



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
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Tony McArdle and Brian Roberts OBE  
Commissioners  
Northamptonshire CC  
By email:

Dear Tony and Brian

Thank you both for your final progress report on the intervention that you have carried out at Northamptonshire County Council.

As you set out in your report, you were appointed as Commissioners on 10 May 2018 with two main objectives:

- To rebuild the governance capacity of the Authority, addressing the current culture of poor governance – both from the political leadership team and the senior executive group – and discouragement of challenge and scrutiny, that was acting as a hindrance to compliance with the best value duty under Part I of the 1999 Act; and
- To secure as soon as practicable that the Authority's financial management was exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire.

I am delighted that you have been able to report that both these objectives have been achieved. Although Northamptonshire County Council ceased to exist as a consequence of the local government reorganisation, you, and the dedicated staff, management team and Members had been able to return the Council to one that was fulfilling its Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999.

In your report, you rightly praise the work of the staff at the Council and their leadership team. However, I do not think that the significant improvements which have been seen and which have pulled the Council back from the brink would have been possible without the energy, commitment and wisdom that you have demonstrated. I am also conscious that the reorganisation was greatly assisted by your dedication and success in rebuilding broken relationships across the County.

You have also prepared a wide ranging and extremely helpful analysis of lessons learnt from your experiences at Northamptonshire over the last three years. As this is published on gov.uk, I would like to commend it to the sector as an insightful and practical source of guidance. These lessons will also be reflected in planned updates to my Department's guide for local authorities on statutory inspection and intervention:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-intervention-and-inspection-a-guide-for-local-authorities>).

Amongst the many recommendations annexed to your paper, there are some recommendations for central Government. I am grateful for these, which largely reflect current practice and plans for the future. As part of our response to the Redmond Review, we have committed to take steps to improve the transparency of local authority financial reporting and enhance the functioning of local audit, and the governance for responding to its findings.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your experiences as Commissioners over the last three years and to thank you personally for your work. My office will be in touch to organise a meeting shortly.

**RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP**