

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN STAFFORDSHIRE

To: LGR Consultation

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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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Subject: Response to the Statutory Consultation on Unitary Proposals for Staffordshire

1. Introduction

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council (Y&CM-PC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals for local government reorganisation in Staffordshire.

2. Preference for Strategic Stability

Y&CM-PC's primary concern is that any new unitary structure must avoid the "democratic deficit" inherent in larger, more remote authorities.

Y&CM-PC supports the principle of an "Eastern and Western Staffordshire" unitary model, as proposed by Staffordshire County Council. We believe this alignment best preserves the socio-economic ties of our residents while ensuring the new authority is of a scale that can remain responsive to rural parish needs.

Y&CM-PC is opposed to any proposal that would split the current Stafford Borough area, as this would disrupt long-standing planning and service delivery frameworks essential to our parish.

3. Strengthening the Parish Tier

With the planned abolition of the borough and county councils by April 2028, the parish council will be the most direct link to the community.

Y&CM-PC calls for a formal commitment to "double devolution", where the new unitary authority transfers specific local assets and service responsibilities to the parish council, accompanied by the necessary funding.

4. Rural Advocacy and Service Delivery

Parish councils have an important role to play and should be seen as key partners in any future local government model in Staffordshire.

Rural communities must not become "service deserts" under the new unitary structure of local government in Staffordshire.

We insist on the creation of Neighbourhood Area Committees to ensure that rural needs are not lost within the wider needs of the new unitary authorities.

Parish Councils have an important role to play as a key partner in any future neighbourhood governance structures and must be consulted at the earliest opportunity to ensure local knowledge and democratic legitimacy help shape the outcome and future delivery of the objectives of the LGR process.

5. Planning

Local Government Reorganisation in Staffordshire poses significant threats to the functioning and impact of the local planning authorities, driven in part by the complexities of merging authorities. This could lead to stalled local plan reviews, decreased service efficiency, loss of planning expertise, and reduced local democratic scrutiny.

Delays in adopting updated local plans will lead to "non-delivery" of housing targets, triggering planning permissions being granted unless adverse impacts "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh the benefits of the approval. This will result in reduced local control over where homes are built.

The [Yarnfield and Cold Meece Neighbourhood Plan](#), which we aim to complete before May 2027 must be upheld as the statutory basis for development decisions within the parish boundary, regardless of the overarching council structure.

6. Conclusion

Y&CM-PC is committed to working constructively with any successor authority. However, our support is contingent on a model that guarantees local accountability, protects our rural identity, and empowers the parish tier of local government.

Signed,



Cllr Sally Parkin
Chairperson, Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council