



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Sir Tony Redmond
By email

Max Soule
*Deputy Director, Local Government
Stewardship*

**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities**
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

www.gov.uk/dluhc

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Dear Sir Tony,

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL: INTERVENTION

I am writing to thank you for agreeing to continue leading the Nottingham City Council Improvement and Assurance Board.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has today made Directions under section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1999 in relation to Nottingham City Council. The Secretary of State has issued Directions that require the Council to follow the advice of the Improvement and Assurance Board as a necessary and expedient action to secure compliance with their best value duty. The Directions move the Improvement and Assurance Board to a statutory footing so that, as Chair of the Board, you are now empowered to direct rather than guide the Council's improvement activities. This move reflects the confidence the Secretary of State has in the work of the Board and the progress made by the Council under your leadership.

However, the Secretary of State is clear that he expects significant progress to be made over the next three months, including in relation to the Council's longer-term budgeting and financial performance, and has asked for six monthly reports from the Board; the first report is expected as soon as is practicable within the first three months of the intervention. The Secretary of State will take this report into consideration before again reviewing his powers under the Local Government Act 1999, including whether to appoint Commissioners.

The Terms of Reference that were agreed for your work as Chair of the Improvement and Assurance Board are attached to this letter. These were published in January 2021. I would be grateful if you could provide me with a revised version in light of the new challenges facing the Council, and the fact that the Board has now moved to a statutory footing and will be in place until September 2024.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Board for your ongoing work in driving forward the necessary improvements which will ensure that the Council will continue to effectively serve and protect the residents of Nottingham.

Yours sincerely,

MAX SOULE

Nottingham City Council Improvement and Assurance Board

Terms of Reference

Following the publication of Max Caller's non-statutory review of Nottingham City Council on 17 December 2020, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced his intention to establish an Improvement and Assurance Board to provide the ongoing support the Council needs to deliver a recovery.

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Board is:
 - To provide external advice, challenge and expertise to Nottingham City Council in driving forward the development and delivery of their Recovery Plan;
 - To provide assurance to the Secretary of State on Nottingham City Council's progress in delivering this Plan.
2. This will involve:
 - Providing regular advice, challenge and support to the Council on the full range of their improvement activities, and in particular on delivery of the recommendations in Max Caller's non-statutory review (published 17 December 2020) and of the three-year recovery plan to restore the financial viability of the Council's capital programme and revenue budget.
 - Providing written commentaries on the Council's progress to the Secretary of State each quarter, including recommending the use of Best Value powers (such as the appointment of Commissioners) if the Council fails to demonstrate progress. These commentaries will be published.
3. The Board will convene for the first time in January 2021 and is expected to conclude by March 2024. Board meetings will be held in private and any minutes produced will not be published. The Board's first commentary will accompany the Council's submission of their Improvement Plan to the Secretary of State at the end of January 2021.

Membership

4. The Improvement and Assurance Board will comprise:
 - Independent Chair – Sir Tony Redmond
 - Leader of the Council – Cllr David Mellen
 - Independent external member (finance lead) - Sean Nolan
 - Independent external member (companies lead) – Robin Hughes
5. Additional independent external members may be appointed to the Board in future if required.

Wider local and political engagement

6. The Improvement and Assurance Board will work closely with other improvement boards/support mechanisms in place across the Council. For example, they will work collaboratively with the Children's Services Improvement Board to ensure that the necessary cost savings identified by Max Caller are managed carefully and do not adversely impact statutory services.

Costs

7. Any costs associated with the Improvement and Assurance Board will be met by Nottingham City Council.
8. Board members will be paid a fee for their work. The fee will be paid on a personal basis.
9. Board members will need to work flexibly as the demands of the role requires. However, Nottingham City Council may wish to agree in advance the number of days advice to be provided by each Board member over a 12-month period.