

Commissioners' Assurance Plan

The outcomes to be achieved in order that commissioners can recommend the conclusion of the intervention by October 2028

January 2026

Foreword – Tony McArdle OBE

As the timeline on the right makes clear, this intervention was initiated in October 2023 by the then Secretary of State as the latest in a long line of attempts to address a saga of difficulties experienced under multiple elected member and officer teams over very many years – indeed decades. The Improvement Panel that was put in place after Sir Bob Kerslake’s 2014 review of the failings that the Council was experiencing at that time found “considerable progress on many fronts”, yet it is sobering to reflect that almost a decade later the list of concerns he identified had remained inadequately addressed and essentially unresolved.


It is unsurprising therefore, that a commissioner-led intervention - the most extensive of the Government’s range of powers for addressing failings in Local Authorities - is now in place. We are entirely aware of the need for this intervention to bring these concerns to an end once and for all and to ensure that changes are not merely introduced but are capable of being sustained.

The intervention, in place for up to five years, is now over two years old. Work to address all of the identified problems is under way, but their causes, rooted as they are in decades of 'lost ground', have made it necessary for the intervention to be wide-ranging, in-depth and thorough. We are encouraged in that there is now good cause for some hope. The Council’s recent improvement work has been purposeful and well-directed. Change – for the better - is taking place. We believe it appropriate that at this point we should set out clearly what the Council will need to achieve as a result of all of that work so that we may find ourselves able, at the appropriate time, to recommend to the Secretary of State that the Council is either meeting its duties or that it is on a path towards doing so, and that he can have confidence this will be maintained. That is what this Plan does. It is our judgement of what the Council must do, and we will commit to supporting the Council as best we are able in its endeavours through its own improvement plan to do it. We believe that all of the outcomes we set out are capable of being achieved over the period of this Plan.

While we are confident that we have captured everything that is necessary and anticipate little need for amendment, work of this nature cannot be reduced to a 'tick box' exercise, nor should the Plan be a tablet of stone. We intend to agree with the Council arrangements for its regular assessment and review.

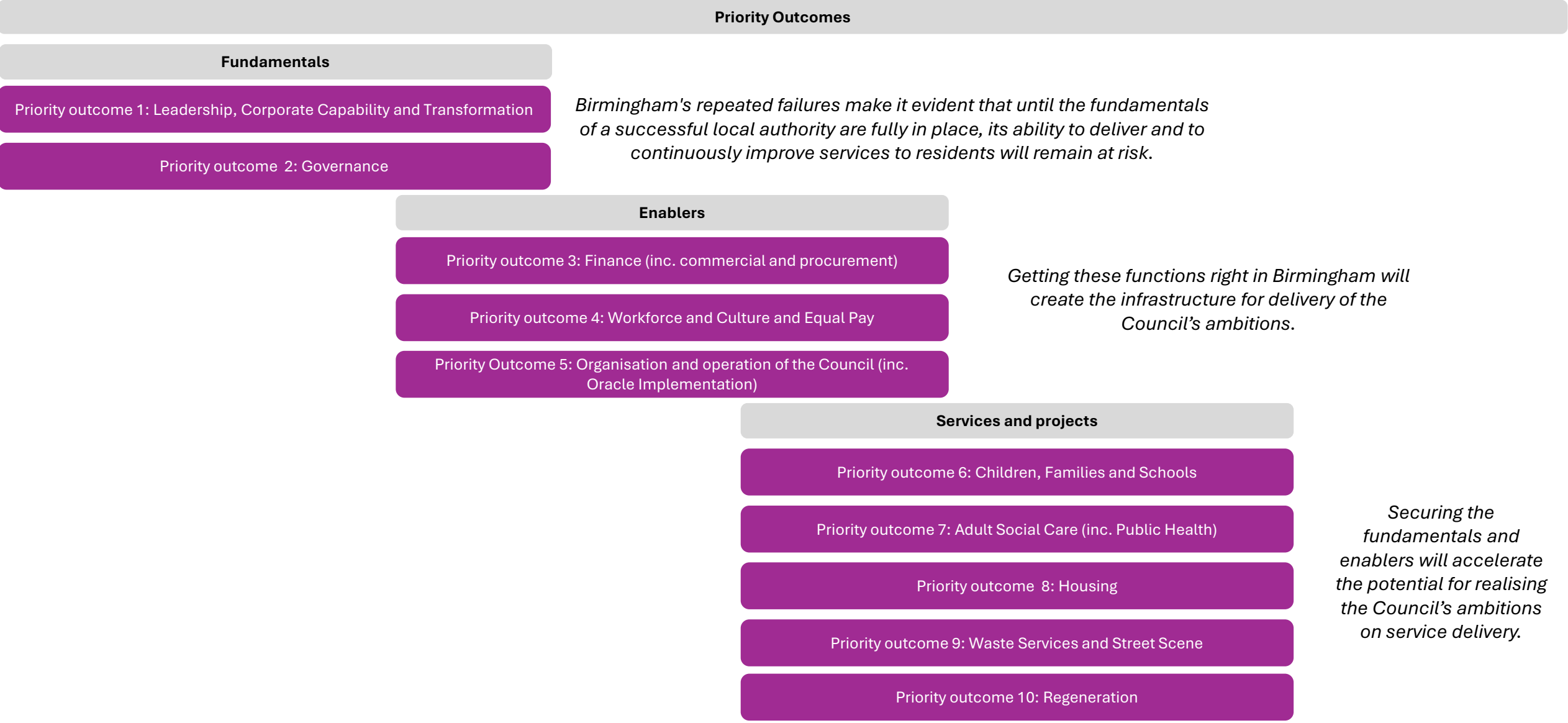
Tony McArdle, January 2026

Timeline of failings over the past decade and beyond:

- 
- **2014 - Kerslake Review** conducted following deterioration in service delivery and decision making as well as in the light of high-profile failings. The review found the Council had “lost ground” over the past 30 years and was unable to “provide consistently good quality services”, “help its partners to grow the local economy”, or “provide leadership and set a vision for the City” alongside a demonstration of poor governance and culture.
 - **2014 - Education commissioners** appointed and made recommendations in the ‘Trojan Horse’ scandal and **Children’s Services commissioners** led to the creation of a Trust to improve “history of poor performance”.
 - **2015 to 2019 - Independent Improvement Panel** set up to “provide support and challenge” in the Council’s attempt to make improvements and deliver “value for money”.
 - **2021 to 2025 - SEND Improvement Board** put in place in response to poor Ofsted and CQC inspection outcomes alongside DfE statutory directions.
 - **2023 to Present - Regulatory Notice from Social Housing Regulator** served following breaches of legislation.
 - **September 2023 - Report from Auditors** on State of Accounts showed “significant weaknesses in finance, governance and Oracle Brindley implementation”
 - **October 2023 - Statutory Intervention** begins and commissioners arrive tasked with a set of directions under the Local Government Act 1999.
 - **November 2023 - Independent Governance Review** by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny identifies the root cause of Birmingham’s problems in poor decision making.
 - **October 2028 – Intervention due to end** with foundations fixed and the Council delivering best value, functioning properly and able to demonstrate continuous improvement.

What form will commissioners’ assurance take and how will they reach their judgement?

The directions issued in October 2023 were broadly set, addressing widespread failures across the Council’s areas of responsibility. Those directions have guided commissioners' work to date and are the foundation of the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan. To judge progress against the directions and to reach a view about the eventual end of the intervention, commissioners will concentrate their efforts on supporting achievement of outcomes across 10 priority areas:



Commissioners' tests

Commissioners will apply 3 tests to determine whether the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty:

Test 1:

Are the foundations of the failure that brought about the intervention now fixed?

Test 2:

Is the Council functioning properly in respect of each outcome and is best value being delivered?

Test 3:

Is progress being sustained and the ability to sustain continuous improvement evident?

Commissioners will not consider recommending the intervention as a whole is stepped down until Test 1 is met in every priority outcome area, all three tests are met on priority outcome 1 and they are confident of progress in Tests 2 and 3 in each of the other nine areas. To make these judgements, commissioners will be guided by performance data and will reflect on three contextual questions:

Question 1:

Council's Own Self-Reflection – Are commissioners confident that the Council's political and corporate leadership is sufficiently self-reflective and can own and deliver continuous improvement?

Question 2:

Workforce cultural change - Do employees across the Council recognise the Council's culture has changed and that it has improved?

Question 3:

External validation - Do residents and partners feel the Council has improved? Do partners see evidence of improved joint working across the priority outcomes?

Priority Outcome 1: Leadership, Corporate Capability and Transformation

What outcome needs to be achieved?	What progress has been made to date?
The Council improves overall delivery on behalf of the City through strong, effective leadership which achieves more than the sum of its individual service areas through having a clear and delivered transformation plan. Structural and technical changes are made to governance arrangements to enable this.	A permanent leadership team of high-quality officers is now in place, alongside improved and more determined political leadership. The Council has produced a corporate plan for 2025-28 and a detailed Improvement and Recovery Plan, monitored through an Improvement and Recovery Board. There are some good examples of transformation at individual directorate level which need to become models for transformation of the Council as a whole.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?
(1) Transformation continues to happen at Directorate and workstream level rather than being a single clear, corporately owned plan and narrative that shapes the strategic decision making of the authority (2) Service delivery continues to operate in isolation in different parts of the Council without the a clear, strengthened axis between delivery directorates and the corporate core

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance date
A Council-wide transformation plan led by a single senior accountable officer on its corporate leadership team (CLT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan developed and agreed at member and officer levelSustained evidence of implementation in all directorates, knitting together governance, leadership, transformation and HR changesTransformation activity is properly resourcedPlan prioritised, resourced and linked to the MTFP and performance frameworkTransformation is a continuous process, with assurance delivery and progress aligned with targets and budgets	Q3 2026 to agree and begin implementation, continued assurance to Q3 2028
Performance management of core projects through the Corporate Programme Management Office (CPMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained evidence of monitoring the performance of core projects and member and officer use of the performance management framework	Q2 2027
A corporate core and operating as a coherent entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained evidence of the grip of CLT managing the Council as a coherent entity and not a collection of directoratesThe Corporate Core provides service directorates with effective enabling support and enforces adherence to agreed corporate disciplines	Q2 2027
Mature operating practices in the conduct of politics including in the functioning of groups and conduct of formal meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All political groups embrace the need for behavioural and cultural changeNo return to past poor behaviours and sustained evidence of high ethical standardsSupport for continuous improvement across all groups on the Council	Q2 2027
Induction for new members following the May 2026 election and support for the post-election administration to operationalise their decisions through a framework of member/officer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Successful handover to the post-election administration and established effective working relationshipsDecision making framework agreed that is purposeful, reflective and systematic in operationA clear political vision for the next Municipal Term is agreed and is reflected and flows through corporate planningOperation of the Cabinet Office in supporting the Leader to drive the political vision of the CouncilContinued ownership of, and engagement with, the intervention	Q3 2026

Effective management and use of data to make decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved data quality, including accuracy and completeness Sustained evidence of data supported digital transformation with data presented to improve decision making Sustained evidence of effective data management and governance processes (inc. a data strategy, data owners, data life cycles etc.) 	Q1 2027
--	---	---------

Delivering best value and functioning effectively: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A clear vision for the type of Council it intends to be, where its priorities lie and how it will achieve these	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgment of the Council’s history of failings Sustained ownership of its improvement journey Clarity and evidence of staff understanding of the vision of the Council Sustained evidence of officers applying the agreed vision with clear direction, a united culture and rigorous focus on its aims and objectives 	Q4 2026
Strong internal and external communications approach and management of both proactive and reactive communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External comms team delivering a disciplined corporate narrative across member and officer leadership Comms supporting the effective running of services and better informing residents The Council is in control of internal and external narratives and demonstrating active media awareness 	Q4 2026
Regular management of Council performance driven by the CLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance monitoring and improvement is underpinned by data across directorates, and its use is sustained including for investment decisions 	Q4 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A clear vision for the future of the City (refined as necessary post election)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision brings together statutory and non-statutory responsibilities Sustained progress towards the vision is evidenced to enable a commissioner judgement that it will be met and work towards it will continue without their support Evidence that partners have been involved (particularly NHS, Police, Combined Authority and Third Sector) and advice received from those partners, demonstrating that there is genuine city-wide partnership working 	Q4 2027
Transformation as a continuous process evident at all levels and in all directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained evidence of continuous improvement across the Council and that transformation is a natural and accepted part of the Council’s operation at all levels Evidence the individual directorate transformations are properly rooted in, and all CLT members are engaged in, the overall Council’s transformation 	Q4 2027
Effective mechanisms and governance to lead its own improvement journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective operation of the Improvement and Recovery Board Timely meeting of IRP milestones and focus on areas off track or of concern Evidence this is owned and driven both corporately and politically leading to effective operation of IRB and that it will be sustained without external oversight Backed by external regulatory and inspection evidence 	Q4 2027

Priority Outcome 2: Governance (inc. risk management and performance management)

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council makes sound, timely and evidence-based decisions and secures public trust through proper, transparent governance. Risk is identified, monitored and managed. Leaders have appropriate oversight and take required actions to improve performance across all directorates.

What progress has been made to date?

The formal governance functions are improving with a new Monitoring Officer and an effective Governance Board now in place. Progress has been made towards a revised member-officer protocol, member development framework and updated code of conduct for members.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) The significant changes the Council has made and will continue to make to improve governance are not able to realise their potential benefits because of a disconnect in how they are delivered in practice
- (2) Parts of the Council do not accept the need for a new set of ways of working which mean reforms do not become embedded and the risk of the causes of the intervention recurring increases

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A new and fit for purpose constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New constitution successfully developed and implemented• Sustained evidence of members and officers delivering against it and being held to account where they do not	Q2 2026 for completion Q4 2026 for assurance
A reviewed and updated code of conduct for members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Code of Conduct revised and commissioners content it is being used in practice• Sustained evidence of improvement of political behaviour and operation within the Council	Q2 2027
A member-officer protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustained evidence of good member and officer joint working• Implementation of recommendations from member/ officer sessions and survey• Evidence of improved relationships and sustainment of that progress after the election	Q4 2026
An effective scrutiny function	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of the agreed plan for change• Evidence the changes are embedded and sustaining	Q2 2027
A new risk management platform used effectively across all directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustained evidence the new platform is being used appropriately• Sustained evidence members and officers know, understand and are making informed decisions on risk	Q4 2026
Consistently improved and timely reports to enable better decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner, member and officer reflections following completion of a wholesale governance review of progress• Evidence that the standard is consistently met at all levels and across all directorates	Q2 2027

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Annual governance statements and regular reviews of, and updates to, the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Annual reports of acceptable qualityAny updates to the Constitution identified as necessary as part of annual governance reviews are delivered in 2027 and 2028	Q2 2028
A forward Corporate Plan post election and Annual Business Plans in 2026, 2027 and 2028 (as well as delivery of the existing Corporate Plan (2025-28))	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consistent and sustained delivery against the existing Corporate PlanEffective development of the next plan and commissioner judgement on how members/officers respond to and govern themDevelopment of acceptable future annual plans and commissioner confidence in delivery against them	Q2 2028
A new performance management framework across all directorates and levels of the Council driven by members and senior leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Officer accountability for delivery is formalised in the implemented framework and there is sustained evidence of it happening at all levels of the CouncilSustained evidence of Member engagement driving the performance systemCommissioner confidence they are operating effectively	Q4 2027
The planned corporate governance learning and development programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Programme designed, developed and implemented effectively	Q4 2027
An effective member induction and a development strategy and programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strategy developed, training programme delivered and sustained evidence it is being used effectively	Q2 2027

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Regular reviews and iterations of scrutiny and governance approaches at the corporate core and in all directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained evidence of officers’ ability to critically review and adapt	Q4 2028

Priority Outcome 3: Finance (inc. commercial and procurement)

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council has a financially sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), an improved finance function, and organisational discipline so it does not repeat previous mistakes. Fair Funding has benefitted the City and the Council ensures that spend adheres to best value principles.

What progress has been made to date?

The finance function is improving under the new section 151 officer. This has led to improvements in financial planning and the prospect that the 2026/27 budget (and subsequent budgets) will be balanced without the use of capital receipts.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) Given the significance of the changes to day to day financial and transactional processes through the move to Oracle Brindley, delays or issues in implementation could have a destabilising effect
- (2) Agreement of a balanced and sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan is essential, as is securing delivery against the Plan. Both could be destabilised without appropriate rigour
- (3) Delivery of planned savings and asset sales are both below the required level and need to go significantly further and faster.

Foundations fixed: To be confident that the core concerns that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A budget independently of additional external support beyond which has already been agreed via EFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EFS financed through asset sales (within the £750m it has agreed), not borrowingCouncil sets a balanced budget without the need for additional EFSCouncil delivers agreed capital receipts to support EFS, and identifies and (if needed) delivers additional receipts	Q1 2026 ongoing to Q4 2028 for assurance
Finances that are sustainable in the medium/long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A robust MTFP that maximises efficiencies and supports the transformation programmeMTFP balances for 2026/27 and 2027/28 without EFSDirectorates fully engage with finance to develop and deliver over 90% of savingsSustained evidence savings and risks are actively managed, with slippage and growth pressures identified and mitigated earlyDecisions to invest in services are supported by robust performance management data and are aligned with corporate plans	Q1 2026 and ongoing to Q4 2028 for assurance
A modern finance function that is fully staffed, compliant with all legislation and capable of tackling the financial challenges the Council faces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Finance function has the appropriate capability, capacity and effective systems and processes to deliver the finance improvement plan in full and on timeTeams are trained and developed as appropriate to their professional roles and responsibilities	Q1 2027
The appropriate governance in place to operate properly disciplined commercial and procurement functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No procurements are initiated/ progressed to Cabinet report without professional procurement/ commercial sign offSustained evidence that procurement/ commercial is the first point of call for directorates when considering or approaching a procurement or commercial activityCompliance with the Procurement Act 2015Sustained evidence of professional contract management is happening effectively across directoratesSustained evidence of effective supplier management	Q4 2026

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Target Date(s)
A sustainable and affordable capital programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council produces a Corporate Asset Strategy which is supported by a robust asset management plan The Capital programme is underpinned by effective prioritisation and robust business cases The vast majority of schemes are delivered on time and within budget. 	Q1 2027 (and beyond)
Appropriate governance of assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets are transitioned to a Corporate Landlord model that facilitates a sustainable estate portfolio Sustained evidence that Council assets are strategically and effectively managed with operational efficiencies identified and actioned 	Q1 2027
Appropriate Commercial and Procurement processes that are consolidated within the finance function and embedded across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement/commercial target operating models are achieved and fully staffed on a permanent basis to deliver £7m+ of procurement savings 90% of procurement savings are delivered with minimal examples of contract waivers or forced extensions occurring due to late procurement activity A comprehensive procurement pipeline is agreed and sustained evidence it is being governed and actively managed effectively A comprehensive contract register is put in place with sustained evidence it is being well governed and effectively managed. Compliance with the Procurement Act 2015 	Q3 2027
Meaningful progress in the journey to a clear set of accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidenced through the external audit opinion and internal and external audit reports 	Q3 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Target Date(s)
Processes to ensure financial considerations are part of decision-making and strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making across the Council is supported by robust financial information and all Council reports are supported by clear and comprehensive financial implications Value for Money principles are embedded into all the Council’s strategic plans 	Q2 2027
Sound financial scrutiny in member and officer behaviour and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and scrutiny committees provide scrutiny on the key financial considerations Members and officers centre the Council’s financial principles/priorities in decisions 	Q2 2027
Discipline in financial management and procurement across all disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong compliance with appropriate processes and governance from all Directorates Commissioner confidence in transparency of decision making 	Q4 2027
Continuous improvement in finance, procurement and commercial functions and professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active training and development programme for finance, commercial, procurement professionals 	Q4 2027

Priority Outcome 4: (a)Workforce and Culture and (b) Equal Pay

What outcome needs to be achieved?	What progress has been made to date?
The Council becomes a competent modern employer by settling its historic equal pay liabilities, modernising the way its HR function operates and setting a clear strategy for the future of its workforce.	<div>(a) On workforce and culture, improvement of the HR function is continuing with greater stability, capacity and competence which is beginning to show impact including progress on employee engagement, trade union relations and job evaluation.</div> <div>(b) On Equal Pay, the Council has also reached agreement on a Framework to end the historic liability and a revised pay and grading framework but now needs to operationalise both.</div>

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?
<div>(a) On Workforce and culture:</div> <div>(1) A lack of CLT focus on strategic workforce planning could reduce the efficacy of transformation work, delay and destabilise recovery and leave the organisation with demographic problems in its workforce</div> <div>(2) An overreliance on temporary and agency staff risks destabilising recovery</div> <div>(b) On Equal Pay:</div> <div>(1) Operationalising the framework agreement and making payments to a large number of individual litigants is a complex process with operational and reputational risks</div> <div>(2) The overall liability remains uncertain and the overall EP risk remains significant until successful delivery of a solution for mitigants</div>

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Job evaluation of all Council, Acivico and school roles, including moderation against sector norms	<div>• Completion and moderation of all roles (including JNC, GR6/7)</div> <div>• Sustained evidence it is now an embedded continuous process</div>	<div>Q4 2026 for completion</div> <div>Q2 2027 for sustained evidence</div>
Implementation of the Equal Pay Framework agreement including processing of payments to litigants and mitigants	<div>• Successful delivery of Framework</div>	Q2 2026
The planned culture programme	<div>• Demonstration that staff across the Council recognise its core objectives at all levels and show awareness of the changes including the guiding principles of a rules based governance culture</div> <div>• Effective and sustained leadership of culture evident through staff engagement mechanisms, including employee survey</div>	<div>Q1 2027</div> <div>Q4 2028 for sustained evidence</div>
The agreed Trade Union Consultation Framework and improved Trade Union relationships across the corporate core and service areas/ directorates	<div>• The Framework becomes an embedded way of working</div> <div>• The Council meets its trajectory for line mangers to receive the Industrial Relations Training and Development</div>	Q1 2027

Sustained senior leadership across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent recruitment to any remaining positions • Sustained evidence the permanent leadership is fully embedded and driving cultural change • Minimisation of interim and agency staff at all grades, but particularly Executive Director, Director, Assistant Director and direct report to ADs 	Q1 2027
--	---	---------

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A clear workforce strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy developed • Sustained evidence that it is being adopted and implemented across all directorates 	Q1 2026 Q1 2028 for sustained evidence
A staff performance management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained evidence that it has become business as usual across all levels and directorates • The Council meets its trajectory for increased 1-2-1 submissions 	Q2 2027 Q2 2028 for sustained evidence
New grievance, capability, recruitment and selection and expenses policies which are embedded across all levels and directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the policies and evidence they are embedded and used in practice is seen through staff engagement mechanisms 	Q1 2027
Strategic workforce plans for all directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans in place for all directorates • Sustained evidence of reduction in reliance on agency staff to at or below industry averages 	Q1 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Leadership development for high potential staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained evidence of delivery 	Q1 2028
The early careers development and Birmingham City Council apprenticeship programmes to secure the future talent pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained evidence of delivery of both programmes 	Q4 2027

Priority Outcome 5: Organisation and operation of the Council (inc. Oracle Brindley implementation)

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council delivers best value for the City and becomes an efficient corporate body by overhauling the way it works, manages performance and delivers its corporate functions - including successfully reimplementing Oracle Brindley.

What progress has been made to date?

Governance and direction has improved with Target Operating Models developed and signed in core business areas. This has been bolstered by improved governance and member-officer relationships. The Council has passed the design phase of Oracle Brindley and moved into user acceptance testing. Digital transformation capability has been developed in the technology unit and a Corporate Programme Management Office has been established.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) Oracle Brindley Implementation timeline is tight, and success is contingent on the Council adapting its ways of working to the system rather than attempting to adapt the system
- (2) Business Support Transformation has not been successful, and savings have not been realised – delivering a clear and improved Business Support Offer is crucial to overall transformation
- (3) There is no clear and agreed overall Target Operating Model for the Council and risks remain in terms of Charities and Traded Services

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Target Date(s)
A properly functioning Income Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is fully embedded and there is sustained evidence it is being used properly and is operationally efficient	Q4 2026
A stable and operational fusion technology system (Oracle Brindley) that delivers all functions the Council needs with use fully embedded across the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Configured processes, interfaces and reports are operationalData migration is successfully completedCouncil can evidence minimal failed processes due to data issuesCouncil has appropriate documentation with supporting maintenance processesEmployees are trained and equipped to use the systemThere are minimal role exceptions to Segregation of DutiesThe Council are exiting Hyper Care into Business As Usual supportIt is fully implemented and provides the services the Council requires (finance, procurement, HR core services)90% compliance with system processes and controls and no unresolved Priority 1 issuesOperational Oracle Competency Centre is correctly resourced with supporting processesOperating model works, with positive independent review and external audit output	Q3 2026 for system Q3 2027 for evidence it is embedded
A clear strategy and processes for traded companies and use of charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strategy incorporates best value principlesA comprehensive register of all traded companies / charities the Council has a controlling stake in and a minority interest inEstablished programme of closing/liquidating non trading, dormant companiesSubmission of annual accounts for all charities that require them	Q3 2027

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Target Date(s)
A strategic approach to improving Customer Experience which has corporate ownership and is rooted in the transformation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of customer service strategy and consolidated shared service model• Sustained evidence it has become embedded across all directorates• Customer feedback demonstrates its effective delivery	Q3 2026
Improved digital capabilities and increased digitalisation of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has developed and implemented an IT & digital strategy which has a focus on delivering cost and time efficiencies, and aligns with transformation goals• The strategy supports digital upskilling amongst staff, including through a skills training programme and apprenticeships• The Council continues to develop and follow robust processes for ensuring digital security across the organisation.	Q1 2027
Effective and functioning units that ensure proper governance and operation of companies, traded services and charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A functioning unit in the Council that oversees the governance and management of companies and charities, including Charity Commission Compliance• Strategic reviews for the top 3 traded services by turnover	Q2 2027

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Target Date(s)
Optimisation of the IMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities are being identified and developed to improve and innovate income management• The system is working effectively and meeting the Council’s needs	Q4 2026
Customer services that reflect the transformation Oracle Brindley can bring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer service transformation is delivered and there is sustained evidence of improved customer outcomes and satisfaction• The intended benefits are realised	Q1 2027
A digital strategy that is aligned with the Council’s transformation plans and facilitates better and more efficient service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processes are streamlined and operational costs are reduced• Online service offer is up to date and is responsive to the needs and expectations of residents and officers	Q1 2027
Target Operating Models across services that support the wider transformation aims of the Council and deliver joined-up and efficient running of the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TOMs are agreed and in place• They are regularly reviewed and adapted to drive continuous improvement	Q1 2027

Priority Outcome 6: Children, families and schools

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council builds on improvement in this area to deliver service outcomes for children and families in receipt of social care and those with SEND. The Council also improves its support for early years settings, schools and post-16 settings to drive educational improvement across the City.

What progress has been made to date?

Continued improvement has been seen in this service area through improved joint working with partners and more effective political and officer leadership, improvements in SEND delivery and service leadership, improved joint working with partners and more effective political and officer leadership. Improvements have been most pronounced in SEND support resulting in an improved Ofsted-CQC judgement and the ending of DfE intervention.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) The continuing trajectory of SEND improvement may be interrupted or threatened by various combinations of demand and partnership working, especially health and schools
- (2) Widespread changes in national policy to reposition family support towards early intervention and prevention will require significant change for most authorities, but especially Birmingham, given its scale and capacity challenges and the positive but recent improvements in SEND, and the role of the Children’s Trust
- (3) There is always potential for the Children’s Trust to encounter extreme cases or lose stability which may undermine safety and progress

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Financially stable services for children and families within both the Council and the Children’s Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustained evidence that budget pressures are forecasted accurately• Efficiencies and savings are delivered as agreed at full Council budgets or realistic mitigations are in place for riskier savings identified• Effective delivery of sufficiency Programmes for Early Years and statutory school age children alongside the SEND and AP sufficiency strategy to ensure there is a sustainable education infrastructure within the Council’s capital budget	Q1 2027
Robust and stable leadership arrangements to support sustainable improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanent staff are in place in the senior leadership structure, in line with the Council Target Operating Model• Staff provide positive feedback on the leadership within Children and Families industry standards• Commissioners are content with progress and organisation at the Council chaired Improving Services for Children and Families Board	Q1 2027

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Services that support Early Years, Schools and Post-16 settings that are on course to be at the heart of communities and deliver positive outcomes for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustained evidence the Council is working effectively with educational partners• Feedback from children and families on the support provided by education setting	Q1 2026

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Sustained and improving performance within the Children’s Services directorate and Children’s Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Continuous Improvement Plan, and SEND and AP Improvement Plan are embedded, delivered and monitored to improve outcomes• Improved inspection outcomes• The Continuous Improvement Plan pipeline progresses projects effectively• Sustained evidence of children, young people and families feedback feeling included, heard and consulted• Commissioner judgement on the Council’s ability to embed the Continuous Improvement Model	Q4 2027 and ongoing

Priority Outcome 7: Adult Social Care

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council supports service users earlier and more holistically by addressing multiple needs together.

What progress has been made to date?

Continued improvement has been seen in this service area with a focus on early intervention and prevention since the appointment of a new Director and subsequent restructuring and modernisation of the service.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) The service is progressively modernising and under new leadership and those new processes (including towards more early help) will test service flexibility and funding
- (2) As elsewhere, Adult Social Care is increasingly dependent on the effectiveness of local NHS effective partnership working, with which will be crucial to delivery

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Robust leadership arrangements to progress the Adult Social Care transformation and improvement journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A stable and permanent senior leadership team s in place to deliver sustainable progressEffective plans in place to sustain a more stable, permanent workforce and sustained evidence of reducing staff turnover and agency staff towards industry norms	Q1 2026
A deliverable directorate Medium Term Financial Plan that supports Council sustainability without Extraordinary Financial Support or other one-off contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Savings and efficiencies are identified and deliveredSustained evidence that savings and efficiencies in Adult services are correctly identified, delivered and mitigations are in place for any that are riskier	Q4 2026
A transformed library service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The libraries transformation is completedThe Council’s milestones/ metrics for the programme are metService savings achieved	Q4 2026
A comprehensive public health framework in partnership with NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The framework and its benefits for communities is delivered(In partnership with the NHS) Public Health is promoted in the delivery of key services to address health inequalities across directorates	Q4 2026

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
An agreed programme of work to support service quality and implementation of the Care Quality Commission improvement action plan following inspection in 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained evidence that agreed programmes of work will be completed each year including the Adult Social Care Service Improvement plan for 25/26 and 26/27IRP milestones are consistently met	Q1 2026

Collaboration across the organisation and partner agencies as an established way of working in delivering Adult's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained evidence that the Adult Social Care directorate is being effectively supported by Council corporate functions like HR, Programme management, Commercial and Procurement and Legal 	Q1 2026
The Connected Communities service model is established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained delivery of IRP milestones and evidence that residents are being effectively supported as a result of the Connected Communities service model 	2026/27 (works begin in Spring 26 on library hubs refurb)

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Adult Social Care Service Improvement Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Adult Social Care Service Improvement Plan is regularly monitored, reviewed each year and tracked to ensure delivery against it Sustained evidence of delivery against the plan The service review and redesign aligns with the Target Operating Model and is in support of the wider cross Council transformation objectives Improved inspection outcomes 	Q4 2026
Digital and data capability to support with Early Intervention and Prevention (EI&P) work with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data is being used effectively in practice to identify and support vulnerable residents earlier than was previously possible 	Q2 2026 (expanded data and digital second stage Q1 2026)

Priority Outcome 8: Housing

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council successfully improves housing conditions for its tenants, complying with health and safety and other legislation and increases tenant satisfaction. The Council reduces the number of families in B&B accommodation over 6 weeks and increases the supply of affordable housing.

What progress has been made to date?

Measurable improvement has been made since intervention began and commissioners and Officers are working closely with the regulator to address the concerns that led to the breach. To date there has been sustained improvement on complaints handling, health and safety and decent homes compliance and a greater focus on tenant satisfaction measures. A new staffing structure is in place and embedding well. A Housing Revenue Account business case was developed and is now being updated annually.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) The Council does not achieve full compliance with the Decent Homes Standard across its housing stock by 2032
- (2) The Council fails to eliminate the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for families beyond six weeks by July 2027
- (3) The Council will not deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet housing need, resulting in continued reliance on high-cost temporary accommodation and failure to reduce overall temporary accommodation expenditure

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Health and safety compliance across all 6 main landlord areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained delivery against the Council’s trajectories and plans on (1) annual gas safety inspections, (2) five yearly Electrical Installation Condition Reports, (3) fire safety provisions, (4) general repairs and in particular new damp and mould legislation, (5) safe furniture and appliances and (6) regular checking of structural integrity to Building Safety Regulator standardsFull stock portfolio on track to have a physical survey by April 2029	Assurance Q2 2026 and ongoing sustained evidence
Sufficient and sustained improvement that the Regulator of Social Housing is satisfied with and allows it to lift the notice against the Council for breaching the Home Standard and the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regulator of Social Housing lifts the May 2023 regulatory notice from the Council after the Council consistently demonstrates significant improvements in its housing services	Ongoing
A clear, monitored inspection-readiness plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The plan contains what is necessary to deliver a successful Regulator of Social Housing inspection and demonstrates good progress against the regulatory standardsImprovement demonstrated through live compliance dashboard, strengthened governance reporting, improved data quality, and delivery of a rolling programme of stock condition surveys that inform prioritised investment decisionsRegular internal audits, tenant engagement feedback, and mock inspection activity, evidencing that the consumer and economic standards are increasingly embedded in practice	Ongoing

Work programmes to make progress towards the target and agreed trajectory of all homes meeting the Decent Homes standard by 2032	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trajectory the Council has set is met consistently and commissioner judgement that progress will sustain 	Ongoing
--	--	---------

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Effective management of the Council’s housing stock by a dedicated, permanently staffed and appropriately skilled housing directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent appointments competed and turnover, vacancies and interim staff levels at industry norms Improvement driven by regular measuring of performance against targets and TSMs Sustaining lower levels of complaints and Housing Ombudsman cases Plans in place for responding to new legislation (i.e. new regs on damp and mould) 	Q4 2028
Annually reviewed Housing Revenue Account Business Plans 2026, 2027 and 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent progress against agreed milestones and KPIs in performance reporting Low levels of variance between forecast and actual HRA revenue and capital expenditure Delivery in line with the acquisition strategy and scope and timeliness of asset investment programmes aligned to Business Plan assumptions Risks recorded, reviewed, and updated in the risk register and managed appropriately External and internal assurance outcomes (e.g. audit findings, regulatory feedback) 	Annual reviews in Q1 2027 and Q1 2028
Repairs and Maintenance and Major Works Contracts to deliver services in line with legislative and regulatory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilisation is achieved on time and contracts go live without critical service disruption Core KPIs are achieved by contractors (e.g. appointments kept, completion times) Repairs/Major works completed to specification with evidence of customer satisfaction Evidence that customer feedback is being used to inform services and contract management and contract performance reviews are held and outcomes are positive Low number of contract risks and issue requiring senior intervention Major works projects are delivered within approved budget and programme 	Q4 2028
Effective homelessness and rough sleeping services delivered in full compliance with statutory duties and legislative requirements and that prioritise prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained evidence of delivery against the Council’s plans on homelessness set out in the IRP Positive findings from internal audit, peer review, or external inspection relating to homelessness duties 	Q4 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Work programmes to allow it to comply with legislative requirements to ensure that families with children and pregnant women are not placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for longer than six weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained evidence of delivery against the Council’s plans on reducing number of families with children and pregnant women placed in B&B accommodation towards zero Internal audit or management assurance confirming compliance with legislation Working collaboratively with MHCLG and with partners to achieve agreed targets 	Q3 2028
Collaborative work with public, private, and third-sector partners to increase the supply of affordable housing,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's delivery against its plans for expanding affordable housing in the City Evidence of the Council using all available levers to maximise delivery and meet identified housing need 	Q4 2028

Priority Outcome 9: Waste Services and Street Scene

What outcome needs to be achieved?

Waste, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance services are transformed to operate efficiently and effectively. They use technology to drive performance, meet recognised industry standards, deliver high levels of customer satisfaction and are services that everyone can be proud of.

What progress has been made to date?

Despite the ongoing waste dispute, there has been significant progress on service transformation through a comprehensive service review, staffing redesign, new routes and performance targets and investment in new vehicles, containers and IT systems. The Council are also developing a reintegration plan for the Waste service for when the dispute comes to an end.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) Delivery of the Waste Transformation Plan is delayed or incomplete resulting in a loss of resident trust and engagement, particularly in food waste participation and wider recycling behaviours, which could negatively impact recycling performance, statutory environmental targets and collection/disposal costs
- (2) The required increases in waste productivity, set more in line with industrial norms and are not sustained or further improved, due to workforce pressures, operational constraints, or insufficient commitment to further improve service delivery, leading to declining efficiency, increased costs, and reduced value for money
- (3) The Transformation Plans for street cleansing and grounds maintenance are not agreed, adequately resourced, or restructuring the services to support the delivery of the new operating model and service improvement are not delivered within agreed timescales, due to competing priorities or funding and capacity constraints, resulting in inconsistent service standards, reputational damage, and reduced resident satisfaction

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
An agreed plan to resolve the waste dispute	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Council explores all available lawful and affordable options for resolutionIf resolution is not possible before the waste service transformation begins, the Council continues to review and adapt to ensure they respond to emerging risks and deliver the Cabinet agreed Transformation Plan outcomesUpon resolution, the Council successfully reintroduces the workforce within the transformed service through onboarding, training, wellbeing support and clear performance and behaviour expectations	Transformation from Q2 2026 into 2027 Dispute resolution when possible
Its transformation plans for waste are in full compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Services are redesigned, mobilised, and embedded to operate safely, efficiently, and to recognised industry standards with improved workforce capabilityDelivery against the Council’s IRP plans on (1) collection rates, (2) household participation and (3) productivity and route redesignImproved resident awareness and satisfaction with waste, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance services, including reduction in enquiries and avoidable complaintsBudgeted financial savings are delivered, and the longer-term financial viability of waste and fleet services is establishedDevelopment of an updated Waste StrategyData is effectively used to enhance and optimise service delivery	Q2 2026 to begin; Q1 2027 for conclusion
Its transformation plans for street cleansing and grounds maintenance services are in full compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Services are redesigned, mobilised, and embedded to operate safely, efficiently, and to recognised industry standards with improved workforce capabilityData is effectively used to enhance and optimise service delivery	To be agreed

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A workforce strategy and recruitment and development of a predominantly permanent workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Percentage of workforce on permanent contracts, time to recruit to key frontline and management roles and vacancy and retention rates in priority servicesSustained evidence of good service management including, completion of training, number of reportable health and safety incidents and absence ratesConsistent training for managers and staffRobust health and safety arrangementsEffective trade union relationsCustomer satisfaction linked to workforce performance	Q4 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Strong governance and mature strategic plans for the future operation of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustained evidence of continuous improvement across the service and that transformation is an embedded way of working within the serviceRobust plans are developed ahead of time for longer term requirements after the Veolia contract ends in 2034	Q1 2028

Priority Outcome 10: Regeneration

What outcome needs to be achieved?

The Council’s approach to regeneration operates effectively with programmes routinely achieving strategic objectives. Schemes are delivered on time and within budget.

What progress has been made to date?

The Council is making progress addressing historic issues with schemes such as Paradise Circus. A new strategic approach is being developed that involves closer working with regional partners including the Mayor. Progress is also being made with some of the foundations such as ensuring business cases are robust.

What are the main risks commissioners are still concerned about?

- (1) The volume and scale of regeneration schemes mean without effective governance, management and resourcing they will be difficult for the Council to deliver
- (2) The Council finds it difficult to deliver the required cultural change and introduce new technical skills to staff

Foundations fixed: To be confident the core problems that resulted in intervention have been fixed, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A strategic approach to regeneration that is clearly understood across the Council and by key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Internal stakeholders understand the approach to regenerationNew working practices are in place within the Council	Q3 2026
Resolutions to its historic issues with regeneration schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Paradise joint venture issues are resolved and lessons learnedThe Smithfield full business case is robust, meets strategic objectives and is approved by CabinetIssues with housing regeneration schemes, including Ladywood and Druids Heath, are resolved and lessons learnedThe Council ensures it has appropriate capacity and capability to deliver schemes including project management and commercial skillsThere is a joined-up approach across the Council to regeneration, and the Council actively considers the financial impact of regeneration models such as Investment zones and Mayoral development corporations	Q3 2026
The remaining delivery of its in flight schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schemes are completed on time and within budget and meet scheme objectives	Q4 2026

Delivering best value and functioning properly: To be confident the Council is meeting its Best Value Duty and functioning as a core city authority would be expected to function, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
A new partnership approach to regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Council shows sustained evidence of effective management and governance of its contributions to schemes and joint ventures, inc. Identifying and managing riskSchemes are delivered in line with finance business case objectives	Q4 2028

Sustaining and continuously improving: To be confident the changes are being sustained and the Council is continuously improving, commissioners will need to be assured on the following:

The Council puts in place and demonstrates effective operation of:	What will commissioners consider in making an assessment of confidence?	Assurance Date
Ambitious regeneration plans and delivery of financially sustainable programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council can demonstrate that it is achieving scheme objectives and has also made a meaningful difference in terms of local economic indicators• The Council has a reputation as a reliable partner from both other governmental bodies and the private sector• There is good progress on major schemes such as Druids Heath, Ladywood, Smithfield and Paradise Circus• The Council achievable pipeline for future major regeneration schemes	Q3 2028