



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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Andrew Quincey
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Dear Mr Quincey,

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: INTERVENTION

I am writing to inform you that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has today made Directions, under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999, in relation to your Authority. I enclose a copy of the Directions, together with an explanatory memorandum.

The Directions implement the intervention package which the previous Secretary of State proposed on 27 March 2018 and which were set out in my letter to you of that date.

You will also see that the Directions and explanatory memorandum provide for the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to nominate a team of Commissioners: a Lead Commissioner, and a Finance Commissioner. The Secretary of State has nominated Tony McArdle as Lead Commissioner and Brian Roberts as Finance Commissioner.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has made a number of provisions in the Directions in relation to the Commissioners, including providing for them to perform certain functions and having roles overseeing actions which the Authority is to perform. The Commissioners are accountable to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in that they have been nominated by him and can have their nomination withdrawn by him.

The Directions set out the following functions to be exercised by the Commissioners:

- all functions associated with the governance and scrutiny of strategic decision making by your Authority;
- all functions associated with the strategic financial management of your Authority, including providing advice and challenge in the setting of annual budgets; scrutiny of all in-year amendments; and the power to amend budgets where necessary; and
- non-executive functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of persons to positions the holders of which are to be designated as the head of paid service, the monitoring officer and the chief financial officer (section 151 officer), and the designation of those persons as statutory officers.

The exercise of these functions should enable the Commissioners to bring the Authority's finances under control and allow robust service delivery to local residents. However, the Secretary of State has not ruled out the possibility that further functions might be brought under the control of the Commissioners. The Directions, therefore, also require the Authority to:

- refer to the Commissioners, together with any recommendation the Authority wishes to make, any matter where the Authority does not agree with any recommendation made to it by a statutory officer or does not comply with and implement any such recommendation within the period specified by the statutory officer in the recommendation;
- comply with and implement any decision or recommendation of the Commissioners following such a reference; and
- comply with and implement any decision or recommendation of the Commissioners following a reference to the Commissioners by any statutory officer of a matter where the Authority has not complied with or implemented a recommendation by the statutory officer within the period specified by the statutory officer in the recommendation and the Authority itself has not complied with the obligation set out above to refer the matter to the Commissioners.

The Directions require your Authority to take certain actions, including providing the Commissioners with such reasonable amenities, services and administrative support as the Commissioners may reasonably require from time to time to carry out their functions and responsibilities under these Directions and to allow the Commissioners at all reasonable times access to any premises of your Authority, to any document relating to your Authority, and to any employee or member of your Authority.

The Directions also require your Authority to pay the Commissioners' reasonable expenses and such fees as the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government determines to be paid to them. The Secretary of State is mindful of the need for Commissioner remuneration to represent value for money for local taxpayers. In recognition of the nature and

scale of the intervention, he has determined fees of £800 a day for the Lead Commissioner and £700 a day for the Finance Commissioner. The Secretary of State also expects the Commissioners to be paid reasonable expenses in accordance with the rules for senior officers set out in your Authority's staff handbook.

Finally, you will wish to note that the Secretary of State has requested the Commissioners to provide progress reports to him on a quarterly basis or at such other times as he might agree with the Commissioners.

I am copying this letter to your Authority's Section 151 Officer, and to its Monitoring Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Powell
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship