

It's time to 'level up' funding for the counties

Boris Johnson's commitment to 'levelling up' government investment in all parts of the country is a message that we welcome.

For decades our historic shire counties have been left behind our urban areas on council funding.

Counties receive just £240 for each resident, compared to £449 in urban areas – with central London receiving £601.

Historic underfunding has contributed to the perverse situation where some residents in London pay half the council tax compared to those in shire counties, while leaving counties facing a funding deficit of £11.2bn; nine times greater than in the capital.

The County Councils Network, supported by County MPs, have campaigned tirelessly to redress these funding inequalities and for a bigger funding pot for all local authorities.

Under the stewardship of Rishi Sunak – now Chief Secretary to Treasury – good progress was made on the 'fair funding review'. There was hope that there would be a genuine levelling up of funding.

But the changing of the guard in Westminster has cast doubt over this.

If the PM is to fulfil his pledge to level up opportunity in this country, then we must have a cast iron commitment to fair funding for our underfunded and overburdened councils.

Mr Johnson knows from his time as London Mayor how the capital benefitted from more generous funding; enabling him to invest its infrastructure and in local services, while cutting council tax.

It is time our shire counties were given the same opportunities.

Cllr David Williams (Con), Leader, Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Paul Carter (Con), Leader, Kent County Council
Cllr Nick Rushton (Con), Leader, Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Peter Nutting (Con), Leader, Shropshire Council
Cllr Andrew Proctor (Con), Leader, Norfolk County Council
Cllr Keith Mans (Con), Leader, Hampshire County Council
Cllr Kay Cutts (Con), Leader, Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Carl Les (Con), Leader, North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Steve Count (Con), Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Con), Leader, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Keith Glazier (Con), Leader, East Sussex County Council
Cllr Julian German (Ind), Leader, Cornwall Council
Cllr Philip Atkins (Con), Leader, Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Hill (Con), Leader, Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Philip Whitehead (Con), Leader, Wiltshire Council
Cllr John Hart (Con), Leader, Devon County Council
Cllr David Fothergill (Con), Leader, Somerset County Council
Cllr Sam Corcoran (Lab), Leader, Cheshire East Council
Cllr Matthew Hicks (Con), Leader, Suffolk County Council
Cllr Izzi Seccombe (Con), Leader, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Louise Goldsmith (Con), Leader, West Sussex County Council

Cllr Barry Lewis (Con), Leader, Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Ian Hudspeth (Con), Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr David Finch (Con), Leader, Essex County Council
Cllr Stewart Young (Lab), Leader, Cumbria County Council
Cllr Geoff Driver (Con), Leader, Lancashire County Council
Cllr David Hitchiner (Ind), Leader, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Martin Tett (Con), Leader, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Simon Geraghty (Con), Leader, Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Tim Oliver (Con), Leader, Surrey County Council
Cllr Peter Jackson (Con), Leader, Northumberland County Council
Cllr Richard Burton (Con), Leader, East Riding of Yorkshire