



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Mayor Chris Cooke
c/o Democratic Services
Town Hall
Middlesbrough
TS1 9FX

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government

Department for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
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Dear Mayor Cooke

I wish to inform you that the Department will issue a revised 'Best Value Notice' ('Notice') to Middlesbrough Council, for a further six months. This is in response to the need for continuing reassurance on the council's capacity to transform at sufficient pace, to ensure you meet your Best Value duties and that you continue to progress actions necessary to rectify the serious concerns highlighted by the external auditor, published in July 2022, around governance arrangements, and cultural and governance issues further investigated in the CIPFA review published in September 2022.

The revised Notice will be published on gov.uk today.

This revised Notice is a formal notification that my department has ongoing concerns regarding your authority and is a request that your authority continues to engage with the Department to provide assurance of Best Value.

The original Notice was issued in January 2023. Since then, your Council has worked well with the Department and has set out and implemented a range of improvement measures to begin to effectively address the identified concerns. We thank the Council for this work. We are also aware that more work is still to be embedded to ensure sustained and material improvements particularly in relation to financial sustainability, delivery of transformation and effectively implementing new strategies to embed positive cultures.

This revised Best Value Notice is intended to continue to support the Council to develop robust and comprehensive improvement plan and to enact those plans, at pace.

This revised Notice will remain in place for 6 months, after which time, should the Department deem it necessary to continue to seek assurance through such a Notice, the Notice will be reissued. The Notice may be withdrawn or escalated at any point based on the available evidence. If the council's Independent Improvement Board and external auditor recommendations are not met in full, with necessary improvements delivered at sufficient pace then the Department will consider whether statutory intervention is needed.

As Mayor, you will be more than aware of the challenges facing Middlesbrough Council and the need to demonstrate progress on those challenges. Your role in the improvement journey

in Middlesbrough is essential and I look forward to seeing progress in the coming months ahead.

Yours sincerely


SIMON HOARE MP

Minister for Local Government