



The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sent by email

29 June 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

Birmingham City Council's Improvement Progress

In our joint letter to the Secretary of State Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP dated 8 March we advised him about our plans to re-shape and strengthen the relationship between the Improvement Panel and the Council to enable more collaborative working. This being in the context of significant changes within the Council's leadership teams as it focuses on driving improvement in its corporate governance and achieving financial sustainability.

We also indicated that we intended to work together to produce a progress report for publication in June. This *Improvement Stocktake Report* is now attached. It provides an account of the current position and recent history in relation to the Council's improvement journey. The Council has pledged to be open and transparent with citizens, staff and partners and, therefore, has also published alongside the report its corporate governance improvement plan. It is continuing to refine service improvement plans and these will also be published in due course.

It is clear from the report that the Council acknowledges that it has not sufficiently gripped the improvement challenge set by Lord Kerslake and is now, with new political and permanent managerial leadership, committed to do so with vigour. In particular the Council has failed to align its revenue expenditure with the available resources and has been using substantial reserves each year since 2015/16 to balance its budget, including 2018/19. The Council is now addressing this crucial issue and is committed to taking the early action necessary to prevent overspending in 2018/19 and to approve a revenue budget for 2019/20 that does not resort to further use of reserves. It acknowledges that this will mean that very difficult decisions must be made and implemented without delay.

The progress of the Council in keeping to these commitments will be monitored closely by the Council and through monthly joint meetings between the Council, the Panel and representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We think it would be helpful to discuss the attached *Improvement Stocktake Report* and the Council's plans for improvement with you at an early date and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



J R A Crabtree
Chair



Councillor Ian Ward
Leader of the Council