



**Department for
Communities and
Local Government**

John Crabtree
Chair
Birmingham Improvement Panel

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
*Secretary of State for Communities and Local
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Dear Mr Crabtree,

Thank you for your letter providing the report on Birmingham City Council's progress against the Kerslake recommendations and your proposal for the Panel to stand back and undertake a review of further progress in the autumn.

Notwithstanding the strong commitment from political and managerial leadership to improvement programmes, I agree that progress on the Kerslake recommendations has unfortunately been slower than anticipated. I also concur with your conclusion that on-going support from yourself and the Panel's adviser, Sally Hammond, is needed to ensure that the Council has strong foundations to deliver on its mandate and translate its political vision of a flourishing city into a reality. To maintain momentum and allow the Council to operate more autonomously, I believe it is appropriate for the other Panel members to step back and return in the autumn to provide a review of progress.

The next few months provides a real opportunity for the Chief Executive and his senior team to build on the improvements made to date including the consolidation of a permanent senior management team in January 2016. I am particularly encouraged by the self awareness the Council shows in relation to the challenges of long-term financial planning, partnership working, member officer relationships and translating vision and aspiration into concrete plans. It is now critical that aspirations crystallise into considered and evidenced actions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the other Panel members, DfE Commissioners and the Panel adviser for your excellent work and close working relationship with my officials. I look forward to your autumn report and remain very open to hearing from you if prior to the next report there are any developments you wish you to appraise me of.

Yours sincerely,

THE RT HON GREG CLARK MP