



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Woking Commissioners
By email

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

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**
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Dear Jim, Carol, and Mervyn,

I am writing to thank you for your first report to the Secretary of State regarding the intervention at Woking Borough Council, and for the hard work and dedication that you have shown in these first three months. The report, along with this response, will be published on gov.uk later today.

In your report, I note the gravity of the situation and your assessment that the scale of the Council's challenge 'should not be underestimated'. It is therefore critical that the Council continues to cooperate with you to address its financial position, strengthen its scrutiny and governance systems and build the capacity and expertise needed meet the challenges it faces.

I note that the Council's Improvement & Recovery Plan was approved at full council on 22 August and that the Council is in the process of reviewing services and identifying savings in developing a balanced budget for 2024-2025. Particularly given the scale of its deficit, it is imperative that Woking does all it can to manage its financial position and makes the tough decisions that are necessary to protect public money.

There is still much to do, and I agree with your assessment that the most difficult decisions are yet to come. Once again, I am very grateful for your work on the intervention and your continued engagement with departmental officials. The Secretary of State and I look forward to receiving your next report in three months' time.

Yours sincerely,

LEE ROWLEY MP
**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Local Government & Building Safety**