



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Housing and Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Gavin Jones
Dr Dave Smith
Thurrock Council Commissioners
By email

6th March 2025

Dear *Gavin & Dave*

I am writing to thank you for your fourth report, which I am publishing today, together with this response. I am pleased to confirm that Dave has been appointed as Managing Director Commissioner until the current Directions expire on 1 September 2025.

I welcome the optimism you report in the progress made by Thurrock to date. It is clear the Council is working hard to meet its Best Value Duty and it is positive to see a corporate plan and conclusion of a governance review, both significant steps forward. However, as you reflect, changes need to be embedded and become part of the Council's business as usual activity. There remains a need for Thurrock to strengthen its collective leadership, aspects of governance and scrutiny, and implement changes to its operating model.

I welcome the steps Thurrock has taken locally to address their financial difficulties and am grateful for your continued work with officials to explore potential long-term options to support the Council to financial sustainability. It is important you continue to work with members to support them to take decisions and provide scrutiny. We have been clear with councils in Greater Essex that Commissioners have a vital role, not only in supporting Thurrock to continue to improve, but also in responding to the invitation to all principal authorities in Greater Essex to provide proposals for local government reorganisation, to ensure that proposals are robust. Given the content of your report, I am copying this response to Council Leaders and Chief Executives across Greater Essex, together with MPs.

With the statutory intervention due to end on 1 September I would like to receive your next report by Easter, which should include your assessment, with evidence, of the extent to which the Best Value Duty is being met. This will allow for a view to be taken on what support, if any, would be most appropriate to provide beyond this date.

I have written to Nicole to express my gratitude for the invaluable support she provided to the Council as Finance Commissioner. Given the ongoing financial challenges, I am minded to appoint a new Finance Commissioner as soon as possible and I am writing to the Council Leader to seek any representation on this proposal. My officials will update you on any appointment I subsequently make. I am also copying this letter to the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

Yours sincerely,

BARONESS TAYLOR OF STEVENAGE
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government