



Councillor Amjid Wazir OBE
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for City Pride & Enforcement
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

By e-mail only: amjid.wazir@stoke.gov.uk

11th August 2026

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1BL

Dear Councillor Wazir,

I am writing as Cabinet Member for Waste and Green Spaces at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, seeking to better understand Stoke-on-Trent City Council's approach to the implementation of weekly household food-waste collections and to identify where our authorities may be able to work together effectively. It is key that, at this early stage following the Government's direction to create a North Staffordshire authority, we are clear and transparent on arrangements.

As you will know, the Simpler Recycling requirements introduced under the Environment Act 2021 required councils to provide weekly food-waste collections to every household from 31 March 2026. Whilst there were no operational changes in Newcastle-under-Lyme, as the Council had already implemented food waste collection, Stoke-on-Trent City Council received new-burdens funding from Defra to support delivery of this service. I would be grateful for clarity on how the service is being implemented, including the extent to which it is currently operating on an opt-in or registration basis, how remaining funding is being managed, and how this relates to the Council's plans for full roll out.

I am sure you will appreciate that these are important matters for all councils in North Staffordshire, particularly in relation to statutory compliance, good stewardship of public funding and the practicalities of completing implementation in a way that is fair to residents.

They are also directly relevant to local government reorganisation. As our councils continue to consider the implications of any proposed new authority, I believe it is in everyone's interests to work together openly and pragmatically so that residents are not exposed to avoidable costs, uncertainty or service disruption.

With that in mind, I would welcome answers to the following questions, which I hope will support a shared understanding of the position:

- How much Defra new burdens grant funding was awarded to Stoke-on-Trent City Council for weekly food waste collections, and how much of that funding has been spent to date?
- If any funding remains unspent or has been placed into reserves, what is the City Council's intended approach to using it to support full delivery of the service, and is any of it expected to be returned to Defra? Is there any risk that Defra could seek to claw back grant funding if it has not been spent on delivering the scheme?

- What is the City Council's understanding of how an opt-in model aligns with the statutory duty to collect food waste from every household, particularly where the service may not yet be delivered automatically to all properties, including flats and managed blocks?
- If any feedback, guidance or compliance queries from Defra in relation to service delivery have been received?
- What is the City Council's timetable for moving from opt in registration to universal, address-based delivery of the service?

The operational and financial differences between existing waste services are significant, and I am keen that they are addressed collaboratively, transparently and in good time. A shared approach would help ensure that any future arrangements are practical, affordable and fair to residents across North Staffordshire.

I would be grateful for a full response, together with any relevant financial information and correspondence that can be shared. I would also welcome the opportunity for our officers and members to discuss these matters constructively, so that we can work together in the interests of residents. In the interests of transparency and public accountability, I intend to publish this letter and your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Simpson'.

Councillor Ben Simpson
Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling & Green Spaces
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council