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Dear Secretary of State

TOWER HAMLETS: FUTURE OVERSIGHT ARRANGEMENTS 2017

I am writing to thank you for Monday's meeting with myself and Will Tuckley, my Chief Executive. I trust you found it reassuring, and that it provided a useful opportunity to explore the scope of any future oversight arrangements for Tower Hamlets, once the current Direction regime expires. In my previous correspondence of 20th February I set out, in broad terms, the proposed oversight arrangements for driving improvement from 1st April 2017 and I thought I could add to this following our conversation.

Following our discussion, I want to confirm my proposal to establish and chair a cross-party Council-wide Improvement Board (Tower Hamlets Improvement Board). I will ensure there is multi-party membership and invite independent representation through the Local Government Association (LGA).

The aim of this Board is to drive continuous improvement across the Council through the provision of robust oversight arrangements. Its purpose is to ensure the Council has a workforce that is skilled and competent, an open and transparent culture, and that we provide excellent services that are value for money.

The initial remit of the Board is to ensure a Council-wide approach to implementing improvement activity especially in relation to the outstanding activities pertaining to the current Directions, oversight of actions arising from our recent Ofsted inspection and of other service reviews. I intend to work in partnership with the LGA on sourcing external challenge as well as best practice to support the work of the Board.

The Board will meet publically each quarter and papers will be available on our website and sent to DCLG for review. Departmental reassurance is important and I suggest we provide you with a detailed progress report every six months, and that we maintain regular contact as necessary with your officials.

My Council is, as we discussed, on a journey and through this is an increasingly resilient organisation able to tackle the improvement challenges ahead. My commitment as Executive Mayor is to ensure that this process is continued, and that it helps to transform my Authority into an excellent one, as it needs to be.

I look forward hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

John Biggs
Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, fluid loop that starts under the name 'John Biggs' and extends to the right, ending with a horizontal stroke. There is a small mark above the signature that looks like a checkmark or a stylized 'n'.