



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP
*Minister of State for Local Government
and English Devolution*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities
and Local Government**
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Max Caller CBE
Lead Commissioner
Birmingham City Council
By email

www.gov.uk/mhclg

2 April 2025

Dear Max,

I am writing to thank you for your report of 31 January which sets out the progress made to date at Birmingham City Council. I would also like to extend my gratitude to you and your team for the continued support you provide to the Council on its improvement and recovery journey. I have now published the report and will be publishing my response, following my statement in Parliament on Monday to update the House on the statutory intervention at Birmingham City Council, and on the issues affecting the Council's waste service.

The situation in Birmingham remains fragile. The report has been published at a point of acute difficulty to residents, as the ongoing dispute in the waste service, which has been escalated to a 'major incident' is impacting on local residents and businesses. It is vital that the current waste dispute is brought to a close in a sustainable way as soon as possible for the benefit of Birmingham residents. I trust that Commissioners will continue to support Birmingham City Council in reaching a fair and sustainable resolution to the dispute - one that maintains value-for-money and delivers a modern, efficient waste service, without creating or storing up liabilities for the future. I continue to encourage all parties to get round the table and find a resolution, and support the Council on its journey to transform Birmingham's waste service for the benefit of residents.

As per the report, I am encouraged by the steps taken towards settling the Equal Pay liability and I hope a resolution can be reached soon. I also welcome the notable progress made on the Oracle re-implementation programme. The committed leadership of Councillor Cotton and Joanne Roney CBE is a positive step in the right direction, and I am confident that the recent senior appointments made by Joanne will help to build a strong corporate core; I expect the new appointees to help drive the governance and culture of the organisation along the right trajectory. I would like to echo your recognition of the hard work of many diligent members of staff in the Council,

who are working tirelessly on several critical workstreams to contribute to the recovery journey of the Council for the benefit of local residents.

Despite the nascent progress, your comprehensive report also clearly sets out that the journey to recovery and financial stability is far from over and has been heavily dependent on the input, guidance and advice of the Commissioner team. Joanne's recruitment campaign is beginning to address the capability gap, but I recognise that it will take time for the Council to be able to stand stably on its own feet without external support in leading its own recovery and achieve its Best Value Duty. I expect to see an update on the Council's progress in your next report, which I request you submit by October.

It important that the improvements in train are delivered at pace so that focus can shift towards growth opportunities. There is significant opportunity in the city and its wider region to deliver good jobs and I continue to encourage the Council to strengthen its partnerships with regional stakeholders, including Mayor Parker of the West Midlands Combined Authority, to support economic growth and financial sustainability. I am keen to promote growth and regeneration opportunities in Birmingham and am confident that as the Council continues to work to 'fix the basics' whilst making progress against milestones, local stakeholders will be encouraged to work in partnership with the Council to deliver a clear vision for the future. I look forward to continuing a dialogue with Commissioners, the Council and regional partners including Mayor Parker on potential opportunities for growth in the region, subject to necessary improvements. A partnership approach here would present a clear vision and increase Birmingham's capacity to achieve sustainable growth.

As always, I am grateful to you and your team for the diligent approach you are taking in supporting the Council and look forward to your next progress report. I am copying this letter to the Commissioner team, to Councillor Cotton and Joanne Roney, and as improvement requires a whole Council approach, to Councillor Robert Alden as leader of the opposition at the Council.

Yours sincerely,

JIM MCMAHON OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution