



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government  
and English Devolution*

2 Marsham Street  
London  
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Our reference: MC2024/25645

Cllr Liam Robinson  
*By email*

19 December 2024

Dear Liam,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 October and enclosing Liverpool City Council's progress report, and letter from the chair of the Liverpool Improvement and Assurance Board, Mike Cunningham CBE QPM. I am pleased to hear of your commitment to the Council's recovery and reform journey and that the Board is working well with the Council, including on taking forward the recommendations from the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge.

When the Commissioners' appointments ended and the Council established the Board, I was encouraged by the overall improvements within the Council, particularly over the previous eighteen months, and by the commitment that you and your Leadership teams demonstrated to continuing to drive the reforms. The updates you have shared alongside the CPC findings assure me that progress continues to be made and that you have continued to demonstrate a strong and stable leadership both within the Members of the Council and the officer team. You have done well to build a solid foundation that ensures the Council can respond and adapt to unexpected changes, and I commend how the Council managed recent challenges faced in Liverpool, including the unforeseen violence and riots of the summer and the withdrawal of the key provider of two care homes. The fact that improvement has continued across the Council is promising and demonstrates how much leadership has grown.

However, as you note, there is still significant work to do before the residents of Liverpool see and feel the positive and tangible outcomes. It is important that all councils strive to achieve continuous improvement and have a clear and deliverable plan in place to ensure this. Your progress updates highlight some challenging legacy areas for the Council, particularly in relation to property, procurement, and housing, which have experienced progress at a slower pace. I am concerned that there is a risk of slippage in these more challenging areas and I know you appreciate it is crucial to continue a focus on tackling these issues with urgency and commitment. I understand you have reviewed plans to support an acceleration of recovery of these services and I am keen to see these come into fruition with positive changes fully embedded across the Council and sustained.

To support your ambitions, I would like to keep open the direct line of communication to the department, including through an official continuing as an observer on the Improvement and Assurance Board. I welcome and accept your offer of a further report from the council and from the Board chair, which I would like to receive by early March 2025.

I note that the Board is currently due to conclude in March 2025 and that plans are being developed for post-March. I understand this is likely to be a combination of an enhanced role for the Cabinet and Council, as well as external support. I strongly support these ambitions, as I believe that strong external support and challenge is as important as internal governance and scrutiny in helping sustain long-term improvement. I will be very interested to consider in your March update the plans you have to support your continuous improvement going forward.

I also appreciate your invitation to visit Liverpool which will be a useful opportunity to discuss your plans for improvement arrangements beyond March and the latest progress being made in the Council. I have asked my office to get in touch to discuss the feasibility in the new year.

Thank you again for your openness and commitment to continuous improvement in the interests of the residents of Liverpool, I look forward to your next update and meeting with you in the new year.

I have copied this letter to your Council's CEO, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, and the Chair of the Liverpool Improvement and Assurance Board. In the interests of transparency, a copy of this letter will be published on gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM MCMAHON OBE MP**

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