

16th July 2026

To: The Worshipful the Mayor of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme

Cc: Monitoring Officer & Chief Executive

Request for a Special Meeting of the Council pursuant to Constitution B4, Procedure Rule 2.4

We, the undersigned Members of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, being not fewer than five Members, formally request that the Mayor convenes a Special Meeting of the Council to consider the Council's response to the Ministerial announcement of 16th July, relating to Local Government Reorganisation.

Reasons for urgency

The announcement by the Labour Government regarding Local Government Reorganisation in Staffordshire will fundamentally alter or extinguish the Borough Council as a separate authority and transfer its powers, assets, liabilities, staff and democratic mandate into a successor authority.

Such a decision would represent an existential change to the future of local government in Newcastle-under-Lyme and would have profound implications for local representation, service delivery, governance, finance and the identity of the Borough.

It is essential that all elected Members are afforded the earliest opportunity to debate the implications of any Government decision in a public Council meeting, to express the views of their constituents, and to determine the Council's response.

The next ordinary meeting of Council is not scheduled until 30th September 2026. Waiting until that date would risk prejudicing the Council's ability to respond to any Government announcement, to obtain timely legal advice, and to preserve any legal remedies available to the authority. Judicial review proceedings are subject to strict and short timescales and any delay could materially affect the Council's position.

In these exceptional circumstances, we submit that the matter cannot reasonably await the next scheduled meeting of Council and therefore warrants the calling of a Special Meeting.

Signed:

Andy Fear	
Mark Holland	
Simon Tagg	
Sue Beeston	
Joan Whieldon	

Motion to the Special Council Meeting

Council Response to Local Government Reorganisation Proposals Affecting Newcastle-under-Lyme

Council notes that:

1. The Labour Government's programme of Local Government Reorganisation will result in the abolition of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and its incorporation within a larger unitary authority.
2. Such proposals would have far-reaching implications for local democracy, community identity, financial resilience, service delivery and local accountability.
3. A number of local authorities elsewhere in England have already pursued or considered judicial review proceedings in relation to Local Government Reorganisation decisions where concerns have arisen regarding the lawfulness of decision-making processes, the adequacy of consultation, the reasoning for decisions, financial assessments, or compliance with statutory requirements.
4. Judicial review claims must be brought promptly and are subject to strict legal deadlines.

Council further notes:

1. That no decision has yet been taken by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council regarding any legal challenge.
2. That it is essential that Members receive independent legal advice on all available options before determining the Council's response to any Government decision.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To instruct the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, to obtain urgent independent counsel and specialist local government legal advice on:
 - the lawfulness of any Local Government Reorganisation decision affecting Newcastle-under-Lyme;
 - the prospects of a judicial review or other legal challenge;
 - the likely costs, risks and benefits of such proceedings;
 - any relevant procedural deadlines.
2. To authorise the Monitoring Officer to take all necessary protective procedural steps to preserve the Council's legal position pending consideration of that advice.
3. That the legal advice, together with recommendations, be reported to Members at the earliest practicable opportunity.

4. To authorise the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to open urgent discussions with Staffordshire County Council and any other affected local authorities regarding potential joint legal action, including the possibility of participating in, supporting, or joining any judicial review proceedings relating to Local Government Reorganisation affecting Staffordshire.
5. That the Chief Executive & Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State seeking full disclosure of the reasons, evidence and assessment underpinning any decision affecting Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.
6. That this Council reaffirms its commitment to protecting effective local representation and ensuring that any reorganisation affecting Newcastle-under-Lyme is lawful, evidence-based and in the best interests of residents.

Proposed: Simon Tagg

Seconded: Mark Holland