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**SENT VIA E-MAIL: [privateoffice@no10.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:privateoffice@no10.x.gsi.gov.uk)**

Rt Hon Liz Truss MP  
The Prime Minister  
No. 10 Downing Street  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

On 05<sup>th</sup> September, the Leader of Birmingham City Council announced the intention to declare a cost-of-living emergency.

The city currently faces a set of unique challenges. The rate of unemployment is 11.5% which is twice the national average, and we estimate that over 300,000 people are already living in poverty in Birmingham with child poverty standing at approximately 43% (equating to over 100,000 children).

We welcome the package of support that the Government has already announced including the energy price freeze (the Energy Price Guarantee), the Energy Bill Discount worth £400, the one-off cost-of-living payment for those on means-tested benefits, bringing forward the cut to the basic rate of income tax, and the introduction of an Energy (Oil and Gas) Profits Levy.

Birmingham City Council has already announced an additional £1.3m to support the most vulnerable in our city on top of the £12.6m being spent via the Household support fund, and we have ensured that over £56m has been paid out in Council Tax Energy Rebates to approximately 376,000 households out of a total of 390,000.

Birmingham City Partnership Board brings together stakeholders from across the public, private, academic and third sectors to discuss the key challenges and opportunities facing us and advocate as a single, collective voice for the city. We are committed to working with national government, to alleviate the worst effects of this cost-of-living emergency on households, businesses and our communities.

We are writing to ask you to work with us to take further decisive action, by looking at some of these asks. Whilst we know for many the issues surrounding cost-of-living have created an emergency in their lives, we also know that the challenges are likely to last for some time to come.

We append to this letter a set of asks from the City Partnership Board to national government, designed to mitigate the impacts. These include short, medium and long-term interventions.

Key asks include (full details are set out in Appendix A):

- Improve access to financial information and support, for example in relation to winter fuel payments
- Temporarily extend VAT relief for hospitality and non-essential retailers given that many are still struggling with debts accrued during the pandemic
- Provide Ofgem with more power to strengthen regulation of the energy market for businesses
- Immediately review and reform the Shortage Occupation List to reduce wage pressures and fill vacancies
- Provide targeted financial support for charities and voluntary organisations that are on the frontline of supporting people through the crisis
- Continue with meaningful reform of the business rates system including reducing the level of the multiplier, removing plant and machinery from the ratings system and simplifying the appeals process

In setting out these asks, we commit to working with national government to develop the most appropriate means of delivery and ensure that support reaches those that are most in need. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), a member of the Birmingham City Partnership Board, is currently in discussions with national government regarding a Trailblazer Devolution Deal (TDD). Some of these asks may be best delivered as part of the TDD, and to that end we attach a document setting out the WMCA's approach to the TDD and principles for working with national government to ensure devolution to the most appropriate level (Appendix B)

We look forward to working constructively with Government to deliver the best outcomes for our citizens and local economy.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Ian Ward  
Leader, Birmingham City Council

Cllr Brigid Jones  
Deputy Leader, Birmingham City Council  
Chair, Birmingham Partnership City Board

Cllr Robert Alden  
Leader, Birmingham Conservative Group

Paulette Hamilton MP

Andrew Mitchell MP

Gary Sambrook MP

Brian Carr  
Chief Executive, Birmingham Voluntary Services Council (BVSC)

David Melbourne  
Interim Designate Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB)

The Rt Revd. David Urquhart  
Bishop of Birmingham

Henriette Breukelaar  
Chief Executive, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Economic Partnership (GBSLEP)

Janice Nichols  
Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Bureau

Cllr John Cotton  
Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Partnership

Laura Shoaf  
Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Penny Thompson  
Chair, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Simon Foster  
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Boyes  
Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP)

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