Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage OBE
Minister for Housing and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
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Tony McArdle OBE
Lead Commissioner
Birmingham City Council
By email

25 November 2026

Dear Tony,

I am writing to thank you for submitting the Commissioners' fourth and fifth reports outlining the progress made to date at Birmingham City Council and your continued dedication towards driving improvement for the residents of Birmingham.

It is clear from the Commissioners' letters that there are significant and ongoing challenges facing the authority but it is right to recognise the progress achieved over the course of the intervention through the joint working of the Commissioners, Council officers, and political leadership. Improvements have been made in advancing the implementation of a new IT system, resolving historic equal pay liabilities, and stabilising Council finances, in part thanks to the work of this Government delivering fairer funding across local government. Notable progress has also been demonstrated in adults' and children's services, evidenced by the Department for Education's SEND intervention stepping down a tier and the Council receiving a second consecutive 'Good' rating from the Care Quality Commission.

Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. Embedding strong governance, a central vision for transformation and an improved culture of decision making will be vital to bring the Council back in line with the Best Value Duty. The ongoing waste dispute continues to divert capacity from this important work. The Council's objective must now be to redouble its efforts with the Lead Commissioner ensuring that sufficient priority is given to reach a sustainable resolution to the dispute at pace that enables residents to receive a full waste service, is fair to the whole workforce and gives the Council a secure basis for moving forward.

It is also imperative that the Council engages meaningfully with the investigation that launched yesterday into poor-quality supported exempt accommodation in Birmingham, led by Sir David Pearson. Commissioners should provide appropriate oversight and challenge to ensure that the Council engages fully with the investigation, particularly as it relates to the Best Value Duty.

Reflecting the sustained improvement in some areas and the acute challenges that remain in others, I am reconfiguring the intervention team to provide greater focus where it is most needed. As part of these changes and informed by where significant progress has been made, John Coughlan CBE, Pam Parkes FCIPD, Jackie Belton, Myron Hrycyk and John Biggs will conclude their roles on 30 November 2026. I want to take this opportunity to thank each of them for their professionalism, dedication and important contribution to Birmingham City Council's improvement journey since the start of the intervention.

As the next phase of the intervention will require a rigorous focus on transformation to ensure the Council's long-term sustainability, I have appointed Kath O'Dwyer as Commissioner to help drive this critical work forward.

It will be important now for the Council to increase the pace of improvement and I look forward to the Commissioners' next report in spring next year.

This letter will be copied to the wider intervention team, Councillor Harmer, Councillor Pritchard, Councillor Parkin as leader of the opposition, and the Managing Director Joanne Roney.

Yours sincerely,

BARONESS TAYLOR OF STEVENAGE OBE
Minister for Housing and Local Government