



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Mike Cunningham CBE QPM
Joanna Killian
Neil Gibson
Deborah McLaughlin
Stephen Hughes

Lee Rowley MP
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Local Government and Building
Safety*

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

By email

8 March 2023

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your report of 13 February and for the continued work that you have been undertaking at Liverpool City Council.

I welcome the cautious optimism on the Council's progress referenced in your report. It is clear, however, that the Council faces significant change in the months ahead with the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive and implementation of a senior officer structure, change in governance model and all out elections, and implementation of a transformation programme. These changes are necessary and make clear that the Council is taking the right steps to put the organisation on a stable footing. However, change of this scale bring risks and it is important the Council does not allow this to derail its improvement journey. I share your view that the current leadership must maintain this pace, and that incoming leadership, at political and officer level, must seize the opportunity to build on the progress made to date. I ask that you keep officials updated on this progress and report any concerns you may have. Your role as Commissioners over this period of transition will be vital as you provide continuity and leadership to support the Council.

In your report you reference risks around the delivery of savings and the level of general fund reserves. These are areas I ask that you continue to monitor and provide updates to me as you deem necessary.

The next six months is clearly a pivotal time for the Council. It is vital that the agreed budget savings and transformation plans are delivered, that the new leadership sets clear strategic priorities to guide and aid delivery, and that culture change and leadership improvements are embedded across the council. The Council must also ensure that its improvement journey manifests in better service outcomes, which should be demonstrably measurable. I ask that you pay particular attention to these areas and provide a specific update in your next report. I would be grateful to receive this report in September.

The important work you are undertaking as Commissioners must continue given the challenges remaining. I am encouraged that you have not requested any changes to the scope or length of the intervention at this stage. I note that the management of change at the Council over the next few months will determine whether that position holds. The decision to end the intervention in Liverpool City Council will only be made when the organisation has demonstrated that its improvement is sustainable. You have been clear that this is possible to be achieved in the next 18 months, but that it is not yet a given and will require determined leadership and focus.

The continued strengthening of Liverpool is not yet a given and will be supported by the Liverpool Strategic Futures Panel. I see the Intervention and Panel as integral to providing a positive future for the City.

Thank you again for the work you are doing to restore confidence in local democracy in Liverpool. I await your next report in September.

I am copying this letter to Liverpool City Council's Mayor, Interim Chief Executive, Interim S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Yours Sincerely,

LEE ROWLEY MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND BUILDING SAFETY