



Alison McGovern MP

Minister of State (Minister for Local Government and Homelessness)

LGReorganisation@communities.gov.uk

Date: 27th November 2025

Dear Minister,

RE: Delivering a Stronger Staffordshire: Our Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation and Future Devolution

We write collectively as the Leaders of the Councils proposing a North Staffordshire Unitary Council and a Southern & Mid Staffordshire Unitary Council via two submissions, which represent a coherent, evidence-based response to the Government's invitation for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) providing the strongest possible platform for future devolution across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

This letter sets out how our two complementary submissions describe a proposal that meets the Government's six criteria for reorganisation, achieves financial sustainability, and creates a governance model that is fit for the future. It also demonstrates how these two unitary councils in Staffordshire will work in harmony to unlock economic growth, improve public services, and strengthen local democracy across the region.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council undertook a detailed option appraisal and extensive public engagement; Cannock Chase District, East Staffordshire and Stafford Borough Councils together undertook their own detailed option appraisal and wide engagement. Each has drawn on separate independent advice. Both exercises have reached the same clear conclusion, that a two unitary solution comprising a North Staffordshire and a Southern-Mid Staffordshire Council is, evidentially, the strongest outcome for the future of local government in Staffordshire.

Through our two submissions, a shared vision emerges, simple yet powerful: two strong, balanced Unitary Councils, aligned to the County's existing functional economic geographies:



- **North Staffordshire Unitary Council** will bring together Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Staffordshire Moorlands, creating a single authority for the county's primary city, its conurbation and its rural hinterland.
- **Southern & Mid Staffordshire Unitary Council** will unite Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Stafford, and Tamworth, forming a council that reflects the strong economic ties to the West Midlands conurbation and provides the scale to deliver efficiencies and resilience.

Together, these two Unitary Councils will:

- Remove duplication across ten existing authorities;
- Align governance with functional economic market areas;
- Establish a strong foundation for strategic collaboration through a future Staffordshire Strategic Authority, unlocking devolved powers for transport, skills, and growth.

Together, our submissions describe a co-ordinated and cohesive model designed to work as a whole, ensuring Staffordshire speaks with a strong, unified voice regionally and nationally.

The proposed North Staffordshire Unitary Council and Southern & Mid Staffordshire Unitary Council meet the six criteria for LGR through:

- Eliminating the existing two-tier system with a sensible number of Unitary Councils;
- Establishing Councils of appropriate size, scale and geography to achieve the critical mass required for financial sustainability and service resilience;
- Delivering high-quality and sustainable services by limiting the costs and complexities of upper-tier service disaggregation, maintaining continuity whilst driving transformation;
- Demonstrating a collaborative approach to formulating reorganisation options, informed through public engagement;
- Creating a proportionate split for future devolution in Staffordshire, through a preferred Staffordshire Strategic Authority;
- Utilising Neighbourhood Area Committees, alongside existing Parish and Town Councils, to preserve local identity and empower communities, as well as reestablishing Charter Trustees to protect local heritage.



Our proposal describes a robust financial case that, subject to the decisions of the new authorities, would achieve significant annual savings and a payback period of within two years for both new Councils. Identified areas of savings include:

- Consolidation of leadership and governance;
- Integration of ICT systems;
- Rationalisation of estates and assets;
- Streamlined procurement and contract management.

Whilst a number of external experts have been utilised across the county to support the modelling of financial outputs, those experts have all utilised the same evidence base and highlighted a potential range of options for a North Staffordshire Unitary Council and a Southern & Mid Staffordshire Unitary Council, with saving ranges for the county area as a whole of between £12.6m - £51.7m and implementation cost ranges of between £20.6m - £54.4m. These identified efficiencies will strengthen resilience, enabling reinvestment in frontline services and infrastructure.

As stated, the creation of two complementary Unitary Councils unlocks the potential for a Staffordshire Strategic Authority, covering the whole County and Stoke-on-Trent, which would:

- Provide a single voice for Staffordshire in engagement with Government;
- Enable coherent planning for transport, housing, and skills;
- Position Staffordshire to compete for investment and funding alongside other devolved regions.

The proposal of a two unitary solution for Staffordshire, split north and south, aligns perfectly with the Government's ambition for stronger local leadership and enhanced regional collaboration, representing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a stronger, fairer, and more resilient Staffordshire. We urge you to support the proposal and work with us to make this vision a reality. Together, we can deliver a model of Local Government that meets the needs of today and the aspirations of tomorrow.

We are copying this letter to our Members of Parliament, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and Baroness Taylor.



Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jane Ashworth OBE

Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Cllr Steve Thornley

Leader, Cannock Chase District Council

Cllr Mick Fitzpatrick

Leader, East Staffordshire Borough Council

Cllr Aidan Godfrey

Leader, Stafford Borough Council

(On behalf of the Councils proposing the North Staffordshire and Southern & Mid Staffordshire Unitary Authorities)