

To: Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Sent by email

06 February 2026

Dear Lisa,

We are writing collectively as Mayors and Leaders of The Great North to set out a clear and practical proposition: that any future UK bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games is anchored in the North of England as the primary host location.

This is not about starting from scratch. The North already has many of the foundations in place to deliver a world-beating Games, with transformational impact for the whole of the North. Across our regions, we collectively offer elite sporting venues, established transport hubs, accommodation capacity, and world-class broadcast facilities. We have a strong and proven track record of delivering complex international sporting and cultural events safely, on time and to global audiences. But we need to see a much stronger and fairer redistribution of major events – covering sport, culture, music and arts - to showcase this to the world.

The case for the North of England is compelling. The International Olympic Committee's clear move towards multi-city and region-wide Games creates a moment of opportunity that the UK should not miss. With a proven track record of hosting celebrated global events, from the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, the Great North Run, Rugby League World Cups, The Open, Ashes Tests and major football tournaments. The Tour de France will be hosted in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Merseyside in 2027, while the World Snooker Championships in Sheffield is a regular feature in the North's sporting calendar.

The North is already a sporting and creative powerhouse has a strong and proven cultural pedigree and a track record of delivering major culture events at scale, being home to the Hull UK City of Culture in 2017 and Bradford in 2025, hosting the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool, and major cultural showcases including the MOBO Awards and the BRITs.

A Northern-based Olympic Games as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate regeneration, rebalance the economy, and reset international perceptions of England. Delivered across Northern city-regions, a Games could act as a catalyst for

long-term investment in transport, skills, housing, grassroots sport and cultural infrastructure – like the successful regeneration of Liverpool Docks to create the Hill Dickinson Stadium - leaving a legacy that reaches far beyond the closing ceremony. Such a model reduces cost and risk, makes better use of existing infrastructure, and creates a broader and more durable legacy than a single city.

There is clear consensus across the Mayors and Leaders of the North. We are united in the view that that the Government should pursue a bid – and this bid should be for the North of England to host the Olympic Games in 2036 or 2040.

The Games should reflect the whole country and actively support economic rebalancing. The North offers a coherent geography, strong mayoral and combined authority governance, and the ability to coordinate delivery at scale.

This is also a question about fairness and credibility. If the UK is serious about rebalancing growth a Games hosted in and across the North would send a clear signal - domestically and internationally - that opportunity, ambition and national pride are shared.

Crucially, this is not a major financial ask of the Government. Much of the infrastructure, delivery capability and skills required already exist. What is needed is early clarity of intent from Government and a decision to match our ambitions, so that feasibility work and engagement with national and international partners can get underway, and are designed around the North's strengths from the outset.

To enable progress, we are asking for:

1. Agreement in principle that any future UK Olympic and Paralympic bid is anchored in the North of England.
2. Government support for proportionate feasibility and preparatory work, working with Northern Mayors and Leaders as strategic partners.
3. Early alignment on the legacy objectives of any bid, ensuring long-term benefit for Northern communities, including sport, culture, skills and connectivity.

We are ready to work with you and your department to shape a proposal that is credible, deliverable and transformative - not just for the North, but for the country as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

Mayors and Leaders of The Great North



Kim McGuinness

North East Mayor

Chair – The Great North



David Skaith

York and

North Yorkshire Mayor



Tracy Brabin

West Yorkshire Mayor



Luke Campbell MBE

Hull and East Yorkshire Mayor



Oliver Coppard

South Yorkshire Mayor



Andy Burnham

Greater Manchester Mayor



Steve Rotherham

Liverpool City Region Mayor



Ben Houchen

Tees Velley Mayor



Cllr Stephen Atkinson

**Lancashire Combined
Authority Chair**



Cllr Jonathan Brook

Westmorland & Furness

Council Leader



Cllr Mark Fryer

Leader of Cumberland Council



Cllr Louise Gittins

Chair of Shadow Board

Cheshire & Warrington

Combined Authority