

# Ambitious Plans to drive levelling up agenda

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will become the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as the Government delivers on its central mission to level up every part of the UK.

The change comes as former Bank of England Chief Economist Andy Haldane was today appointed as the new Head of the Levelling Up Taskforce.

The taskforce has been jointly established by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove MP.

The Secretary of State will drive cross-Whitehall efforts to deliver a programme of tangible improvements in every part of the UK as we build back better from the pandemic, and deliver on the people's priorities.

The Secretary of State will have responsibility for United Kingdom governance and elections. He will therefore also take on the additional title of Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, working closely with the Territorial Offices and leading coordination with the devolved administrations on the Prime Minister's behalf.

He will be supported in the department by new Minister of State Kemi Badenoch MP and Neil O'Brien MP, who has been appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State.

Reappointed to the department are Ministers of State the Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP and Lord Greenhalgh, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Eddie Hughes MP.

Andy Haldane will join as a permanent secretary in the Cabinet Office on secondment from the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) for six months. He will head up the Levelling Up Taskforce that will report jointly to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson MP, said:

This Government is committed to uniting and levelling up every part of the UK and I am determined that as we build back better from the pandemic we are geared up with the teams and expertise to deliver on that promise.

Andy is uniquely qualified to lead our efforts to raise living standards, spread opportunity, improve our public services and restore people's sense of pride in their communities. I look forward to working with him, and with my new ministerial team, to deliver the opportunities this country needs.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove MP, said:

I'm thrilled that the PM has asked me to lead the Levelling Up agenda, the defining mission of this Government.

With a superb team of ministers and officials in a new department, our relentless focus will be on delivering for those overlooked families and undervalued communities across the United Kingdom.

We have a unique opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives.

Commenting on Andy's appointment, the Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case, said:

I would like to congratulate Andy on his appointment. Andy brings with him a wealth of experience and insight from his distinguished career at the Bank of England and in academia. I am very grateful that he has agreed to join us to lead this ambitious programme of work and look forward to working with him over the next six months.

Andy Haldane said:

Levelling up the UK is one of the signature challenges of our time. It has also been a personal passion throughout my professional career. So, I am delighted and honoured to be making a contribution to this crucial objective by heading the new Levelling Up Taskforce. I look forward to working with colleagues across government, local and national, and with the private and voluntary sectors, to design and deliver an economy that works for every part of the UK.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Permanent Secretary Jeremy Pocklington said:

This department is leading the way in championing levelling up, and our recently unveiled second headquarters in the city of Wolverhampton reflects our commitment to driving growth across the UK. I'm incredibly excited that we are at the forefront of such important work.

Tim Eyles, Chair of the RSA, said:

The RSA has a long history of working with government to help resolve the challenges of our time. Levelling up is crucial if we are to unlock untapped potential across the whole of the UK, and is at the heart of the RSA's programmes of work. We are therefore extremely pleased and honoured that Andy has been asked to lead this taskforce.