

*Councillor Simon Tagg, Leader*

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 7 November 2024

David Williams MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA



Castle House  
Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Staffordshire  
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By e-mail: [david.williams.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.williams.mp@parliament.uk)

Dear David,

### **RE: Kidsgrove Town Deal – Kidsgrove Train Station/Network Rail**

It is good to have your involvement in the Kidsgrove Town Deal Board in your new role as Member of Parliament for the area. I am sure that your input will follow on from the previous MP's input and determination to make the Town Deal a lasting legacy.

Newcastle Borough Council is concerned about the significant risk to the Kidsgrove Train Station project as there are considerable risks to the ground conditions and both Network Rail and The Coal Authority have been working with the Town Deal Board Sub-Group, responsible for the development of the project delivery, to close a financial hole due to the abnormal ground conditions and any mitigation works required.

There has been much debate and investigation into the cost of insurance for ground investigations that both Network Rail and The Coal Authority have insisted be undertaken, which we have now resolved, and The Coal Authority are to issue a licence for the trial holes to be undertaken, so the extent of the underground remediation can be ascertained.

Our previous MP had held discussions with such people as the chair of NR, Lord Hendy, and the then Secretary of State for Transport, which has translated into dedicated support from senior DfT officers.

It has been suggested by these DfT officials that any additional funding for the scheme comes from Local Transport Funding (LTF) announced in February 2024. As you will be aware, Network North announced a significant uplift in Local Transport Fund (LTF) allocations to several Local Authorities including Staffordshire, which will receive £284.9m of additional LTF funding over seven years from 2025-2032 to be spent on its local transport priorities, as the result of the cancellation of the Birmingham to Crewe section of the HS2 project.

Further to this, Kidsgrove was specifically named in paragraph 62 of the Network North announcement as a station enhancement that could be funded by this uplift should the Local Authority choose to. DfT would expect any shortfall on the existing budget for the scheme to be met by this extra funding.

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At present we are not sure about the availability of this funding with the new Government,

In addition to the funding, there is an issue with a fundamental point regarding the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR). We have asked MHCLG whether the project could still proceed if its Ratio (BCR) fell below 1.5 due to the additional cost of the remediation work, which we anticipate it will do when these additional costs are factored in.

Therefore, in your role as the MP on the Board and the link to Government departments, I would request that you continue to take the challenges of this project to the Secretaries of State for Transport and MHCLG to further the understanding of the risks this project is facing and the hitherto agreed principles be continued to avoid the failure of the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Tagg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Simon Tagg  
Leader

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Cc: Dan Gray, Executive Director of Place, Aspire Housing