



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government
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Tony McArdle OBE
Chair of the London Borough of Croydon
Improvement and Assurance Panel
By email

24 January 2024

Dear Mr. McArdle,

Thank you for your latest report, received on 27 October, which provided an update on the Improvement and Assurance Panel's assessment of progress since statutory Directions were issued to the London Borough of Croydon on 20 July. I would like to thank you and the Panel for your sustained efforts in supporting the Council's on-going recovery.

I am pleased that you are reporting an increase in pace of improvement across the Council, with strengthened governance arrangements, improved capacity and capability and a commitment to implement transformation and culture change across the organisation. The financial challenges facing the Council remain significant. I agree with your assessment that the Council must go further to identify transformation efficiencies and reduce service costs to achieve financial stability. I also recognise that Children's Services remains a significant pressure for the Council. The appointment of Eleanor Brazil to the Panel will provide expertise and challenge on their improvement plans in this area, and this appointment should be accommodated within the Panel's existing agreement with the Council on the number of working days for all Panel members.

This is a critical point in the Council's improvement journey, particularly as it navigates its way through the budget setting process to agree a budget for 2024/25. The 'Exit Strategy' you have developed in collaboration with the Council provides a realistic pathway to secure the necessary improvements and it is vital that Mayor Perry's Business Plan, which supersedes the former Croydon Renewal Plan, continues to be implemented for the benefit of Croydon residents.

I will continue to look for assurance from the Panel that the Council continues to comply with the statutory Directions and that it maintains and builds on its current trajectory of improvement and look forward to receiving your next report.

SIMON HOARE MP