

Mr M Soule,
Deputy Director,
Local Government Stewardship.

By Email

My ref: KBD/TJK
Your ref:
Please ask for: Kim Bromley-Derry
Telephone No: 07787 741595
Email address: kim_bromleyderry@sandwell.gov.uk
Date: 10th February 2022

Dear Mr Soule,

Thank you for your letter dated 18th January 2022 inviting the Authority to respond to the proposed intervention. I also thank you for the formal recognition of the hard work of the council to date to move our organisation forward.

We are passionate about improving Sandwell Council so that we can continue to deliver positive outcomes for our communities. Whilst we are disappointed with the direction that DLUHC is considering regarding intervention, we welcome the support from your department to aid us on our improvement journey.

The council has already developed an Improvement Plan in response to the Grant Thornton Governance Review, and we are making progress on these actions that build on the 'green shoots' identified by that review. Both the recently received CIPFA Financial Management Review Report and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge conducted in early February 2022 have recognised that the steps we have recently taken are already demonstrating our ability to move forward, and both have also set out further recommendations to guide our improvement journey.

The next stage of our improvement journey is to bring together the actions to address the findings of these three reviews into one overarching Improvement Plan for the council. This single, comprehensive Improvement Plan will clearly set out our aims aligned to the priorities in our Corporate Plan and enable us to measure our direction of travel.

[IL1: PROTECT]

KIM BROMLEY-DERRY – INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Sandwell Council House, PO Box 2374, OLDBURY, West Midlands B69 3DE

Should the Secretary of State decide to implement the proposed package of intervention measures as set out in your letter, we would look forward to working with the Department's appointed Commissioners. The expertise and experience that they would bring will further aid the council to move forward on its improvement journey at the pace that Sandwell's residents, businesses, partners and staff deserve.

With regards to moving to a four yearly election cycle, we are keen to work with the Department on this. We are in the process of preparing a clear plan of action to progress this matter, that includes details of our consultation and engagement activity, so that an informed decision can be made at full council as soon as it is practicable to do so.

We look forward to working jointly with DLUHC on our improvement journey and welcome the decision on the level of intervention that will be put in place at Sandwell.

Yours sincerely,



Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL,
Interim Chief Executive.

[IL1: PROTECT]

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