

**Matthew Pennycook MP**  
**Minister for Housing and Planning**

**Miatta Fahnbulleh MP**  
**PUS for Devolution, Faith and Communities**

Sent via email: [ministerial.correspondence@communities.gov.uk](mailto:ministerial.correspondence@communities.gov.uk)

19 March 2026

Dear Ministers

### **Devolution and Strategic Planning**

Thank you for your letter of 12 February, inviting local authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to consider their appetite and readiness to bring forward proposals for the first step in devolution, namely the creation of a Foundational Strategic Authority (FSA), and also to express our views on the preferred geography for the purposes of strategic land use planning.

In response, we would like to express our interest in establishing an FSA for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent at the first opportunity, with the same spatial planning footprint.

As a group of local authorities, we are more than ready to take this step, having first expressed our desire to start the devolution process some eighteen months ago. With the growing imbalance in resources and powers between areas with and without Strategic Authorities, it is imperative that we now have the opportunity to establish an FSA in Staffordshire without further delay.

The ten local authorities are already in the process of crafting the first Growth Plan for the geography and have established an Innovation Framework in partnership with our two main universities. We already collaborate across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on business support, tourism, place marketing, careers development, nature recovery and waste disposal, amongst other areas of work. More formal devolution to a newly created FSA is a logical next step.

We are pleased that Government itself has recognised that Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent is a sensible footprint for strategic spatial planning. With a population of over a million people and a strongly inter-dependent economy using shared infrastructure, we agree wholeheartedly with the Government's judgement on this matter. We have no desire or need to combine with any other geographies. And whatever the Government decides upon in terms of the future local government structure for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, we are confident that a single strategic authority for the whole of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent area will complement any unitary structure.

We already have the developmental governance in place, in the form of a Leader's Board and a supporting CEO' Board, to move rapidly to establish the governance model, the core structure and the operating framework for a new

FSA. We are prepared to work at pace and would like to see the new strategic authority in place as early as April 2027 if the Government is willing to work at equal pace.

We will await your response to our expression and geographical preference but would emphasise our desire to move at pace now to establish the FSA for the benefit of the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Yours sincerely



**County Councillor Martin Murray**  
Acting Leader




**Councillor Aidan Godfrey**  
Leader




**Councillor Steve Thornley**  
Leader



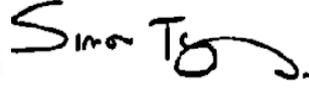

**Councillor Doug Pullen**  
Leader



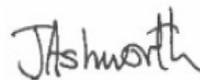

**Councillor Carol Dean**  
Leader




**Councillor Mick Fitzpatrick**  
Leader

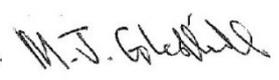
**Councillor Simon Tagg**  
Leader

**Councillor Jane Ashworth**  
Leader




**Councillor Kath Perry MBE**  
Leader

**Councillor Mike Gledhill**  
Leader

