



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

The Rt Hon. Lord Hutton of Furness
By email

Max Soule
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Dear John,

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL: INTERVENTION

I am writing to thank you for agreeing to be a political advisor and part of the Commissioner team in Birmingham City Council. This letter formally confirms your appointment by the Secretary of State. I have also enclosed terms of engagement that you will need to sign and return; your nomination is made on the conditions set out in the terms of engagement.

The Commissioner team will be led by Max Caller CBE, with John Coughlan CBE, Chris Tambini, Pam Parkes, Jackie Belton and Myron Hrycyk as Commissioners, and John Biggs also acting as a political advisor. You will support the Authority as they embark on their improvement journey but will not hold the powers of Commissioners. We expect the team to work together in supporting Birmingham City Council to meet its best value duty. In particular it is expected that you will focus on supporting the political leadership of the Authority as they take the difficult decisions that will be required.

You will be entitled to a fee for each day you act a political advisor. You will also be entitled to reasonable expenses. The Secretary of State is requiring the Authority to meet your fees and expenses, as he considers your services are necessary for the Commissioners to carry out their functions and responsibilities. The Secretary of State has set these fees for you at £1,100 per day. Fees are payable up to a maximum of 150 days per annum. These limits should not be exceeded without prior approval of the Secretary of State. As to reasonable expenses, we would expect these to be in accordance with the rules for senior officers set out in the Authority's staff handbook.

The Secretary of State expects you to take an interest in matters across the Authority, given the scale of the challenges the Authority is facing. You will play an important role in informing Ministers' response to the situation in Birmingham.

The Secretary of State has asked that the team work closely with John Coughlin CBE in his role as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Commissioner to improve the service for the long-term benefit of children and young people. John will continue to report to the Department for Education on this aspect of his work. In addition, the Secretary of State has asked that the team works with the Social Housing

Regulator and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman regarding their concerns.

You will wish to note that the Secretary of State has asked the Commissioner team to provide him with an update within the first six months of the intervention, and thereafter at six-monthly intervals – or at any other time deemed necessary by the Secretary of State.

You are required to exercise care in the use of information that you acquire in the course of your duties and to protect information that is held in confidence. You must declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, influence your judgement in performing your functions. These interests include (without limitation), personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and, any such interests of your close family members and/or of people living in the same household as you or your close family members.

You are expected to ensure that acceptance of gifts and hospitality can stand up to public scrutiny. Similarly, care should be taken that no extravagance is involved with working lunches and other social occasions.

In your role as a public appointee, you must act appropriately and in accordance with the required standards. You are required to uphold the standards of conduct set out in by the Seven Principles of Public Life (as amended from time to time). You will be required to demonstrate your commitment to the principles and values of public service throughout your appointment.

In your role as a public appointee, it may be necessary to disclose information on your remuneration as part of annual accounts and you will be required to consent to the disclosure of this information. By accepting this appointment, you will be indicating your consent to this.

Your appointment has the status of an office holder and not of an employee. Nothing in this letter shall be construed as, or taken to create, a contract of service or contract for services between yourself and DLUHC, the Crown, or Birmingham City Council.

Should you have any queries or issues please contact me in the first instance.

We are very grateful for your commitment to taking up this challenge to improve the performance of Birmingham City Council as a political advisor.

Yours sincerely,

Max Soule
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship