# Communities question Labour's new Pride in Place programme amid Tory legacy of neglect



Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh’s dismissive attack on Boris Johnson’s so-called “Levelling Up” pledge exposes the sham that this Government’s supposed commitment to rebuilding our neglected communities is nothing more than empty rhetoric. As she launched the £5 billion, 10-year Pride in Place programme—a misguided attempt to cloak years of Conservative austerity under a new veneer—she revealed the true priority: spin over substance. The initiative’s focus on empowering local neighbourhood boards sounds promising in theory, but in reality, it’s another hollow promise designed to paper over the crumbling infrastructure left behind by Conservative mismanagement.

Fahnbulleh’s comments in the Commons painted a bleak picture: 14 years of Tory governance have devastated local services, gutting community institutions and plunging towns into decline. Their “levelling up” promises turned out to be nothing more than political spin, failing to address the root causes of inequality. Instead, what we’ve seen are cut after cut, with communities left to fend for themselves while the Conservatives blame “complex challenges” they have failed to confront. This government’s failure to deliver meaningful change highlights how hollow Tory rhetoric about “levelling up” truly is—a cynical ploy to win votes while communities suffer.

The sceptics, like Conservative shadow minister David Simmonds, dismiss the Pride in Place programme as little more than rebranded initiatives from a government that has consistently underfunded local authorities. Simmonds’ criticisms about rising council taxes and bureaucratic funding models reveal what many already know: funding is scarce, and far too often governments prefer to funnel cash through convoluted channels that insulate political elites from real community needs. Far from empowering neighborhoods, this approach merely delayed the inevitable: policies that have consistently failed to meet their promises.

Fahnbulleh’s sharp rebuttal—accusing Conservatives of “denuding” local institutions and falsely claiming Labour’s approach is targeted at deprived communities—rings hollow in light of the decade-long neglect that has eroded these very foundations of local democracy. Labour’s focus on objective metrics like deprivation indices is a pragmatic attempt to address the systemic failures of Conservative neglect, exposing the real priorities of a government more interested in propaganda than genuine progress. Labour MP Navendu Mishra’s description of the previous “levelling up” agenda as “levelling down” is a stark reminder of the failure of Conservative policies that have increased inequality and distrust in government.

The political landscape is shifting—I.e., Angela Rayner’s recent move to strip “Levelling Up” from her departmental portfolio reflects this new reality. The Labour government’s conscious decision to abandon the empty slogans of the past underscores their focus on actual results, not political showmanship. Meanwhile, Conservative MPs’ concerns over oversight and accountability—criticised as an attempt to shield failed policies—confirm their inability to deliver on promises. Fahnbulleh’s assurance that neighbourhood boards maintain control is little more than an attempt to deflect scrutiny, given that their track record shows a pattern of mismanagement and waste.

In sum, the Pride in Place initiative is yet another attempt by this Labour government to rebrand failure as progress—hoping to hide the fact that their “collaborative” approach is just more of the same empty promises. The real test will be whether they can deliver meaningful change, or if this is just another chapter in a long story of political spin designed to mask incompetence and neglect. Communities deserve better, and only a government committed to real action, not slogans, will truly serve their interests.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/levelling-up-was-hollow-slogan-says-minister-in-new-pride-in-place-pitch-RIBICFPTG5PNNOBFREGNMO7EXE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/government-pride-levelling-up-conservative-house-of-commons-b1253123.html> - In a recent debate, Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh criticised Boris Johnson's 'Levelling Up' pledge as a 'hollow slogan'. She highlighted the government's new £5 billion, 10-year 'Pride in Place' programme, which aims to revitalise communities by involving MPs and councillors in local regeneration plans. Fahnbulleh attributed the decline in community pride to 14 years of Conservative governance, citing underfunding of local government and industrial decline. Conservative shadow minister David Simmonds responded, questioning the programme's effectiveness and suggesting it was a rebranding of previous initiatives.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-levelling-up-communities-slogan-twitter-labour-b1169531.html> - Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has removed the term 'Levelling Up' from her official title and the department's name, referring to it as a 'slogan'. She stated that the focus should be on 'fixing the fundamentals to deliver for the British people', moving away from 'gimmicks and slogans'. This change reflects the new Labour government's commitment to substantive governance over symbolic initiatives.
4. <https://helm.news/2025-10-15/uk-launches-b-year-regeneration-plan-focused-high-need-areas-through.html> - The UK government has introduced the 'Pride in Place' regeneration plan, a £5 billion, 10-year initiative aimed at replacing the previous 'Levelling Up' pledge. Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh criticised the former pledge as a 'hollow slogan' and blamed 14 years of Conservative rule for weakening local institutions and deepening regional inequality. The new plan prioritises high-need areas through locally led neighbourhood boards, focusing on community-driven regeneration.
5. <https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/uk/1919810/levelling-up-was-hollow-slogan-says-minister-in-new-pride-in-place-pitch.html> - Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh has described Boris Johnson's 'Levelling Up' pledge as a 'hollow slogan'. In a parliamentary discussion, she highlighted the government's new 'Pride in Place' programme, a £5 billion, 10-year initiative aimed at regenerating communities. Fahnbulleh attributed the decline in community pride to 14 years of Conservative governance, citing underfunding of local government and industrial decline. Conservative shadow minister David Simmonds responded, questioning the programme's effectiveness and suggesting it was a rebranding of previous initiatives.
6. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/government-pride-communities-and-local-government-caroline-dinenage-conservative-b2846040.html> - In a recent parliamentary debate, Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh criticised Boris Johnson's 'Levelling Up' pledge as a 'hollow slogan'. She introduced the government's new 'Pride in Place' programme, a £5 billion, 10-year initiative aimed at regenerating communities. Fahnbulleh attributed the decline in community pride to 14 years of Conservative governance, citing underfunding of local government and industrial decline. Conservative shadow minister David Simmonds responded, questioning the programme's effectiveness and suggesting it was a rebranding of previous initiatives.
7. <https://www.inkl.com/news/levelling-up-was-hollow-slogan-says-minister-in-new-pride-in-place-pitch> - Communities Minister Miatta Fahnbulleh has described Boris Johnson's 'Levelling Up' pledge as a 'hollow slogan'. In a parliamentary discussion, she highlighted the government's new 'Pride in Place' programme, a £5 billion, 10-year initiative aimed at regenerating communities. Fahnbulleh attributed the decline in community pride to 14 years of Conservative governance, citing underfunding of local government and industrial decline. Conservative shadow minister David Simmonds responded, questioning the programme's effectiveness and suggesting it was a rebranding of previous initiatives.