STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

21 October 2026

Open letter ahead of budget

Ahead of the Budget, we are writing to restate the simple case we have made consistently through our engagement with ministers, officials, MPs and the Prime Minister over recent months.

Stockport is doing exactly what Government says it wants councils to do.

We are delivering the UK's largest town centre regeneration programme, building new homes, reforming public services, investing in prevention and managing our finances responsibly. The Prime Minister has repeatedly highlighted Stockport as an example of growth, ambition and delivery

The funding settlement tells a different story.

Stockport's three-year increase in Core Spending Power is 7.53%, compared with 15.52% across England and 19.8% for metropolitan boroughs.

We have around £1,206 of spending power per resident, compared with around £1,424 across England and almost £1,473 across metropolitan boroughs. That means residents in Stockport are supported by significantly less funding than residents elsewhere.

By 2028/29, some comparable councils will receive over £100 more per resident than Stockport. For Stockport, a difference of around £130 per resident would equate to around £40m every year. Those are resources that could otherwise help protect services, invest in prevention and support future growth.

That leaves a simple question: ***Why are Stockport residents receiving less?***

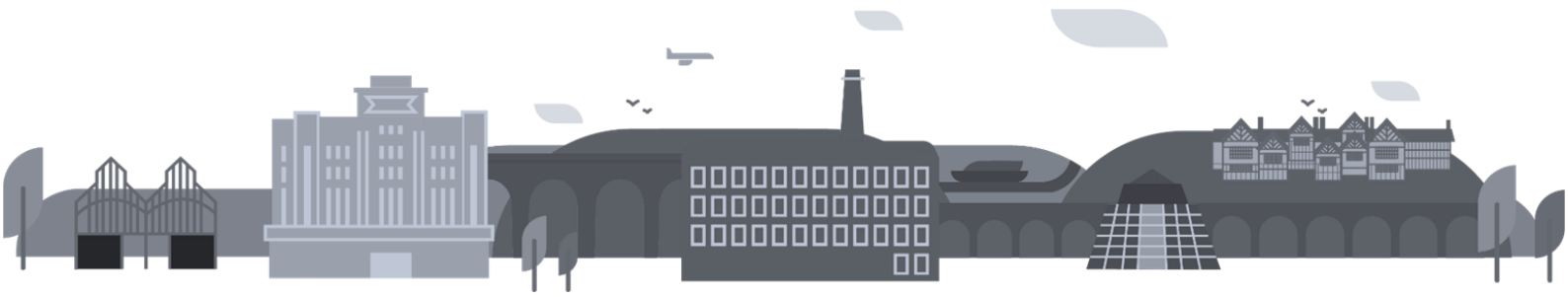
Through our discussions with Government, we have consistently argued that this disparity is neither sustainable nor fair. We are not asking Government to rescue a failing council. We are asking Government to back a successful one.

Stockport has delivered savings, controlled spending and redesigned services. We will continue to do so. However, rising statutory demand combined with insufficient funding is creating a structural gap that local action alone cannot sustainably close.

Without sufficient funding, more resources must be diverted into responding to rising demand, leaving less available for prevention, early intervention and the local services that help communities thrive.

The implications extend beyond the council itself. Ahead of the Budget, we are asking Government to:

- Provide a £28 million stabilisation grant through to the end of the multi-year settlement, bringing Stockport's Core Spending Power (CSP) growth into line with the England average (CSP increase of 15.52%) by 2028/29 and bridging the council to a fair and sustainable funding settlement from 2029/30.



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- Invest £12m in Stockport over the next two years to accelerate transformation across our highest-cost services, reduce demand and deliver recurrent savings. In return, we will commit to a clear, independently assured delivery plan with measurable outcomes and transparent reporting. Investing now will help secure Stockport's financial sustainability. This is an investment now to reduce the need for more costly Government intervention later.

- Agree an urgent, formal review of Stockport's funding position, with named MHCLG and Treasury leads and a clear timetable for resolution.

If Stockport represents the growth, regeneration and public service reform Government wants to see, the funding system should support that success, not put it at risk.

We invite you to come to Stockport and see the reality for yourself. See what is already being delivered despite the funding challenges we face, and what more could be achieved if our residents received a fairer level of funding. We would welcome the opportunity to show you our regeneration, our work to reform public services and invest in prevention, and the difference a fair settlement could make for residents, communities and local services.

We are not asking Government to turn the clock back. We are asking you to look forward. We are asking for a fair, sustainable settlement that enables Stockport to protect essential services, invest in prevention and continue delivering growth and reform.

Stockport has shown its ambition. We hope this Budget is the moment Government backs it with the fair deal our residents deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Roberts

Cllr Mark Roberts
Leader of Stockport Council

Michael Cullen
Chief Executive, Stockport Council

