

Levelling up

Levelling up is a good slogan and a worthy idea. The idea is not to press for equality by trying to drive the super rich out of the UK and by taxing the successful who remain more, but through greater opportunities to let more people succeed all round the country.

There are some who seem to see it as primarily a matter of providing more public money to the places that have been left behind. Where they need better public services or need to renovate the public estate that may be necessary, but it is not sufficient to level up. Levelling up is about the quality of life and the living standards of the many, not about the percentage gains in public money for the public sector minority.

There have been various government attempts in the past to institute regional and local policies by improving public buildings, putting in better arts facilities, expanding public sector offices to house more officials and tidying up pieces of land owned by a careful public sector owner. All of this can be helpful, but it does not generate the self sustaining jobs nor provide the private sector impetus needed to create a richer community where more people fulfil their personal ambitions.

Levelling up needs to be about hundreds of thousands of personal journeys, as people in places on below average incomes and with a shortfall of good employment come to generate the businesses and the jobs that can sustain more well paid employment. One of the things a town or area needs to level up is a wider range of housing, with more of the new executive housing investment so favoured in the higher income communities available in places with aspirations. More good new homes are needed both for those who already live in the area to move into as they get promoted or build their own business. More good homes are need to attract in people on higher incomes or with successful businesses so they can enjoy the new local area and make various contributions to it.