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5th February 2014

Sir Bob Kerlake
Permanent Secretary
Dept. for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Sir Bob,

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council: Proposed Intervention

Further to my initial letter of response sent yesterday to Paul Rowsell, I am following up with some additional points, now that I have had some further time to reflect on Louise Casey's report, the Secretary of State's proposed interventions, as well as the subsequent events that took place here in Rotherham in terms of the resignation of the Leader and Cabinet.

I should make it clear, once again, that the Council fully recognises and accepts the findings of the Corporate Governance Inspection report. In the light of yesterday's events an urgent priority is to now establish the stability required for the Council to make the fresh start that Louise Casey and her team have called for.

In this regard I would ask for urgent clarity over both the identities and specific roles of the five Commissioners that the Secretary of State intends to appoint. The Council welcomes their appointment and I would wish for them to be in a position to start their dialogue and direct work with the Council without delay. The Council does not want the 14-day period we have to formally respond to yesterday's announcements to hold back the appointment processes in any way.

I understand that regulations will need to be laid before Parliament to confirm the remit and powers of the Commissioners, Can I urge you to do all you can to ensure that this takes place as rapidly as possible and that the Council has a clear timescale to work to in terms of transitional arrangements. In this regard I am conscious of the Parliamentary Recess period from 12th to 23rd February, which, with purdah following from 30 March, would seemingly leave little Parliamentary time available.

In addition to the urgency of the legislative process, please can I request that the identities of the Commissioners are confirmed quickly – ideally within the next week if possible. I have assumed that the Children's Commissioner appointment will remain that already in

place, overseeing the dedicated Children's Improvement Board and Action Plan. However, it is vital that we have confirmation of this and the names of the other four appointments as a topmost priority, so that we can begin the process of dialogue and "hand-over" from the improvement/recovery structures and priority actions that have already started to be put in place over recent weeks.

It would be extremely helpful if you could outline the precise areas of responsibility it is proposed each Commissioner will have. It would also be helpful to have clarity regarding the impact the appointments will have upon the roles that elected members hold on partnership bodies (such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Combined Authority etc.).

Clearly there are a number of questions pertaining to constitutional and other technical issues, on which I would like to engage with your Department at the earliest opportunity. I will ask my Monitoring Officer here to send these through to you in the coming days.

As I noted yesterday, I may still write to you again within the 14-day period with regard to the Secretary of State's proposed intervention. However, I would not wish this to delay the early appointment of the Commissioners.

Given the above issues I would like to propose a meeting with you and your lead senior officials working on the intervention plan to discuss these transitional matters face-to-face; and I am clearly happy to do all I can to clear my diary to do so at any point next week.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Ormondroyd', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jan Ormondroyd
Interim Chief Executive

cc: Louise Casey, DCLG
Helen Edwards, DCLG
Paul Rowsell, DCLG
Gemma Penn, DCLG
Jacqueline Collins, RMBC