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Date: 26 March 2026

Dear Chancellor

Council Motion – Fair Funding

I have been instructed to write to you on behalf of Stockton Council, in respect of a motion that was approved at the 18 March 2026 meeting of Full Council. The motion relates to Fair Funding and states:

“This Council Notes:

1. That the Labour Government’s approach to public service funding, including the so-called “Fair Funding” arrangements and recent national settlements, has failed to deliver genuinely fair or needs-based funding for policing, fire and rescue services, or local government in areas such as Cleveland.
2. That Cleveland Police has publicly and repeatedly warned that current Government funding settlements are inadequate, unfair, and unsustainable, resulting in a projected funding shortfall of around £2.4 million, equivalent to approximately 40 frontline police officers, despite continued high levels of crime, vulnerability, and demand. Between 2024 and 2025, national police forces have seen a net decrease of 2,195 officers.
3. That Cleveland Police received the lowest percentage funding increase nationally, a settlement which its Labour Police and Crime Commissioner has described as deeply unfair and disconnected from operational reality, placing frontline policing at risk.

The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Sent by email to
public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk / rachel.reeves.mp@parliament

4. That since Labour came to power in 2024, police forces nationally have faced ongoing real-terms funding pressure, with forces such as Cleveland being forced to plan for reductions in officer numbers, fewer specialist roles, and reduced neighbourhood policing capacity, not because demand has fallen, but because Government funding has failed to keep pace with costs.
5. That Cleveland Fire Brigade remains one of the most financially constrained fire services in the country, with a structural funding gap projected at around £1.77 million, even after proposed council tax precept increases.
6. That Cleveland Fire Brigade has made clear that continued under-funding places frontline resilience at risk, forcing difficult decisions on staffing, appliances, and service delivery, and transferring the burden of national funding failures onto local residents.
7. That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has itself been negatively impacted by the Government's funding framework, including:
 - A worsening financial position driving poor fiscal planning.
 - Missing out entirely on any share of the additional £740 million announced in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement, despite significant local need.
 - Being excluded from multiple support grants purely because of headline Core Spending Power calculations that mask real-world pressures.

This Council Believes:

1. That the Government's "Fair Funding" approach is neither fair nor reflective of need and systematically disadvantages areas such as Stockton-on-Tees and the wider Cleveland area.
2. That current under-funding of police and fire services directly undermines public safety, increases risk to residents, and erodes confidence in essential public services.
3. That the Government's reliance on council tax precepts to prop up police and fire funding is regressive, unfairly shifting responsibility from the Exchequer to local households, many of whom are already under severe cost-of-living pressure.

This Council Resolves:

1. That the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing this Council's deep concern and strong opposition to the impact of the Labour Government's funding policies on Police and Fire Services, particularly the consequences of the current Fair Funding approach.
2. That the correspondence explicitly highlights:
 - The severe and disproportionate impact of funding shortfalls on Cleveland Police, including the real risk of losing frontline officers and reduced community policing in Stockton-on-Tees.
 - The ongoing financial fragility of Cleveland Fire Brigade, and the unacceptable risks this creates for emergency response and public safety.
 - The failure of national funding decisions to recognise the needs of Stockton-on-Tees and the wider Cleveland area, despite unambiguous evidence of demand and need.

3. That the Council calls on the Chancellor to urgently review and reform current funding arrangements, to:
 - Deliver genuinely fair, needs-based funding for Police and Fire Services
 - Provide immediate redress for Forces and Brigades facing funding-driven reductions.
 - Ensure areas such as Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade services are no longer penalised by flawed funding formulas.
4. That the letter be issued on behalf of the Council by the Chief Executive.”

I am therefore writing to you requesting that you consider this motion. Any response that you send to this letter will be shared with all Members of the Council and made available to view with the relevant minutes from the meeting of Council (18 March 2026) on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council website.

Thank you in anticipation for your consideration of the above.

Yours sincerely



Mike Greene
Chief Executive