



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Lee Rowley MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Local Government and Building Safety
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

15 August 2023

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 August 2023. I would like place on record how much we appreciate and value the collaborative working with central government and the resulting ability for us to continue delivering our services and support our local economy at this challenging time.

I am grateful for your comments, as well as the support given by CIPFA. I was particularly pleased with the comments of the review that stated that *“The council has grasped the improvement agenda with seriousness and purpose and has made significant progress. The leadership team can point to a range of positive changes, accomplished or imminent.”*

Please be assured, that the council welcomes and fully accepts the recommendations of the Rapid Finance Review carried out by CIPFA in April of this year.

Indeed, the recommended actions are already being implemented as part of our ongoing internal improvement programme (Stability and Growth - which has replaced the Recovery and Stabilisation plan referenced in the document).

The Stability and Growth Programme continues our work in delivering a wide range of operational transformations and efficiencies designed to contribute towards a resilient and sustainable financial future for the council.

We continue to be committed to delivering good services for our residents and support them during these challenging economic times. We consider achieving the best outcomes for our residents and business communities our primary goal and work with our communities, partners and other public sector colleague to ensure and secure better outcomes for the Borough.

However, we would like to take this opportunity to stress the very real challenges we face in doing this against a backdrop of the continuing cost of living challenges for our residents. It is worth noting, that the original capitalisation direction was given partly as a consequence of the increased cost of homelessness. These pressures relating to homelessness have not declined, and similar to some of our neighbouring and coastal authorities, have increased which place real pressures on our services and limited resources.

Whilst, we are taking proactive and positive actions to manage and reduce the increasing demand on our services and resources, we would welcome further discussions with our

Councillor Stephen Holt

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DLUHC colleagues about the council's housing need pressures and concerns going forward at the earliest opportunity to see what support your Department may be able to offer our authority.

I am exceptionally proud of our achievements through the council's Recovery and Stabilisation work and am confident of our ability to continue to deliver good outcome through our Stabilisation and Growth Programme.

I trust that our progress to date in addressing the issues highlighted by our original Assurance Review will give you confidence in our ability and determination to deliver the additional actions arising from this supplementary assessment, and look forward to meeting with your Department to discuss the homelessness and cost of living burdens placed on this authority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Holt', with the initials 'H.H.' written to the right of the main signature.

Stephen Holt
Leader, Eastbourne Borough Council