



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Sir Stephen Houghton
Ministerial Envoy
Warrington Borough Council
By email

James Blythe
*Deputy Director, Local Government
Stewardship and Interventions*

**Ministry of Housing,
Communities and Local
Government**
2 Marsham Street
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www.gov.uk/mhclg

9 July 2025

Dear Sir Stephen,

I am writing to inform you that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has appointed you as Ministerial Envoy for the purposes of the Directions made on 9 July 2025 under section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1999 in relation to Warrington Borough Council.

Ministerial Envoys have the roles and responsibilities set out in the Directions, a copy of which I enclose, along with a copy of the Explanatory Memorandum. Under the Directions, the Ministerial Envoys will act jointly or severally and are accountable to the Secretary of State in that you have been appointed by them and can have your appointment withdrawn by them. I have also enclosed terms of engagement that you will need to sign and return; your appointment is made on the conditions set out in the terms of engagement.

You will be joined by Harry Catherall, Carolyn Williamson, and Phil Brookes as Ministerial Envoys with powers to exercise functions. You will support the Authority as they embark on their improvement journey, but will not exercise functions of the Authority. We expect the team to work together in supporting Warrington Borough Council to meet its Best Vale Duty, providing comprehensive and holistic support to drive cultural change and help deliver the necessary improvements.

You will be entitled to a fee for each day you act as a Ministerial Envoy. You will also be entitled to reasonable expenses. Under the terms of the Directions, it is the Authority's responsibility to meet these costs and the Secretary of State has set these fees for you at £1,100 per day. Fees are payable up to a maximum of 120 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.

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.

The Secretary of State expects you to take an interest in matters across the Authority, beyond those identified in the Directions, given the importance of ensuring that the Authority is delivering best value in all that it does. You will play an important role in informing Ministers' response to the situation in Warrington Borough Council.

You will wish to note that the Secretary of State has asked that the Ministerial Envoys provide an update within the first six months of the intervention, and from then on, on a regular basis as agreed with the Ministry.

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 judgements 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 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.

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 MHCLG, the Crown, or Warrington Borough Council.

Should you have any queries or issues either now or during the Directions period, please contact me in the first instance.

We are very grateful for your commitment to taking up this challenge to improve the performance of Warrington Borough Council as Ministerial Envoy.

Yours sincerely,

James Blythe
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship and Interventions