

Councillor Simon Tagg, Leader



Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 8th August 2025

Adam Jogee MP
Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-
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By e-mail: adam.jogee.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Adam,

RE: Forced Local Government Reorganisation

Following the resolution of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Cabinet most recent meeting, I am writing to you to seek your active support in preserving our Loyal and Ancient Borough.

Our position is underpinned by a desire to preserve and strengthen the autonomy and civic character of Newcastle-under-Lyme - an area with a proud and enduring heritage. As you know, Newcastle was granted borough status by Royal Charter in 1173, making us one of the oldest boroughs in the country. This status was reaffirmed in 1835 under the Municipal Corporations Act, and again in 1974 and 1997 when Newcastle-under-Lyme retained its borough designation amidst widespread local government reform. These historic milestones reflect the strength of our local institutions and the enduring voice of our community.

We believe that the existing model in Newcastle works best for our community and seek your support by arguing this case on behalf of local residents in Parliament. However, if your Labour government's forced reorganisation agenda is imposed, this must protect the borough's legacy and also continue the innovation, stronger partnership, and better outcomes for our residents that has been a hallmark of the Borough Council over many years. The Council has launched a borough-wide consultation to further ask the views of its residents, businesses, and partners.

Our Interim Plan set out the options which we are further investigating, including the creation of a single unitary authority on the existing Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council geography, as well as options to align a new unitary with neighbouring authorities to our east and west, and with Staffordshire Moorlands. I am sure you are well aware of the history and ongoing concerns regarding a merger with Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst we work well with our close neighbours, the borough is, and has always been, distinctly different and must retain its identity and ability to deliver for our residents.

The Full Council at its recent meeting was unanimous across political lines in its opposition to the proposal by Stoke-on-Trent City Council for a North Staffordshire Unitary Council. Over 8,000 people have now signed a petition saying 'No to Stoke'.

We want to be clear that the Council is wholly supportive of the desire to create Strategic Authorities to deliver devolution of powers and funding from central government to local areas. We recognise that a well-designed Strategic Authority could bring benefits in terms of scale, coordination, and investment. A model that respects local identities while enabling more effective regional planning, infrastructure delivery, and economic development could help unlock new opportunities for our communities. It must be noted that a Strategic Authority would not deliver day-to-day local services like emptying the bins or

filling in potholes, and we feel it does not require forced local government reorganisation to move forward.

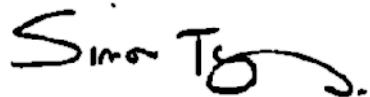
I would strongly argue that this should be a priority of the government rather than costly and time-consuming reorganisation of local government, to put the borough and Staffordshire back on the main stage for future funding and influence when it comes to those strategic matters we see as most vital – including transport, economic development and health outcomes.

In September 2025, we, along with Staffordshire's District Councils, City Council, and County Council informed the Government that we preferred a whole Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent footprint for any future Strategic Authority. We have never received a response to this submission or whether we can advance activity so that Staffordshire and Stoke are not left behind.

I am sure you will agree that we all seek the best outcomes for our residents, businesses and visitors and call upon you to use your influence as a Member of Parliament to achieve this.

I look forward to meeting at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr. Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council
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