



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

**Lee Rowley MP**  
*Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for  
Local Government and Building Safety*

**Department for Levelling up, Housing and  
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Cllr Kevin Bentley  
Leader  
Essex County Council

5 October 2023

*By email*

Dear Kevin,

As you know, on 7 July 2023 I received the second report from the Thurrock Commissioners on the progress of the intervention in Thurrock. The report highlights some welcome areas of progress, such as in financial leadership and capability, and the production of an enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan. The report and my response will today be published on gov.uk.

As we move from a 'discovery' to a 'transformation' phase, the Secretary of State and I have taken the opportunity to review the intervention approach. We will now move to a model of three standalone Commissioners and allow your Council the opportunity to exit from its formal support role as a corporate body. The support provided by Essex County Council has been invaluable in allowing detailed diagnostic work to be completed on the finance and governance issues at Thurrock Council and in the immediate response to the findings of the Best Value Inspection. This was a significant piece of work and one that Essex stepped up to provide. The Secretary of State and I are extremely grateful for all the work Essex has done as Commissioner, and would like to thank all those involved at the Council.

I would also like to thank you for supporting the appointment of your Chief Executive, Gavin Jones, and your Section 151 Officer, Nicole Wood, as individual Commissioners for the next phase of the intervention at Thurrock Council. The skills and continuity that they both bring to the intervention will be invaluable.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the excellent work that you personally have undertaken in support of elected members in Thurrock. It is clear that the wide range of expertise that you have been able to bring to this intervention has made a real difference.

Yours sincerely,

**LEE ROWLEY MP**  
**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND BUILDING SAFETY**