

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Cabinet

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) panel: 30th March 2026

Response to the Submission from Adam Jogee MP ([Submission to NULBC Cabinet Panel for Local Government Reorganisation](#))

1. Engagement: The Record Does Not Support the MP's Claim

Mr Jogee suggests there has not been adequately engagement with him (or indeed Partners) in the LGR process. However, the documentary record shows the opposite.

Since January 2025, I and the Borough Council have repeatedly sought his engagement - in January, March, May and July and invited him to meet after his September 2025 correspondence, which he said his office would follow up on. No such approach was received; the only meeting was a short Teams meeting along with the two other local MPs.

The Council's LGR work has included extensive engagement with strategic partners and stakeholders, as set out in our published Cabinet materials. The issues have been debated at three public Full Council meetings.

Therefore, the claim of insufficient engagement is not supported by evidence.

2. On Political Motivation: The Council Has Been Consistent. The MP Has Not

The MP alleges the process has been driven by party-political considerations.

Yet he himself acknowledged that "*Newcastle-under-Lyme has every reason to consider every single option,*" therefore supporting the multi-option analysis we undertook.

He now raises concerns about models he previously accepted should be examined.

He mentions £200,000 spent on LGR by the Council so far. This cost is only because of the Government agenda for LGR that no one asked for or voted for.

The Council's proposal for a Newcastle Borough only Unitary enjoys cross-party support locally and over 11,000 residents have signed a petition opposing a merger into a larger authority.

The Council is following local opinion and acting in the Borough's interest, not party interest.

3. On the Quality and Seriousness of the Council's Work

The MP describes our proposals as "inadequate" or "incompetent." This contradicts the published evidence.

The LGR process required all councils to submit models by November 2025 in line with the Government's timetable. The Council's proposals were prepared with the support of external consultants and in accordance with national criteria for unitary submissions.

Government documentation confirms that five models were submitted across Staffordshire by various councils, including Newcastle's four-unitary for Staffordshire model reflecting a full and serious options appraisal that meets the government criteria.

The work was thorough, compliant, and professionally supported. Therefore the MP's characterisation is without foundation.

4. Public Support Is Clear and the Council's Position Reflects That

The MP speaks about the importance of local identity and democracy. On that point, The Council fully agrees.

That is why the Council's proposal protects the Borough's identity by creating a Newcastle Borough only unitary, headquartered in the Borough and avoiding absorption into a larger, more remote authority.

The strength of local feeling is undeniable: with 11,000 people have formally opposed a merger into a larger authority.

The Council is aligned with the community; the MP is not aligned with its expressed views.

5. The MP's Criticism of the Current Two-Tier System Ignores Evidence

He points to examples of coordination challenges in the two-tier structure. While individual issues can arise in any system, the Council performance record is strong.

Newcastle Borough Council has delivered high-quality, cost-effective services, backed by annual efficiency reviews delivering more than £10 million in savings since 2018. Another £1.1million in cuts from the Government have had to be absorbed over the last year.

The Council has consistently stated that it opposes forced reorganisation, believing the existing system works well.

His critique in his submission does not reflect the documented performance of this authority.

6. A “Newcastle-First” Approach Requires Action—Not Just Words

The MP claims to favour a Newcastle Borough only unitary model. If so, he should support the only proposal that guarantees that outcome.

Instead, he has not provided the letter of support requested in November 2025 to strengthen the Borough Council’s case submitted to Government.

With Government actively consulting on models that include a merger with Stoke-on-Trent, The MP failing to publicly back the Newcastle Borough only model risks weakening the Borough’s position at a critical moment.

Civil Servants have confirmed that Local MPs will be a key consultee on what unitary models they choose in their area

If the MP wishes to protect Newcastle-under-Lyme’s identity, the time to act is now.

The Council has acted transparently, responsibly, and in line with both Government requirements and the clear wishes of local people. The MP’s submission misrepresents the process and overlooks the extensive evidence of engagement, planning, and public support and shows how out of touch he is with local residents in our Borough.

Our priority remains unchanged: to defend the Borough, protect its identity, and ensure that any reorganisation strengthens not weakens the voice of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough residents.

Councillor Simon Tagg

Leader of Newcastle Borough Council

30th March 2026