



Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State
Department for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

London Borough of Tower
Hamlets Town Hall
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
London E14 2BG

020 7364 4830
07931 751 251

cllrpetergolds@aol.com

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Dear Secretary of State

On behalf of the Tower Hamlets Conservative Group, I am responding to the letter of the Commissioners dated 21 February 2017 in respect of the Directions under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 199, 2014-20115- 2017 and the Commissioners response to the Best Value Action Plan 6 month report of 17 February 2017.

We agree that some matters under both the original and revised directions remain to be completed but that progress has been made in many matters. We note that the Commissioners refer, in their second paragraph, to the failure of the council to take appropriate steps at the outset of the Direction regime. This was endemic under the previous administration. Similar obstruction was placed in the way of PwC during their Best Value Audit of the council. After June 2015 a majority of councillors have worked with the Mayor and Commissioners to move forward. A minority have remained in what is a state of denial.

By exclamation we are concerned that a number of councillors, elected as Tower Hamlets First, a political party which was removed from the Register of Political Parties by the Electoral Commission, remain obstructive in moving forward. This can be evidenced in their conduct at full council meetings and their unwillingness, despite receiving allowances to take part in in much of the regulatory and scrutiny work of the Council, apart from Planning and Development.

We are therefore of the opinion that should the Secretary of State be minded to lift the existing directions, progress would be expedited by the establishment of a genuinely Cross Party Improvement Board chaired by the Mayor, consisting of elected members, with deputies to ensure that there is genuine representation. In addition this board should include external representation.

We would expect that this Board would be underpinned on a statutory basis requiring regular reports to the Secretary of State, thereby ensuring continued and accepted improvement as we move forward.

Yours sincerely
Peter Golds

Councillor Peter Golds
Leader, London Borough of Tower Hamlets Conservative Group

cc. The Tower Hamlets Commissioners
Mayor John Biggs
Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, London

