

Our ref: CST/2103

Date: 21st March 2025



Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Jim,

Local Government Reorganisation Interim Plan: Newcastle-under-Lyme

I am writing further to the resolutions of Newcastle-under-Lyme's full Council at its special meeting held on 19th March 2025. This meeting agreed to the submission of an interim plan by the Council in response to your statutory invitation of 5th February 2025.

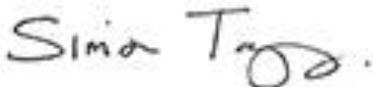
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has and will continue to work with our partner authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in setting the conditions for the creation of a strategic authority at an appropriate geography ahead of November 2025. The Borough Council has been a champion for local and regional investment which brings benefits to both the loyal and ancient borough but also to those who live and work in neighbouring authorities including the city, Cheshire, Shropshire and other parts of Staffordshire. We will continue to work to increase economic growth and greater opportunities for business development in our region. We do not think a Mayor is necessary to achieve these ambitions, but will commit to work with others on the appropriate structure for delivery of a Strategic Authority.

However, our Council is firm in its view that it does not support the ceasing of successful two-tier local government delivery in Newcastle. Furthermore, we cannot support one of the upper-tier proposed models for a unitary authority – that of a North Staffordshire authority forcing a merger for Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands with Stoke-on-Trent, for the reasons I outline in our report (enclosed). The Council does not currently favour a Staffordshire-wide unitary authority. We will continue to work with partners and anchor organisations on options but are clear that there are other ways of delivery which can meet the objectives of this forced reorganisation, as set out in our Interim Plan.

My report also calls for a number of additional measures, including that Government fully funds the development and implementation of this reorganisation, that the people of our Loyal and Ancient borough have their say on reorganisation through a Government-funded referendum, and, above all, that the delivery of vital local services are put first and foremost at the heart of the process – our residents require that services continue to be provided to the highest quality, not the lowest common standard.

I repeat my invitation to you, and extend it to your officials, to visit the borough so that you can see first-hand the changes the Borough Council has made to Newcastle and understand the concerns of our residents.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. Simon Tagg, Leader of the Council

Cc: Adam Jogee MP, Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme
Gordon Mole, Chief Executive, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Encl.