

# Andy Burnham — Mayor & Labour Candidate

## Andy Burnham — Greater Manchester Mayor & Labour Candidate

**Role:** Incumbent Mayor of Greater Manchester (since 2017) **Also standing in:** Makerfield by-election (18 June 2026) **Last updated:** 25 May 2026

### Bio

Detail	Info
Full name	Andrew Murray Burnham
Age	56 (born January 1970)
Born	Aintree, Merseyside
Education	St Aelred's Catholic High School, Newton-le-Willows; Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge (English)
Family	Married to Marie-France van Heel; three children
Residence	Greater Manchester

### Political History

Role	Years
MP for Makerfield	2001–2024
Chief Secretary to the Treasury	2007–2008

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Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport	2008–2009
Secretary of State for Health	2009–2010
Shadow Education Secretary	2010–2011
Shadow Health Secretary	2011–2015
Shadow Home Secretary	2015–2016
Labour leadership candidate	2015 (4th place), 2016 (withdrew)
Greater Manchester Mayor	2017–present (re-elected 2021, 2024)
Makerfield by-election candidate	2026

## Key Achievements (as Mayor)

- **Bee Network** — First bus franchising scheme outside London; took control of buses in 2023
- **Clean Air U-turn** — Scrapped GM Clean Air Zone charging plan in 2023, replacing with non-charging alternative
- **Homelessness** — A Bed Every Night scheme during COVID
- **Devolution** — Expanded GMCA powers; pushed for rail devolution
- **Standing up to government** — Famously clashed with Boris Johnson's government during COVID Tier 3 negotiations (Oct 2020)

## The Leadership Question

Burnham is widely seen as the most likely alternative to Keir Starmer for the Labour leadership. His Makerfield campaign is viewed through this lens:

- **NEC blocked** him from standing in Gorton & Denton by-election (Jan 2026) — widely seen as Starmer protecting his position
- **Allies say** Burnham has a "credible plan to return to Westminster within weeks"
- **Starmer's unpopularity** — polling consistently shows Burnham outperforming Starmer in favourability
- **If he wins Makerfield**, he becomes an instant leadership contender

## Twitter/X Discussion

- **Leadership framing dominates:** "Burnham has plan to return to Westminster 'within weeks', allies say" — shared and debated constantly

- **Dual candidacy practicality:** "Andy Burnham is trying to please everybody at once. Makerfield, the country and the markets..."
- **The nickname debate:** "King of the North" is used both positively and as a criticism
- **Electoral risk:** "Massive gamble for Andy Burnham if he resigns as Greater Manchester Mayor now" — warnings about Reform potentially winning a mayoral by-election

# Reddit Discussion

Burnham is one of the most-discussed Labour figures on r/ukpolitics. The dominant threads cover his leadership prospects, the NEC block (seen as Starmer's fear), and whether he can be both mayor and MP. His record on the Bee Network is generally praised; housing targets and clean air are criticised.

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