2021, Helping purpose-driven business thrive

¹⁸ Both the Offshore Wind Industry Council and the Offshore Wind Sector Deal are collaborations between government and industry. See <u>here</u> and <u>here</u> for more information.

¹⁹ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back</u> <u>Better with Business</u>

²⁰ Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future: Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment</u> <u>for economic, environmental and social policy priorities</u>

²¹ Big Society Capital, 14/11/2023, <u>Better investment for a better Britain</u>

are considered of utmost strategic importance" by their governments.²² The United States' progress on Artificial Intelligence, for example, comes from strong, strategic relations between government and the private sector to maximise innovation but also to help ensure that systems and solutions are developed ethically and to serve the public good.²³

If the UK is going to hold its own in the race to net zero, and tackle key issues such as the cost of living crisis and regional inequalities, this needs fixing. The time to act is now: with a general election on the horizon, the government has a unique opportunity to redefine how it works with business for the benefit of people and planet.

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²² Quotes extracted from an interview with Colin Mayer CBE, Emeritus Professor at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, conducted in November 2023.

²³ President Biden recently signed off the launch of the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource pilot programme, a collaboration between federal agencies and the private sector to expedite government support for responsible Artificial Intelligence research, particularly for researchers and small businesses with the aim to democratise access to Artificial Intelligence innovation and ensure its trustworthiness. See this article for more information.

2 FOUR PILLARS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

What makes a government-business partnership effective? We spoke to people working at the heart of models past and present, as well as those interested in future partnership opportunities, to find out. Based on a review of eight government-business partnership models in the UK and abroad (see Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership models), as well as interviews with members of ReGenerate's network, including business leaders and investors, senior politicians and political advisers, and civil servants, our research helped to identify lessons learned for an effective government-business partnership across four key pillars (see Annex 2: Research approach).²⁴

We focused on models in which central government is the principal convenor. These are complementary to, and not a replacement for, government-business partnerships at other levels and in the devolved administrations, and their ability to tap into and support work taking place at other levels will be crucial to their success.

2.1 Supporting structures

Partnerships need a stable and supportive 'home' within central government, with the power to drive action across Whitehall and beyond. Business leaders want to partner with the government if there is long-term commitment to engagement and action.²⁵ Though ministers may change, a stable home within government with the resources and expertise to provide the secretariat to the partnership and drive action within government helps to demonstrate and ensure commitment.

This 'home' should also provide a single focal point within government for businesses and investors seeking to do good. A major difficulty faced by businesses and investors wanting to support policy priorities is that "on each issue there are several different government departments involved, no one of which has full authority to work with business to agree goals and a timeline for achievement."²⁶ Building on the many voices calling for a clear focal point

²⁴ Building on Kenis and Provan's definition of network effectiveness in <u>Modes of Network Governance: Structure</u>, <u>Management</u>, <u>and Effectiveness</u>, we define partnership effectiveness as the achievement of partnership objectives that could not normally be achieved by individual members acting independently.

²⁵ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back</u> <u>Better with Business</u>

²⁶ Ibid.

within central government, this report puts forward a proposal for a single Unit focused on enabling businesses and investors to profitably do good. This could be a joint HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit, with a direct line to No 10. As well as bringing together policy experts on areas ranging from blended finance to stakeholder governance, including a senior adviser from the sector, this Unit could support structured partnerships between government, business and investors, and have a role in helping to enable, replicate and scale up business-led solutions to social and environmental challenges.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Civil Society Impact Funding Team (previously the Government Inclusive Economy Unit) provided a stable and supportive home for the **Dormant Assets Expansion Board**, which enabled it to deliver the expansion of the Dormant Assets Scheme in the context of elections, changing ministers and a global pandemic. The **National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board** in Australia is an example of a government-business partnership that changed its supporting structures to better align with an evolution in its purpose and objectives. Once the Board was no longer needed to advise on urgent practical aspects of the COVID-19 response, its role evolved to collaborating with the government on return to work policies, and the partnership became incorporated into the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, functioning as a strategic advisory body and forming part of deliberative processes. See <u>Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership models</u> for more information.

2.2 Purpose

Partnerships should be action-oriented, with a clear purpose and specific, measurable and time-bound objectives. Forums for discussion and consultation abound. While these are important, achieving policy priorities without putting further strain on the public purse requires actions as well as words. A key reason why partnerships failed was because they became 'talking shops' or were viewed as vehicles for crony capitalism. While having a clear purpose and specific objectives may seem obvious, it is a step that many partnerships missed and vital to partnership

²⁷ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back</u> <u>Better with Business</u>

²⁸ Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future: Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment</u> <u>for economic, environmental and social policy priorities</u>

²⁹ Big Society Capital, 14/11/2023, <u>Better investment for a better Britain</u>

effectiveness.³⁰ Objectives should also be designed so that it is resoundingly clear whether or not they have been achieved at their end.

In considering challenges on which to focus, partnerships should hone in on those that could not be tackled by members acting independently. Reflecting on his experience co-chairing the Prime Minister's Council for Social Action with Gordon Brown, David Robinson OBE, Co-Founder of Community Links, and Founder and Co-leader of the Relationships Project, noted that this was a crucial consideration for him and other members.³¹ There is much that businesses, investors as well as local authorities and charities – notwithstanding the impact of significant funding gaps noted above – can do independently, and local and business-led solutions abound. As such, partnerships should focus on challenges where central government levers are needed to enable, scale or replicate business-led solutions, or that could benefit from co-designed and co-delivered solutions.³²

The **Danish Disruption Council** set out a clear framework for its purpose. Within two overarching aims (specifically, continue to be one of the wealthiest countries in the world and make everyone the winners of the future) and four focus areas (namely, a prosperous welfare state with small social divisions, future education in a digital world, competitive companies that are digital frontrunners and a robust, and safe and flexible labour market), the Council identified fifteen time-bound objectives. See <u>Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership models</u> for more information.

2.3 Membership and governance

A stable chair, who is trusted by partners to balance competing interests, will be key to keeping the partnership on track. Changing chairs can represent a real risk to a partnership's momentum and existence.³³ A partnership chaired by the Prime Minister is both a powerful and relatively stable political option. The success of the Prime Minister's Council for Social Action,

³⁰ Kenis and Provan's article <u>Modes of Network Governance</u> outlines that goal-directed networks that are set up with a specific purpose "evolve largely through conscious efforts to build coordination" and are less likely to foster opportunism.

³¹ Extracted from an interview with David Robinson OBE, Co-Founder of Community Links, and Founder and Co-leader of the Relationships Project, conducted in December 2023.

³² The Young Offender Programme is a powerful example of business-led solutions scaled with government support. Established by the National Grid in Reading in response to local skills shortages, the Programme's success prompted the then Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to ask National Grid to lead the programme's UK-wide rollout, with benefits for both young offenders and businesses. See an evaluation of the programme <a href="https://example.com/here-example.com/he

³³ The <u>Building Back Better with Business</u> report revealed that frequently changing ministerial teams, which can lead to diminished interest in a particular issue or challenge, often results in frustration.

noted David Robinson, was due in no small part to the convening power of No 10.³⁴ Alternatively, an independent chair with a direct line to, and strong political backing from, senior government leaders can be a good option. Where partners' interests compete and are not balanced, as was the case in the Public Health Responsibility Deal, partnerships can actually enable resistance to change.³⁵

In order to drive change, partnerships should be composed of members who have the willingness and ability to achieve the partnership's objectives. In the models we reviewed, those that were effective were careful to consider representation in terms of both the size and location of their members. Though often not fully representative of the business population as a whole, they engaged more widely when a more representative view was needed. Models that were seen to not be representative or engage more broadly, for example the Prime Minister's Business Council, were questioned on their ability to take a balanced view. Change happens in places, which means that small, locally-based businesses and local government, including Mayoral Combined Authorities, are key to an effective partnership – in terms of both designing and delivering solutions. However, local government is currently being held back by a lack of funding and powers. Alongside small business and local government, anchor businesses' such as Severn Trent or Newcastle Building Society should be considered as potential members, given their long-term vested interest in, and commitment to, improving the prosperity and wellbeing of the communities which both their employees and customers call home.

Members need to be committed to specific actions that support the partnership's objectives and be empowered to take these forward. Partnerships were particularly effective where partners had clear roles and the flexibility to engage others beyond the partnership to carry these out, including setting up their own structures and subgroups.

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³⁴ Extracted from an interview with David Robinson OBE, Co-Founder of Community Links, and Founder and Co-leader of the Relationships Project, conducted in December 2023.

³⁵ See this <u>article</u> for an analysis of the Public Health Responsibility Deal, an example of a government-business partnership that involved partners voluntarily committing to pledges to take actions benefiting public health. It ultimately failed to deliver its intended impact because the generation and uptake of pledges was largely driven by the partners themselves, enabling the alcohol, food, physical activity, and workplace health sub-systems to resist change.

³⁶ Powell, E., The Times, 28/08/2023, <u>Put us on business council, say small firms</u>

³⁷ The Local Government Association has estimated that <u>local authorities face a £4 billion funding gap over the next two years</u>. The province of British Columbia in Canada is a good example of how an empowered region has been able to support social and environmental prosperity. In response to mounting social and environmental problems, the province set out the <u>StrongerBC</u> plan to transition to a stronger economy that is both inclusive and clean by addressing society's most pressing issues.

Though the **Dormant Assets Expansion Board** was chaired by the government at the time of its establishment, an independent chair, trusted by both government and industry, eventually stepped in as work ramped up on the Dormant Assets Bill and helped to keep Scheme expansion on track. Committed industry leaders worked in partnership with key trade bodies to run sector working groups, which provided technical advice on Scheme design and helped to build participation in this voluntary Scheme. See <u>Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership</u> models for more information.

2.4 Ways of working

Partnerships should make good use of members' time and harness their comparative advantages. For business leaders, "time is both short and precious". As such, seemingly small considerations like having a meeting's agenda and objectives set ahead of time make a big difference. Partnerships where responsibility was distributed according to members' comparative advantages were more effective and, crucially, more likely to be a good use of partners' time, thereby maintaining engagement.

Partnerships should operate in a way that creates space for innovation, including drawing on business-led and place-based solutions. Partnerships that took a flexible approach to finding solutions and tackling blockers, within structures which ensured that the partnership's overall objectives were met, were more likely to support innovation and be effective at tackling complex challenges. In particular, where an issue arose that partners did not have the ability to resolve, the flexibility to draw on other actors was key.

The **Inclusive Economy Partnership** created working groups for each of its three focus areas (namely, transition to work, mental health and financial inclusion), which worked together to develop four 'Big Ideas' to find solutions to tackle these challenges. Members' respective strengths were harnessed, with civil society experts providing knowledge and experience of the issues, and business leaders providing skills, resources and access to people. See <u>Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership models</u> for more information.

³⁸ Collier-Keywood, R., Woods, N., The University of Oxford, Blavatnik School of Government, 04/2021, <u>Building Back</u> <u>Better with Business</u>

3 TOWARDS NEW PARTNERSHIP MODELS

Based on these lessons learned, ReGenerate puts forward three proposed models for government-business partnership. These models could, and ideally should, be combined. For example, the Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts will be particularly effective at inviting businesses to highlight and seek government support for business-led solutions – whether national or place based. As such, it could be combined with the Prime Minister's Business Action Council, whose more structured, delivery-focused approach will help to enable, scale or replicate these nationally.

3.1 The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts

The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts (see Table 1 below) are designed to harness the full potential of business-led innovation by providing a direct channel for businesses and investors to bring solutions to major societal challenges requiring central government support to the Prime Minister's attention. These solutions could be national or place based, and could involve working in partnership with local government, including Mayoral Combined Authorities. This model takes inspiration from the Prime Minister's Business Council but opens it up beyond the 'usual suspects' and makes it more action-focused. Effective follow-up from the secretariat will be essential to ensuring that momentum on enabling, scaling or replicating solutions is not lost, as was successfully done in the Build Back Better Business Council.

Table 1: The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts

Purpose

The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts provide a space where businesses and investors can put forward ideas for how businesses can help to tackle social or environmental challenges requiring central government support, or showcase existing place-based solutions for scaling or replication. A first meeting would be used to identify objectives aligned to the challenge put forward, with the overall purpose being to ensure that the objectives are met by the end of the parliamentary term.

Membership & governance

The Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts would be hosted and chaired by the Prime Minister. Other attendees would depend on the issue being discussed, but could include businesses, including small businesses and anchor businesses, investors, and relevant ministers and local government representatives.

Ways of working

Breakfasts would be held monthly. The invitees would use a first meeting to present a time-bound plan for tackling a specific challenge and be given the opportunity to flag where they need central government support. The Prime Minister would then ask a minister to take responsibility for providing that support. The secretariat would run the agenda setting process by reviewing plans put forward by businesses and investors in advance of the first meeting. This process would be used to ensure that the meetings are a good use of time by checking that the challenge identified is aligned to policy priorities and that central government has the levers needed to provide support. The follow-up meeting would be set according to the timeframe proposed at the first meeting and used by invitees to report on what they achieved. If they have failed to meet their objective, the meeting could be used to determine whether to continue partnering through this mechanism or whether a different approach is needed, for example embedding the work into the Prime Minister's Business Action Council. Consideration could be given to offering regular slots to some key actors, for example the Confederation of Small Businesses or Mayoral Combined Authorities.

Supporting structures

A joint HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit with a direct line to the Prime Minister's Business Team would provide the secretariat to the Breakfasts, including running the agenda setting process, and tracking and reporting on progress toward achieving the objectives identified during the meetings. This Unit would also have a role in gathering and helping to enable, replicate and scale up business-led solutions to social and environmental challenges.

3.2 The Prime Minister's Business Action Council

The Prime Minister's Business Action Council (see Table 2 below) enables the Prime Minister to identify the top three priorities on which the government wants to work in partnership with businesses and investors, and ask three ministers to oversee their delivery. This model takes inspiration from the Inclusive Economy Partnership (see Annex 2: Fight government-business partnership models), which targeted three specific issues and whose ways of working ensured that the partnership led to tangible action rather than becoming a 'talking shop'. Like the Danish Disruption Council, the Inclusive Economy Partnership intentionally drew on the insights and expertise of civil society as well as the private sector. Finally, this model also draws on the Dormant Assets Expansion Board, whose subgroups were the motor that enabled the Board to deliver (see Annex 2: Fight government-business partnership models).

Table 2: The Prime Minister's Business Action Council

Purpose

The Prime Minister would identify three key priorities on which the government wants to work in partnership with business. For each priority, the Prime Minister would ask a minister to work with businesses and investors to identify one specific, measurable and time-bound objective, which they will work in partnership to achieve. The Prime Minister's Business Action Council's purpose would be to ensure that the three objectives are met by the end of the parliamentary term.

Membership & governance

The specific members would depend on the priorities identified, but at a high level the Council could include:

- the Prime Minister, who would chair the Council and leverage their convening power to ensure that it achieves its purpose and sustains members' long-term commitment and engagement;
- three relevant ministers, one per objective, who would each chair a Steering Group and be responsible for the delivery of the Steering Group's objectives; and
- six relevant business and investment leaders, two per objective.

Alongside the three ministers and the six business and investment leaders who sit on the Council, the membership of the Steering Groups could include other businesses and investors, trade associations, and business networks such as B Lab UK or the British Chambers of Commerce, among others.

Ways of working

The Council would meet every 6 months. At these meetings, each Steering Group chair would be invited to identify the single biggest barrier to meeting their objective. With backing from the Council, the Steering Group would then establish a task and finish group to tackle this barrier and report on its progress at the next meeting. The Council, Steering Groups and successful task and finish groups would be invited to meet the Prime Minister once a year.

Supporting structures

A joint HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit would provide the secretariat to the Council, working with ministers' respective departments. The secretariat to the Steering Groups would be provided by the three ministers' departments, with support from the HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit.

HOW MIGHT THE PRIME MINISTER'S BUSINESS BREAKFASTS AND BUSINESS ACTION COUNCIL WORK IN PRACTICE?

We set out below how a combination of the Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts and Business Action Council might be used to fill the UK's 1 million labour vacancies with marginalised talent.

The problem

The UK's 1 million labour vacancies are holding back business potential and stifling growth. ^{39,40,41} Meanwhile, millions of people in the UK face barriers to work, including people with disabilities or criminal records, single parents and care leavers. Our research shows that while 70% of employers feel that people from most marginalised groups could fit well in their organisation, only about 20% are taking steps to recruit them. ⁴² Reducing this drop-off rate would represent a triple win for businesses, the economy and society.

How the government-business partnership models could help

The Prime Minister could identify 'good jobs' as one of the top three priorities on which the government wants to work with business, alongside levelling up and net zero, for example. This would feed into the purpose and membership of the Prime Minister's Business Action Council, with a Steering Group set up to focus on this priority, which could be chaired by the Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business, for example.

To set the agenda for the Prime Minister's Business Breakfasts, a joint HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit could work with No 10's Business Team to invite businesses and investors with ideas for reducing barriers to employment to meet the Prime Minister. Attendees could, for example, include members of the newly established West Midlands Employment Alliance, a group of ten major businesses with a combined reach of 100,000 employees and over 50,000 hires per year, which is working to help businesses recruit and retain people from marginalised groups. The Alliance could present their solutions to the Prime Minister, identifying where the government's support is needed. Other key players in this space, such as Greggs and Timpson, could also be invited to attend.

Where ideas brought forward during the Breakfasts require significant focus from, and collaboration with, central government to deliver, they could be fed into the work of the Prime Minister's Business Action Council. This could include supporting the development of a one-stop-shop for businesses looking for guidance and support on recruiting people from marginalised backgrounds – an idea for which there is strong and growing business support – or helping to lower the financial risk for employers interested in recruiting people from marginalised groups by not requiring them to pay employer National Insurance for 12 months for new employees who were in receipt of Universal Support.

The potential partners

Potential partners could include members of the West Midlands Employment Alliance, including Cook, EY Foundation, Pertemps and Severn Trent, or other businesses notable for their work recruiting people from marginalised groups, such as Greggs and Timpson.

³⁹ Office for National Statistics, 12/12/2023, Vacancies and jobs in the UK: December 2023

⁴⁰ British Chambers of Commerce, 14/02/2023, Labour shortage a huge drag on economic growth

⁴¹ Confederation of British Industry, 12/10/2023, <u>Labour shortages remain a blocker for business potential</u>

⁴² ReGenerate, 03/07/2023, The Good Jobs Project: The Purpose-Driven Business Solution to the UK's Labour Shortage

3.3 A people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy Council

A people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy Council (see Table 3 below) would come into play should the UK put in place a new industrial or growth strategy. This model takes on board lessons learned from the UK's 2018-2021 Industrial Strategy Council (see Annex 2: Eight government-business partnership models), expanding its focus beyond the 'traditional drivers' of growth and productivity to consider people and planet. ^{43,44,45,46} As well as implementing the 2018-2021 Council's recommendations, this model reflects the strong and growing evidence that unleashing the power of business to tackle societal challenges will also support much-needed growth and investment. While the previous Council's role was to track progress and provide advice, tweaks to its purpose and ways of working in this model make it action focused.

⁴³ O'Brien, A., Demos, 11/2023, <u>The Purpose Dividend</u>

⁴⁴ Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 20/04/2016, <u>The Business Case for Purpose</u>

⁴⁵ ReGenerate, 17/07/2020, <u>The Case for Purpose-Driven Business</u>

⁴⁶ Industrial Strategy Council, 03/2021, <u>Annual Report</u>

Table 3: A people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy Council

Purpose	 The Industrial Strategy Council's purpose would be to support the development and delivery of an industrial or growth strategy that targets economic growth by putting people and planet at its heart by: advising the government on the development of the strategy, with a focus on helping to prioritise actions needed to enable businesses and investors to – profitably and in a way that spurs productivity and economic growth – help meet social and environmental objectives; ensuring that actions for businesses and investors are taken forward and flagging where government support is needed to tackle blockers; and developing a monitoring and evaluation framework which focuses on social and environmental, as well as economic, outcomes, and using this to monitor progress across all actions, including those led by businesses and investors.
Membership & governance	The Council's Chair and members would be appointed by the Chancellor and Business Secretary, and include leaders from business, civil society and academia.
Ways of working	The Council would meet on a quarterly basis and report to Parliament annually. The Council's Chair would meet with the Business Secretary, Chancellor and Prime Minister on an annual basis to take stock of progress, and identify and tackle blockers.
Supporting structures	The secretariat would be provided by a joint HM Treasury-Department for Business and Trade Unit.

HOW MIGHT THE PEOPLE AND PLANET-FOCUSED INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY COUNCIL WORK IN PRACTICE?

We set out below how a people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy Council, aligned to UK Growth and Community Funds, could help to power the UK economy.

The problem

The UK economy is lagging behind other G7 countries in terms of growth, productivity and investment.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, inequalities between people and places persist, and the transition to net zero will require decisive action and investment.^{48,49}

A people and planet-focused industrial or growth strategy, combined with a blended finance approach to investment, could prove powerful tools for getting government, businesses and investors working in partnership to tackle the UK's biggest challenges head on:

- The UK is the only leading economy in the world not to have a long-term industrial strategy.⁵⁰ Though industrial policy tends to be divisive, there is "a powerful economic case for [it]," and many voices are now calling for a "mission oriented" industrial policy.^{51,52} A strategy that supports UK businesses putting people and planet at the heart of their operations could boost GDP growth by 7% (£149 billion per year), while increasing capital investment by £86 billion, and R&D expenditure by £116 billion.⁵³
- The UK has been held back by decades of under-investment by both the public and private sectors.^{54,55} And yet, with over £4.6 trillion of insurance and pension fund assets, it is home to the world's second-largest pool of long-term capital.⁵⁶ By leveraging this huge resource, as well as investor appetite for impact alongside financial returns, the government could potentially unlock £5 billion in private investment for public policy priorities initially, and a further £50 billion over the next 5-10 years.⁵⁷ This is about spending smarter: the UK government currently spends £865 billion on capital investments and services annually; it could use a portion of this to crowd in much-needed private sector investment.⁵⁸

How the government-business partnership model could help

To power the economy, address inequality and poverty, and meet net zero targets, the government could establish an Industrial Strategy Council that is formed in conjunction with the development of a new people and planet-focused Industrial Strategy. UK Growth and Community Funds could support the Strategy's delivery by helping to deploy private investment for policy priorities.

⁴⁷ Resolution Foundation & Centre for Economic Performance, LSE, 04/12/2023, Ending Stagnation: A New Economic Strategy for Britain

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Climate Change Committee, 12/2020, <u>The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero</u>

⁵⁰ Make UK, 04/05/2023, <u>Industrial Strategy: A Manufacturing Ambition</u>

⁵¹ Juhász, R., Lane, N., & Rodrik, D., 08/2023, The New Economics of Industrial Policy, Annual Review of Economics

⁵² Industrial Strategy Council, 20/07/2020, A challenge led recovery; the role of mission oriented industrial strategy

⁵³ O'Brien, A., Demos, 11/2023, <u>The Purpose Dividend</u>

⁵⁴ Resolution Foundation & Centre for Economic Performance, LSE, 04/12/2023, Ending Stagnation: A New Economic Strategy for Britain

⁵⁵ Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future: Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment for economic.</u> <u>environmental and social policy priorities</u>

⁵⁶ Big Society Capital, 14/11/2023, <u>Better investment for a better Britain</u>

⁵⁷ Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future: Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment for economic, environmental and social policy priorities</u>

⁵⁸ Big Society Capital, 14/11/2023, <u>Better investment for a better Britain</u>

As a first key step, the Industrial Strategy Council could advise the government on the development of the Strategy, including considering the economic, social and environmental outcomes that it could target, as well as priority actions for businesses and government. Aside from progress tracking, the Council could drive business action and flag where government support is needed to tackle blockers.

To support delivery, the government could establish the widely called for economic growth 'super-fund'. The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment's recent report sets out how this fund could be structured and supported, with key recommendations including:

- the establishment of a UK Growth Fund, an umbrella fund-of-funds which would aim to attract institutional
 capital, under which sector-specific funds would address market failures or fundings gaps, directing capital
 from start-up and scale-up investors to support business growth;
- the establishment of a UK Community Growth Fund, which would complement the UK Growth Fund by directing much-needed capital to businesses and places that are struggling to unlock mainstream finance, including small businesses and social enterprises;⁵⁹ and
- the implementation of policy tweaks to encourage and enable private investors to direct capital to the funds and other policy priorities, including new guidance on fiduciary duties and incentives.⁶⁰

A critical success factor – applying the lessons learned from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund – will be the alignment of the Funds' outcomes to those of the Industrial Strategy.⁶¹ The Industrial Strategy Council could have a role in advising the government on how best to do this.

The potential partners

The Chancellor and the Business Secretary could ask leaders from business, investment, academia and civil society with expertise in the specific challenges facing the UK and in the sectors of the future to make up the Council's Chair and members. The two Funds could potentially be managed by the UK Government's Infrastructure Bank and British Business Bank.⁶²

⁵⁹ See the Impact Investing Institute's <u>examples of place-based impact investing</u> and recent report 'Bridging capital into communities: A <u>practical guide for policy makers</u>.

⁶⁰ Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future: Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment for economic.</u>
<u>environmental and social policy priorities</u>

⁶¹ The House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee found in its <u>April 2021 report on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund</u> that the Fund was "insufficiently focused on what it [was] expected to deliver", focusing on inputs rather than outcomes.

⁶² Gordon, S., 10/2023, <u>Investing in our future</u>: <u>Practical solutions for the UK government to mobilise private investment for economic, environmental and social policy priorities</u>

Annex 1: Eight government-business partnership models

What worked and did not work

Prime Minister's Business Council (UK, 2023-present)

- Membership is not representative of the full UK landscape. It excludes sole traders, small and medium-sized businesses, family businesses or employee-owned firms, despite together representing 99% of the UK business sector.
- Governance and decision-making are impacted from the PM receiving a more limited view of the challenges faced by UK businesses.
- Ways of working were reported by some members as ineffective at enabling detailed discussions, given the Council meets for less than 45 minutes every 6 months.

Build Back Better Business Council (UK, January 2021-December 2021)

- Effective ways of working harnessed members' expertise by creating space to innovate and co-design solutions. Members formed subgroups in specialty areas, such as the Electric Vehicle Fleet Accelerator (EVFA), which detailed how to remove obstacles to the electrification of the UK's transport system.
- Strong governance and supporting structures enabled follow-up action on the EVFA's findings. The Secretary of State for Transport agreed to establish a governance board to enable the EVFA to work with BEIS, Ofgem and the Council to drive progress on fleet electrification.

National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board (Australia, 2020-2021)

- Purpose and objectives were criticised for being too narrow in focus.
- Governance lacked clear and independent appointment processes. Concerns were raised relating to the chair's conflict of interest.
- Flexible supporting structures enabled the Board to be incorporated into the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in order to adapt to shifting national priorities (from crisis management to economic recovery).
- External legitimacy was further challenged due to a lack of accountability procedures and legislative underpinning.

Dormant Assets Expansion Board (UK, 2018-present)

- Effective ways of working harnessed members' expertise, with Industry Champions convening sector working groups, which proved invaluable to developing policies and the operationalisation of Scheme expansion.
- Strong and consistent supporting structures enabled successful delivery of Scheme expansion and the Dormant Assets Act.
- A strong, independent Chair enabled the Board to maintain momentum in the context of ministerial reshuffles and competing priorities (including Covid-19).

Industrial Strategy Council (UK, 2018-2021)

 Effective ways of working and strong supporting structures enabled a significant number of publications monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Industrial Strategy. This included two annual reports putting forward recommendations, a series of success metrics for the Industrial Strategy and seven papers on a range of topics including skills, local policy and growth, sectoral policy and the development of greener supply chains.

Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP) (UK, 2017-present)

- A purpose targeting 3 specific issues enabled successful outcomes: the launch of 3 regional programmes supporting youth employment and access to fairer services for 125k+ people.
- Strong membership representation across civil society and business enabled a balanced view on how to deliver solutions. The IEP led 2 accelerator programmes supporting 27 social enterprises to scale and leveraged £6m+ of investment and funding through partnerships.
- Effective ways of working harnessed members' expertise by forming working groups for each issue to develop 4 'Big Ideas'.

Danish Disruption Council (Denmark, 2017-2018)

- A targeted purpose outlined aims, focus areas and objectives. Structured ways of working involved a finite number of meetings, each with a specific agenda enabled successful outcomes. This included the launch of a national strategy for digital growth supporting businesses to make use of new technologies; a tripartite agreement on retraining Danish workers; and the Danish Technology Pact.
- Strong membership representation across social partners, business leaders and experts enabled a balanced view of how to deliver on objectives.

National Economic Development Council (UK, 1962-1992)

- Shifting governance and membership makeup brought instability. Changes to Chair positions often followed machinery of government changes.
- Ineffective ways of working meant that members' expertise was poorly harnessed as they did not have right of access to official documents or to the government's own discussions on economic policy.
- Long-term commitment waned as Council meetings became less frequent after the Council lost prominence in the late 1980s.

Supporting structures

Industrial Strategy. The sponsor's role was to

advise and, where appropriate, act on behalf of Ministers and the Accounting Officer to scrutinise and oversee the Council.

Prime Minister's Business Council	Build Back Better Business Council	National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board	Dormant Assets Expansion Board
(UK, 2023-present)	(UK, January 2021-December 2021)	(Australia, 2020-2021)	(UK, 2018-present)
Supported by No 10.	Supported by No 10.	 Supported by a secretariat within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Council was incorporated into the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet after it evolved later in 2020 to strengthen its position as an advisory body forming part of deliberative processes, rather than acting as an external agency. 	Together with HM Treasury officials, the secretariat updated ministers in both departments on the Board's progress, and was responsible for driving Scheme expansion,
Industrial Strategy Council	Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP)	Danish Disruption Council	National Economic Development Council
(UK, 2018-2021)	(UK, 2017-present)	(Denmark, 2017-2018)	(UK, 1962-1992)
 Supported by a secretariat composed of BEIS civil servants. Its function was to support the Council and its members by arranging meetings, facilitating the production of reports and correspondence and advising the Council on procedure in its relationship with government. The Council's sponsor was BEIS' Director of 	Supported by the Cabinet Office Business Partnerships Team and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.		Supported by a secretariat, the National Economic Development Office (NEDO), that was headed up by a Director General and its staff drawn from industry, trade unions, universities, research bodies and trade associations. The NEDO's function was to service the Council, carry out its programmes of research and investigation, and produce

reports on its findings. The secretariat's size

varied between 100-200 employees.

Purpose

Prime Minister's Business Council (UK, 2023-present)

- Boost economic growth.
- Make the UK a leading hub to do business by unlocking investment, fuelling innovation and improving access to skills and talent.
- Collect first-hand perspectives on the economy's impact on business and how to break down the barriers they face.

Build Back Better Business Council (UK, January 2021-December 2021)

- Drive economic recovery and growth by unlocking investment, boosting job creation and levelling up the UK.
- Enable the transition to a Net Zero economy by 2050.
- Promote Global Britain as set out in the Plan for Growth.
- Advisory role.

National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board (Australia, 2020-2021)

- Mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic by advising the government on crisis management and public-private partnerships, such as keeping ports open and supply chains operating while finding new supplies of personal protective equipment.
- The Council was expanded and repurposed later in 2020 to support the government's 'JobMaker' plan and inform policies for economic recovery.
- Strategic advisory role.

Dormant Assets Expansion Board (UK, 2018-present)

• Help the government to design and deliver the expansion of the UK Dormant Assets Scheme to unlock an estimated £880 million of dormant financial assets for social and environmental initiatives across the UK, including advising the government and regulators on legislative and regulatory changes; developing and embedding industry good practice; and building industry participation in the voluntary Scheme.

Industrial Strategy Council (UK, 2018-2021)

- Develop measures of success for the government's Industrial Strategy and assess its progress and delivery against these measures.
- Independent non-statutory advisory body.

Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP) (UK, 2017-present)

- Unlock the potential of people and communities across the UK to build a more inclusive society.
- Address three issues at both national and local levels: transition to work, mental health and financial inclusion.
- Improve the lives of highly vulnerable communities through innovation projects.

Danish Disruption Council (Denmark, 2017-2018)

- Recommend ways Denmark can 1) continue to Assess the state of the UK's economy and be one of the wealthiest countries in the world and seize technological opportunities and 2) ensure its citizens live a prosperous life.
- 4 focus areas: a prosperous welfare state with small social divisions: future education in a digital world; competitive companies that are digital frontrunners; and a robust labour market.
- Formed on the basis that tripartite collaboration between government, business and civil society is most effective at finding solutions to societal challenges.

National Economic Development Council (UK, 1962-1992)

- identify obstacles to its growth.
- Agree on an agenda and recommendations to improve economic performance.
- Determine the programme of research and assess the implications of the results.
- Intended as an alternative to the Treasury in acting as a source of information.
- Advisory body.

Membership & governance

Prime Minister's Business Council (UK, 2023-present)

- 13 Chief Executives of leading employers (almost all FTSE 100 companies), considered experts across strategically important industries for UK growth, including construction, tech, energy and financial services.
- Co-chaired by the Prime Minister and his Special Adviser on Business and Investment.

Build Back Better Business Council (UK, January 2021-December 2021)

- 30 business leaders from across the whole economy.
- Invited and appointed individually by the Prime Minister for a maximum twelve-month term.
- Co-chaired by the Prime Minister and Chancellor.
- Members can be added or removed at the discretion of the co-chairs.

National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board (Australia, 2020-2021)

- 8 leaders from the private and public sectors across different areas of expertise.
- Personally selected and appointed by the Prime Minister's office.
- Chaired by a senior business leader.

Dormant Assets Expansion Board (UK, 2018-present)

- 4 Industry Champions representing the four sectors identified for Scheme expansion (banking, insurance and pensions, investment and wealth management, and securities); CEO of the Scheme's administrator, Reclaim Fund Ltd; senior officials from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and HM Treasury; Financial Conduct Authority representatives; and representatives from relevant Trade Bodies, including the Association of British Insurers and the Investment Association.
- The Chair has changed over time, including senior officials, a former Industry Champion and the Chair of Reclaim Fund Ltd.

Industrial Strategy Council (UK, 2018-2021)

- 15 business leaders, investors, economists, and
 14 business and civil society champions, academics with expertise from across the full spectrum of areas of activity covered by the UK Industrial Strategy.
- Invited by the Secretary of State for BEIS for a period of up to three years.
- Additional experts may be invited to review aspects of the Strategy.
- The Secretary of State for BEIS and the Chancellor determine the Council's role and remit.
- Led by a Chair appointed by the Secretary of State for BEIS.

Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP) (UK, 2017-present)

including Nationwide, Unilever, and Mastercard.

Danish Disruption Council (Denmark, 2017-2018)

- 8 ministers and 32 permanent members, including social partners (6 trade union representatives), business representatives and experts.
- Chaired by Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

National Economic Development Council (UK, 1962-1992)

- 20 members, including two government ministers, six trade union leaders, six senior private sector managers and two chairmen of nationalised industries. There were also three independent members: the Director-General of the National Economic Development Office (NEDO) and two academics.
- Members' make-up varied throughout the Council's existence in terms of size and inclusion of members ex officiis.
- Treasury and Cabinet Office officials were not normally appointed as members.
- Initially chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Ways of working

(UK, 2023-present)	(UK, January 2021-December 2021)	National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board (Australia, 2020-2021)	(UK, 2018-present)
Members meet twice a year.	 Met quarterly in plenary and members were required to attend all scheduled sessions. Agendas and papers were circulated in advance. Supplementary meetings with Council members could be agreed via the co-chairs. Members were invited to continue their engagement beyond the Council's term. The Council reported to the Prime Minister and Chancellor via the Downing Street Business Team. 	 Three task forces were attached to the Council and advised the NCC. They considered different focus areas (manufacturing, charity and philanthropy and industrial relations). Members of the working groups were not necessarily official commissioners of the NCC. The Council advised the Cabinet. Their input remained confidential. 	 Each Industry Champion chaired a sector working group, which included other businesses, trade associations and relevant government officials. With support from Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport officials and their working groups, the Industry Champions produced a report with recommendations on Scheme expansion. The government consulted with the Expansion Board on a public consultation on Scheme expansion and the Dormant Assets Bill. The Board ensured that preparations for operationalising an expanded Scheme were on track.
Industrial Strategy Council	Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP)	Danish Disruption Council	National Economic Development Council

• Met three to four times per year.

(UK, 2018-2021)

- Annual work programme and priorities agreed with BEIS and HMT.
- The Chair met annually with the Secretary of State for BEIS and the Chancellor to discuss its work programme and progress.
- The Government could ask the Council to change its work plan depending on emerging priorities.
- The Council worked closely with relevant Government Departments, their agencies and other advisory committees to avoid unnecessary overlap of work.

(UK, 2017-present)

- In its first year, the partnership ran an accelerator programme to test how the partnership would run. This was done via an open call for social innovators to apply for partnerships to help them scale solutions.
- Civil society experts provided solutions, knowledge and experience of the issues, and business enablers provided skills, experience, resources and access to people.
- Members co-designed the partnership's approach.
- Formed working groups for each of the 3 challenges to develop 4 'Big Ideas' for members to work on together.

(Denmark, 2017-2018)

- Held a total of 8 meetings around the Council's two ambitions, each with a different focus and held in different regions of the country to facilitate dialogue on a national level.
- Formulated 15 objectives under the Council's four focus areas.
- The Government stated it would follow up on the Council's work by producing an annual review relating to the objectives.

- on
- on

(UK, 1962-1992)

- Met every 1-2 months until 1987.
- The Council was not established through an act or charter; its remit and constitution were expressed in the Chancellor's statements.

Annex 2: Research approach

Between September and December 2023, ReGenerate considered eight government-business partnership models in the UK and abroad, assessing the impact of their supporting structures, purpose, membership and governance, and ways of working on partnership effectiveness. We used a mixed method approach to identify lessons learned and develop new partnership models, including:

• Policy idea mapping

We gathered and analysed c. 380 policy ideas supporting businesses and investors that are seeking to profitably do good that have been put to the government in the past decade.

• Literature review

We conducted desk research to identify and analyse past and current UK and international models of government-business partnerships, as well as wider research to gain a better understanding of the impact of key characteristics on partnership effectiveness.

• Interviews, meetings and workshops

We conducted semi-structured interviews and meetings with leaders from government, business, investment and academia, including people with direct experience of the models under consideration, to understand where government-business partnerships had worked and not worked, and gather views on strengthening their effectiveness. We also held a workshop with senior leaders from government and business to stress test and strengthen our proposed partnership models.

Review cycles

We sought feedback from those we engaged to refine our findings and proposed partnership models.

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