

Minister Jim McMahon

By email: PSJimMcMahon@communities.gov.uk

25 November 2024

Chief Executive's Office

Town Hall
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Our Ref: Letters/25.11.2024 letter to minister jim mcmahon from statutory officers & mayor re representations

Your Ref:

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Dear Minister McMahon,

We recognise our responsibility to make this partnership a success and ensure that the LBTH improvement plan works to deliver the necessary improvement for the Council, our partners and our residents. We look forward to working with the Ministerial Envoys and strengthened Transformation and Assurance Board to ensure you can have confidence in our improvement journey.

We accept the findings of the Best Value Inspection report and acknowledge the need for urgent action to address the serious failings identified. We are pleased that you have recognised that we already have some of the building blocks in place for driving forward improvement in the areas identified in the report.

Since the publication of the report we have begun an open conversation with: our members; sector support bodies; strategic partners; staff and wider stakeholders, to reflect on the issues raised in the report and have worked to set a positive, collaborative approach to deliver the changes that need to be made. We see this as a shared journey and recognise that we don't have all the answers.

We are determined that this statutory support package can be a fresh start to achieve meaningful and lasting change at the LBTH and welcome the input, oversight and support of the Ministerial Envoys to re-balance the political divisions and support the statutory officer's in their role. We commit to engaging positively with and working to the requirements of the Ministerial Envoys to support delivery against your directions in full.



We will take a paper to Cabinet on the 18th December and to Full Council on the 22nd January to ensure that the council has an opportunity to discuss the report and understand next steps, also ensuring that the Overview and Scrutiny committee has a chance to comment.

Our approach to delivering against your directions will be built on these principles:

- **We will work in a collaborative, inclusive way:** to scope this change programme with our members, partners and staff recognising that the Council needs to build on existing foundations to coproduce solutions effectively.
- **The report makes hard hitting criticism of LBTH's political culture:** and is clear that this is a longstanding, entrenched issue. We are discussing a comprehensive package of support with the LGA focused on ensuring that our members are equipped and supported to own and contribute positively to the improvement journey.
- **We will take a transparent, data-driven, relational approach** to ensuring that external challenge is hardwired into the Council's ways of working and decision making e.g. through making the assurance dashboard available to the Envoys, Transformation and Advisory Board members, relevant Committee members and ensuring that key data is publicly available.
- **We will work with the Envoys and TAB members** to develop an exit strategy to ensure our success measures have been validated and we have a common understanding of what good looks like.
- **We will build the right officer capability and capacity** to deliver against the directions in full and will agree what this should look like with the Ministerial Envoys when they are appointed. This will include recruiting a senior officer for the lead improvement officer role and a wider plan to ensure that this function has the right support.

We of course, understand that developing these principles and ways of working will be the subject of further work undertaken with the Ministerial Envoys and the Transformation and Assurance Board and may change as a result of their input and any feedback we receive from your Department.

We have made good progress on addressing some of the concerns set out by the inspection team since receiving the draft report in August. Like you we are optimistic that by welcoming this support package and drawing on the support of Government and our partners we will be able to achieve the necessary improvements at pace.

We welcome your suggestion to visit the Borough when the Ministerial Envoys are in place with a view to building a positive collaborative partnership relationship between the Council, Ministerial Envoys and Department.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Halsey
Chief Executive

(Head of Paid Service)



Lutfur Rahman
(Mayor)



Julie Lorraine
Corporate Director,
Resources
(Section 151 Officer)



Linda Walker
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