

### ***It is time to 'level up' funding for the counties***

The Prime Minister's commitment to 'levelling up' government investment in all parts of the country is a message that we strongly welcome as leaders of England's county local authorities.

For decades, the towns, rural, and coastal communities that make up our historic shire counties, and which contain 25 million people, have been left behind our major cities and urban areas.

This is especially true for local government funding.

This year, county authorities will receive just £240 for each resident from core central government grants, compared to £414 in the capital and £449 in other urban areas – with central London boroughs receiving £601 per person.

Historic underfunding of England's heartlands has contributed to the perverse situation where some London boroughs are still able to charge residents council tax at half the average paid in shire counties, while leaving county councils facing a funding black hole of £11.2bn over the next five years; nine times greater than councils in the capital.

The County Councils Network, supported by MPs from counties, 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 under the proposals he developed that there would be a genuine levelling up of the funding received for county residents.

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

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

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

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

### ***Signed:***

**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**