



Press release **EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 am MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH**

Date 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

## Independent Improvement Panel signs off City Council's Improvement Plan

The government-appointed Birmingham Independent Improvement Panel has today signed off the Council's Improvement Plan. The Plan responds to the recommendations made by the Kerslake report, published last December.

In a letter to Councillor Sir Albert Bore, Leader of the City Council, the Chair of the Panel, John Crabtree, notes the progress made so far and draws attention to the risks to implementation of the Plan.

Commenting on the Panel's decision to sign off the Plan John Crabtree commented

'We have discussed the key risks for the Council as it moves forward to implementation of the wide ranging plans for change with the leaders of all three political parties on the Council. We are reassured by the commitments made to embrace the need for change and to involve all councillors and all parties in the process.'

We are very aware that, despite the current difficulties faced by the Council, Birmingham has many strengths and that there is a real pride and passion felt by its residents for the City. As the Kerslake report states 'Birmingham is a great city'. We know that all the city's residents and the Council's partners will welcome the Council's commitment to move forward and transform the way it conducts its business.

The Panel will be monitoring the Council's progress in implementing the Plan and providing support to the Council. It will report to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the Council's progress in July.'

Along with the letter to Cllr Bore the Panel has also published the report prepared for the Panel in relation to its assessment of the Council's Improvement Plan. This formed the basis for discussion with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive at the Panel meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Panel also met with the leaders of the two opposition parties, Councillor Robert Alden (Leader of the Conservative Group) and Councillor Paul Tilsley CBE (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group).

ENDS

For further information please contact Lucie Perrins PA to John Crabtree  
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## BACKGROUND

In December 2014 Sir Bob Kerslake published *The way forward: an independent review of the governance and organisational capabilities of Birmingham City Council*. Sir Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham City Council and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had asked Sir Bob Kerslake to conduct the independent review. The Council was a willing and helpful partner throughout.

Alongside the recommendations in the Kerslake report relating to action Birmingham City Council should take, Sir Bob Kerslake recommended that the Secretary of State appoint an independent improvement Panel to work with the Council to provide robust challenge and support.

The Improvement Panel was set up in January 2015. Its members are John Crabtree OBE (chair), Frances Done CBE (vice chair), Cllr Keith Wakefield (Leader of Leeds City Council), and Steve Robinson (chief executive of Cheshire West and Chester Council). Lord Warner and Sir Mike Tomlinson, as children's services commissioners for Birmingham, are ex-officio members.