



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Lord Khan of Burnley**  
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State*

4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

Lord Berkeley OBE  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

1 August 2024

Dear Lord Berkeley,

Thank you for your contribution to the debate on Tuesday 23 July on The Constitution and Devolution. In the debate, you raised some points around devolution, The Isle of Scilly's infrastructure and Duchy leases which I have provided responses to below.

You mentioned the vital importance of devolution across the UK. The English Devolution Bill will deliver the Government's manifesto commitment to transfer power out of Westminster and into our local communities, allowing them to take back control. It will also enable our towns and cities to thrive by strengthening mayoral powers, giving local leaders the tools to kickstart their economies, as well as empowering communities to transform their neighbourhoods, high streets and important community assets.

This Government will also deliver on our manifesto commitment to strengthen mayoral powers and give local leaders the tools to kickstart their economies, including: providing single funding settlements for Mayoral Combined Authorities, which can show exemplary management of public money; devolving more powers over employment support, housing and strategic planning, adult education and skills, and helping Mayors deliver fully integrated transport systems like London. As we set out in our manifesto, we want all councils outside of an existing devolution deal to begin preparatory work to join together with their neighbours on a sensible economic geography and take on a new suite of powers through an enhanced devolution framework.

You also mentioned in the debate that transport links on the islands are fragile, unreliable and expensive. The government knows that reliable and affordable local transport services are an essential part of prosperous and sustainable communities. As announced in the King's Speech, the government will pass the Better Buses Bill to put the power over local bus services back in the hands of local leaders right across England, to ensure networks can meet the needs to the communities who rely on them.

The Government is also committed to ensuring that passenger and freight services to and from remote island communities are maintained and secured for the future. It is very positive news for the Isles of Scilly that the construction of a new passenger ferry is now underway, and that the construction of a new freight vessel will follow shortly. Both are being delivered and funded by the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group and will bring a marked improvement in the transport provision for the Isles.

You also mentioned duchy leases on the Isles of Scilly. The Crown authorities confirmed in their undertaking made on 24 May 2024 to Parliament that the Crown would act in accordance with the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 and the statutes it amends, subject to specific conditions. On the question of when the Duchy of Cornwall will publish its guidelines in relation to the Crown undertaking, Baroness Taylor of Stevenage confirmed on the 30<sup>th</sup> July that we anticipate the Crown policies of the relevant Crown bodies will be published no later than when the relevant provisions of the Act come into effect.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the House Library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Khan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Lord Khan of Burnley**  
**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State**