

## If ever there was a wrong person for a job on levelling...

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As the [Guardian has](#) reported:

*Andy Haldane, the former Bank of England chief economist appointed on Sunday as the head of the government's levelling up taskforce, has described his new task as "one of the signature challenges of our time".*

*He said that addressing regional disparities had been a "personal passion" throughout his career and he was looking forward to working with the private and voluntary sectors "to design and deliver an economy that works for every part of the UK".*

I have not been a fan of Haldane for some time. My sense that all he is looking for in the rest of his career is a gong has only increased with this appointment. And my sense that he is the last person for this job is, I think, justified.

Let's run through the reasons. First, in more than thirty years at the Bank Haldane has overseen the unlevelling of the UK. He helped create the problem he is now being asked to address. How can he be the solution in that case?

Second, the one thing we can be sure of is that he won't be asking awkward questions about the relationship between a supposedly independent central bank and government when that supposed independence has been his power to date. The power of the Bank and the City will be upheld in his review, of that we can be sure.

Third, Haldane's judgments have proved massively wide of the mark of late. This is the person who thought that by now the economy would be racing as Covid is over and people would be rushing to spend their savings. They are not. Nor do most people have those savings, of which he seems quite unaware.

Fourth, this is also a man who sees an interest rate rise as the answer to any problem right now, which would simply tip us into recession whilst helping the owners of debt (otherwise called the wealthy) very nicely. He is not a person who has had levelling up on his mind to date.

Fifth, note that second paragraph I quote: this is a man who thinks levelling up is a problem for the private and voluntary sectors to solve. Government is already off the hook when this is their problem.

Sixth, he apparently thinks he is going to solve the issue in six months. He must be deluded.

If ever there was a wrong person for a job right now Haldane is it. He brings the power, privilege and wealth of the City to a problem that is to be found in the Mile End Road - which is beyond the City's walls. After a working lifetime within the gilded walls of the Bank of England it is very hard to see what he can say to anyone in the real economy that can add any real value. But that suits the Tory agenda very well.