



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Tony McArdle OBE

Lead Commissioner at Birmingham City Council

*By email*

**Alison McGovern MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
Homelessness*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities  
and Local Government**

2 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DF

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

1 December 2025

Dear Tony,

I am writing to thank you for submitting the Commissioners' third report, and your first as Lead Commissioner, on 23 October, outlining the progress made to date at Birmingham City Council.

I was encouraged to see progress has been made since the last report in January 2025, including in major front-line service areas such as Adults' and Children's services, and some positive progress in Housing. The work undertaken to produce a Corporate Plan for 2025/26 and establish measures to ensure its delivery is welcome. Reaching a framework agreement on equal pay is also a significant step towards resolving the Council's longstanding equal pay issues, which have burdened the local authority for decades.

Whilst these achievements are important, I note your assessment that several areas of significant risk remain. The waste dispute has undoubtedly diverted the focus of the leadership team, contributing to delays to the waste service transformation programme and slowing progress in other areas. Finances remain fragile and the Council must continue to develop an overall corporate transformation plan and narrative. The final equal pay liability remains a substantial risk which could have a major impact on the overall financial position of the Council.

The various milestones on the horizon for 2026, including Oracle reimplementation and equal pay resolution, set against the backdrop of May elections, require the Council to maintain absolute focus on delivery while sustaining the momentum of improvement and recovery. Embedding a strong culture, sound governance, and a central transformation vision and plan is essential. The next report should provide evidence of progress in these areas.

I share my predecessor's ambitions on growth and expect to see strengthened partnership working with regional stakeholders to ensure opportunities are not missed.

I would also like to place on record my gratitude to you, your fellow Commissioners and Political Advisor for the important support you continue to dedicate to the Council. The next period will be critical for the Council, and I look forward to receiving your next progress report, which I ask is submitted to my officials by the end of May 2026. You have committed to producing an exit strategy by the time of the next report, which will be important in assessing the future shape and focus of the intervention.

I am copying this letter to the Commissioner team, to Councillor Cotton, the Managing Director Joanne Roney and, as improvement requires a whole Council approach, to Councillor Robert Alden as Leader of the Opposition.

Yours sincerely,

**ALISON MCGOVERN MP**

**Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness**