



**Department for
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The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
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Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 17 March 2016 and the accompanying Best Value Action Plan second six-month progress report. I very much welcome the progress you have made over the past six months, and the steps you have taken to ensure that appropriate and measurable outcomes are now defined in this Action Plan.

In particular, I welcome your desire to tackle the root causes of the intervention, such as underlying cultural and organisational foundations, and your recognition that it has taken time for the whole Council to recognise this deeper challenge. I was very interested to hear of the steps you have taken to promote greater transparency and improve Member relations, and I appreciate your personal commitment to promoting good practice through leadership and eradicating bad practice wherever it may remain.

I would like to take this opportunity to endorse the points the Commissioners made in their response to your update. I share their disappointment of the lost time and lack of progress in certain areas of the intervention, and agree that embedding the proposed cultural change throughout the entire organisation is the single most important component to successful exit from the Directions. I also agree that finalising a clear and meaningful delegation of responsibilities to the new CEO will mark a fundamental difference between your administration and that of your predecessor.

While I understand your impatience for the intervention to end, I will need to be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that change has been embedded and key outcomes have been delivered before I will consider any variation to the current Directions.

I look forward to meeting you again, this time with your Chief Executive, to discuss priorities for future progress. My office will be in touch shortly to suggest a date for this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

THE RT HON GREG CLARK MP