

Dear constituent,

Thank you for your recent email regarding Building Schools for the Future and the proposals for Stoke-on-Trent's schools. This is an important agenda and I have worked with constituents, the Council and the other Stoke-on-Trent MPs to get a solution that is right for our part of the city.

After months of debate and discussion, I am pleased to let you know that there have been some big steps forward. Today, the Council has announced that the future of each school will be decided on what makes sense for that school. This will mean that our city can fully benefit from the £200 million that is being spent.

More details are in the press release below. I shall continue to focus my work on this important agenda and I look forward to receiving more thoughts and ideas from anybody in the constituency who is interested in building on the achievements that we have already made in education in Stoke-on-Trent North.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Walley." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Joan Walley MP
Stoke-on-Trent North

Major breakthrough on transforming schools

As Stoke-on-Trent's biggest ever consultation exercise draws to a close political leaders have agreed a 'route map' on how to transform schools in the city. They have agreed not to proceed with two of the possible options in the BSF document.

- The option of closing ALL schools now disappears. Instead, schools will be considered on a bespoke basis.
- Special schools will be 'decoupled' from the BSF exercise and considered separately at a later date.

The news follows discussions between the Elected Mayor and the city's three MPs. They will be holding a joint press conference tomorrow to discuss the breakthrough.

Elected Mayor Mark Meredith said: "I'm delighted that we now have a way forward. We told people we would listen and we have done. I would like to reassure teachers, pupils and parents once again that what we want is to provide the very best for the children of our city."

Mark Fisher, MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central, said: "I welcome this decision. Now each school can be looked at individually and on its merits, and our excellent Special Schools can continue to provide the high quality education that parents and pupils so value."

Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, said: "It is now essential we find a way of getting all the parties together to look at the detail of how to take the bespoke plans forward. In the northern cluster I will be looking to see how we can all build on the strong community representations and how we can harness that energy to improving our educational achievements alongside the regeneration strategies already underway. "

Rob Ffello, MP from Stoke-on-Trent South, said: "I am delighted that the Elected Mayor, in listening to the consultation, has acted swiftly to rule out the closure of all secondary schools and given a welcome reassurance to parents and children using our special schools. I look forward to working closely with the city council on the detail of what is right for our city."

Members of the public are still able to have their say - consultation does not end until 11 January.

Background:

Around 5,000 people have already taken part in the consultation over the future of secondary and special education in Stoke-on-Trent. City council officials are now analysing written feedback sent in after more than 80 meetings to brief school staff, parents, governors and young people on the challenge to transform the city's high schools in a £200 million investment programme. To encourage more people to take part, 45,000 special booklets have been mailed out and 120,000 summary newsletters are being delivered to homes and businesses throughout the city. In the New Year the team behind the consultation will draw up a report to be considered by Stoke-on-Trent's Elected Mayor Mark Meredith and Chief Executive Steve Robinson.