

Labour Blocks Manchester Mayoral Election Over Cost Concerns



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LONDON — The Labour Party has decided against holding a by-election to replace Andy Burnham as Mayor of Greater Manchester, citing significant financial and political concerns.

Sources told the BBC that party officials raised worries about the high costs of an election and the potential for a divisive campaign. Burnham, elected in May 2024 for a term lasting until 2028, is

widely regarded by allies as performing “a very good job” in his role. Holding a by-election, they argued, could cost the party hundreds of thousands of pounds and place a further financial burden on the public amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Supporters of Prime Minister Sir Keir expressed concerns that Reform UK could outspend Labour tenfold during the campaign. Party sources added that the public currently has little appetite for political drama, with national attention focused on international issues and domestic economic pressures.

The Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) emphasized the importance of upholding party rules preventing mayors and police and crime commissioners (PCCs) from standing in by-elections. The last Greater Manchester mayoral election cost taxpayers approximately £4.7 million.

In an official statement, the party said:

“The NEC believes that causing an unnecessary election for the position of Greater Manchester mayor would have a substantial and disproportionate impact on party campaign resources ahead of local elections and the Scottish and Welsh parliamentary votes in May. Although confident of retaining the mayoralty, Labour cannot risk undermining its control of Greater Manchester.”