

Government to set up strategic futures panel to support growth and lead Liverpool to bright future

- Greg Clark 'minded to' take further action after commissioners' report highlights continued problems
- New measures include appointing a Finance Commissioner
- Government to set up Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel chaired by metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, to work alongside the commissioners and help develop plan for revival

Levelling Up Secretary Greg Clark has today (19 August 2022) announced he will set up a strategic advisory panel to develop a long-term plan to guide Liverpool City Council out of the current government intervention and help shape the future of the city, alongside confirming he is "minded to" expand the intervention in the council, in response to the [latest report from commissioners](#).

The Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel will work closely with the City Mayor Joanne Anderson and her Cabinet, and also with the commissioners, to help the council make the right decisions and to develop a plan to give long term confidence in the future of the city, beyond the current temporary intervention. The panel will have a particular focus on driving growth in skills, jobs and opportunities for the city.

The Panel will be chaired by Steve Rotheram, metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region. He will be joined by two of the most experienced people in city leadership, Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive of the City of Manchester from 1999 to 2017, and Baroness Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council from 2015 to 2021. The Panel will be asked to nominate an experienced business leader to join them.

Using their expertise and knowledge, the Panel will work closely with Mayor Joanne Anderson and her Cabinet, members, and wider partners, as well as with the commissioners to support the council to make the right decisions and employ its resources to bring long-term confidence and meet the ambitions of the people of Liverpool.

This further step comes after the report on the council's progress revealed serious shortcomings, particularly around financial management and senior leadership. It also criticised the slow progress made in driving improvement measures that were highlighted in the commissioners' second report.

Four commissioners were sent into Liverpool City Council in June 2021 to oversee the Council's highways, property and regeneration functions. They submitted a second report into the council's progress on 10 June 2022.

Following the report, in addition to setting up the new Strategic Futures

Panel, the Secretary of State is announcing that he is minded to appoint a commissioner to oversee the authority's financial management and to transfer functions associated with governance and financial decision-making to the commissioners together with powers regarding recruitment to improve the running of the organisation.

Levelling Up Secretary Greg Clark said:

I am determined to help do everything I can to help Liverpool come out of the current intervention stronger and able to achieve its ambitions.

The commissioners' report shows that there are still serious shortcomings that need to be sorted out, especially in financial management. But I want this to be a turning point at which the City of Liverpool can see a bright future that lives up to the power this great city embodies.

So following talks I had in person in Liverpool with Mayor Joanne Anderson and Mayor Steve Rotheram in recent weeks, I am appointing a new panel, chaired by that same Mayor Rotheram and supported by some of the wisest, and most experienced people in city leadership, to lead this transition from current interventions to a successful future.

Lead Commissioner Mike Cunningham QPM CBE said:

Our report outlines the challenges the council has faced over the past year in their improvement journey, and highlights some of the areas that need urgent improvement. We welcome the Secretary of State's decision to expand the directions, and the creation of the Strategic Futures Panel. We have confidence that the council can now address these challenges.

Liverpool City Council and other interested parties will have until 2 September to provide representations on these proposed intervention measures.

On 10 June 2021, the government intervened in Liverpool City Council, appointing four commissioners to oversee the councils' highways, property and regeneration functions of the council at the request of the former Secretary of State.

They are:

- Mike Cunningham QPM CBE (Lead Commissioner) – Mike has been involved in

policing for more than 30 years, most recently as Chief Executive of the College of Policing from 2018 – 2020, the standards setting body for policing in England and Wales. Formerly one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, inspecting forces in the north of England and Northern Ireland, and the national lead inspector for the development and implementation of inspections into police efficiency, legitimacy and leadership, and Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police.

- Joanna Killian (Local Government Improvement Commissioner) – Joanna has more than 30 years of experience in the public sector delivering transformational change and service improvement. Since March 2018 she has been Chief Executive of Surrey County Council. Prior to this Joanna worked at KPMG and was also Chief Executive of Essex County Council for 9 years.
- Neil Gibson (Highways Commissioner) – Neil is the former Executive Director of Transport Economy and Environment for Buckinghamshire County Council, where he also acted for a time as Interim Chief Executive. Neil is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation and former President of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.
- Deborah McLaughlin (Regeneration Commissioner) – Deborah has extensive experience working in Regeneration and Housing for over 30 years across public and private sectors, including as Director of Housing at Manchester City Council, regional director for the North West at Homes England and Director of Capita's real estate business. Deborah has also previously worked at the Audit Commission as a Best Value Inspector and auditor.

The Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel

On 19 August, Levelling Up Secretary Greg Clark announced the creation of the Liverpool Strategic Futures Advisory Panel. The Panel will work closely with Mayor Joanne Anderson, her Cabinet, members, and Liverpool City Council's commissioners.

The members of the panel are as follows:

- Mayor Steve Rotheram (Chair) – Mayor Rotheram has been the metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region since May 2017. He will convene and chair this panel as part of his role as Mayor.
- Sir Howard Bernstein – Sir Howard was Chief Executive of Manchester City Council from 1999 to 2017 and is synonymous with success in regeneration, business investment and negotiations on devolved powers.

- Baroness Judith Blake CBE – Baroness Blake was Leader of Leeds City Council from 2015 to 2021 and has experience of leading a major city with a good record of attracting new investment