

**Mr Matthew Ellis**  
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My ref: ME/

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2010

Dear Mr Taylor,

I would like to respond to the letter you sent to Julie Thompson-Edwards relating to the Staffordshire LINK underspend. I've dealt with Julie around this to date but would be very happy to talk with you directly should you wish to.

There were a number of distinct budget areas within Social Care and Health which, for a variety of reasons, had not been fully used or specifically allocated from the 09/10 budget. One of the several which are not 'ring-fenced' relates to Staffordshire LINK.

I am currently in the final stages of negotiating with Cabinet colleagues what I believe is a pragmatic three year budget for Social Care and Health to meet the enormous demographic pressures faced in future years.

If we end up where I think we will it means Staffordshire will not be reducing budgets which support older and vulnerable people to anything like the extent other areas face in the UK. I think that is absolutely right.

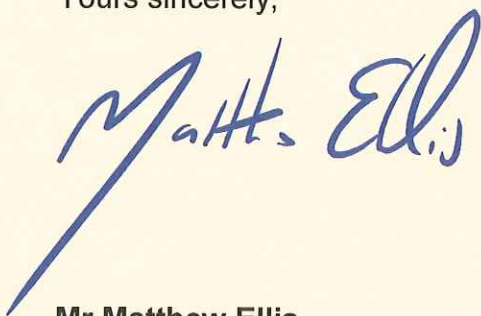
To achieve that for front line social care services I have, however, had to agree to return unused budgets unless there are specific reasons, supported by a strong business case, not to do so. I also believe that is right in the current circumstances.

My understanding is that Staffordshire LINK has sufficient resources within the budget available for the current financial year. I can confirm that the evolution of LINK into Healthwatch and further development to create a social enterprise for wider public services engagement is being funded from Departmental budget.

In the event that central Government do not provide interim funding for LINKs prior to Healthwatch starting I will also ensure that sufficient budget is made available locally for the transition period.

I am delighted at the tremendous, and nationally recognised, progress you are making with Staffordshire LINK since its relaunch and would be more than happy to talk to you if you have any questions about the future financial arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

**Mr Matthew Ellis**  
**Cabinet Member for Adult & Wellbeing**

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