

Date of meeting **Tuesday, 4th November, 2025**
Time **2.00 pm**
Venue **Astley Room - Castle**
Contact **Geoff Durham 742222**



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1BL

Cabinet

AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.
- 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** **(Pages 5 - 14)**
To consider the Minutes of the previous meeting.
- 4 WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES** **(To Follow)**
- 5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION UPDATE** **(Pages 15 - 72)**
- 6 BRADWELL DINGLE PLAY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**
- 7 ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106 MONIES TO REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME, MARSH PARADE, NEWCASTLE** **(Pages 73 - 78)**
- 8 CONTRACT AWARD FOR REPAIRS TO J2 MAIN POOL ROOF** **(Pages 79 - 84)**
- 9 VEHICLE FLEET AND MAINTENANCE PROCUREMENT** **(Pages 85 - 90)**
- 10 FORWARD PLAN** **(To Follow)**
- 11 URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 12 DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following reports, because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**13 SECTION 106 REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME, MARSH PARADE - (Pages 91 - 92)
CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**

**14 CONTRACT AWARD FOR REPAIRS TO J2 MAIN POOL ROOF - (Pages 93 - 94)
CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

ATTENDANCE AT CABINET MEETINGS

Councillor attendance at Cabinet meetings:

- (1) The Chair or spokesperson of the Council's scrutiny committees and the mover of any motion referred to Cabinet shall be entitled to attend any formal public meeting of Cabinet to speak.
- (2) Other persons including non-executive members of the Council may speak at such meetings with the permission of the Chair of the Cabinet.

Public attendance at Cabinet meetings:

- (1) If a member of the public wishes to ask a question(s) at a meeting of Cabinet, they should serve two clear days' notice in writing of any such question(s) to the appropriate committee officer.
- (2) The Council Leader as Chair of Cabinet is given the discretion to waive the above deadline and assess the permissibility of the question(s). The Chair's decision will be final.
- (3) The maximum limit is three public questions at any one Cabinet meeting.
- (4) A maximum limit of three minutes is provided for each person to ask an initial question or make an initial statement to the Cabinet.
- (5) Any questions deemed to be repetitious or vexatious will be disallowed at the discretion of the Chair.

Members: Councillors S Tagg (Leader) (Chair), Sweeney (Vice-Chair), Heesom, Fear, Skelding and Hutchison

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums: Where the total membership of a committee is 12 Members or less, the quorum will be 3 members.... Where the total membership is more than 12 Members, the quorum will be one quarter of the total membership.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER SCHEME (Section B5 – Rule 2 of Constitution)

The Constitution provides for the appointment of Substitute members to attend Committees. The named Substitutes for this meeting are listed below:-

Substitute Members:

If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to appoint a Substitute to attend on your place you need to identify a Substitute member from the list above who is able to attend on your behalf

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

NOTE: IF THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS, PLEASE LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE FIRE EXIT DOORS.

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Agenda Item 3

Cabinet - 14/10/25

CABINET

Tuesday, 14th October, 2025
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

Present: Councillor Simon Tagg (Chair)

Councillors: Sweeney Skelding
Heesom Hutchison

Apologies: Councillor(s) Fear

Officers:	Gordon Mole	Chief Executive
	Anthony Harold	Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer
	Sarah Wilkes	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Andrew Bird	Service Director - Sustainable Environment
	Nesta Barker	Service Director - Regulatory Services
	Roger Tait	Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Craig Turner	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer
	Simone Harris	Marketing and Communications Officer
	Joanne Halliday	Service Director - Commercial Delivery

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2 September, 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

3. WALLEYS QUARRY - ODOUR ISSUES

The Leader introduced a report regarding the latest position regarding odour issues at Walleys Quarry and asked the Chief Executive to provide an update.

The Chief Executive advised that during September there had been one complaint. The site would continue to be monitored and the public were encouraged to continue

to report any odours coming from the site. Odour assessments were carried out during September and no odour was detected across the seven locations where the assessments were taken.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.13 of the report which outlined the progress with ongoing works at the site.

It was now a year since the Committee of Inquiry findings and the recommendations were listed at paragraph 2.30 of the report, along with a progress update. Recommendation 'O' happened on 28 November, 2024.

The Leader stated that the photographs in the report, showing the site largely capped, were encouraging and the caps were of a good standard. Looking to the future, low complaints were being seen in this recovery phase.

It was now all about the government stepping in with funding for the site to be fully capped and restored. There was also the call for a public inquiry, however, a letter from Mary Creagh CBE, the new Minister for Environment gave a negative response to the request. In addition, no response had been received from Adam Jogee MP.

Councillor Sweeney, in response to the letter from the Minister for Environment, was disappointed with the sentence 'I am not convinced of the benefits of holding such an inquiry and believe that our efforts are best focussed on addressing the problems at the site.' The problem could not be unique so a public inquiry to find out what went wrong with Walleys Quarry and the Environment Agency would be an excellent way of stopping it happening again.

Councillor Heesom agreed with the comments made and was also disappointed with the letter from the Minister and lack of support from the local MP.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. CREATION OF LYME PARK COUNTRYSIDE PARK

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced a report updating Members on the creation of an Countryside Park on the Former Keele Golf Course.

The site incorporated vast swathes of woodland and mature trees – including 850 trees that were planted for the Borough's anniversary in 2023. The site would also include appropriate walking and cycling routes.

The development of the site would be in three phases and these were outlined at paragraph 2.4 of the report.

The Leader stated that it was a large green space, already used by the public and two thirds of the 69 acre site would be protected and enhanced to make it better for the public to use.

Councillor Sweeney agreed with the comments, stating that phase one was well underway and was an excellent use for a redundant golf course.

- Resolved:** (i) That the contents of the report be noted and that the timeline for the three phases of development for the Lyme Park Countryside Park, be agreed.
- (ii) That the commencement of phase 1 in the creation of a Lyme Park Countryside Park to allow for the site to be operational from late Spring 2026, be supported.
- (iii) That it be agreed that a Traffic Regulation Order 2025 Amendment is drafted for consultation on the basis that the car park to serve the Lyme Park Countryside Park is free for a 2-hour limit per day, then subject to consultation comments that delegation is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to adopt the amendment.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. **GREEN SPACE PROTECTION UPDATE**

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment introduced a report providing an update on the work underway to support Fields in Trust Applications which gave a permanent status for green spaces and carbon capture areas.

Since this item had been brought to Cabinet previously, a number of sites had been submitted into the Fields in Trust application process. These were shown at paragraph 2.1 of the report and paragraph 2.2 listed sites to be submitted in phase four.

There were eight applications currently being considered and those were listed at paragraph 2.4.

The Leader stated that a lot of the sites had been talked about over the last couple of decades, some of which had been included in asset disposal plans so it was good that they would now be protected. The Fields in Trust and Village Green schemes complimented each other.

Members welcomed this stating that it would enhance and protect the Borough.

- Resolved:** (i) That the progress made with the Fields in Trust work being undertaken be noted.
- (ii) That the updates on the Village Green Applications made historically, the calling of a Public Inquiry and that the Council designates an officer to support the Inquiry for the Sandy Lane Village Green status in January 2026 be noted.

- (iii) That the Deputy Chief Executive and the Service Director Sustainable Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Sustainable Environment and Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to continue the work required with the Fields in Trust applications to secure our sites protection.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. UK SHARED PROSPERITY UPDATE

The Leader introduced a report outlining the progress made in delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and advising upon projects going forward to deliver the interventions as part of the plan.

There were £4.8m of schemes with a further and a further £1.5m in the final phase. Twenty five projects were earmarked for delivery this year. Six new initiatives focused on creative industries and the digital innovation. Paragraph 3 of the report outlined the schemes in more detail.

The programme had involved 455 businesses helping 189 entrepreneurs and had reached over 1000 people in business support initiatives.

Councillor Sweeney stated that it was good to see how the Council had used the money.

Councillor Hutchison stated that approximately 700m2 of green spaces had been improved through monies from the fund.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the content in this report be acknowledged and continue to work with the SPF Board to deliver the programme.
 - (ii) That the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the One Council, People and Partnerships Portfolio holder be authorised to confirm any further projects within the funding.
 - (iii) That further updates be received on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and any subsequent funding programme beyond March 2026.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE - RE-BALLOT

The Leader introduced a report updating Members on the Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Improvement District (BID) plans to hold a re-ballot for a further five year term. The Council, as a key partner, had been asked whether they supported the BID to continue its work within the town.

Over the past few years, the BID had been putting on more activities which included the Christmas lights switch on event. They also interacted with local businesses and last week had put on the Love NUL Awards, highlighting businesses that had excelled over the past year - rewarding and recognising them.

It was key to keep the BID in place to continue their support for the town and its businesses.

Councillor Sweeney stated that he had attended the Business Awards last week and it was very moving to see the love and passion that people had for the Borough who were proud to live and work in Newcastle.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the requirements of the Council to operate the ballot (and collection of levy if vote is successful) in line with the regulations covering BID ballots be noted.
 - (ii) That the BID Proposal and Business Plan and the aims and objectives for the new BID duration 2026 to 2031 be noted.
 - (iii) That the BID be supported in its efforts for a successful ballot outcome.
 - (iv) That the Portfolio Holder for One Council, People & Partnerships be authorised to vote Yes for each of the Council hereditaments to the BID proposal for a new term.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. KIDSGROVE TRAIN STATION UPDATE

The Leader introduced a report updating Members on the improvement works at Kidsgrove Train Station as part of the Kidsgrove Town Deal and the recent changes to Town Deal Governance and to seek approval to proceed with the station project.

The revised plans for the modernised train station were now moving to the next stage and were detailed in the report.

A much larger scheme had been planned which would have involved bringing the former car park back into use but government funding was not made available for those remedial works. Therefore, following discussions with East Midlands Railway and National Rail, a revised scheme would now involve refurbishment of the station and would be a great improvement of the station and a gateway into the new developments taking place.

Councillor Skelding stated that it was a shame that some of the funding was withdrawn but good to see the works taking place under the Town Deal. Kidsgrove Train Station was a small but well used station.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the current proposals for the Kidsgrove Station Project be noted.
 - (ii) That the Government funding simplification for Towns Deals and the implications for projects currently in

delivery be noted.

- (iii) That the strategic significance of investing in an improved train station facility at Kidsgrove for the delivery of Kidsgrove Town Deal and approves the revised scheme to progress be recognised.
- (iv) That the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, for Finance, Town Centres and Growth be authorised to vary the current Grant Funding Agreement with East Midlands Railway to enable the project to be delivered.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. ASSET DISPOSALS AND OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER 2025

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report regarding asset disposals and the Off-Street Parking Places Order 2025.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.1 of the report which set out the car parks that had been considered for disposal. Paragraph 1.3 outlined the usage of the three car parks.

In addition to the three car parks there was a garage at King Street, Kidsgrove which would be demolished and used as a temporary car park whilst the car park at Heathcote Street and King Street had improvement works carried out on them.

The Leader stated that redevelopment of the brownfield sites was a good thing.

Parking within the Borough had been looked at pragmatically.

The new Castle Car Park was now fully operational. Usage of all of the car parks had been looked at and underused ones had been brought into the housing stock, still allowing enough car parking spaces for visitors coming into the town.

A copy of the amended Off-Street Parking Places Order 2025 was appended to the report.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the disposal of the car parks listed in the report be approved.
 - (ii) That the demolition of the former Browns Service, King Street, Kidsgrove, exploration of options in respect of developing or disposing of the site and the giving of delegated powers to the Deputy Chief Executive, in

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to implement the proposal be approved;

- (iii) That the start of the consultation process as set out in the with the Asset Management Strategy in respect of disposal of two car parks on Heathcote Street, Kidsgrove be approved;
- (iv) That the Borough Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme adopt the 'Off-street Parking Places' Order 2025, with delegated authorisation given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to agree the Goose Street car park boundary plan and implementation date for this specific car park.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. FORWARD PLAN

The Leader presented the Forward Plan

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received and noted

[Watch the debate here](#)

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

12. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration if the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

**13. ASSET DISPOSALS AND OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER 2025
CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Asset Disposals and Off-Street Parking Spaces Order 2025.

Resolved: That the recommendations, as set out in the confidential report be agreed as printed.

**14. RENEWAL OF IN CAB AND BACK OFFICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR
RECYCLING WASTE & STREETSCENE SERVICES**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the renewal of in cab and back office management system for Recycling Waste and Streetscene services.

Resolved: That the recommendations, as set out in the confidential report, be agreed as printed.

15. **SARAH WILKES**

Members were advised that Sarah Wilkes, the Council's Service Director for Finance /Section 151 Officer was leaving the Authority today after 18 years service. Sarah was wished all the best for her future. Her successor, Craig Turner was congratulated on taking on the role.

Councillor Simon Tagg
Chair

Meeting concluded at 2.40 pm

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEADER'S REPORT TO CABINET

4th November 2025

Report Title: Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update

Submitted by: Leader of the Council

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☒	No ☐
To seek the endorsement and support of full Council for actions to enable the submission of a proposal to HM Government setting out a model for the invitation area of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That Cabinet: A. Notes the recent developments by HM Government in respect of Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution. B. Notes the work undertaken to date with stakeholders to prepare the final submission document. C. Recommends to full Council a unitary council for Newcastle-under-Lyme as its preferred option for submission. <i>On Devolution:</i> D. Supports Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council co-developing a submission to Government setting out a devolution growth framework for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. E. Endorses the submission document's focus on devolution, and Staffordshire's ability to deliver against devolution themes without recourse to completing Local Government Reorganisation F. Supports the proposed Strategic Authority geography at a suitable regional footprint to give the Strategic Authority parity of esteem with other regions. <i>On forced reorganisation of local government:</i> G. Remains of the belief that the current two tiers of local government in Staffordshire should remain in place as the best governance model for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.			

- H. Believes that any new authority must have the highest possible standards of service to residents and any changes to the current governance model in the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme must maintain or exceed the current level of local service provision.
- I. Request the Government fully fund their selective forced reorganisation of local authorities in England. Funding of local services should not have to be cut nor council tax increased to pay for reorganisation.
- J. Requests that Newcastle-under-Lyme's Members of Parliament provide active support for these proposals and advocate them to HM Government.

Final Proposal

- K. Authorises the Leader, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, to make any required updates to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's final Submission to Government following the Full Council meeting on 19th November before submission to the Minister by 28th November 2025.
- L. Notes that further reports will be brought to Cabinet and Council at the appropriate time.

Reasons

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Council in developing options for a final submission to HM Government on forced local government reorganisation, following the release of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024 and subsequent invitations to submit proposals by the Local Government and English Devolution Minister in January 2025 (with further feedback on interim plans in June 2025).

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the release of its English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024, Government has expressed its intention to seek devolution settlements in every part of England, with the creation of new governance arrangements at revised population sizes.
- 1.2 Councils across England have been engaged in the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) since December 2024. The Government's devolution agenda aims to create a new network of strategic authorities for the whole of England by 2029. LGR is stated as a required precursor to devolution in some areas, including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, replacing two-tier county and borough/district councils and small unitary authorities with much larger unitary councils, which will be grouped into Strategic Authority areas.
- 1.3 Councils have been invited by Government to make final submissions by 28th November 2025, following feedback in June 2025 from the then Minister for Local Government & English Devolution. This collective feedback on interim plans was issued to all Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent authorities, and did not rule in or out any proposals.
- 1.4 In September 2024, prior to the release of the White Paper and at the Government's request, the Staffordshire Leaders Board submitted its collective devolution plan to Government. This covered key themes:

- 1.4.1** Devolution must work for all: plans must reflect and respond to a deep understanding of local needs and opportunities. That is what our authorities have been working hard at over the summer.
- 1.4.2** Form must follow function: if we are to accept another layer of governance in the county, at additional cost to the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, then the benefit in terms of devolved functions, powers and resources has to be significant.
- 1.4.3** Governance has to be inclusive: current governance arrangements across our region work because all local authorities get to participate and contribute, and we want to ensure that this is also the case in any devolved arrangements.
- 1.4.4** Commitment to subsidiarity: devolution should be to the most appropriate level of governance for the function in any question, and that should mean a combination of county-wide, local authority level and, perhaps most importantly, community level. We seek a devolution deal that gives us flexibility to make those judgements together.

2. Issues

- 2.1** In devising and investigating options which have the ability to be compliant with the criteria set out in the English Devolution White Paper, the Council nevertheless strongly remains of the view that residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough are better served by a locally accountable, locally focused authority. The two-tier system of local authorities works well for Newcastle and remains in its citizens' best interest. Over recent decades, Newcastle has actively opted to remain its own entity, in charge of its own destiny. There is a strong risk that if the preferred option is not adopted, this will cease to be the case.
- 2.2** On 16th December 2024, the Government published its English Devolution White Paper. This set out both a desire to see local authorities work collaboratively, as had been extensively trailed by Ministers, but also set out a plan for local government reorganisation, which had not been shared with district and borough councils. Within this White Paper, the Government has stated that it wishes to see the rapid creation of new, far larger local authorities on a unitary basis, and with it the abolition of existing and historic boroughs, including Newcastle-Under-Lyme.
- 2.3** Following the resignation of the Deputy Prime Minister Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon. Angela Rayner MP, and the subsequent removal of Jim McMahon MP (former Local Government and English Devolution Minister) from Government, the incoming Secretary of State, Rt. Hon. Steve Reed OBE MP, wrote to all Council Leaders confirming he was holding to the timetable for local government reorganisation set out by previous Ministers and that it is intended to happen within the lifetime of the current Parliament, with all new structures in place by Spring 2028.
- 2.4** There have, however, been some changes within the Devolution Priority Programme (those areas on an accelerated devolution programme), with two elections delayed until 2027 from an intended establishment date of 2026.
- 2.5** The Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has also redesignated Ministerial portfolios, with the previous Local Government and English Devolution Minister being styled the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, indicating a change in emphasis around areas of priority delivery.

Devolution has been incorporated into a new junior ministerial position alongside the key areas of Faith and Communities.

- 2.6** Government officials have indicated that differing proposals may be submitted for an area, with Ministers selecting proposals which most closely match the criteria to be brought forward in the guidance following the publication of the White Paper. It is intended that, in the case that no agreement is reached across Staffordshire, Newcastle will submit its own final submission and accompanying documentation.
- 2.7** Officers continue to meet with MHCLG officials, council networks and other authorities in the shaping of submissions for November. Since May 2025, two meetings of Staffordshire Leaders on LGR and Devolution have also taken place.

Proposed Structures and Options

- 2.8** The Government's White Paper sets out that it seeks "universal coverage in England of Strategic Authorities (SA's) - which should be a number of councils working together, covering areas that people recognise and work in". Strategic Authorities are intended to reduce duplication and give cities and regions a bigger voice, while utilising economies of scale.
- 2.9** Strategic Authorities should be at scale, reflecting a regional economic and cultural geography, such as those already established in places such as Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and the West Midlands. The Government's default assumption is for them to have a combined population of, or greater than, 1.5 million. It acknowledges that some places may have different, smaller geographies where this makes sense.
- 2.10** A Strategic Authority at a Staffordshire or wider scale (for example, to include Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin) has the potential to enable scaled investment in infrastructure and support economic growth and is supported by all authorities in the area. It is intended that a devolution growth framework will be developed to accompany submissions on LGR in November 2025, as the region risks being excluded from major funding opportunities.
- 2.11** With the firm position that the Council supports the retention of an effective two-tier system, were unitarisation to be imposed, the Council has worked with its appointed consultants, Ignite, to develop and model the [five] options resolved by full Council in March 2025 for further investigation as follows;
 - 2.11.1** The creation of a new unitary council on the existing geographical footprint of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council;
 - 2.11.2** The creation of a new unitary council across the existing geographies of neighbouring Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands;
 - 2.11.3** The creation of a new 'West Staffordshire' unitary council based on a connected M6 corridor, comprising Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Cannock, South Staffordshire.
 - 2.11.4** The creation of a new unitary council comprising the existing unitary area of Shropshire and the existing borough geography of Newcastle-under-Lyme;
 - 2.11.5** The creation of a new single unitary council on the existing geographical footprint of Staffordshire County Council, as proposed by the County Council.

- 2.12 The preferred option for recommendation to full Council, alongside a detailed submission and business case is for a single Newcastle unitary authority, as set out in Appendix A. This is based on detailed work by the Council and its consultants and a strong majority of opinion from the Council's public online survey (with some 59% of respondents supportive of the model).
- 2.13 The Council has been active in engaging with partners. Stakeholder engagement is ongoing and views will be incorporated into the final submission.
- 2.14 Appendix A further sets out the comparative position of the other options for investigation. It notes that there have been some key changes since the election of a new Administration for Staffordshire County Council and developments which may bring additional risk in effectively modelling and developing a Newcastle and Shropshire Unitary Council.
- 2.15 Alongside its consultants, the Council also considered the implications of a North Staffordshire authority, based on a footprint of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent. This option was rejected at full Council in March 2025, but data analysis shows that there would be significant financial challenges to such an authority, as further described in Section 6, Appendix A.
- 2.16 The Council's preferred option, a single Newcastle unitary authority, would protect Newcastle from such impacts, but in describing the model for the whole invitation area (that is, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent), the Council has sought to align unitary council areas with the wishes of other authorities, so that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands are combined, together with authorities in the centre and south of the county.
- 2.17 The Council is clear on the need to protect the loyal and ancient nature of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and in doing so will continue to work on the recognition of the Borough's Mayoralty, Aldermen, Burgesses and other civic and ceremonial arrangements, together with longstanding trusts and charitable arrangements, which are particular to the Borough. The preferred option would underpin this protection.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- A. Notes the recent developments by HM Government in respect of Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution.
- B. Notes the work undertaken to date with stakeholders to prepare the final submission document.
- C. Recommends to full Council a unitary council for Newcastle-under-Lyme as its preferred option for submission.

On Devolution:

- D. Supports Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council co-developing a submission to Government setting out a devolution growth framework for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- E. Endorses the submission document's focus on devolution, and Staffordshire's ability to deliver against devolution themes without recourse to completing Local Government Reorganisation

- F. Supports the proposed Strategic Authority geography at a suitable regional footprint to give the Strategic Authority parity of esteem with other regions.

On forced reorganisation of local government:

- G. Remains of the belief that the current two tiers of local government in Staffordshire should remain in place as the best governance model for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- H. Believes that any new authority must have the highest possible standards of service to residents and any changes to the current governance model in the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme must maintain or exceed the current level of local service provision.
- I. Request the Government fully fund their selective forced reorganisation of local authorities in England. Funding of local services should not have to be cut nor council tax increased to pay for reorganisation.
- J. Requests that Newcastle-under-Lyme's Members of Parliament provide active support for these proposals and advocate them to HM Government.

Final Proposal

- K. Authorises the Leader, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, to make any updates to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's final Submission to Government following the Full Council meeting on 19th November before submission to the Minister by 28th November 2025.
- L. Notes that further reports will be brought to Cabinet and Council at the appropriate time.

4. Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 As noted in the report to full Council of 22nd January 2025, the Government has, to date, not provided an investment case or intended savings arising from local government reorganisation.
- 4.2 The act of reorganisation brings significant, but as yet, not fully quantifiable costs. The modelling of the options for investigation sets out forecast financial sustainability arising from revenue generation, transformation benefits and implementation costs. These vary across each option for investigation (in the instance of the creation of a unitary council for Newcastle, this involves a financial pressure), but across all options are viewed as more marginal than some comparator area submissions.
- 4.3 As set out in the Local Government Reorganisation report to Cabinet of 8th July, the Council has set aside £200,000 for initial work on its submission to Government. On 3rd June 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed allocations for all 21 areas working on local government reorganisation proposals. For Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, this equated to £367,336, based on a baseline sum of £135,000, plus an additional 20p per person based on the latest ONS population estimates. Following an initial proposal to exclude Newcastle from any funds, officers have worked with MHCLG to secure £36,734, equating to one-tenth of the funding for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

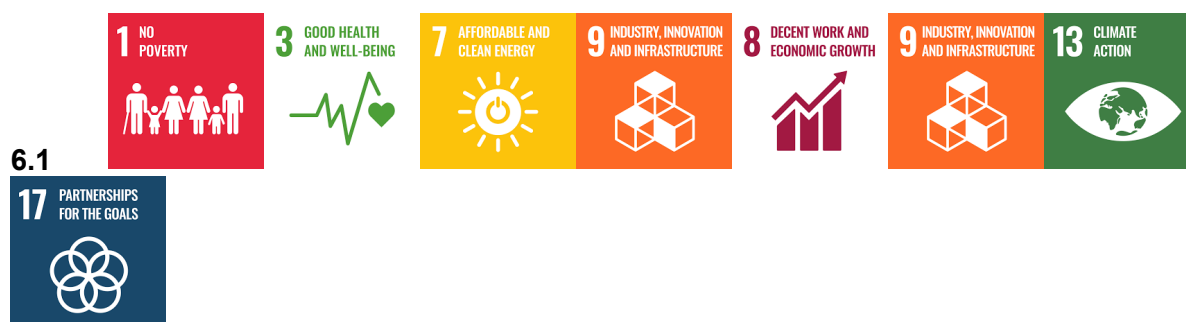
5. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 5.1 Much remains unknown of detail at this stage so mitigation measures cannot yet be fully considered. Potential risks at this stage include staff recruitment and retention, a

reduction in service delivery under a larger local authority, a potential 'democratic deficit' as details of local governance arrangements continue to be developed.

- 5.2** *Financial sustainability* – Over recent years, the Council has delivered a balanced budget based on efficiencies across its services and investment in the Borough whilst seeking to maintain optimum delivery for residents. It is unknown at what stage in a reorganisation process would restrict spending or borrowing, or whether areas in a much worse financial position would be prioritised over Newcastle.
- 5.3** A unitary council would have significantly greater spend responsibilities than existing borough and district councils, with statutory provision taking precedence over non-statutory and discretionary service delivery.
- 5.4** Effectiveness of change – There is a lack of proven success where local government reorganisation has taken place elsewhere in the country to date, and the Government has provided limited detail to date on the business case/benefits of the approach being described in the White Paper.
- 5.5** Restructuring and staffing - The process of local government reorganisation to new councils and the creation of a Strategic Authority would result in changes in employing organisations and structures. TUPE / COSOP is likely to apply to staff moving between organisations for the same roles as those that they undertake presently. This will be the responsibility of the vesting (new) authority. Following that process, the new authority may assess resource need.
- 5.6** It is likely that implementation of Local Government Reorganisation will have significant impact across the Borough, this initial stage is commencing the development of the outline proposals to be submitted to Government. The Legislation will be subject to an impact assessment.

6. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



7. One Council

7.1 Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council ☒

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

The reorganisation of local government would change the commercial asset holding of councils, for example leisure centres and museums, and decisions would be made on these at a unitary level.

One Digital Council ☒

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction

A new approach to digital delivery will become necessary through LGR, including the mapping of shared service opportunities.

One Sustainable Council ☒

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

Newcastle Borough Council has sustainability programme to meet a 2030 target for its scopes 1 and 2 emissions. Other local authorities are at different stages of implementing sustainability approaches.

8. **Key Decision Information**

- 8.1 This is a key decision as local government reorganisation may affect residents in all wards.

9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 9.1 Cabinet – 4th June 2024 – Staffordshire Leaders Board Joint Committee
- 9.2 Cabinet – 9th January 2025 – Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation: White Paper
- 9.3 Full Council – 22nd January 2025 – Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation White Paper
- 9.4 Special Full Council – 19th March 2025 – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Response to Local Government Reorganisation
- 9.5 Cabinet – 8th July 2025 – Local Government Reorganisation

10. **List of Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix A – Local Government Reorganisation Options
- 10.2 Appendix B – Letter from MHCLG, September 2025
- 10.3 Appendix C – Public Survey Results

Background Papers

- 10.4 [English Devolution White Paper](#), December 2024, HMSO.

Appendix A

Outline of Preferred Option for Local Government Reorganisation

Introduction

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has, since the English Devolution White Paper was launched by UK Government in December 2024, taken a strong stance that forced local government reorganisation presents a distraction both from the effective working of local authorities and from the goal – shared by all ten authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent – of meaningful and impactful devolution to the region. The Council remains of the view that reorganisation presents an unknown cost, risk and challenge to the delivery of services to residents and businesses in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

In our Interim Proposal, we were clear that Newcastle-under-Lyme has a long and proud history, a forward-looking view of adaptation for the future and a strong sense of place, working alongside our neighbours. This assessment recognised that across our region, we will strive for and all gain from economic investment in our region at all scales – from local businesses starting up and growing across Staffordshire and Stoke and beyond, to established global advanced manufacturing and world class service industries, with innovative regenerators of our town and city centres together with cutting edge spin-outs from our great academic institutions – all have a part to play at attracting and retaining investment, and the higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs we all aspire to be available to those who live and work here.

With this in mind, we needed to be clear on and test a number of factors:

- A majority of support from our residents to move to a new structure of local government;
- A balanced economy where places which invest and manage finances with strong fiduciary responsibility are not placed at disadvantage in ‘plugging gaps’ in areas which are struggling;
- A level of governance which demonstrates the true objective of devolution – having decisions made at the most appropriate local level, closest to those the decisions will affect;
- A geography which has meaning for investors, businesses, residents and anchor organisations (including co-terminus delivery where this makes sense)
- A population size which broadly aligns to broader objectives but has a local rationale – not so distant as to be remote governance, not an arbitrary level which confuses geography and population.

- A solution which will ensure that we continue to deliver quality services at the highest possible standard, not to the lowest common denominator or on a reduced basis to address historic financial troubles.

At its special meeting of 19th March 2025, full Council voted to endorse the Interim Proposal with its five options for investigation. These were:

1. A single unitary council based on the existing footprint of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (the preferred option of all parties);
2. The creation of a new unitary council across the existing geographies of neighbouring Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands;
3. The creation of a new 'West Staffordshire' unitary council based on a connected M6 corridor, comprising Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Cannock, South Staffordshire;
4. The creation of a new unitary council comprising the existing unitary area of Shropshire and the existing borough geography of Newcastle-under-Lyme; and
5. The creation of a new unitary council on the footprint of the existing Staffordshire County Council.

At this meeting of Council, all parties rejected the inclusion of a North Staffordshire model (comprising Newcastle, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent) as an option for investigation.

What has changed?

Since the submission of an Interim Proposal in March 2025, and subsequent feedback from UK Government on 6th June 2025 (see Appendix B), there have been a number of changes to both the local and national context which have been included in considerations of the options for investigation. These include:

- The Government's amendment of population size from 500,000 as a hard target to asking that final submissions set out a clear rationale for their selected population size;
- The experience of local government reorganisation submissions in Surrey on 9th May 2025 and those areas within the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) which submitted on 26th September 2025 showed that a variety of models for LGR delivery could be brought forward for consideration by Government – with no area submitting a single submission for their invitational area;
- The election of a new Administration for Shropshire Council, who are taking the necessary time to consider options for LGR (being outside of an invitational area) and devolution arrangements;
- The declaration by Shropshire Council of a 'financial emergency' has been considered where information has been available in the modelling of options – at this time, the full impact cannot be fully modelled so is considered a risk;

- The election of a new Administration for Staffordshire County Council, which has reviewed the County Council's previous position for a single unitary model and developed alternate options, including its preferred option of a two-unitary council model on a west-east footprint covering the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This model mirrors the west unitary option for investigation put forward by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council in March 2025.
- The confirmation of its position by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in favour of a North Staffordshire unitary authority comprising Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent and parts of the existing Stafford and East Staffordshire Borough Councils.

Consultation

Since December 2024, the Council has been engaged with key stakeholders in respect of the potential for shaping a meaningful local government geography. This engagement has taken place both through the Council's work directly, and in consort with other authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, to reduce the consultation burden on strategic partners and explore key themes. This engagement work continues with stakeholders holding focused sessions with the Council's consultants.

Following receipt of the UK Government's response to Interim Proposals in June 2025, the Council has also carried out an online consultation with residents, businesses, those who work in and visit Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire/Shropshire. The results of this consultation are set out in Appendix C.

Modelling for a Preferred Option

The Council has engaged respected consultants, *Ignite*, to work with the authority on developing a final submission and business case, including modelling of the five options for investigation and reviewing comparator data for models being considered across the invitation area.

This modelling responds to the criteria set out in the invitation letter of January 2025, namely that a proposal:

- Supports sustainable economic growth, housing and infrastructure delivery
- Unlocks the full benefits of devolution
- Reflects and empowers Staffordshire's unique local identities and places
- Provides strong democratic accountability, representation and community empowerment
- Delivers high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services that are responsive to local need and enable wider public sector reform
- Secures financial efficiency, resilience and the ability to withstand financial shocks

UK Government has confirmed that these criteria will not be weighted in their consideration of submissions, but the modelling also seeks to demonstrate – for each option – the financial impacts including a financial sustainability baseline;

transformational and reorganisation benefits; and implementation costs. The modelling also considers the number of times existing authorities are disaggregated; the complexity of disaggregation; the number of authorities being proposed; and the presence of continuing authorities.

Further considerations

In considering the options for investigation, the modelling for the final submission and business case will take into account the proposed governance arrangements, final shaping of a Strategic Authority area, preservation of ceremonial arrangements (with further work required post-submission in respect of the legal considerations of Newcastle's Aldermen and Burgesses), neighbourhood governance arrangements (including both the existence and absence of town and parish councils across the geography) and the presence or otherwise of a continuing authority.

Moreover, it is recognised that the reshaping of local government presents a distinct challenge, but if forced to do so the Council would wish to use the process to reshape the delivery of services at the right scale, balanced against the need to have unitary councils of the right shape and size for their population, heritage, functional economic and delivery area, and sense of place.

The Council and its consultants have elected to follow the guidance of UK Government in a preferred approach of using existing district, borough and unitary council boundaries as the building blocks of reorganisation modelling.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's preferred option recognises that a range of public services are already delivered across a wide geography, and this will be further amended by the creation of, for example, new ICB geographies. The Council believes there are significant opportunities to reduce deficits and deliver more efficiently by implementing a 'shared-service first' approach to those parts of delivery which can best be delivered at scale, whilst retaining the local dimension for delivery at a local level to our residents and businesses. Examples of opportunities for shared service delivery include:

- Joint procurement of goods and services;
- IT and digital delivery;
- Using the Staffordshire Waste Partnership as a foundation for delivery of a single waste approach;
- Joined up, intelligence-led and customer responsive regulatory services;
- Strategic housing approaches to temporary accommodation;
- Support functionality

These known areas of challenge provide an opportunity to reshape delivery in areas where councils (of any size) face national burdens, recruitment challenges and a lack of strategic scale.

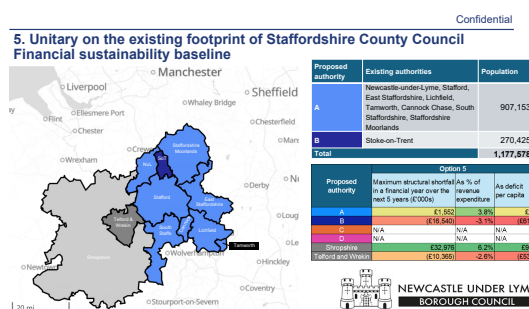
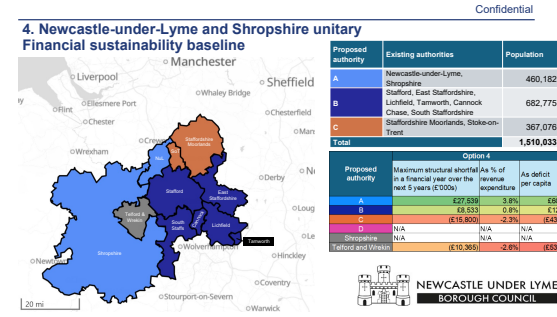
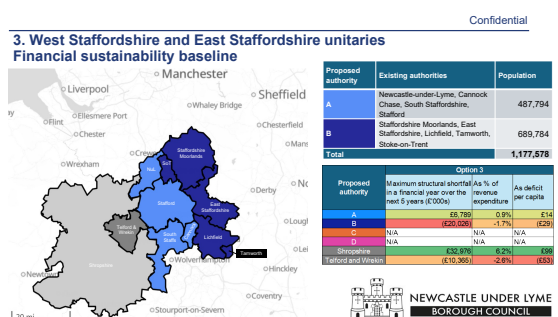
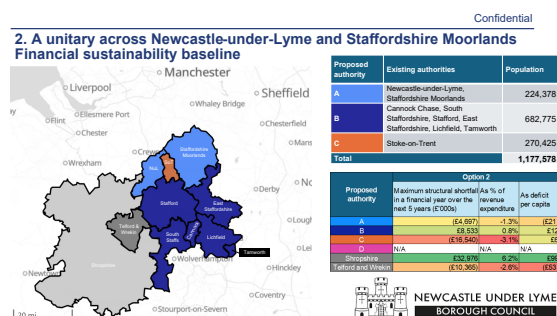
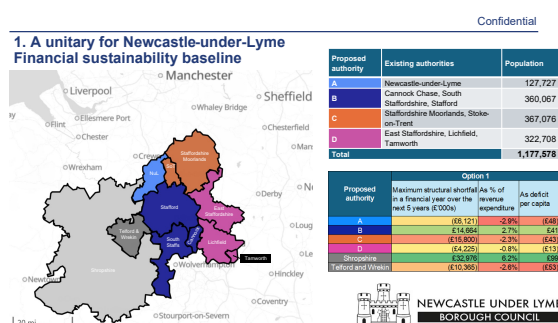
Preferred Option

UK Government has specified that each local authority within an invitation area can only support one preferred option for local government reorganisation within that area. The form of submission can be via a single submission with one proposal from more than one authority, a submission with multiple proposals from more than one authority, or a single proposal from one authority.

As set out above, the five options for investigation have been considered against relevant factors including population size and financial sustainability, as indicated below for each option for investigation. Financial modelling is subject to:

- Final agreement on approach and timing of council tax harmonisation
- Inclusion of transition and transformation cost/benefit profile

In each model, a notional strategic authority area of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Shropshire was adopted.



1. A unitary authority for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Preferred Option)

The considerations around this model included the minimisation of impact to existing residents and businesses within Newcastle-under-Lyme, the projected growing population of the geography (as quantified in the Newcastle-under-Lyme draft Local

Plan, currently under examination), continuity of governance arrangements and public support.

Confidential

1. A unitary for Newcastle-under-Lyme Financial sustainability baseline



Proposed authority	Existing authorities	Population
A	Newcastle-under-Lyme	127,727
B	Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Stafford	360,067
C	Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent	367,076
D	East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth	322,708
Total		1,177,578

Proposed authority	Option 1		
	Maximum structural shortfall in a financial year over the next 5 years (£'000s)	As % of revenue expenditure	As deficit per capita
A	(£6,121)	-2.9%	(£48)
B	£14,664	2.7%	£41
C	(£15,800)	-2.3%	(£43)
D	(£4,225)	-0.8%	(£13)
Shropshire	£32,976	6.2%	£99
Telford and Wrekin	(£10,365)	-2.6%	(£53)



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It is recognised that the population size is some way below the indicative target population set out by Government, but exceeds that of existing and well-functioning unitary councils in areas not subject to reorganisation (such as in Wales), not likely to be reorganised (including the Isle of Wight) or seeking to maintain their status in any reorganisation plans (such as Rutland).

Newcastle-under-Lyme is a cohesive geography, and one that reflects its strategic location, so that some of our communities naturally look to other places – from Mow Cop with its spilt conurbation between Newcastle and Cheshire East, to Madeley at the border with rural Shropshire and the Westlands bordering Stafford, with Wolstanton and May Bank bordering our neighbours in Stoke-on-Trent, our well-connected place can and should look to have a cohesion with not one geography but exploit and maximise each and every one of its economic links.

The existing footprint has many of the features of other, larger unitary councils, including one of the largest FE provisions in the region, strategic links by road to all parts of mainland Britain, a leading university, an abundance of protected green space, room for sustainable housing growth and infrastructure and governance at a sufficiently local level which would not require major upheaval.

Implementation of shared service arrangements would be essential under this model to reduce the structural shortfall for the new unitary over the early period of its existence.

This model also looks to accommodate (where not in direct conflict with stated aims of Council resolutions) meaningful geographies across the rest of the invitation area

– i.e. the creation of a North Staffordshire authority for those authorities supportive of this model (Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands), and matching geographies in the centre and south of Staffordshire), all with roughly equal populations.

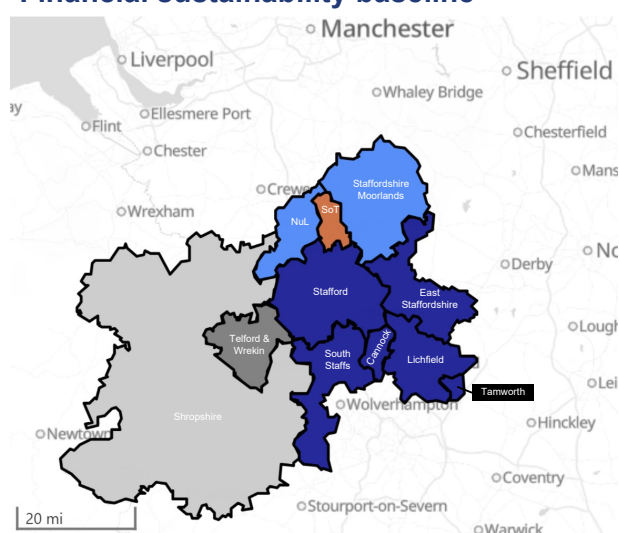
The Newcastle-under-Lyme unitary council would be a continuing authority (a unitary borough council).

2. A unitary council across Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands

The model proposed to link Newcastle-under-Lyme with Staffordshire Moorlands focuses primarily on two factors – not burdening either existing authority area with the financial impacts of alignment with Stoke-on-Trent and a recognition of a commonality of population spread and geographic similarity, places of towns and rural villages which recognise and celebrate their size and scale, not to become city suburbs or infill.

Confidential

2. A unitary across Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands Financial sustainability baseline



Proposed authority	Existing authorities	Population
A	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands	224,378
B	Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Stafford, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth	682,775
C	Stoke-on-Trent	270,425
Total		1,177,578

Proposed authority	Option 2		
	Maximum structural shortfall in a financial year over the next 5 years (£'000s)	As % of revenue expenditure	As deficit per capita
A	(£4,697)	-1.3%	(£21)
B	£8,533	0.8%	£12
C	(£16,540)	-3.1%	£6
D	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shropshire	£32,976	6.2%	£99
Telford and Wrekin	(£10,365)	-2.6%	(£53)



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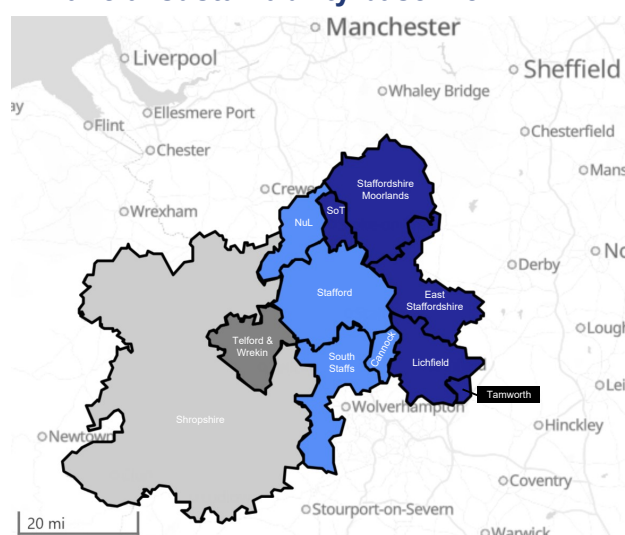
Modelling shows a slightly smaller structural shortfall than option 1, based on the ability to introduce council tax harmonisation and economies of scale, however this is offset by the assumption that Stoke-on-Trent would be 'islanded', and the expectation of Government that failing unitary authorities will be supported through the reorganisation process. The model also shows a sizeable imbalance between authority sizes across the invitation area.

3. West and East Staffordshire Authority Areas (County Council new model)

The initial option for investigation set out in the Council's Interim Proposal in March 2025 was to look at a 'West Staffordshire' unitary authority to cover the geography of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Cannock and South Staffordshire. For the purposes of modelling, an attendant 'east' authority area was set out as below.

Confidential

3. West Staffordshire and East Staffordshire unitaries Financial sustainability baseline



Proposed authority	Existing authorities	Population
A	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Stafford	487,794
B	Staffordshire Moorlands, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth, Stoke-on-Trent	689,784
Total		1,177,578

Proposed authority	Option 3		
	Maximum structural shortfall in a financial year over the next 5 years (£'000s)	As % of revenue expenditure	As deficit per capita
A	£6,789	0.9%	£14
B	(£20,026)	-1.7%	(£29)
C	N/A	N/A	N/A
D	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shropshire	£32,976	6.2%	£99
Telford and Wrekin	(£10,365)	-2.6%	(£53)



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This model was subsequently endorsed by Staffordshire County Council in its Cabinet paper of September 2025. The model proposes two larger unitary authorities across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent geography, and in the case of a larger Strategic Authority (SA) area (to include Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin), would see the M6 corridor as the centre point of a new SA.

The option would give strong initial financial stability for the West Staffordshire unitary council and deliver an option for Newcastle to be located within a more akin geography. However, neighbourhood governance arrangements would need to be put in place – potentially with some significant cost – to support local accountability, democracy and delivery.

This model also has potential as the basis of a shared services approach across wider geographies.

4. A Newcastle-under-Lyme and Shropshire Unitary

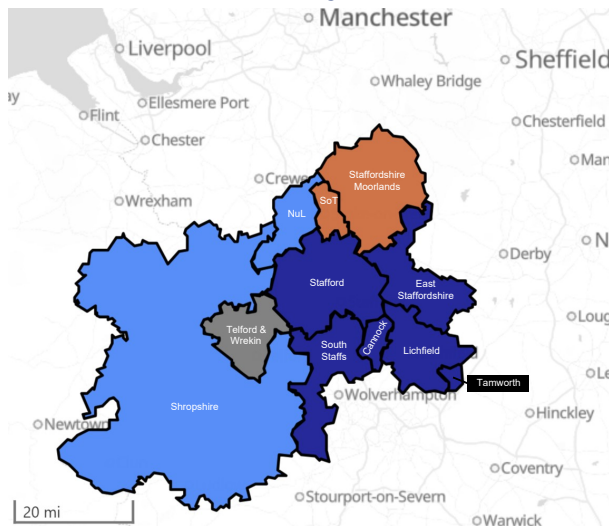
This model would give a close fit to the Government's initial target figure of 500,000 of population. Newcastle and the existing unitary council of Shropshire share a long border, extending to Shropshire addresses and postcodes for many residents in the west of Newcastle. Newcastle and Shropshire share a cohesive sense of place – historic market towns with an established and characteristic rural hinterland. The council would also incorporate two sides of the M6 corridor (as noted above) with onward links to the M54

corridor. This model would also fit alongside revised ICB arrangements for health, but would require new legislation (currently being enacted) in respect of Police authorities.

Following the election of a new Administration at Shropshire Council, commitment to shared working remains uncertain and financial modelling will need to take account of Shropshire's challenging financial position.

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4. Newcastle-under-Lyme and Shropshire unitary Financial sustainability baseline



Proposed authority	Existing authorities	Population
A	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Shropshire	460,182
B	Stafford, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire	682,775
C	Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent	367,076
Total		1,510,033

Proposed authority	Option 4		
	Maximum structural shortfall in a financial year over the next 5 years (£'000s)	As % of revenue expenditure	As deficit per capita
A	£27,539	3.8%	£60
B	£8,533	0.8%	£12
C	(£15,800)	-2.3%	(£43)
D	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shropshire	N/A	N/A	N/A
Telford and Wrekin	(£10,365)	-2.6%	(£53)



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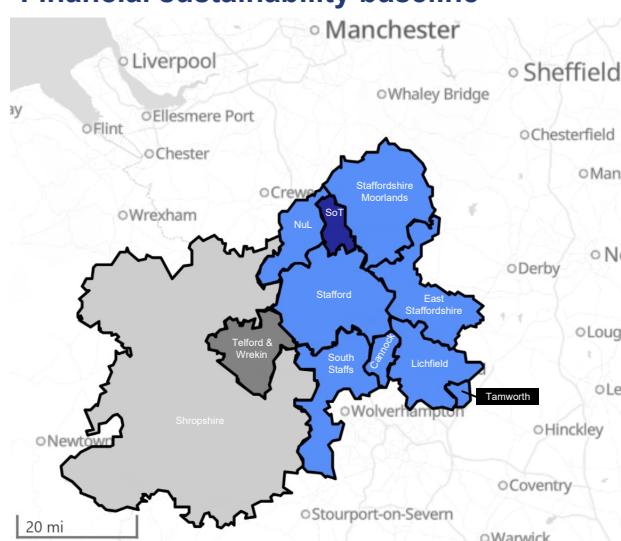
5. A single unitary council on the existing footprint of Staffordshire County Council

This option was included following confirmation of Staffordshire County Council's interim submission in March 2025. Since that time, as noted above, the County Council has developed alternate options.

Whilst the single unitary council would have some strong levels of financial power, the primary challenges lie with the remoteness from local accountability, the overall size (larger than nearly all existing unitary councils) and leaving Stoke-on-Trent islanded. For these reasons, the option is not being further investigated.

Confidential

5. Unitary on the existing footprint of Staffordshire County Council Financial sustainability baseline



Proposed authority	Existing authorities	Population
A	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire, Staffordshire Moorlands	907,153
B	Stoke-on-Trent	270,425
Total		1,177,578

Proposed authority	Option 5		
	Maximum structural shortfall in a financial year over the next 5 years (£'000s)	As % of revenue expenditure	As deficit per capita
A	£1,552	3.8%	£2
B	(£16,540)	-3.1%	(£61)
C	N/A	N/A	N/A
D	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shropshire	£32,976	6.2%	£99
Telford and Wrekin	(£10,365)	-2.6%	(£53)



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6. A North Staffordshire Unitary Authority

Newcastle's full Council rejected investigation of a North Staffordshire Unitary authority at its meeting of March 2025. However, given the current stated intention of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to submit a proposal covering a North Staffordshire geography of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands, an assessment was made of this option. Together with strong public support to remain unaligned with Stoke-on-Trent, the structural shortfall (as echoed in all other options) of aligning with Stoke were significant, and risks to service delivery, local identity and heritage were prominent. This option cannot therefore be supported.

Devolution

The Government has set out that, in addition to the creation of new local authority structures to unlock devolution, it wishes to establish new Strategic Authorities (SAs) at a wider geography to provide the basis of greater levels of regional representation and investment. The primary models set out by the Government are:

We are supportive of the creation of a new Strategic Authority to serve the collective needs of Staffordshire and Stoke. Given its connection along council boundaries and the M6 as our point of economic linkage, we believe it makes sense to also consider a Strategic Authority area which includes Shropshire (and if appropriate Telford & Wrekin) which would have the additional advantage of ensuring no area is 'orphaned' within the SA process. We anticipate that these areas will work collectively in the shaping of an SA which meets the needs of our collective geography and builds on our collective devolution ambitions, as set out to the Government in Autumn 2024, where we noted that our devolved region should have the following key features:

- Devolution must work for all: plans must reflect and respond to a deep understanding of local needs and opportunities. That is what our authorities have been working hard at over the summer.
- Form must follow function: if we are to accept another layer of governance in the county, at additional cost to the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, then the prize in terms of devolved functions, powers and resources has to be significant.
- Governance has to be inclusive: the existing model works because all local authorities get to participate and contribute, and we want to ensure that this is also the case in any devolved arrangements.
- Commitment to subsidiarity: devolution should be to the most appropriate level of governance for the function in any question, and that should mean a combination of county-wide, local authority level and, perhaps most importantly, community level. We seek a devolution deal that gives us flexibility to make those judgements together.

Devolution at a Strategic Authority level is not about local service delivery, but rather setting the conditions at a strategic level, making the case for and directing funding towards, for example, areas to develop infrastructure at a local level. To support the final submissions, a joint devolution growth framework will be developed and submitted by, for and on behalf of all authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To: Council leaders in England

Cc: council chief executives

12 September 2025

Dear Leader,

I am writing to you as the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. I am delighted to be appointed to this role and to drive the Government's agenda of housebuilding as well as supporting and empowering local communities and local government.

I want firstly to recognise and thank you for the vital work you do in our democracy, representing your communities and delivering services that make a real difference to people's lives. Having been a councillor and council leader myself, I know first hand the importance of local democracy and ensuring that decisions are made to benefit the communities we serve.

This Government was elected last year on a clear mandate to deliver sustainable public services, devolve power and responsibility to local areas and build a country where everyone has access to a safe, secure and affordable home. I am determined to deliver on that vision.

I understand that the vital work you do requires stable and fair funding to support you to deliver critical local services. Earlier this year, we announced the £69 billion financial Settlement for 2025-26 – a 6.8% cash terms increase, with £600 million being directed through a one-off Recovery Grant. As part of the Spending Review, we announced £5 billion of new funding for local services. From 2026-27, we want to fundamentally improve the way we fund local authorities through the first multi-year Settlement in 10 years. I also look forward to enacting the Fair Funding Review 2.0, to ensure places are finally funded based on need. We will publish further detail at the provisional Settlement later this year.

Having delivered preventative reform as a council leader, I know the impact that public service reform can have in creating more effective public services that save taxpayers' money. I am really excited about the work we are doing in this space, including our partnerships with places on the Test, Learn and Grow programme and exploring more flexible funding options. We are currently developing new pilots so councils and mayors can pool budgets and do joined-up services, learning the lessons of programmes like Total Place – the last Labour government's pioneering reform programme.

The English Devolution White Paper set out our plans to support local government reorganisation swiftly and effectively. We are committed to creating strong, sustainable unitary councils that represent their communities, deliver vital public services, and improve outcomes for residents.

Delivering the largest single package of devolution in our history is central to our mission - kickstarting economic growth by putting power in the hands of local people who know their areas best. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, which had its second reading last week, will give us the means

to do this. I am enormously grateful to the former Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, for his work to introduce this bill to Parliament. It will create a system of 'devolution by default' and put the strengthened framework of devolved powers into primary legislation, giving mayors the levers to drive growth improve transport and create jobs. Through the Devolution Priority Programme, subject to constituent councils providing formal consent to the necessary legislation, by early 2026, we will have increased the coverage of devolution in England to 77% – or just over 44 million people.

Equally important is our mission to restore public trust in local institutions. I take my responsibility for stewardship of local government and ensuring authorities meet the highest standards of leadership and governance incredibly seriously. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill proposes reforms to strengthen audit, enhance oversight, and ensure councils can better serve their communities, alongside reforms to the standards regime.

I am committed to pulling every lever to get Britain building. A vital part of our Plan for Change is the commitment to deliver 1.5 million safe and decent homes in England over the course of this Parliament. We have taken action to reform the planning system, updating the National Planning Policy Framework to prioritise brownfield land for development, restore and increase housing targets, and modernise Green Belt policy to meet the needs of our economy and local communities. We recognise the critical role that local plans play in enabling housing delivery. That is why I will continue to drive forward universal coverage of local plans as a priority. Our new plan-making system will make it faster and easier for local authorities to put plans in place.

We have already taken decisive action to unlock the homes and infrastructure our communities need. This includes the largest investment in social and affordable housing in a generation, a new National Housing Bank backed with £16 billion of financial capacity and the creation of the New Homes Accelerator. I will continue to work in partnership with councils, housing associations, developers and the wider sector to deliver the housing we need.

I remain committed to building on the work of the former Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, to reinvigorate council housebuilding. The Government has taken significant steps to increase the capacity and capability of councils to support them to once again deliver at scale notably reforming the Right to Buy, launching a new Council Housebuilding Skills and Capacity Programme and confirming a rent settlement of CPI+1% for ten years from 2026-27. I ask that you now come forward with the ambitious plans for new and innovative social and affordable housing schemes that communities need.

I am delighted to be joined by Matthew Pennycook, Alison McGovern, Miatta Fahnbulleh, Samantha Dixon, and Baroness Sharon Taylor in my ministerial team. We look forward to working with all leaders, across all parties, to deliver on these ambitions and strengthen local democracy across England.

Yours sincerely,



RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Appendix C



Local Government Reorganisation survey, Summer 2025

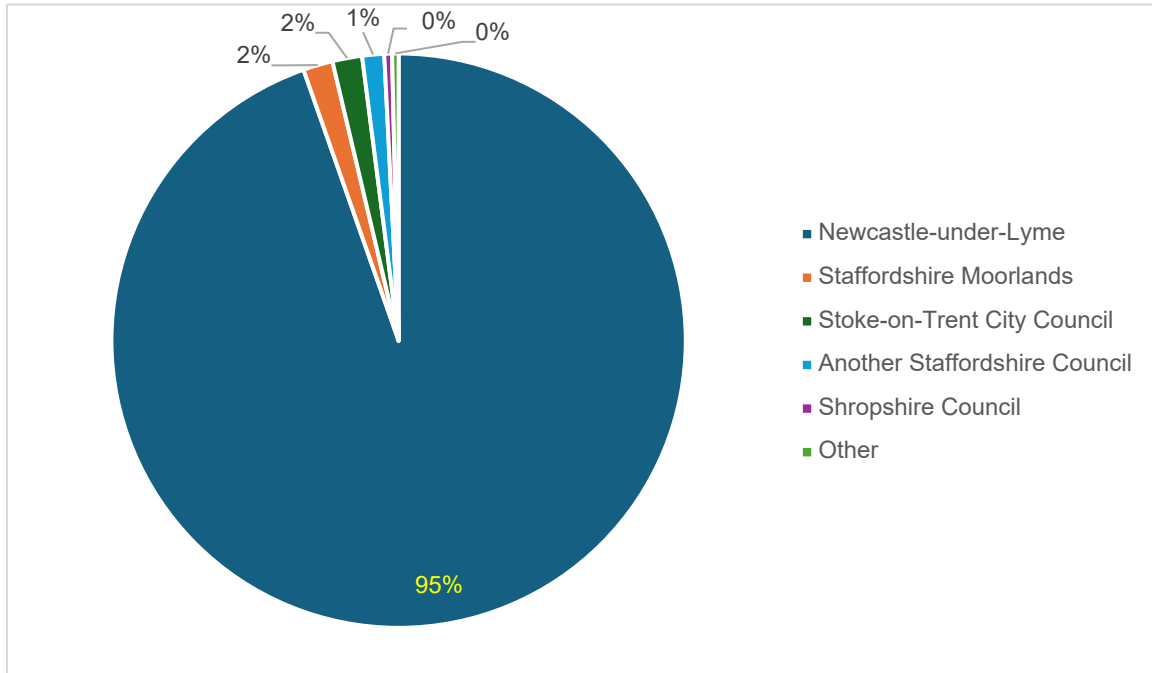
Headline findings

- There were 1,380 responses between 18 August and 16 September
 - 95 per cent were from residents of Newcastle-under-Lyme
 - 53 per cent of respondents also used services from Staffordshire County Council
- 63 per cent had contact with HWRC in the past year
 - 51 per cent with Council Tax
 - 40 per cent with Parks and Open Spaces
- Top four priorities for a new council were, by some way:
 - Keeping services that are based on local need
 - Having local councillors who are close to local issues
 - Saving money while keeping local services running smoothly
 - Keeping what makes our area special
- Top four most important themes to how services are delivered were, by some way:
 - Improved infrastructure (roads, health and schools)
 - Able to change to fit what local people need
 - Value for money
 - Delivered local
- 59 per cent want a unitary council based on the existing borders of Newcastle-under-Lyme
 - 15 per cent want a unitary covering all of Staffordshire, excluding Stoke-on-Trent
 - 12 per cent want a unitary on the existing borders of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands
 - 7 per cent chose 'other', most of whom favoured a North Staffordshire Authority, generally with Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands and often with the northern part of Stafford Borough and East Staffordshire Borough
- 76 per cent were very concerned about LGR
- Six per cent were very confident that Local Government Reorganisation can continue to provide good public services that last and meet their needs
- 59 per cent of respondents who provided their age group were 61+
 - 10 per cent of were aged up to 40

1) Which council area do you live in and get services such as waste and recycling, planning and council tax?

A significant majority of respondents (95 per cent) lived in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Two per cent were from each of Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent, with one per cent from an unnamed other Staffordshire council. Six respondents (fewer than one per cent) were from Shropshire, with three from Cheshire East, one from Manchester and one from Runnymede (Surrey).

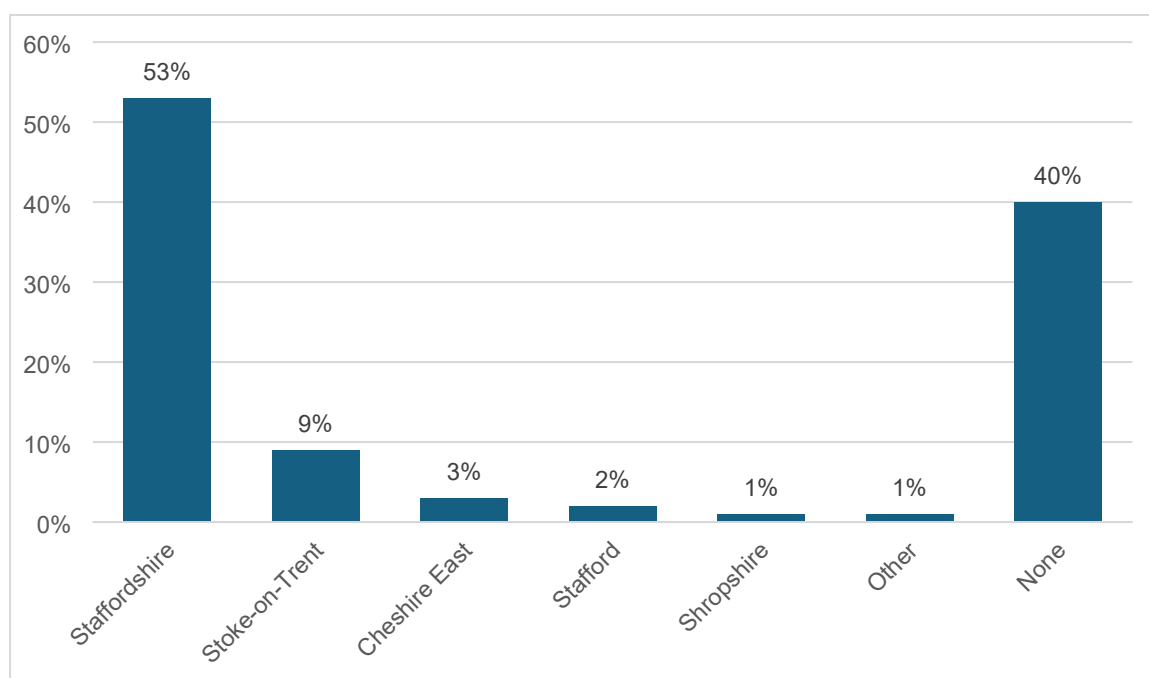
Figure 1: Which council area do you live in? 1,380 responses



2) And, if known, which other council's services do you use (for services such as libraries, schools, social care)? Please tick all that apply.

The most common response was Staffordshire County Council, with 53 per cent of respondents saying they used their services. Nine per cent used services from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, with 40 per cent not using services from any other council. Note that because respondents could tick more than one box, percentages add up to more than 100.

Figure 2: And, if known, which other council's services do you use (for services such as libraries, schools or social care?)



3) Which of the following apply to you? Please tick all that apply.

Again, as respondents could tick more than one box, percentages add up to more than 100.

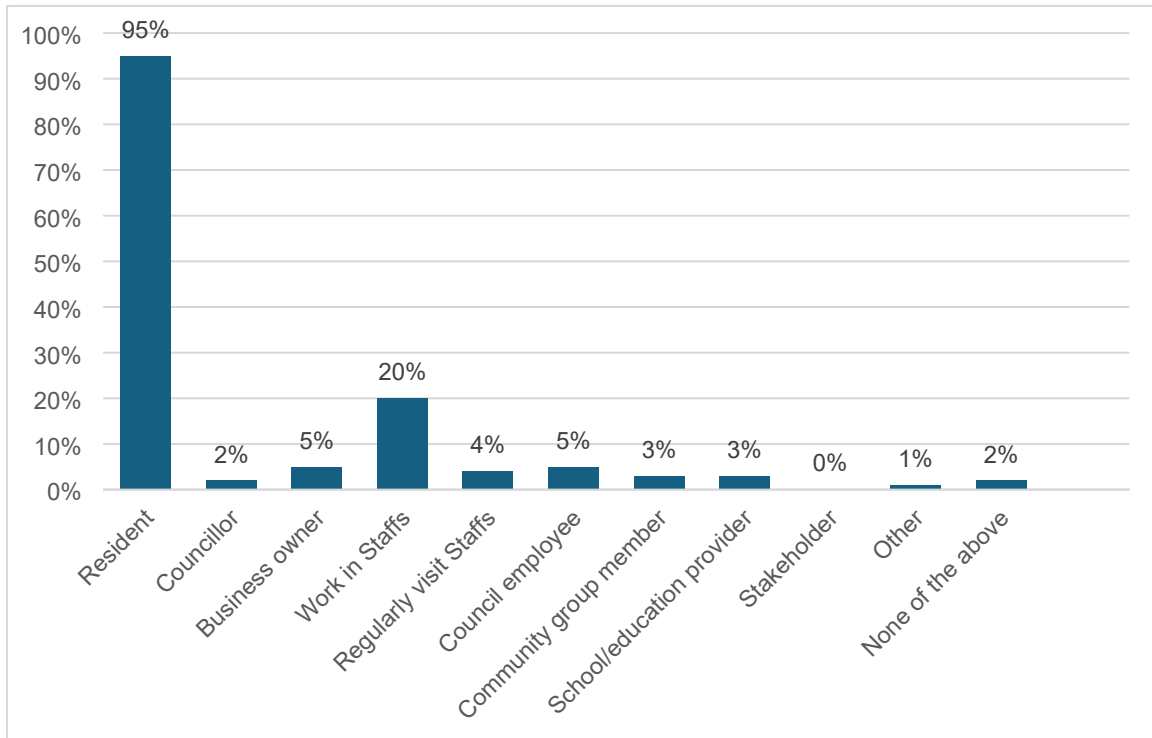
- 95 per cent described themselves as 'resident'
- 20 per cent worked in Staffordshire
- Five per cent were business owners
- Five per cent were council employees

If respondents chose 'stakeholder' or 'other', they were asked to elaborate on this, and their responses were:

- Stakeholder
 - Silverdale Scout Group
 - Kidsgrove Athletic Football Club
- Other
 - Volunteer with Audley Millennium Green Trust.
 - Retired *3
 - Grew up in Newcastle
 - I was born and brought up in Newcastle. My father and uncle were both councillors in Newcastle and Stoke. I have maintained an interest in local democracy, especially where I live (Egham, Surrey) and in North Staffs
 - Landlord
 - Volunteer at Stoke-on-Trent libraries
 - Volunteer in Staffordshire

- Concerned pensioner
- Academy Director
- I'm from the area with family still living there, I care for my mum in Audley
- In the process of moving to Knutton from Leek

Figure 3: Which of the following apply to you?

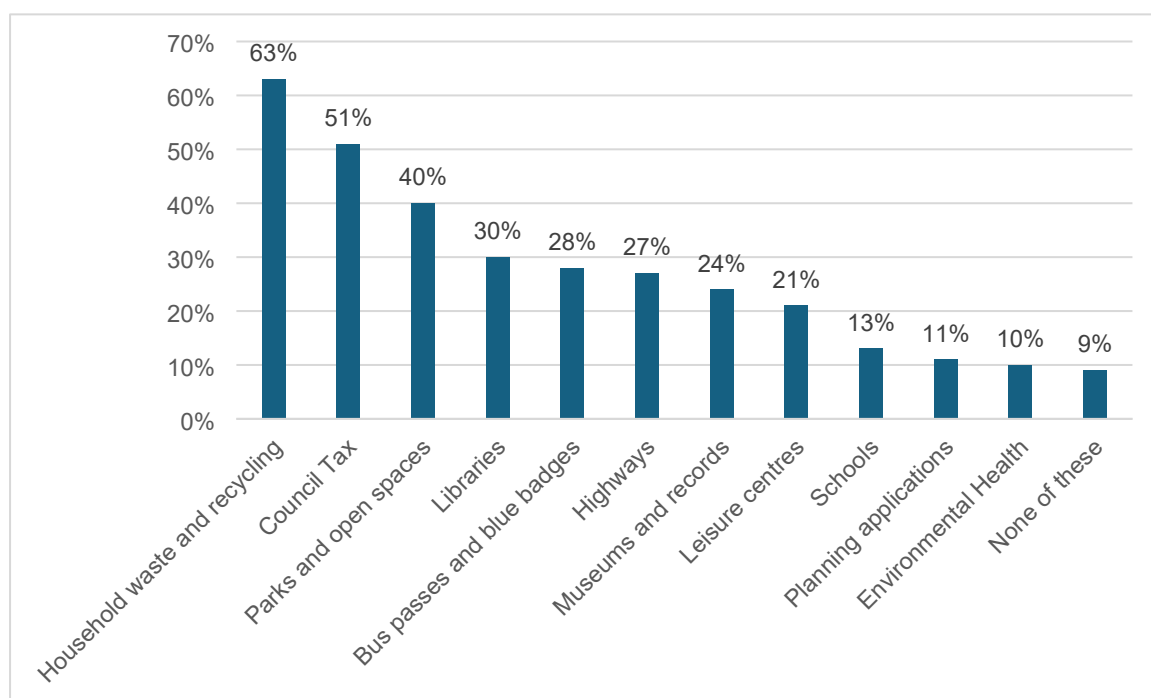


4) Which council services have you had contact with over the last 12 months? Please tick all that apply.

The most common responses were:

- Household Waste and Recycling (63 per cent of respondents)
- Council Tax (51 per cent)
- Parks and open spaces (40 per cent)
- Libraries (30 per cent)

Figure 4: Which council services have you had contact with over the last 12 months?



Respondents who answered 'other' were then asked to elaborate on their answer, and did, as follows:

- Allotments *2
- Cemeteries
- Election services *3
- Enquiries for foodbank
- Environmental
- HMCTS
- Local Councillor regarding a longstanding drug selling issue and graffiti problem - both continue to be unaddressed
- Newcastle family hub
- Parking
- Partnerships
- SCC about adored (road?) camera we need on Westbury Road, Clayton
- Sports club based at Newcastle school
- Tree maintenance

5) Thinking about the future, what would your top priorities be for a new council? Please select no more than four options.

As respondents could choose up to four options, percentages add up to more than 100.

Four responses were chosen by more than half of respondents, as the below table shows, with 'keeping services that are based on local needs' clearly the most popular choice.

Table 1: Thinking about the future, what would your top priorities be for a new council?

	% of respondents
Keeping services that are based on local needs	74%
Having local councillors who are close to local issues	67%
Saving money while keeping local services running smoothly	56%
Keeping what makes our area special	51%
Continuing local events and traditions	36%
Making sure the council has enough money	34%
Being easy to contact	31%
Having a simpler council system	16%

6) Continuing to think about a new council, what is most important to you around how services are delivered? Please select no more than four options.

As respondents could choose up to four options, percentages add up to more than 100.

Like with the previous question, four options were chosen by at least half of all respondents, with 'improved infrastructure' the most popular of all choices.

Table 2: Continuing to think about a new council, what is most important to you around how services are delivered?

	Percentage of respondents
Improved infrastructure (roads, health and schools)	63%
Able to change to fit what local people need	56%
Value for money	55%
Delivered local	51%
Services are accessible to all	38%
Listen to feedback	38%
Working better and faster	35%
Environmentally-friendly	19%

All comments are included in full in the [appendix](#), but the following word cloud shows the most common words used.

[illegible]

Respondents were given a choice of five options, and then an open comments box for other suggestions. All comments are included in full in the [appendix](#).

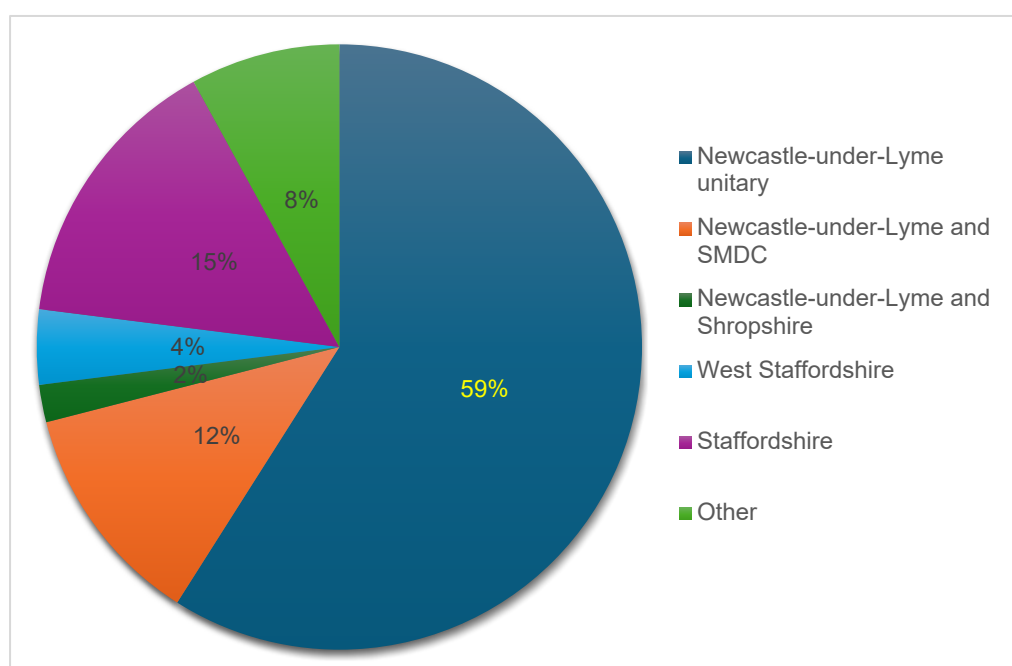
The most popular option, by a significant amount, was to have a unitary authority based on the current boundaries of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough. This was chosen by 59 per cent of respondents. Of the other listed options, a unitary council comprising all of Staffordshire, and excluding Stoke-on-Trent, was the next most popular choice, preferred by 15 per cent of respondents. 12 per cent favoured a

unitary on the current boundaries of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands, with two per cent choosing a unitary with Newcastle-under-Lyme and Shropshire and four per cent opting for a West Staffordshire unitary.

There was an 'other' option, allowing respondents to suggest their own preferred geography, and this option was chosen by eight per cent of respondents. Responses were fairly straightforward to break down into a few categories.

- North Staffordshire (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands as a minimum): 43 respondents
- A unitary based on the current borders of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent: 19 respondents
- Leave things as they are: 12 respondents
- A unitary covering the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent: Eight respondents

Figure 6: Thinking about your earlier answers, what geography would you like to see for a new Council?

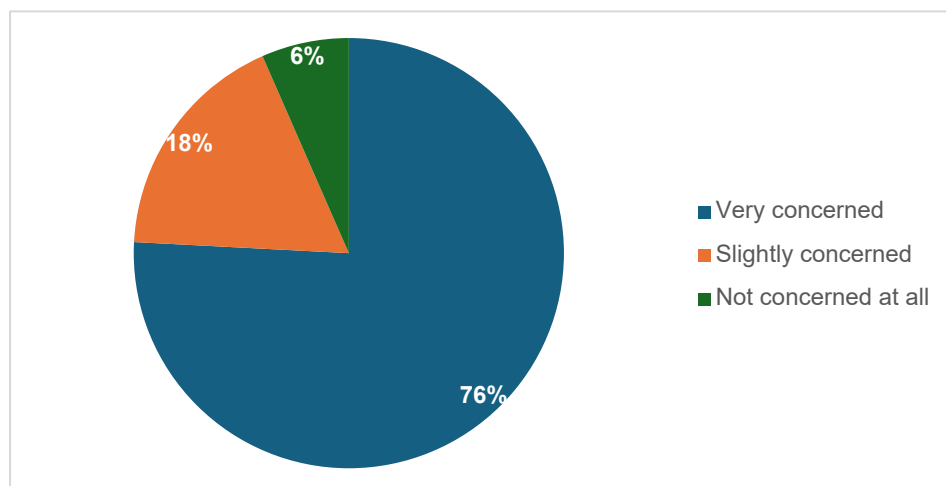


9) How concerned are you about Local Government Reorganisation?

Respondents were given three options, 'very concerned', 'slightly concerned' and 'not concerned at all'. Of these three options, the most common response, by a significant amount was 'very concerned'.

- 76 per cent were very concerned
- 18 per cent were slightly concerned
- Six per cent were not concerned at all.

Figure 7:How concerned are you about Local Government Reorganisation?



Respondents who said they were either ‘very concerned’ or ‘slightly concerned’ were then given the opportunity to respond to **‘what concerns do you have around local government being reorganised?’**. This was another open comments box with answers limited to 200 characters. Again, all comments are included in the appendix, with the following word cloud showing key themes.

Figure 8: What concerns do you have around local government being reorganised?

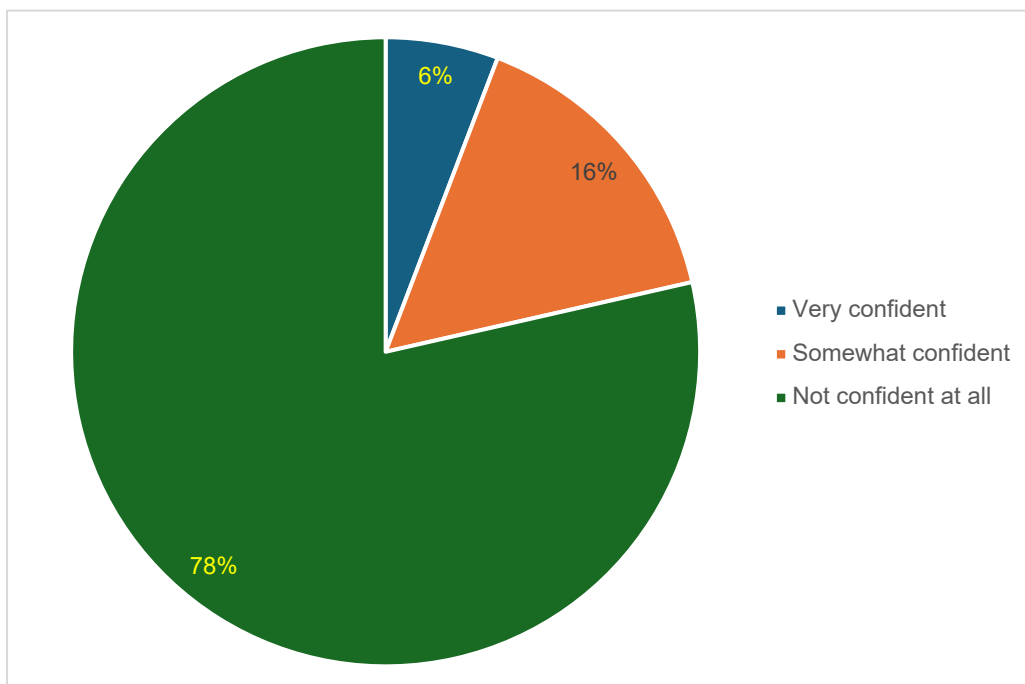


10) How confident are you that Local Government Reorganisation can continue to provide good public services that last and meet your needs?

Again, respondents were given three answers to choose from, namely 'very confident', 'somewhat confident' and 'not confident'. Responses were almost identical in proportions to the previous question:

- 78 per cent were not confident at all
- 16 per cent were somewhat confident
- Six per cent were very confident.

Figure 9: How confident are you that Local Government Reorganisation can continue to provide good public services that last and meet your needs?



11) And in a few words, what opportunities do you see around local government reorganisation?

Again, all comments are included in full in the [appendix](#) with the following word cloud showing key themes.

Figure 9: What opportunities do you see around local government reorganisation?



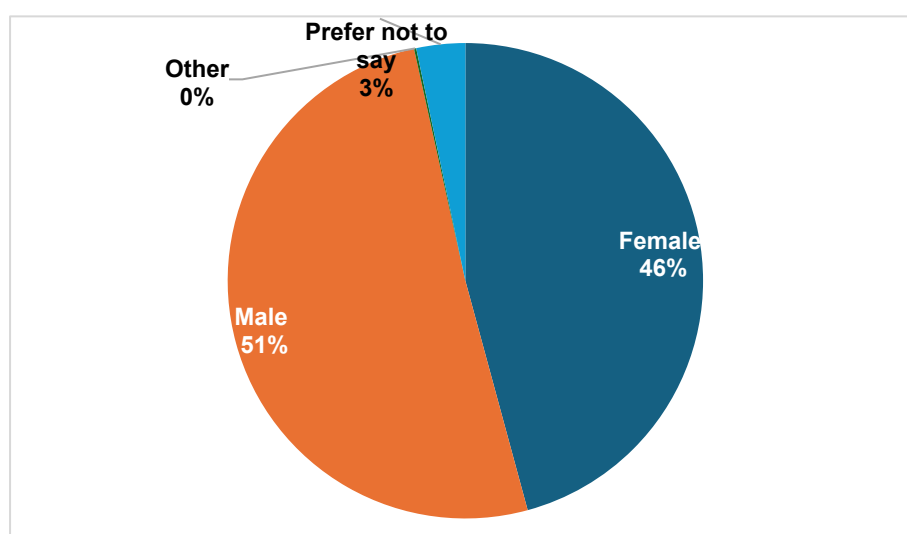
Demographics

Respondents were asked to provide some demographic information to help u see how representative they were of the borough's population.

Gender

There was a reasonable balance between females (46 per cent) and males (51 per cent), with three per cent saying either 'prefer not to say' or 'other'.

Figure 10: Gender of respondents



Age range

There were significantly more respondents from the older age groups than the younger groups. Six per cent chose not to say which age group they belonged to, and if they are removed then 59 per cent were aged 61 or above – compared to the 34 per cent of the borough's adult population they make up- with only ten per cent of responses from residents aged up to 40 despite them comprising 36 per cent of the borough's adult population.

Figure 11: Broad age bands of respondents

Age group	% of respondents	% of borough's adult (18+) population
Under 18	0%	-
18-30	3%	21%
31-40	7%	15%
41-50	12%	14%
51-60	18%	17%
61-70	29%	15%
71-80	22%	12%
80+	8%	7%

Disability

Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) of respondents said they had a disability or long-standing illness. 69 per cent said they did not, with eight per cent preferring not to say.

Ethnicity

92 per cent of respondents identified as being white. However, if those who answered 'prefer not to say' are removed from the analysis, 98.5 per cent were

white, with 0.7 per cent Asian or Asian British, 0.6 per cent mixed and 0.2 per cent Black or Black British. According to the 2021 Census, 92.9 per cent of the borough's population was white.

Location of respondents

Asking respondents for their postcode makes it possible to see which part of the borough they live in, again to see how representative of the borough this consultation was, and it was possible to match 969 postcodes to wards. Several respondents put their postcode as just CW3 – residents of the borough who did this were allocated to the Madeley and Betley ward as almost all CW3 postcodes in the borough are in this ward. Several respondents put either ST5 or ST7, but it was impossible to allocate them to any particular wards.

There were relatively few responses from the northern wards. For example, the wards of Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe, Newchapel and Mow Cop and Talke and Butt Lane make up 19 per cent of the borough's population. However, they only provided four per cent of the borough's respondents to this consultation. Conversely, May Bank, Thistleberry and Westlands contributed 37 per cent of the borough's respondents to this consultation but only make up 18 per cent of the borough's population.

Figure 12: Wards of respondents from the borough

Ward	% of responses	% of borough's population
Audley	7%	6%
Bradwell	7%	7%
Clayton	3%	2%
Crackley & Red Street	2%	5%
Cross Heath	4%	5%
Holditch & Chesterton	3%	4%
Keele	1%	3%
Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe	2%	7%
Knutton	2%	2%
Loggerheads	2%	3%
Madeley & Betley	6%	4%
Maer & Whitmore	4%	2%
May Bank	11%	7%
Newchapel & Mow Cop	1%	4%
Silverdale	2%	4%
Talke & Butt Lane	1%	7%
Thistleberry	7%	4%
Town	5%	5%
Westbury Park & Northwood	7%	4%
Westlands	19%	7%
Wolstanton	6%	5%

Appendix

Q5) In a few words, what feedback or suggestions would you like to share on the services provided by your current council (for example, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council)?

- A cleaner, tidy town to feel safe and more help for homeless people
- A leaflet through the door a while ago stating " What we will do", "we will collect litter from grass before we mow". Would be good if this happened
- A very well-run local council, I have no issues at this present time.
- Also, all council activity seems to stop at 3.30pm, after which you are unable to contact anyone.
- Although Newcastle council strive to keep the borough a pleasant place to live there is still issues with anti-social behaviour in and around the town, but I doubt it would improve under Stoke council
- Car parking can be difficult for those without apps or access to internet/smart phone and THEY DO STILL EXIST!
- Communication could be improved. I see lots of information on what Stoke is doing but hardly any for Newcastle. More information for social care and services/groups is needed.
- Do not change how Staffordshire is run.
- Do not want to merge with SOT we are fine as we are
- Doing a good job but need to do more
- Encouragement of local independent shops and indoor markets. Also, some free parking (or intervals) like e.g. Trentham, to help with increased footfall.
- Environmental health are slow to act on issues. Council tax department always helpful. Highways inspectors need to go to Specsavers as apparently can't find any issues. Pest control brilliant service.
- Excellent
- Excellent council with well-run services
- Excellent regular bin collections and facility to check each week the exact bins to be collected.
- Excellent service
- Extend the car park allocation for Jubilee 2 members as there is not enough parking spaces on School Street car park in the evening.
- From personal experience, although not perfect, I don't feel the services I use are too bad.
- Happy with our council as it is apart from potholes on main roads
- Happy with the currently provided services
- Hempstalls School, parents parking on the footpaths and in front of drives. You have to plan your time when coming home because you cannot get near your house. Something needs doing about it urgently

- I am completely happy with my council -Newcastle under Lyme. Any queries I have are always answered by phone, email or web site. Workers are always polite, definitely want to help. Very impressed! Thank you.
- I am disappointed that NUL council no longer offers a service to take away old white goods such as my fridge freezer. I also want the high street and small businesses given more help
- I am happy living in Newcastle-under-Lyme; I am happy with the services provided by the council.
- I am happy with the services of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council at this present time.
- I am perfectly happy with the services provided by N-u-L Borough Council
- I don't have any major problems
- I feel the service is good on the whole.
- I have no complaints re the services provided by the local Council. On the whole I feel that Newcastle Borough Council is efficiently & effectively run whichever Party is in control.
- I only have my bin collected, no children. Can we see a reduction in tax for couples who use no other service? Parking on public roads is also abysmal. Absolute free for all and dangerous in places
- I really appreciate the regularity and dependability of the waste, garden waste and recycling services provided by NULBC
- I think Newcastle Borough Council should stay solo as I'm proud to be from Newcastle and it feels more personal than being part of a bigger community
- I think Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and doing a good job at the moment when other Councils are in debt.
- I think Newcastle-under-Lyme Council should remain as it is as a unitary council would be too big to be effective. Why change a winning formula?
- I think that more people should be encouraged to be recycling. The food recycling especially should be encouraged.
- I think the current council do a good job, especially with grass cutting and refuse collection. I'd like to see the weeds removed because they're unsightly and cause infrastructure damage.
- I was born and bred in Newcastle-under-Lyme along with my whole family 5 siblings' its very rare we have any reason to cross the A500 and use any of S-O-T facilities, only Festival Park shops.
- I wish to remain independent from Stoke on Trent as I have no desire to inherit debt and their problems.
- I've had no problems. Stoke is a mess.
- It is a daft idea merging Council areas
- It takes a long time to get a reply when a problem is reported and then not always completed.
- Library and museum very good

- Litter and dog poo is a major concern along with the state of the roads. Don't visit Newcastle often due to homeless/ druggies etc
- Living in West Brampton more urgent care in chasing rogue landlords who let to drug users, resulting in poorly kept premises and anti-social behaviour
- Making Newcastle town centre safe. Free parking in town as out of town shopping is free. Encourage new businesses in town with a lower rent to start them off to encourage small independent shops.
- More of my paid council tax to be put to fixing potholes.
- Most services are satisfactory. The only thing that I disagree on is that the Borough council does not control parking enforcement in Newcastle under Lyme as there are people continually contravening
- NBC have experience of looking after residents of the borough in the interests of the people There generally is no self-interest but public duty. Sot has no overall strategy or vision for the people.
- NBC is run ok most of the time let's keep it that way
- Never had any problems with Newcastle council, on the other hand SOT council are awful, issuing fines to innocent people to get money where they can.
- Newcastle council fails to respond to contact made about park issues, street issues & telephone lines down as a result of overgrown street trees.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council are effective in ensuring our borough provides effective services, they are concerned in caring what the opinions of the residents are.
- Newcastle-under-Lyme council is doing a great job, not getting into debt. The recycling is very good but could do with more people being educated on food waste. Not enough people bother with it.
- No feedback
- No. We need to keep services local. For example, Ball's field in May Bank. Planning permission turned down locally but overturned by County Council, in spite of food risk and other issues highlighted.
- Not enough investment in towns, new businesses and leisure into the area - lack of regeneration. The service I accessed was acceptable.
- Not to join Stoke-On-Trent
- On the whole I am entirely satisfied with the services I received from Newcastle Borough Council. My only issue is potholes which is a countrywide problem.
- Our services by Newcastle under Lyme borough council have been good.
- Overall quite happy with services provided. Potholes / damaged roads around the area need urgent attention
- Please give more access via the telephone other than relying on reporting issues through the internet, it's a complete waste of time.

- Post the re-cycling debacle with 13 diff' bins - it was daft. But here's a popular policy now. Declare Adam Jogee "Persona non Grata" and start a campaign to get rid of him preferably before 2029
- Potholes at top of my drive-reported a couple of times over the last 2 years. and would like sandy lane, Newcastle being swept more often. v busy lane now.
- Professional and effective services with prompt responses when appropriate, not passing the buck causing frustration to residents. Listening and responding to people's needs. Spending our money
- Quick and efficient service.
- Really pleased with the services of Newcastle-under-Lyme. I have lived here all my life & have always been happy with the services they supply
- Repair potholes, seen bin men put cardboard waste into the general waste, and not picking waste up that was dropped on the floor
- SEND for primary schools, household waste - we have good systems in place that shouldn't change.
- Services provided by Newcastle are good
- So far as I can tell Newcastle Borough Council does a good job, doesn't waste money and listens to communities
- State of the roads is dreadful. Bus services are inadequate. Newcastle town does not encourage one to visit.
- Straightforward website
- The area needs completely clearing up, it is very grubby and uninviting
- The carpark near my doctor's surgery no longer displays charges but only mentions a 'charges app' why it cannot still say how long is free is annoying!
- The council has always provided excellent service without going into debt. Stoke on Trent council is an absolute joke; they are always in debt. I do not want to be associated with them.
- The current council work extremely hard and efficiently. I have lived here for over 30 years and over 30 years under the Stoke on Trent Council that I do not have the confidence in.
- The idea of joining with Stoke on Trent council is silly. Stoke Council is not well run, they waste money on things like car parks, ornate structures on roundabouts. Leave Newcastle alone!
- The perception is fewer services but increasing cost to the taxpayer.
- The poor standard of roads needs to be attended to. The plan to develop Newcastle Town Centre appears to ignore the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- The recycling centre at Leycett is woefully inadequate for the size of the community it serves, and the access is at times dangerous. Urgently needs a more central, larger and better designed centre.

- The recycling including garden waste is really good. Brampton Museum is an example of the work the Borough Council have done to make it an enjoyable visit, especially the talks. Gardens are great.
- The roads have numerous potholes
- The service is excellent and thorough, and I really would not like our council to be merged with Stoke on Trent
- The services provided are excellent
- The services that I receive from Newcastle- under-Lyme Borough Council are first class, and I support the Borough 100%.
- There needs to be more availability to talk to someone
- They do a good job at present and don't want to join a bankrupt STOKE COUNCIL
- Too many reported frightening and unsafe actions taking place, speeding vehicles on minor roads. Long standing damaging road services to self and vehicle
- Trees not maintained properly, pavements in dangerous condition, grids blocked, leaves not and debris from trees not collected often enough.
- Try their best with limited resources, now early retired employee and understand the strain put on them and expectations. But in general, good job achieved with no debts unlike other city council.
- Very happy with the household waste and recycling. I think social care should not be part of the N-U-L council budget but in a separate fund.
- Very happy with the services.
- Waste collection service is excellent.
- Waste collection service offered by Our local council is excellent. The variety of things we can recycle is amazing and saves time having to recycle in stores.
- We are hoping to move to the outskirts of Newcastle under Lyme area and just wondered if there will be jobs available for my daughter who is neurodivergent and autism. What are transport options?
- We need everything local I am proud to live in Newcastle-under-Lyme i do not wish to be a resident in any way at all to Stoke-on-Trent and feel let down with the plans for ant sort of amalgamation.
- We receive a good service regarding our refuse and garden bin collections.
- What few dealings I have with NUL have all been conducted efficiently & satisfactorily.
- Whenever I require details or help, I find that our present system is OK.
- Work with local shops to rejuvenate the town centre. Too many charity shops and cafes. Nothing to come into town for. Reopen the Midway car park it is vital for disabled peoples' access to shops.
- Would like to be able to speak directly to a person. Not leave a message or e-mail and wait a reply.

Q8) In a few words, what services do you think any new council should improve to better help residents and businesses?

- A general improvement across the whole structure
- A new council should be able to adapt to local needs while preserving the individual character of its identity
- A telephone not the website for older residents
- Adult social Services
- All services
- As previous comments need increased footfall and therefore reduced business rates.
- At the moment I cannot think that any new Council could provide a service that is better than that already provided. My experience over many years is that larger & bigger inevitably results in worse.
- Awareness of local needs and responding accordingly.
- Be less officious to both the public (u need council taxpayers goodwill) & business, consider incentives to both promote & save the High St
- Better parking facilities central to the town
- Bus service in rural areas & road repairs.
- Clamping down on illegal tipping.
- Clearing drains to ensure better rainwater management
- Community policing clamp down on graffiti and littering
- Council should always consider and act upon public feedback and continue to improve infrastructure needs.
- Cut business rates so we can have more variety of shops open
- Cut business rates to encourage new shops
- Definitely have local input from local councillors I don't see what advantages there are to amalgamation-we have great services now, no need for change
- Drive community responsibility and initiatives to support value and ownership of local areas. This is cost-effective and helps councils deliver services
- Environmentally friendly, saving green space, wildlife, plants and eco system
- Fill in the POTHLES
- Finances are key, revisiting all the costs that can be saved without taking away any of the services.
- Focus on local neighbourhoods, and keeping them clean, e.g removing weeds from roads and cleaning out gutters. Also continuing keeping the town clean, e.g flowers, to boost footfall.
- For new retail shops reduce business rates
- Free parking in town centre to encourage shoppers in line with out-of-town complexes. More infrastructure i.e. roads schools and GP services in rural communities and reduce new housing until in place

- Have a monthly selection post listing what services people want prioritised. police access is hard. Make it easier
- Help for local businesses to survive by lowering council tax.
- Highways, roads are awful. Tourism and restricting bad parking in rural communities.
- I think the ability to be able to talk to local councillors is most important if there is any problem
- I think they do a great job
- I'd prefer the Council to remain as it is just Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Improve potholes
- Improve the state of roads whilst maintaining a balanced budget
- Improved road conditions i.e. Road surfaces. Maintain the current recycling and waste collection. Keeping drains free of rubbish to deflect flooding
- Improved road repair
- Improving pothole repair time. We live in a weight restriction avenue but have heavy vehicles running through on a daily basis plus speeding is a problem. No one takes any notice of our 7.5-ton limit
- Improving the state of roads in the borough
- In the area where I live it can be in some streets impossible to walk on the pavements, either due to vegetation overhanging the pavement or the very uneven surfaces, inspections and action follow-up!
- Infrastructure improvements new roads, drainage potholes etc repaired quickly
- Infrastructure.
- Investment into the town and business regeneration. The area is run down compared to how it once thrived
- Jobs near to where people live
- Keep Newcastle run by Newcastle
- Keeping hedges etc cut back to see road signs
- Listen to our feedback and concentrate on local delivery of services.
- Listening to what is important to the people in the area. The infrastructure should not be cut.
- Local issues - like cleaning out drains to prevent flooding and cleaning out weeds from the roads, keeping the town tidy and clean to boost footfall.
- Local roads
- Local schools funding if applicable and the dreaded potholes
- Lower rental fees, put money into helping existing business & need to use empty premises updated instead of putting up new units & taking away car parks
- Lower shop rents in town to keep shops open and people in work. A better bus service evenings and weekends so people can attend town events. Toilets needed by everyone when shopping attending events

- Maintain street clearing and potholes
- Make it easier for new shops and businesses to set up in Newcastle
- Make it easier for new shops to open businesses in Newcastle. Help with business rates in particular as an incentive to come to Newcastle.
- Make the cost of town centre premises more affordable to business to stop the independents leaving and attract more business. Be proud of Newcastle town and celebrate the positives.
- Mend potholes
- More new council houses should be built.
- More proactive approach to antisocial behaviour in town centre
- More regeneration. Climate considerations. Local transport that runs when we need it. More wild spaces. Local needs to mean local understands local needs. Social needs. Homeless needs.
- More schools and doctors close to where people live. Walking distance to recreation or services for non-drivers
- Not sure that a new council would be any better than what we have now. Best for services to be managed locally. Definitely would oppose the Borough being subsumed within Stoke-on-Trent.
- Our main priority is not to Join with Stoke Council. It is important that our local council continues to support residents and local businesses.
- Parking and safety of residents. Housing for local people.
- Pothole repairs. Perhaps prioritise council efficiency -> cheaper and quicker. Here's an idea, since the country is in debt, cut all council workers salary by 5% (say) -> reduce council tax.
- Potholes need to be tackled more efficiently. parking in city centres needs to be improved. If you have mobility concerns, there is not enough disabled parking near the theatre.
- Practical fully costed projects not pie in the sky wishes driven by political persuasion.
- Prompt action Less bureaucracy
- Proper maintenance of roads including lasting repair of potholes,
- Public transport, cycling facilities and off-road paths,
- Reduce business rental to make the town more attractive for business, opening the towns up again.
- Reduced parking fees would bring more people and shops into the town centre.
- Road repairs, help for special needs children, no council tax increase
- Road repairs, high street, anti-social behaviour
- Road surfaces
- Roads
- Roads
- Roads and infrastructure

- Roads are terrible. Councils do not respond to email requests or follow up on stated tasks
- Roads Looking after the area i.e. keeping trees at a reasonable level. The trees in Harrowby Drive are ridiculous
- Roads, mending potholes and footpaths. Proper separate cycleways away from traffic between villages and in towns.
- Roads, parking & public transport
- Roads repaired and also safety, with consultations with local people.
- Roads. Potholes are getting worse!!
- School provision and SEND
- Social care including for the elderly, continues to be a challenge giving the changing population demographics
- Social care. Less money spent on those unwilling to work and more spent on our ageing population.
- State of the roads, litter and unsavoury characters in town
- Stoke on Trent council is rubbish and corrupt, I do not want to be associated with stoke on Trent.
- Stop knocking down buildings, just to replace them with the same. It's not feasible. already character of Newcastle has been destroyed, with demolition of swimming baths to build monstrosity flats.
- Tend thoroughly to road damage not constant temporary refills! More police on the streets to aid safety and enforce law and order. Encourage safe, social groups for debate around community services.
- The ability to use the town centre easily
- The area needs a good clean up.
- The council should be able to respond promptly to local needs
- Tidy up verges and gutters. This area's 850 years chartered, our traditions and shops etc need to be saved and built on.
- Traffic wardens to fine owners parking on pavement
- Tree management & Highway/road management
- Value for your council tax that is a charge for very little return, becoming a bill that is unattainable.
- You could look at lowering business rates to entice more retailers into the town centre instead of building more rented accommodation.
- Youth & elderly services there are none disabled services contact SEND service is on chaos needs a review & restart. Highways need better maintenance often show entry to areas look like war zone

Q9) Thinking about your earlier answers, what geography would you like to see for a new Council?

- With SOT.
 - With Stoke on Trent
 - With Stoke-on-Trent
 - With Stoke-on-Trent
 - With Stoke-on-Trent
 - A council merged with Stoke-on-Trent
 - Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme could join, they are close to each other and a pool of resources would make sense.
 - Stoke/ Newcastle conurbation
 - I would prefer Stoke and Newcastle. It makes sense to merge with Stoke on Trent
 - It seems nonsensical to exclude Stoke-on-Trent from a unitary council. Like it or not we share so many common interests with them that we rely on a combined plan for the area
 - Newcastle and Stoke
 - The clear and obvious unit of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme.
 - Stop trying to lump Stoke in with Staffordshire Moorlands. You're the Potteries - own it.
 - Newcastle-under-Lyme with Stoke on Trent
 - I'd love Stoke involved
 - Everything with Stoke-on-Trent
 - Clearly, we need to stop being elitist and include Stoke-on-Trent in any plan. Stoke is crucial to NUL economy and integrated development.
 - Newcastle and Stoke, with the rest of Staffordshire staying separate as they have very different needs and people
-
- North Staffordshire plus Uttoxeter and Stone, to align with the A50 corridor.
 - North Staffordshire to be of an appropriate size for a unitary authority
 - North Staffordshire Unitary
 - North Staffordshire Unitary comprising Stoke, Newcastle and Moorlands
 - North Staffordshire, any others are illogical, and do not represent the geography of the area.
 - North Staffs (Stoke, Staffs Moorlands, Newcastle plus Stone and Uttoxeter (but not rest of Stafford District or East Staffs District)); or Unit 24 from Redcliffe Maud (i.e. also Crewe Congleton)
 - North Staffs including Stoke, Uttoxeter and Stone
 - North Staffs Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs Moorlands, Newcastle under Lyme and parts of Stafford

- Where's the option for North Staffordshire? Newcastle/ Staffs Moorlands and Stoke?
- You've cynically excluded a North Staffs option with Stoke
- The practical geography would be Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent
- The proposal being worked on by Staffs Moorlands and Stoke - a north Staffordshire council
- Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffs Moorlands
- The common sense one - One North Staffordshire based covering conurbation with all current councils dissolved.
- Staffs Moorlands, Stoke and Newcastle seems the obvious and missing option.
- Needs to be a North Staffs option which you haven't included on here. Should include Stoke, Newcastle, Staffs Moorlands, Stafford North and East Staffs north.
- Needs to be stoke, Newcastle and moorlands in one council
- Newcastle STOKES and Staffordshire moorlands
- Newcastle Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands
- Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands
- From Stafford north, including the Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent
- North Staffordshire
- North Staffordshire - NUL, Staffs Moorlands and Stoke City
- North Staffordshire (Stoke, NuL, Leek, Stone)
- North Staffordshire comprising Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent, and East Staffs. Need Stoke-on-Trent to support loss of Staffs County for higher tier roles. I think the other suggestions are very biased against Stoke which is shortsighted.
- North Staffordshire council inc Stoke, Stone, Newcastle and Uttoxeter
- North Staffordshire encompassing Newcastle, Stoke and Moorlands. This should be an option on your list
- North Staffordshire including Stoke. Similar areas need grouping together, we have no similarities with Shropshire
- North Staffordshire is a known working geography i.e. University Hospital of North Midlands and should include Stone and Uttoxeter as a work area.
- Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands
- A Council combined with Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stone as a new unitary responsible for all local government services.
- A greater north Staffordshire incorporating Staffs Moorlands, NUL, Stoke-on-Trent and parts of Stafford borough and East Staffs i.e. Stone and Uttoxeter. It is a fully realised and costed proper option that doesn't exclude Stoke-on-Trent on the grounds of petty prejudice.

- A North Staffordshire Authority based on Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands. Disappointed that you have not included this, obvious, option in your question.
 - A North Staffordshire council including Stoke on Trent
 - Newcastle, Stoke, Staffordshire Moorlands
 - Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffs Moorlands
 - None of the above are deliverable so why offer them as options? There should be a North Staffordshire authority, Stoke, Newcastle, Staffs Moorlands and the north of Stafford Borough and East Staffs.
 - Newcastle, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent. Should be named something other than Stoke-on-Trent to allow towns such as Newcastle, Leek and Kids Grove to retain some individual identity with equal status to the six towns of the Stoke-on-Trent.
 - Newcastle, Stoke and the Moorlands
 - Be realistic, please - Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs Moorlands and Stoke
 - Perhaps Stoke on Trent, Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands. Ideally adding Crewe as per Redcliffe Maud.
 - I have no issue with NuLBC being part of a new Council alongside Stoke-on-Trent CC. I believe that a North Staffordshire geography of NuLBC, Stoke and SMDC (with or without parts of Stone, Uttoxeter etc) makes most sense with the A50 and A53 corridors. My second choice would be a 'West Staffordshire' geography similar to what has been put forward by Staffordshire County Council recently. NuLBC becoming a unitary authority on its existing footprint does not meet any of the prerequisites of LGR, and as well as the organisation is run, this will not be a viable option to put forward to Government.
-
- Keep things as they are.
 - Leave it as it is
 - Leave it the same
 - Leave things the way they are
 - Stick with what we have
 - Remain as it is.
 - How about not messing with the current councils and not wasting all our money on needless reorganisation?
 - Can't see the point of changing, what does a mayor actually do other than add cost?
 - Keep councils as they are as Newcastle has a surplus in their accounts. Where Stoke-on-Trent council is in deficit, so if they joined Newcastle would lose its money. Because it would be pooled and there would be a loss of jobs.
 - Stay independent don't let other councils drag Newcastle down too
 - They shouldn't be united; there should be dedicated councils for local areas.

- Keep Newcastle-Under-Lyme separate.
- Single council for all of Staffordshire including Stoke-on-Trent
- One unitary including Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent
- Single unitary council for Staffordshire including Stoke-on-Trent or Single unitary council for the whole West Midlands, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire
- SINGLE STAFFORDSHIRE & STOKE AS CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON ARE HAVING WITH VOLUNTARY LOCAL TOWN BOARDS INSTEAD OF PARISH CONCILS.
- Staffordshire and SOT. Disaggregation will be too expensive for taxpayers. As other answers will not be possible to have combination that suits everyone's views. Therefore, focus on what brings best value and how delivery model can accommodate local needs. Newcastle already very diverse so treating as one not the answer. Asking residents this question will lead to answers based on historic rivalries rather than what brings best services (as leaving the EU)
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent combined
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent makes most sense coterminous with health and police boundaries locally.
- The whole county of Staffordshire including Stoke-on-Trent and the Moorlands
- Don't mind at all as long as it works
- Anything not including Stoke-on-Trent, which is bankrupt
- Large unitary councils may not be as efficient.
- The natural area of economic and cultural activity for Newcastle-under-Lyme would include South Cheshire. Crewe, Nantwich, Sandbach are all much more familiar places for residents than any further south in Staffordshire or west to Shropshire
- This survey is centred on the western side of the county with, as usual, no thought given to the eastern side of the county, despite the large population.
- None of the above. Newcastle is too small an area, combining with Shropshire is too large and unwieldy. Ditto for West Staffordshire. Combine with Stafford possible but again too big and too far away.
- Newcastle, Stafford, Cannock Chase

Q10) In a few words, what concerns do you have around local government being reorganised?

- Access to services & Stoke sucking all the money as they have the most issues.
- Because it appears that Newcastle will be merged with Stoke and Stoke council are massively in debt
- Being able to help people who do not have internet access
- Being consumed within a larger unit, taking on their liabilities and paying more.
- Being joined with poorly running other councils will drag our level of service down
- Being merged with a council that is performing poorly and this being carried out by remote government (e.g. Walley's quarry).
- Being merged with stoke on Trent and the money not being spent well
- Being merged with the bankrupt Stoke on Trent and being merged in general with any local council which would remove the voice from local people. I don't want to lose local independence and our voice.
- Being totally selfish, I would not like to merge with Stoke-on-Trent - I feel their needs do not reflect my needs.
- Central government is deciding this without any real idea of what happens in the area as witness the Walley's landfill debacle
- concerned about loss of local control
- Cost
- Cost. Lack of strategy. Lack of local knowledge or input
- Dilution of efforts through reorganisation.
- Do not wish to join with debt ridden Stoke on Trent council
- Don't bring us down to the other council's level
- Don't change what works for political ends
- Don't want to be merged with stoke on Trent
- Finances & meeting the needs of NUL residents
- Financial issues draining our current council
- Going with Stoke council. Millions in debt and they will just swallow up Newcastle and spit us out.
- Handing it over to a council out of the area means that they will lose touch with what the people of this area require and need
- I do not want to lose the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- I don't feel that major reorganisation bringing in non-local members to control our area, would give no benefits to the residents of Newcastle under Lyme!
- I don't want to be absorbed into a large council where Newcastle will lose out on funding. I don't want to be merged with Stoke. As Newcastle would inherit its huge financial issues. I don't want to be merged with any other council, decisions that affect NuL should be made in NuL.

- I think things will get worse
- I wish to remain a citizen of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme
- I'm concerned about being part of Stoke on Trent council this is a mistake.
- If merged with Stoke on Trent City Council money will be spent on irrelevant things or not in our Borough at all
- I'm concerned about the financial aspects of any move to bring existing authorities together. I don't want to pay for Stoke on Trent's debts. We are not part of Stoke and I do not want to be.
- I'm quite happy with the way the borough is managed now. I don't like change just for the sake of 'Efficiency'. If we give up our council, how long before we lose our MP too?
- Increased cost and loss of efficiency.
- Issues local to Newcastle will become secondary to that of other areas.
- It concerns me that we may have to absorb Stoke on Trent Councils debts.
- It is clear that Stoke-on-Trent city council have complex city related issues. Newcastle would not be served well if amalgamated with them.
- It will cost me more money in council tax and provide a poorer service.
- It will not be local
- It's a Labour scheme to keep power of areas they don't always control
- Joining with S-O-T would be a disaster as they cannot run their own council let alone a bigger area.
- Lack of priority for matters which affect local people. Planning for new houses without thought about transport GP surgeries and schools causing problems for existing communities
- Larger groupings forget small and local interests. Stoke is failing I do not want any Newcastle money going into the city
- Larger is not always successful. Council mergers have been tried in the past, not successfully.
- Less local voice
- Local needs being ignored and being saddled with excessive debts.
- Loss of funding in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough.
- Loss of unique identity
- Lots of change
- Money it costs
- More remote inaccessible services
- Need to know the financial situation of the councils merging with. Should not be expected to pick up their debt
- Newcastle BC has a proud history of self-management. Fear the Borough would lose its status, character and individuality.
- Newcastle should not lose its Royal Borough status.
- Newcastle will lose its identity.
- Newcastle works very well & should stay as it is

- Newcastle would lose its identity and control of the finances.
- Newcastle would lose its independence
- None so long as they perform well.
- Not being merged with bankrupt councils
- Not happy to join other councils that are in debt and unable to give good service
- Nothing good will come of merging Newcastle with Stoke, people i know that live in stoke say it is terrible
- One huge council for many diverse areas in Staffordshire would be impossible to Manage. Consider the difficulties now facing NHS for example.
- One large council with minimum funds
- Other councils who have overspent due to poor management now taking over NUL whom have stayed within budget. My council taxes going up to cater for other poor performing councils. WHY!!!!
- Our borough having to support another authority's deficit and being a paired of Stoke on Trent.
- Our current council is very aware of its own local problems. If we're lumped in with Stoke, our concerns go to the bottom of the pile because Stoke has got massive problems.
- Paying for losses generated in distant districts, particularly due to political dogma
- Planning- obviously no knowledge of history or don't even care.
- Reorganisation does not improve things.
- Reorganisation into a larger council area means that local issues will not be a concern unless someone on the council lives in the area and highlights issues
- Safety of existing council jobs
- Separate councils give better service for the area.
- Services will disappear example children's centres community facilities
- Spreading yourselves too thinly to deal with a larger area
- Stoke appears to be continually badly managed no matter which party is in charge.
- Stoke are in debt, we don't want to take on their debts in Newcastle
- Stoke council not as good as Newcastle
- Stoke has excessive debt which will be spread
- Stoke on Trent being broke, we don't want our services to be made worse.
- Stoke on Trent council has many problems and little money this merger would not benefit Newcastle only make it poorer
- Stoke-on-Trent's debt being incorporated into Newcastle.
- Taking on other council debts. Reduction of services for Newcastle residents
- Taking on the debts of Stoke-on-Trent council who have a different demographic and needs than Newcastle-under-Lyme

- That it will result in more high-level management which as an example LGO officer I know is already micromanaged too much incurring unwanted cost
- That our Borough will suffer as our money will be spread even thinner to accommodate Stoke's failings with their pot.
- That we will become marginalised and not equally financed. Also, that it will cause an increase in council tax, which as retirees would not be welcome.
- The allocation of money for services
- The important aspect of the ancient borough being lost and diminished, losing the area's individual history.
- The loss of the individuality of the community that it serves
- The wastage of the financial position that Newcastle under Lyme enjoys
- There is a political and aspirational difference.
- Too unwieldy and costly to organise
- Want to keep our identity. Don't think we should take on debts from Stoke on Trent
- We are a beautiful Borough and if this merge takes place residents will suffer because services will be more thinly spread as we will become bottom of the pile to city. The city is debt riddled.
- We want to stay as we are a Borough not a SOT city
- We will be forced into a merger with Stoke-on-Trent with all of their financial problems and because of their relative size they will dominate decision making for Newcastle.
- Why should we take on other bankrupt councils when we're already stretched ourselves?
- Will lose the local touch
- Won't work and cost a lot

Q12) And in a few words, what opportunities do you see around local government reorganisation?

- A possible cull of public servants - WFH says it all - there are too many unproductive people in this country with undeserved superior pensions real workers pay for.
- Better community support
- Can't see any!
- Communication
- Cost saving if done correctly, restructure, centralising of resources & slimmed down workforce.
- Do not see any opportunities. Feel it will be a backward step
- Do we get more M P's & councillors parachuted in to tell us what they think we need in our area
- Don't know
- Economies of scale can be beneficial, but I don't trust the political motivation

- Hardly any for this area. but other areas will benefit from our better financial position
- I am only confident if Newcastle stays as Newcastle. If it gets joined with Stoke-on-Trent it would be a disaster for Newcastle-under-Lyme
- I cannot see much benefit. Newcastle Borough & Staffordshire County Council do a pretty decent job. (Walleys Quarry except)
- I do not see any opportunities. Newcastle has always been debt free. Stoke-on-Trent council has always been in debt due to corruption.
- I don't see any. I do not want to be part of stoke on Trent
- I don't see any need for change. It will cost money & not increase efficiencies for people. I worked for the NHS for 50 years and reorganisation which I was affected by 5 times, never improved things.
- I don't see any opportunities, only concern and anxiety for my family and their welfare and future happiness
- I personally do not understand why it needs to be altered.
- I see no opportunities, if NuL is merged with any other council. I'll state again any decisions that affect NuL should be made in NuL and not by councillors from Stoke, etc.
- I see the borough council as better than S-o-T. But by no means perfect. Would prefer no merging
- I support pursuing opportunities for efficiencies, providing the standard of services are not affected.
- I'd prefer it to remain as it is
- If is it not broken don't fix it
- In a word 'nothing'. In fact, I think that any reorganisation will result in worse services.
- It all depends on which way it goes. If Newcastle stays as Newcastle, I am very confident. If it gets swallowed up by Stoke, I would be not confident at all.
- It could help with buying power
- I've never thought about this nor discussed it with anyone, so I don't know.
- Keep councils smaller, well organised and transparent breeds unity amongst the many. Too big and vast each voice gets smaller breeding sense of loneliness and isolation. Less personal. Automation
- Local jobs, outdoor leisure facilities walks and more schools, healthcare
- More funding for my previous improvement recommendations.
- Mostly negatives
- need more funding to revitalise the town
- New people fresh ideas
- Newcastle will be swallowed up by Stoke -on-Trent. Financial gain for Stoke at our expense.
- NO
- No obvious benefits

- No opportunities at all. Any merger would mean Newcastle loses its right to make decisions affects Newcastle itself.
- No opportunities that are not already provided
- No opportunities. Newcastle will get absorbed, services will go down (Highways already appalling)
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- none
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- None
- none at all don't want to merge with SOT they have too much debt
- None at all other than no push back on central government once all local government ran by the same party
- None if we join Soke on Trent.
- None whatsoever
- None whatsoever
- None whatsoever. Our new county councillor appears a waste of time. So, a larger grouping will only make the situation worse
- None.
- None.
- None. Is a way for central government to cover up their failure to put an adequate funding system in place
- None. Newcastle will be lost. It's just a political thing
- Not a great deal, could be surprised
- Not a lot if we are to pick other authorities debts.
- Not a lot only more employees doing less work than at present.
- Not a lot!
- Not a lot.
- Not been informed about any
- Not much

- Not much
- Not sure
- Not sure
- Nothing comes to mind.
- Nothing obvious. 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'
- Nothing positive
- Nothing this government are destroying everything they touch
- Nothing, just keep the system as it is...
- only to save money, but not to improve local needs
- Possibility of reducing administration costs.
- Possible savings on duplicated services. If money were available for an integrated tram service linking the local towns and enabling residents to travel more easily.
- Redundancies
- Saving money for central government, none for the residents.
- Shropshire are better with roads could try reach their standard. parking should be made free so giving restaurants and shops better chance of survival. as more office staff would work and shop in town.
- Stoke on Trent council is very poor service.
- Streamlining administrative jobs. More multi-tasking and quicker decision making.
- Take a good look at the area, it's hardly thriving it's the council's responsibility to bring investment into the area. Please do it
- The bigger the organisation becomes, the more incompetent it gets.
- The opportunity to ensure that Newcastle and its local parish councils retain their identity and ensuring its survival.
- There are none
- There must be fairness to ensure a good standard of living for all.
- They will take away our funding like has been done around Chatterley Whitfield & Peacocks Hay area
- They would not be in touch with what is required by the residents, they would talk but not walk!
- To put every service in 1 council eradicating constant toing & froing for services better
- Too big, too clumsy, a potential vast increase in red tape, all local services being watered down none
- Too divorced from reality
- Very few
- Why do it? We in N-u-L would only have higher costs and charges caused by other councils who have not managed their finances well. Disaster awaits if this goes through.

- Why should a well-run NuL council and others join a poor performing council SOT. I can see my council tax going up to pay for other areas. I am very concerned about LGR. A rethink is needed.
- With the right mix of counties Newcastle can stay solvent, and in control.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

4 NOVEMBER 2025

Report Title: Allocation of Section 106 Monies to Redevelopment Scheme, Marsh Parade, Newcastle

Submitted by: Service Director Planning

Portfolios: Strategic Planning; Community Safety and Wellbeing

Ward(s) affected: Cross Heath, Town

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☒	No ☐
To seek Cabinet approval to allocate S106 planning obligation monies towards a residential and commercial redevelopment scheme at Marsh Parade, Newcastle.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That Cabinet: Agrees to the allocation of £916,363 towards the costs of a Redevelopment Scheme by Aspire Housing Group on the site of the former Zanzibar Night Club, Marsh Parade, Newcastle.			
<u>Reasons</u> Without the provision of S106 monies the scheme at Marsh Parade, the Newcastle Town Deal programme to regenerate the former Zanzibar site would not be capable of being implemented.			

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission was recently granted for a mixed residential and commercial re-development scheme by Aspire Homes on the former Zanzibar night club site, Marsh Parade, Newcastle.
- 1.2 The scheme provides for 63 affordable housing units (social rent) and 5 Enterprise Units.
- 1.3 The former Zanzibar site has remained vacant for nearly 15 years. Its redevelopment would support the regeneration of this part of Newcastle and sit alongside other development schemes which are occurring or planned in and adjacent to the town centre to boost growth and prosperity.
- 1.4 The scheme is dependent upon public subsidy as without this it would be unviable and hence undeliverable. In addition to Aspire's own investment,

Town Deal monies agreed with the Borough Council would be utilised as would Recycled Capital Grant with further support sought from Homes England. Even with all of the aforementioned contributions there would remain a funding gap.

- 1.5** In 2018 permission was granted for a residential scheme at Wilmot Drive, Lower Milehouse Lane, Newcastle. A Section 106 planning obligation entered into for this scheme required the developers Tilia Homes (formerly Kier) to pay monies toward off-site affordable housing. The sum payable was £899,570. The development at Wilmot Drive was duly completed and the S106 monies received. They remain unallocated and unspent.

2. Issues

- 2.1** The Borough Council has worked closely with Aspire Homes in the development of the Zanzibar redevelopment scheme. This has included commenting on the type and tenure of residential units from a Housing Authority perspective and assisting in identifying how the project could be funded, including accessing Newcastle Town Deal monies allocated to the Council.
- 2.2** As proposed the scheme is not financially viable. It would provide for 63 residential apartments which would be for social rent alongside the 5 Enterprise Units. There is a lack of affordable housing provision in the Borough and hence this project seeks to address this issue. Due to the viability issues, delivery would be dependent upon accessing additional funds over and above investment that Aspire can make into the scheme.
- 2.3** In granting a planning permission in 2018 for a residential development scheme on Wilmot Drive, Lower Milehouse Lane, Newcastle the developer of the site was party to various obligations including a commitment to financially support the delivery of off-site affordable housing elsewhere in the borough. This commitment was based on payment of monies to the Council as and when proportions of the residential scheme were completed at Wilmot Drive. In due course the Wilmot Drive development was built out providing total receipts of £899,570 to the Council. With accrual of interest the current total stands at £916,363
- 2.4** As part of the discussions between the Council and Aspire Homes with regards to the Zanzibar scheme, the prospect of utilising the Wilmot Drive monies arose. Aspire subsequently worked up a scheme which confirmed the need for public subsidy of which the aforementioned monies were factored in.
- 2.5** With the granting of planning permission and Aspire needing to confirm funding including with Homes England, Aspire has now formally approached the Council to seek confirmation that the Wilmot Drive monies can be allocated towards the Zanzibar scheme.
- 2.6** The Council's Planning service has confirmed that the wording of the agreement entered into by the developer of the Wilmot Drive residential development allows for the monies to be allocated to the Zanzibar scheme. The latter would provide for social/affordable housing on a site elsewhere in the borough and in doing so contribute towards meeting an identified need.

2.7 The Council's Housing Service has confirmed that there is a significant and increasing demand for affordable housing and are supportive of the delivery of 63 residential units for social rent.

2.8 On the basis that the legal agreements would allow for the use of the monies from the Wilmot Drive scheme to be utilised at the Zanzibar site and the Council's Housing Service deems the proposed number of units and the tenure to be acceptable, it is requested that Cabinet approves the allocation of £916,363 towards the Zanzibar project.

3. **Recommendation**

3.1 That the Cabinet approves the allocation of £916,363 towards the Zanzibar redevelopment scheme on Marsh Parade, Newcastle.

4. **Reasons**

4.1 Monies generated from a residential scheme on Wilmot Drive, Lower Milehouse Lane, Newcastle are for the delivery of affordable housing within Newcastle Borough. An affordable housing development is proposed on the site of the former Zanzibar night club, Marsh Parade, Newcastle by Aspire Housing Group. This scheme is unviable and requires public subsidy in order to be delivered. Use of the Wilmot Drive monies would assist in addressing the funding gap.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 The Council could decide not to confirm the allocation of monies however without funding support the Aspire scheme cannot be delivered.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The legal agreement entered in to by the developers of the Wilmot Drive scheme requires the provision of off-site affordable housing

6.2 Under the Council's constitution decisions relating to the scale of monies involved here (greater than £100,000 and less than £1 million) are for the Cabinet to take.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 N/A

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no financial and resource implications for the Council. The monies in question have been paid by the developer of the Wilmot Drive scheme with interest accrued.

9. **Major Risks & Mitigation**

9.1 Correspondence received from Aspire Housing Group confirms the critical importance of the S106 monies being allocated to the Zanzibar scheme

recognising the non-viability of the scheme and the need for significant public funding support (See Appendix 1)

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council ☐

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

One Digital Council ☐

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

One Sustainable Council ☒

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is a key decision in line with the capital value of the S106 transfer.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1 – Correspondence pertaining to S106 allocation

15. Background Papers

15.1 None.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

4 November 2025

Report Title: Contract Award for repairs to J2 main pool roof

Submitted by: Service Director – Commercial Services

Portfolios: Finance, Town Centres and Growth; Leisure, Culture and Heritage

Ward(s) affected: Town Ward

Purpose of the Report

To outline plans to enable capital works to the roof of the Jubilee 2 (J2) leisure centre, request a budget allocation and agree arrangements for the award of contract.

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the repair works to the underside of the pool roof to enable the continuation of swimming provision in the Borough for the benefit of residents.
2. Allocates £64,792.60 within the Capital Programme for J2 making the total scheme budget £362,018.60. This provides funding for the main contractor works and all associated fees such as Structural Engineer, Architect and Principal Designer. Authorising the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to award these supporting contracts.
3. Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to award the contract for J2 Leisure Centre Poolhall Roof Repair and Refurbishment to Domino Commercial Interiors Ltd.
4. Notes that the above works will be followed by the installation of pool covers which will reduce the water heating requirements supporting the Council's Sustainability programme.

Reasons

The implementation of necessary works at Jubilee 2 (J2) requires Cabinet to review the plans to maintain the J2 pool and allocate the required funding.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Jubilee 2 Leisure Centre (J2), owned and managed by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, provides two swimming pools for a wide range of aquatic leisure, from 25-metre lane swimming through to children's lessons and aqua exercise sessions.
- 1.2 There have been various Latent Defect investigations to the main pool hall roof at J2 over the recent years as the underside of the roof has started showing signs of corrosion. C2C and Jonathan Cornes Associates undertook reviews in Summer 2023. In June 2023 safety netting to rooflight wells was installed to catch any potential debris falling to mitigate any risks to swimmers. Due to the warm temperatures and high moisture content in the air, the corrosion is slowly worsening and leaving the problem would result in additional repairs required and increasing contractor costs.
- 1.3 To ensure the works procured met the needs of the swimming pool environment, specialist paint advice was obtained from a Paint Research Association expert to support the development of the specification for repairs. As part of the preparation for the works testing of the paint is also being undertaken.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The required works have been tendered through Pagabo, which is a public sector compliant framework.
- 2.2 Two tenders were returned, and following assessment, Domino Commercial Interiors Ltd has been selected as the successful bidder following evaluation. As part of the Pagabo framework tendering process the tenderers provided clarification on their tenders and Officers were reassured on the plans proposed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet:
 1. Approves the repair works to the underside of the pool roof to enable the continuation of swimming provision in the Borough which benefits many of our residents including children.
 2. Allocates £64,792.60 within the Capital Programme for J2 making the total scheme budget £362,018.60. This provides funding for the main contractor works and all associated fees such as Structural Engineer, Architect and Principal Designer. Authorising the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to award these supporting contracts.
 3. Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth to award the contract for J2 Leisure Centre Poolhall Roof Repair and Refurbishment to Domino Commercial Interiors Ltd.

4. Notes that the above works will be followed by the installation of pool covers which will reduce the water heating requirements supporting the Council's Sustainability programme.

4. Reasons for Proposed Solution

- 4.1 J2 is a very well-used leisure facility, and it is important that the Council continues to maintain the building to a high standard. The Council has committed to installing pool covers to ensure that the water temperature is maintained and that the energy used to heat the water is reduced. It is therefore appropriate that the repairs to the roof are completed first.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 The Council has a choice whether to repair the main pool hall roof and when to complete this repair.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The Pagabo framework enable the Council to utilise a compliant procurement approach, enabling the Council to access suitably qualified companies and utilising a mini competition to secure the best value for our project. The Council will contract with Domino Commercial Interiors Ltd for the works.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The provision of the large swimming pool supports a wide range of users from school lessons, customer swimming lessons, leisure swims and club swimming. There is also pool lifts and hoists to support those requiring alternative access.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 This project is funded by the Council's Capital Programme, resource has been allocated from the Council's regeneration team to manage the major works and Leisure services will support the works whilst on site. The total costs of the works including fees is £362,018.60. The Capital Programme includes £297,226, therefore an additional £64,792.60 needs to be allocated.
- 8.2 Whilst the works are onsite the main pool will remain closed, there will be a loss of income from pay-as-you-use customers and refunds to J2 members with Direct Debit swimming memberships.

9. Major Risks

- 9.1 The main risk identified would be that this project would not be complete in line with the specification including time delays. As a mitigation, professional services have been appointed to support the project and regular contract monitoring meetings will take place.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

- 10.1 J2, in line with the majority of leisure centres with swimming pools, is a high energy consumer and the efficiency of the building is important. Maintaining the structure of the building is important alongside future investment in energy efficiency measures. Following the repair works the Council is intending to install pool covers which will retain the water temperature thus reducing the building heating requirements.



11. One Council

- 11.1 Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council x

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

Taking into account all swimming facilities within the Borough they are generally oversubscribed and therefore the Council has to carefully consider maximising pool space for all users. A key area of support for our communities is teaching children and adults to swim as an important life skill.

One Digital Council x

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

J2 offers online booking and App's for its users, including monitoring of children's progression against the national swimming stages so parents can track progress. Adult swimmers can also use Swim Tag to monitor their swimming and set personal or group targets.

One Sustainable Council x

We will deliver on our commitments to a net zero future and make all decisions with sustainability as a driving principle.

As outlined above the regular maintenance of the building and the plans for the pool covers supports the sustainability agenda.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This is a key decision item as the main contract is over £250,000 of capital costs.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 None.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 None.

15. Background Papers

15.1 Tender information is considered to be commercially confidential.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S REPORT TO CABINET

4th NOVEMBER 2025

Report Title: **Vehicle Fleet and Maintenance Procurement**

Submitted by: **Service Director Sustainable Environment**

Portfolios: **Sustainable Environment**

Ward(s) affected: **N/A**

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes ☒	No ☐
To gain approval for the procurement of up to 10 Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's) and 8 Food waste vehicles either through direct purchase with separate in-house maintenance, or via contract hire including maintenance. Although vehicles aren't required before 2027, the lead in time for waste collection vehicles is now so long, around 18 months, that procurement needs to commence before the end of this year.			
<u>Recommendation</u> That: Cabinet: 1. Approves the procurement of 18 vehicles to support the Council's Recycling & Waste collection service including an option to procure on a contract hire basis with maintenance. 2. Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Environment to approve the award of contract for the supply of 18 vehicles following the procurement and evaluation process having confirmed a best value approach.			
<u>Reasons</u> The current vehicle fleet utilised for the Council's dry recycling and food waste collections need to be replaced within the next 18 months, and with vehicle lead in times now being very long, procurement needs to commence this year to ensure delivery in mid 2027. This procurement exercise needs to also include an option for procuring the vehicles through contact hire with maintenance.			

1. Background

- 1.1** Traditionally the Council has procured and purchased all its vehicle and plant fleet through the Councils Capital programme. Vehicles and plant are then managed and maintained inhouse utilising the Councils garage workshop facilities.

- 1.2 The Council currently has 40 vehicles on its Operators License ('O' Licence) and manages and maintains a further 25 vehicles under 3.5 tonnes and therefore not required to be on the O licence together with 150 pieces of plant mainly mowers used in the ground's maintenance service.
- 1.3 The garage workshop has been operational for well over 50 years, although is now maintaining vehicles it was never designed to facilitate. As well as maintaining and repairing the Council's own fleet, the garage workshop also undertakes taxi testing on behalf of the Council's Licensing division, as well as private MOT's and small amounts of commercial work on vehicles for a private sector company.
- 1.4 The garage workshop employs 6 mechanics, a transport / workshop manager, as well as a part time stores person, and a full-time technical officer. The service sits under a Business Manager who is also responsible for the Council's Recycling & Waste transfer station, the depot site and compliance for the Directorates operational services.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Since the Covid pandemic, the supply of specialist vehicles has become increasingly difficult, with build times of more than 12 months. The roll out of the Government's Simpler Recycling legislation where all waste collection authorities are required to collect food waste separately has put considerable strain on suppliers of specialist food waste collection vehicles. If the Council does not go out to procurement within the next few months, it is likely the new fleet will not be delivered before 2028, meaning the existing fleet, due to its age will require more costly maintenance, and disruption to service delivery.
- 2.2 It is necessary within this procurement exercise to look at alternative delivery models for the supply and maintenance of the Councils vehicle fleet. This is because over the last 20 years or so, and particularly the last 10 the size and complexity of the Council's fleet has changed out of all recognition. This requires more diverse skills for mechanics, and maintenance equipment to service and maintain the fleet. With the introduction and expansion of electric vehicles (EVs) this adds a further complexity and dimension to the work needed to manage and maintain the fleet.
- 2.3 With increasing house building the recycling and waste service will need to further expand requiring additional Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs), putting added pressure onto the garage workshop.
- 2.4 The garage workshop is now old, very tired and not a pleasant place to work.
- 2.5 The garage workshop has an aging workforce, with over half the current staff set to retire over the next few years. Recruitment of HGV mechanics is very difficult in the current market; they are a relatively scarce resource due to market factors.
- 2.6 There is no digital maintenance and fleet management system in place, with the workshop still using paper-based systems. An IT solution is currently being researched with a view to implement this financial year unless other options wish to be taken forward.

- 2.7** Fleet vehicles have traditionally been procured in 'block', for example refuse collection vehicles. While this may provide small discounts in bulk purchasing it means the whole fleet starts to wear out at the same time, requiring costly repairs which take time and resource to fix, often requiring the need to send vehicles to third party suppliers as there is insufficient resource within the garage workshop to deal with these eventualities. This has been the case this year with the recycling and refuse fleet and several streetscene vehicles all of which are coming to the end of their operational life.
- 2.8** The Council is in a position where it is now having to borrow to finance Capital projects including the Council's fleet replacement programme. The cost of borrowing changes the ongoing revenue costs for the fleet significantly, with every £1m borrowed costing £415k in interest over the asset life (8 years). In addition, for every £1m borrowed on a maturity loan a charge to revenue for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) would be incurred – this would range between £103k and £148k over the asset life.
- 2.9** The garage workshop currently generates a not insignificant amount of income through providing services that are non-fleet related. In 2024/25 MOT's were undertaken that generated £13k of income and taxi tests were completed that generated a £61k recharge to licensing services who in turn charge the client a fee that includes this test.
- 2.10** It is of note that a standard 26 tonne RCV now costs in excess of £250k, but up to £500k if the fleet was to move to electric. Food waste vehicles are around £110k for diesel and £200k for electric ones.

3. Options and Recommendation

- 3.1** There are two main options to consider and test for the procurement of the vehicles outlined in this report.
- Go out to Procurement via a compliant framework and procure the new fleet in the way the Council has traditionally and continue to undertake the maintenance in-house.
 - Go out to Procurement for a contract hire solution with maintenance. This could have several variances to replace the current fleet and the way the Council manages and maintains its vehicle and plant fleet.
- 3.2** A contract hire solution with maintenance is popular with many local authorities and private sector companies. The model is simple in that a company would supply vehicles to the Council's specification and charge a monthly hire fee for each vehicle including maintenance. A fleet provider would take over the operation of the workshop as part of the solution, along with the staff who are currently employed within that service.
- 3.3** There are several variations which can be looked at, effectively providing a hybrid approach between what the Council currently does, and a full contract hire solution described above. The main hybrid option would be for the Council to still purchase the vehicles itself and effectively transfer the maintenance and management of them to a fleet provider. This is the approach taken by one authority currently within Staffordshire.
- 3.4** Soft market testing has been undertaken with two fleet management companies who provide contract hire arrangements for other authorities in

Staffordshire. As part of this exercise, we have also been fortunate in Lichfield DC sharing their procurement results as they have recently been out to procurement for fleet management services. Additionally finance colleagues have been undertaking detail financial analysis of our current costs for procuring managing and maintaining the council's vehicle and plant fleet.

- 3.5** It is recommended that a procurement exercise is undertaken with the two options which once received a full analysis is undertaken to assess which option is financially preferable over the length of the vehicle's life, circa 7 years together with an analysis of risk.

4. Reasons

- 4.1** The current garage workshop is old and in need of significant investment, HGV mechanics are difficult to find when recruitment is needed, putting pressure on service delivery, particularly as the vehicles get older. Additionally, ever changing technology and the need to further increase the number of vehicles the Council needs to operate moving forward, the current situation could be viewed as unsustainable.
- 4.2** Capital financing is now a challenge with the Council now borrowing to fund Capital works including ongoing replacement of the Council's fleet.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 5.1** The Council has a legal obligation to hold and maintain an Operator's License, for all its vehicles over 3.5tonnes. there is set criteria around how vehicles on the 'O' licence are managed and maintained, and the Council has to have at least one named individual, normally a Transport Manager who holds and is named on the licence. Currently the Council has two individuals named on its 'O' license.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1** The report has no equality impact assessment implications.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 1.1** The 2025/26 net budget for the provision of the transport workshop is £496k, excluding support service recharges. Included within this is a charge direct to licensing for the provision of MOTs on hackney carriage and private hire vehicles of £88k. This licensing recharge needs to be included as if the transport workshop is no longer providing the MOT, then an external cost and therefore budget pressure would be required within licensing.
- 1.2** Within the Council's current Capital Programme, there is allowance for £19.236m of vehicle expenditure up to and including 2030/31. The expenditure on this is currently profiled as follows:
- 2025/26 - £3.440m
 - 2026/27 - £5.803m
 - 2027/28 - £400k
 - 2028/29 - £973k

- 2029/30 - £1.264m
- 2023/31 - £7.356m

- 1.3** A full review of the benefits of any contract hire/leasing arrangement, including a comparison of the financing of both this and the purchase option will be undertaken as part of the procurement and evaluation process, any budget implications will need to be clearly determined during this period.

8. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 8.1** A major risk is loss of the Operator's License through not following procedures set out as part of the license requirements, and therefore not managing and maintaining the fleet to ensure it is always in roadworthy and safe condition to operate on the highway. 'O' license holders are inspected and held accountable by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
- 8.2** The Council has robust policies and procedures in place to manage and maintain the Councils vehicle fleet which adhere to 'O' license requirements and guidance. Any new arrangements will need to demonstrate the Council is still able to fulfil and evidence its compliance to the DVSA.

9. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



10. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

One Commercial Council **x**

We will make investment to diversify our income and think entrepreneurially.

Currently the garage workshop offers MOTs to members of the public, which combined with taxi testing allows an additional Mechanic to be employed. However, it is increasingly difficult to compete with private companies, especially national corporations, who can run promotions, and undertake vehicle repairs, which the Council doesn't have the resources to offer.

One Digital Council **x**

We will develop and implement a digital approach which makes it easy for all residents and businesses to engage with the Council, with our customers at the heart of every interaction.

Any new arrangements will need to make full use of the latest digital processes to ensure maximum efficiency and legal compliance required for the operation of the 'O' Licence.

Sustainable One Council **x**

An efficiently operated fleet ensures all vehicles are operating to optimal performance, and that consumables such as oils are utilised and disposed of in a way to cause no harm to the environment.

11. Key Decision Information

11.1 This report is a key decision, due to the value of the procurement exercise.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 none

13. List of Appendices

13.1 none

14. Background Papers

14.1 none

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