

Independent reviewers appointed for councils requesting financial support

The government has appointed independent reviewers to undertake assurance reviews into 8 councils, following decisions earlier this year to provide exceptional financial support to these authorities.

The government has formally appointed the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to undertake the financial element of these external assurance reviews.

This follows a decision to provide exceptional financial support packages to 8 councils subject to an external review. These authorities are Bexley, Copeland, Eastbourne, Luton, Peterborough, Redcar & Cleveland, Slough and Wirral councils.

The external assurance reviewers will provide a detailed assessment of each councils' financial position and management, making recommendations where necessary of how each council can take action to improve.

Local Government Minister Luke Hall said:

The government has committed over £35 billion to help councils support their communities and local businesses during the pandemic.

Even with the considerable support already provided there will be individual councils with unique circumstances which, in some cases, has been exacerbated by poor financial management on their part.

These reviewers will ensure each of the councils have plans in place so that they are financially sustainable, minimising the need for further government support and working in the interests of the communities they serve.

The external reviews will provide an assessment of a council's financial management and management of risk; deliverability of savings plans and efficiency in delivering services.

Any recommendations from these reviews will inform the Local Government Secretary's decisions on exceptional financial support for the financial year 2021-22, and any other matters of concern at the authorities.

In the case of Slough, Peterborough and Wirral, the reviews will look at both the councils' financial position and wider governance arrangements, to ensure they can deliver financially sustainable plans for the communities they serve.

This decision has been taken in response to wider concerns at each of the

councils. In the case of Slough this includes recent statutory recommendations issued by external auditors, relating to the council's overall financial sustainability, as well as its arrangements for financial governance and monitoring.

The government is also confirming the appointment of these reviewers today (30 June 2021). Andrew Flockhart has been confirmed as the reviewer for Peterborough Council, Ada Adams for Wirral Council and Jim Taylor for Slough Council. Each has a wealth of experience within local government having worked in a range of senior roles.

See further details on [exceptional financial support agreed or agreed in principle](#).

The confirmed reviewers are:

Peterborough – Andrew Flockhart

Chief Executive of Poole Borough Council from April 2014 to his retirement in March 2019 where he led the council through the Dorset/Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitarisation.

Wirral – Ada Burns

Chief Executive of Darlington Borough Council until 2018 where she played an important role in the development of the Tees Valley Mayoral Combined Authority. She worked in senior roles in London on housing and regeneration for 25 years prior to moving to Darlington.

Slough – Jim Taylor

Chief Executive of Salford City Council for 6 years until his retirement in January 2021. He was interim Chief Executive of Trafford Borough Council from July 2018 to February 2019 and prior to that Chief Executive of Rochdale Borough Council.