

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Minister,

Interim Plan Submissions – Pendle Borough Council covering letter

Following your letter dated 5th February 2025 regarding Local Government Re-organisation, and your request for Interim Plans to be submitted before the 21st March 2025, I am writing to you to submit the proposals for Pendle Borough Council.

At our Full Council meeting on the 17th March 2025, Council unanimously agreed to sign the “All Lancashire Leaders” joint letter which you will have received by separate communication.

It also agreed to forward to you, by separate letter, our preferred options as contained in the all Lancashire letter. Of the 5 options referred to in that letter, Pendle Borough Council is clear that only the options that could create 4 or 5 Unitary Councils in Lancashire would ensure the complex and urgent needs of our community are addressed, and that local democracy would underpin the work and decision making of any unitary council.

We believe that these 2 options follow the guidance from your department, namely, they will seek to achieve a solution to, and establish, a single tier of local government.

We believe that these 2 options will ensure Unitaries of the right size, improve existing capacity, withstand financial shocks and deliver efficient and effective local government for our area.

We are determined through this process, and based on these 2 options, we can and will deliver services of the highest quality and sustainability to all within our community.

We, by signing the joint Lancashire letter, give our commitment to working together with all relevant partners and councils in our area, to meet local needs informed by local views.

We believe that our preferred options will not only support devolution structures in Lancashire but enhance the ability of such structures to excel and deliver real quality services and provide life changing opportunities for our communities.

A significant bedrock of community engagement and neighbourhood engagement here in Pendle is the work of our local councillors, our community organisations, based on strong and connected communities through Parish and Town Councils. The Council wishes to express its strong desire to see this method further enhanced across the whole of any new Unitary area and structure. The Council feels strongly that such structures, where they exist, can help not only the Unitary of choice but also the issue of devolution to the very heart of our communities, through their Parish and Town Councils.

As per your guidance, we will use our District footprints to develop any proposals for the November bid submission deadline, working with all our colleagues in Lancashire and we sincerely hope, following the submission of this letter, and any feedback received, we can start the process of forming those essential allegiances, with our willing local government partners, that will take the initiative to its best and ultimate conclusion.

As a final point, Members of Pendle Borough Council strongly expressed their concerns on the cost of writing bid submissions and Local Government re-organisation in general. We are aware that from the last round of re-organisation some Districts Councils had to contribute approximately £1.5m each, along with a much higher cost for a County Council, and would urge the Minister to consider any financial assistance his department is able to give, that may reduce significant expenditure that, we are sure you will agree, should be spent on vital services to our communities.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A Mahmood', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Asjad Mahmood
Leader of Pendle Borough Council