



**10 DOWNING STREET**

**LONDON SW1A 2AA**

**[www.gov.uk/number10](http://www.gov.uk/number10)**

THE PRIME MINISTER

26 August 2026

Dear Leader,

### **REWIRING THE STATE**

I want to write to you all at the outset of my time in office to pledge to work with you to change our country for the better. As I have been saying, politics in the UK has not been good enough for some time now. We can do better and we will. This Government will choose hope, build a fairer country and get Britain believing again. I know from personal experience that real change can only be delivered through a genuine partnership between local, regional and national government. This is why I am asking for your support in bringing hope back to our places and growth in every postcode. I ask that you pull with me – regardless of your political persuasion – to build a country that works for all.

As a local government leader, you are absolutely critical to delivering this change. You understand your communities better than anyone. You see both their challenges and their strengths every day. You know where investment is needed, where barriers need removing and where opportunities can be unlocked. I hope you can see from my first days in office that my belief in the power of local government is not simply sentiment. One of the first acts of my Cabinet was to take on some of the most difficult problems facing local councils, from social care to homelessness, as well as setting out our plans to rewire our country by shifting power, funding and accountability from Whitehall to local leaders. We have set out how we will deliver on our shared ambition for local leaders to have the powers, funding and control you need to drive growth, reindustrialisation and improved public services.

But I know this is just the start. Only a few weeks ago, like you I was frustrated with a Whitehall that lacked the local knowledge you possess about what your residents need - with a system in which control is surrendered, leaving councils exposed, subject to the whims of centralised power and spiralling costs. No wonder some councils are struggling to deliver even the basic statutory obligations. Too much economic power and opportunity has been concentrated in too few places, creating deep inequalities between regions, towns, cities and neighbourhoods.

I am determined to do things differently. To truly change the political culture and end this economic model, we must reverse the wrong turns this country took in the 1980s which concentrated power in the hands of fewer people and concentrated growth, prosperity and opportunity in fewer places. This starts with trusting and empowering the people who know their places best. That is why, over the coming months, the Government will work in lockstep with you to develop a new White Paper for our ambitious devolution agenda. It also means working much closer with you to unlock the economic growth and regeneration opportunities that exist right across the UK.

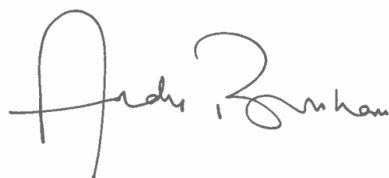
This will be driven by No10 North, which will spearhead the transfer of power out of Whitehall, and our collective plans to get the economy moving, acting as a nerve centre to drive our push for good growth in every postcode. The door to No10 North is always open – and that means a genuine commitment to working in partnership with you to unblock issues, speed up decision-making and drive forward growth projects at local and regional level. Where Whitehall isn't working for you, No10 North is there to change that and deliver for your place.

I know that for too long local government capacity has been hacked away. I saw this in Greater Manchester and I know it is the case across the country. That's why I want the whole country to benefit from the expertise and experience of the Civil Service in Whitehall. I am working with the First Secretary of State and Cabinet Secretary to enable the Civil Service to become smaller, more strategic and more representative of the places it serves. This means an end to duplicating functions in the centre when powers now rest with you as local leaders, and more interchange of Whitehall officials to every part of the country, so all the country benefits.

Councils have been at the forefront of supporting residents through years of unprecedented pressure, and for too long central government has left you out in the cold – I've seen it happen. During the Covid pandemic, local leaders were held back by the centralising arm of Whitehall. I want to create a new settlement between central and local, where central government plays its part in ensuring no community is left behind. Reforming public services is critical to this, and I am determined that central government steps up and supports you to deliver good services for your residents. For more than a decade, public services have been in decline, and we all need to start pulling in the same direction if we want people to feel genuine improvement. And yes, this means more power to communities to do what is right for them. But it also means reform of the highest cost services – adult and children's social care, homelessness, and special educational needs and disabilities – with an emphasis on prevention. This is why, in the early days of my leadership, I have urgently set about fixing our broken social care system, as well as setting a national objective to end rough sleeping in our country.

I look forward to working on this together with you from the newly established No10 North – driving power away from the centre of government and into communities right across the UK. Together, we can rewire the way our country works, and make sure we deliver good growth for every postcode.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Andy Burnham', with a stylized, cursive script.

**THE RT HON ANDY BURNHAM MP**