

**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Ms Jayne Minor  
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WS7 9AR**

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Our Ref: JM

04 March 2026

**To: All Members of the Parish Council**

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of the Parish Council to be held in the Conference Centre, HMP Swinfen on Wednesday 11 March 2026 commencing 6.00 p.m. at which the business set out below will be transacted.

Yours sincerely

*Jayne Minor*

**Jayne Minor (Ms) CiLCA & FiLCA  
Parish Clerk**

<b>AGENDA</b>
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**PUBLIC FORUM**

To promote community engagement, the public now has the opportunity to attend and speak at all of the Parish Council's meetings. Please refer to the end of the agenda for details of how to participate in this meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION**

To receive declarations of interests and consider requests for dispensations.

**3. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 46-55) (ENCLOSURE).

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANS**

Members are requested to debate the up-to-date position relating to the High-Speed Rail Plans.

6. **CIL MONIES [FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY]**

**CIL receipts**

Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2025/26	£0.00
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2024/25	£0.00
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2023/24	£0.00
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2022/23	£0.00
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2021/22	£26,163.50
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2020/21	£8,721.17
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2019/20	£410.55
Total amount of CIL received in financial year 2018/19	£1,037.77
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED</b>	<b>£36,332.99</b>

**CIL Spent**

Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2025/26	£0.00
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2024/25	£575.00
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2023/24	£16,000.00
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2022/23	£10,424.50
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2021/22	£4,090.00
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2020/21	£1,930.50
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2019/20	£295.00
Total amount of CIL spent in financial year 2018/19	£1,037.77
<b>TOTAL SPENT</b>	<b>£34,352.77</b>

## CIL Unspent

<b>TOTAL UNSPENT</b>	<b>£1,980.22</b>
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### 7. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Members are requested to receive and note the attached report (**ENCLOSURE**).

### 8. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Members are requested to receive and note the attached report (**ENCLOSURE**).

### 9. STAFFORDSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS' ASSOCIATION (SPCA)

Members are requested to consider renewal of membership of the SPCA at a cost of £149.02 per annum.

The Association was founded in 1939 and:

- Saves you time and money by streamlining your Council's "business" using model documents.
- Provides legal/financial advice.
- Provides free quarterly newsletters to all Clerks/Councillors to keep Councils in touch with the latest developments.
- Suggests sources of funding for projects and provides guidance and advice on public sector borrowing approval
- Provides access to a database of suppliers who provide products and services for Councils, website design, Council notice boards, playground equipment, shelters, bins etc.

### 10. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE ON TRENT

The UK Government has now launched a formal, online consultation on the five proposals put forward by Councils on the future structure of local government across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

Lichfield District Council, alongside Tamworth Borough Council and South Staffordshire District Council, have submitted a joint proposal for creating three new unitary councils across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent:

- North Staffordshire Unitary – covering the existing areas of Newcastle under Lyme, Stoke on Trent, and Staffordshire Moorlands.

- South West Staffordshire – covering the existing areas of Cannock Chase, Stafford, and South Staffordshire.
- South East Staffordshire – covering the existing areas of Lichfield, East Staffordshire, and Tamworth.

The Parish Council is asked to take part in the Government's statutory consultation.

## **11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman will move:

That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

## **12. PARISH CLERK'S SALARY**

Members are requested to approve the payment of the Parish Clerk's February 2026 and March 2026 salary (**PINK ENCLOSURE**).

## **13. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Wednesday 13 May 2026 – Annual General Meeting

All meetings will commence at 6pm

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

15 minutes will be set aside at the beginning of this meeting for you to raise issues relevant to the remit of the meeting. You will have up to 3 minutes and can raise more than one issue. However, the Chairman has the option to extend the time allowed to you if they think it is appropriate. So that the Members at the meeting can be properly briefed in order to enable them to provide a considered response to your question, please advise the Town Clerk of the question[s] you wish to ask the Parish Council at least five working days before the meeting. The Chairman of the meeting has the right to reject any representations that he/she considers not to be appropriate for the meeting. The public forum session will usually be the first item on the agenda and normally will last up to 15 minutes. In some instances, it may not be possible at the meeting to provide an answer. Where that is the case, a written response will be sent to your stated address. While audio and video recordings of this meeting are entirely legal, as a matter of courtesy to Parish Council members who work for this Parish and this Council on a voluntary basis, we would be grateful if you would let the Clerk or the Chairman know beforehand.

**MINUTES OF THE SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT CONFERENCE CENTRE, HMP SWINFEN ON  
WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2026 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

**PRESENT**

Councillor Barnes in the Chair  
Councillor Dyott

**In attendance:**

Ms J Minor, Parish Clerk

**PUBLIC FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

**46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillor Armstrong (Dispensation), Councillor Loescher, Councillor Perks, Councillor Mrs Phillips, and Councillor Pope.

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

Members formally received and approved Councillor Armstrong's Leave of Absence from attendance at meetings from January 2026 to January 2027.

**48. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 November 2025 (Minute Nos. 34-45) as circulated, be approved as a correct record.

**49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Swinfen Broun Grave**

Referring to previous discussions, Councillor Barnes stated that the grave was still not fixed.

**The Hall**

In the absence of Councillor Perks, Councillor Barnes stated that 5 units were still available.

Following notification regarding the extended deferral of HS2 works between Curdworth in North Warwickshire and Handsacre, following the initial pause of works in March 2023, HS2 have taken the decision to extend this deferral for a further period of four years, Councillor Barnes stated that a portion of the land acquired by HS2 at Packington had been rented to the agricultural company Huntapec Produce Limited for 2 years.

Referring to the Cricket Lane housing development, Councillor Barnes explained that landowners had been approached sometime ago with regard to selling off their land for housing developments. However, he was not too sure of the exact locations within the parish.

#### **50. THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANS**

In the absence of Councillor Loescher, the Information and Feedback Request – Background to the HS2 Deferral, produced by Councillor Loescher, in consultation with Councillor Barnes, was discussed.

It was **AGREED** that the response would be forwarded to Balfour Beatty Vinci.

#### **51. CIL MONIES**

**RESOLVED** That the CIL unspent to date totalling £1,980.22 be noted.

#### **52. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE 2025**

The Parish Clerk advised Members that this was for information purposes only and no decision was required by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk explained that the Practitioners' Guide 25 (Assertion 10) states that it is best practice for all Council communication to use authority-owned gov.uk domains. Staffordshire Parish Councils Association (SPCA) of which the Parish Council are members, have suggested Parish Online which provide free gov.uk domain and free gov.uk mailbox for Parish Council Clerk (gov.uk domain name and one gov.uk email address for the clerk). The email will be:

[clerk@swinfenandpackingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@swinfenandpackingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

#### **53. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as expended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

**54. PARISH CLERK'S SALARY**

**RESOLVED** That cheques be drawn in respect of the Parish Clerk's December 2025 (**cheque number 100777**) and January 2026 (**cheque number 100779**) salary, Staffordshire Pension Fund – December 2025 (**cheque number 100776**) and Staffordshire Pension Fund – January 2026 (**cheque number 100778**).

**55. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**RESOLVED** That:  
Wednesday 11 March 2026  
Wednesday 13 May 2026 – Annual General Meeting

All meetings will commence at 6.00 pm.

(The Meeting closed at 6.24 pm)

Signed .....

Dated .....

## **SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 imposes a duty on local councils to “maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control”.
- 1.2 Internal audit is a key component of the system of internal control. The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a council’s activities and operating procedures are effective.
- 1.3 Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of effectiveness of internal audit. The council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.

#### **2. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

- 2.1 The following criteria must be satisfied for internal audit to be considered effective:
- That the Internal Auditor is independent of the other financial controls and procedures of the Council which are subject to review.
  - That they are competent to carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs of the Council.
  - That consideration is made of how many times in a year the systems and records should be subject to internal audit.
  - That the scope of the internal audit is sufficient.
  - That any internal audit report is considered in full by a meeting of the Parish Council.
  - That appropriate action is taken on any recommendations contained in the internal audit report.
  - The Council must also satisfy itself that the quality of delivery of the internal audit service provides reliable assurance about the Council’s internal controls and its management of risk.
- 2.2 Considering these requirements for internal audit for Swinfen and Packington Parish Council:

##### **2.3.1 Independence**

The Internal Auditor has no involvement in the Parish Council’s financial controls, procedures or decision making. They are not related to, nor associated with, any member of the Parish Council or the Parish Clerk. The Internal Auditor has direct access to the Parish Council should they think this necessary.

##### **2.3.2 Competence**

The Internal Auditor is familiar with the criteria on financial matters applied to local councils and the Audit Commission’s current ‘Light Touch’ audit process and has

access to "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England)". There is no evidence/reason to believe that the internal audit will not be carried out competently, ethically and with integrity and objectivity.

### **2.3.3 Frequency of Internal Audit**

One internal audit undertaken after the annual accounts have been prepared is considered to be adequate for the Parish Council's needs given the current level of activity.

### **2.3.4 Scope of Work**

The scope of the internal audit work carried out by the Internal Auditor follows the suggested approach to internal audit provided by the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2010 (England)".

### **2.3.5 Audit Report**

The Internal Auditor will prepare a report in their own name and addressed to the Council following their completion of the internal audit. It will be presented to the Parish Council at the next meeting after it has been issued. Act actions to be taken on the recommendations made will be minuted.

## **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 That the Parish Council considers for itself whether the system of internal audit is sufficiently effective, using this report as prepared by the Parish Clerk as a starting point for those considerations.

**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL  
INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST  
PART 1 – MEETING STANDARDS**

EXPECTED STANDARD	EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT	YES/NO	AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. <b>Scope of Internal Audit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal audit work takes into account both the Council's risk assessment and wider internal control arrangements.</li> <li>▪ Internal audit work covers the Council's anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
2. <b>Independence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance.</li> <li>▪ Reports are made in own name to management.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor does not have any other role within the Council.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
3. <b>Competence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is no evidence of a failure to carry out internal audit work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	
4. <b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All responsible officers (Clerk/RFO and Finance Officer) are consulted on the internal audit plan.</li> <li>▪ Respective responsibilities for officers and the Internal Auditor are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters (job descriptions and engagement letter).</li> <li>▪ The responsibilities of Council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p>	

5. <b>Audit Planning and Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The annual internal audit plan properly takes account of all the risks facing the Council.</li> </ul>	Y	
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**Review conducted on behalf of the Council by:**

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 March 2026:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL  
INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST  
PART 2 – CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVENESS**

EXPECTED STANDARD	EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT	YES/NO	AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
1. <b>Internal audit work is planned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planned internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the Council's needs.</li> </ul>	Y	
2. <b>Understanding the whole Council, its needs and objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance for the Council's Annual Governance Statement.</li> </ul>	Y	
3. <b>Be seen as a catalyst for change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor supports the Council's work in delivering improved services to the community.</li> </ul>	Y	
4. <b>Add value and assist the Council in achieving its objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council makes positive responses to the Internal Auditor's recommendations and follows up with action where this is called for.</li> </ul>	Y	
5. <b>Be forward looking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National agenda changes are considered in formulating the annual audit plan.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.</li> </ul>	Y  Y	
6. <b>Be challenging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor focuses on the risks facing the Council.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor encourages officers and Members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations.</li> </ul>	Y  Y	

<p>7. <b>Ensure the right resources are available</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate resource is made available for the Internal Auditor to complete his work.</li> <li>▪ The Internal Auditor understands the Council and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates.</li> </ul>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	
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**Review conducted on behalf of the Council by:**

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 March 2026:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

## **SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 imposes a duty on local councils to ensure “that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control”.
- 1.2 Local councils are required to conduct, at least once a year, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control. The council is required to sign the Annual Governance Statement (on the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.
- 1.3 In order for the Parish Council to review the effectiveness of the Internal Control System there needs to be clarity on the internal controls in place.
- 1.4 Some internal controls are listed in the Financial Regulations document but the system of controls goes beyond this. A Statement of internal Controls has been prepared and is appended to this report.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Parish Council consider the attached Statement of Internal Controls and consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

## SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

<b>Cash Book/Bank Reconciliations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The Cash Book is kept up-to-date and reconciled to the bank statement on a monthly basis.</li></ul>
<b>Financial Regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A document listing the Parish Council's financial regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC, is maintained. The regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Parish Council.</li><li>▪ The Financial Regulations are complemented by the approved "Duties of the Responsible Financial Officer".</li></ul>
<b>Order/Tender Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotations or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work.</li><li>▪ Official letters or emails are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature.</li></ul>
<b>Legal Powers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A proper legal power is identified in advance of any expenditure.</li></ul>
<b>Payment Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Letters/emails ordering the work are matched to invoices.</li><li>▪ A Schedule of Payments is presented to the Parish Council for approval (such approval is recorded in the Minutes).</li><li>▪ All cheques and financial documents are signed by at least one Councillor and the Parish Clerk.</li><li>▪ Original invoices are provided to the Councillors signing the cheques.</li><li>▪ The cheque number used to settle an invoice is noted on the invoice for cross reference purposes.</li></ul>
<b>The Free Resource, i.e. LGA 1972, s.137</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A s.137 account is maintained.</li><li>▪ The proper minute authorising expenditure from s.137 is prepared on each occasion.</li></ul>
<b>VAT Repayment Claims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council.</li><li>▪ The RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year.</li> </ul>
<b>Income Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The RFO ensures that the amount of Precept received is correct in accordance with the Precept request submitted to the District Council.</li> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO ensures that all other receipts are received when due and correctly calculated.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The performance to date and latest year end forecast against the agreed annual Budget are presented to the Parish Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Budgetary Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council.</li> <li>▪ The Precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the District Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Payroll Controls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All staff are paid under PAYE.</li> <li>▪ All staff salaries are set by the Parish Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salaries.</li> <li>▪ Salaries are currently paid by cheque; all cheques are signed by at least one Councillor and the Parish Clerk.</li> <li>▪ The RFO will ensure that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and will retain evidence that this has been done.</li> </ul>
<b>Asset Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Finance Officer/RFO maintains a full Asset Register.</li> <li>▪ The existence and condition of assets is checked on an annual basis.</li> <li>▪ The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal.</li> </ul>

**Report considered and adopted by Members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 March 2026:**

Chairman of the Council .....

Ms Jayne Minor, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer .....

Your ref  
Our ref DP/KF  
Ask for Cllr D Pullen  
Email



Lichfield  
District Council

District Council House, Frog Lane  
Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 6YU

Swinfen and Packington Parish Council  
Jayneminor@talktalk.net

Customer Services 01543 308000

19<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Dear Sir or Madam

### Government Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

The UK Government has now launched a formal, online consultation on the five proposals put forward by councils on the future structure of local government across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This consultation is an important opportunity for residents, businesses and partners to have their say on how local services should be delivered and governed in the years ahead.

Lichfield District Council, alongside Tamworth Borough Council and South Staffordshire District Council, has submitted a joint proposal for creating **three new unitary councils** across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent:

- North Staffordshire Unitary – covering the existing areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Moorlands
- South-West Staffordshire – covering the existing areas of Cannock Chase, Stafford and South Staffordshire
- South-East Staffordshire – covering the existing areas of Lichfield, East Staffordshire and Tamworth

I firmly believe this is **the only proposal that is bold, balanced, legitimate and designed for the future.**

As the tier of local government closest to our communities, parish and town councils are vital in ensuring the voice of local residents are heard and the challenges and aspirations of neighbourhoods are championed. I believe that the three unitary council model, supported by parish and town councils, is the only option being proposed that will ensure local government maintains its connections to the communities we serve.

If local government reorganisation is being forced upon us, we must take the opportunity to radically transform local government, be bold in our commitment to deliver the very best outcomes for our residents and business and ensure local government in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent becomes a beacon for the sector. Ambition for our people and places, and innovation is hard-wired into the three unitary council proposal.

A defining strength of the three unitary council proposal is the balance it achieves across all three councils. By avoiding extremes - neither overly large nor small – the proposal ensures the new councils are large enough to be efficient and deliver savings, yet sufficiently local to critically, remain connected to



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the communities they serve. Much has been said in the media about the 'right' population size for unitary councils. There is an assumption that 'bigger is better', however as we evidence in our proposal, analysis of both performance and financial data does not support this.

The views and opinions of our residents have been at the very heart of developing our proposal. We launched a major consultation and engagement exercise in 2025 with our residents, and over 16,700 residents from across the south of the county responded – one of the largest responses to any local government reorganisation consultations in the country. Our proposal has an unequivocal public mandate - 75% of respondents expressed support for the three unitary model. Respondents clearly told us that the top priorities for a new council were keeping services that are based on local needs and having local councillors that listen to residents.

The three unitary council proposal meets all of the criteria set out by the MHCLG for local government reorganisation, including respecting the diverse communities and differences that make Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent such a very special place. Keeping decision-making as close to communities as possible is essential to ensuring local government remains accountable and responsive to the communities it serves. Our proposal also best reflects sensible economic and local geographies, avoiding the need to artificially 'connect' areas that have little in common. The three unitary model will provide the best balance of strategic scale with the ability to understand and respond to local needs and opportunities – critical to working collaboratively and successfully with partners.

The three unitary model is not designed merely to address today's pressures; it will enable Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to effectively respond to the long-term challenges facing not just local government but the wider public sector. It sets Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent up in the best position possible to benefit from the opportunities that devolution will bring. Three balanced unitary councils in size, financial sustainability and influence will create a collaborative rather than a potentially competitive relationship with a future Mayoral Strategic Authority.

I would strongly encourage you to take part in the Government's statutory consultation and I hope that you see, as I do, that the three unitary council is the best option for the future of local government in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. You can read more about the three unitary council proposal [here](#) and you can submit your views to Government [here](#).

If you would like to discuss the proposals further or require any information to support your response, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Yours faithfully,



**Cllr Doug Pullen**

Leader  
Lichfield District Council

