



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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Assurance Panel

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON - IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE PANEL

I am writing in response to your letter of 30 April updating me on the Improvement and Assurance Panel's assessment of the London Borough of Croydon's improvement progress since February. I would like to extend my thanks to you and your fellow Panel members for producing such a detailed and comprehensive report.

In your report you set out clearly the progress that the Council is making in starting to implement the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan. It is encouraging to read of the intent that is being demonstrated by the Leadership of the Council alongside the significant work that is being undertaken. At the same time, I have noted the concerns that you describe centring on the continuing impact of past failings in the management of key assets and investment vehicles. It remains essential that these are unravelled, and credible plans are implemented to enable the Council to minimise the adverse implications for its finances whilst continuing to secure value for money.

The Panel's role in supporting and challenging the Council as it seeks to make progress continues to be of vital importance. I am pleased to read of the cooperation and support that you have received from the Council. Any faltering in this area would be of considerable concern and could lead to a reconsideration as to whether or not a more statutory approach might be appropriate in order to secure the improvements that are necessary. I also note your comments on the impact that Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are having on the Council. As you are aware, my officials continue to work closely with colleagues in the Home Office and Department for Education to explore solutions to this issue.

I am most grateful to you for your continuing work with the Council and look forward to receiving your next report in the summer. My officials will be working with you on the milestones which it would be appropriate to expect the Council to have met by that time. But, as a minimum, I would expect it to be possible to form a clear view as to the credibility and deliverability of the budget for 2021-22 which the Council agreed in March and Mid Term Financial Strategy that fed into that decision.

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP