

3 October 2025

An open letter from the group leaders on Stafford Borough Council

The future of local government in Stafford Borough.

The four group leaders on Stafford Borough Council are united in their support for a single unitary council to deliver all council services across the Southern and Mid Staffordshire area of the county.

The Government set out legislation that will see all district, borough, city and county councils in Staffordshire abolished to be replaced by fewer larger councils with responsibility for all council services, Unitary Authorities.

Although the four leaders, Councillors Aidan Godfrey (Labour and Council Leader), Rob Kenney (Stafford Borough Independents), Jeremy Pert (Conservative) and Doug Rouxel (Green Party), believe the existing system works best for the residents of Stafford Borough, they are speaking about why a single unitary council in the south - complementing a single unitary council in the north - would be in the best interests of residents and businesses in the area.

They propose the new unitary authority should cover the existing council areas which serve Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Tamworth and Stafford Borough because:

1. **Resilience:** A single authority would be stronger and more sustainable in providing services to the public. The leaders believe a single southern unitary authority would be far less likely to fail and be put into special measures.
2. **Economic Powerhouse:** A strong southern unitary will be a major force when it comes to attracting inward investment and creating new employment opportunities. It will be able to compete with the West Midlands and a North Staffordshire unitary.
3. **Saving council taxpayers money:** One authority covering the whole of the southern Staffordshire area will operate a single system and not fragment services. It will reduce duplication of staff and need for two computer systems that would cost more and leave gaps in the service. A larger authority will potentially have greater buying power than smaller ones. A single southern authority will be run by one set of professional management – the benefits of which have been seen with Stafford Borough Council sharing services and senior management with Cannock Chase District Council.

4. **Robust:** The new unitary council will include all the County Council functions - such as highways, adult social services, children services, and education - along with district services like household bin collections, keeping streets clean and planning. This new council will need to exist well into the future so must be robust and efficient. Smaller councils may struggle to provide good value for money services.
5. **Size:** The Government made it clear that a new authority should have a population in the region of 500k – a southern unitary council will easily exceed this figure.
6. Stafford Borough Council has existed for over fifty years, the Borough has a community feeling. Residents in the north and south of the area feel part of the Borough, and for this reason Stafford Borough boundaries must be protected. Stafford Borough is a very special place with a long and rich history; Stafford Borough Council boundaries are a red line not to be crossed.

Why not two unitary councils in the south?

This would leave the authorities with as little as 310,000 population and therefore

- much lower than the Government target - and proposed north Staffordshire unitary
- less attractive for private inward investment
- Slow down our economic growth and job creation
- More difficult to compete for Government funding when up against larger unitary authorities in north Staffordshire and the West Midlands.
- Duplication of systems and staff

In summary: A single southern unitary authority will be more financially stable, be able to attract more inward investment, will not fragment vital services, be strong enough to secure Government funding, be less likely to be put into special measures and be able to compete with the strong city led north Staffordshire and the West Midlands authorities.

'Local Government Reorganisation is not what the group leaders wanted at this time - but the Government has made the decision to abolish us, so we must change. We believe the single southern unitary is the best option for the residents of our area. This will be the biggest change in service delivery in fifty years; it must be right for our residents, not only for now but also the future.'

Councillor Aidan Godfrey

Councillor Rob Kenney

Councillor Jeremy Pert

Councillor Doug Rouxel