



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Ms Nicole Wood

By email

Max Soule

*Deputy Director, Local Government
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***Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities***

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Dear Nicole,

THURROCK COUNCIL INTERVENTION

I am writing to let you know that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has nominated you as Finance Commissioner for the purposes of the Directions he made on 16 March 2023 under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999, in relation to Thurrock Council, which updated Directions made on 2 September 2022 in relation to the same authority. I enclose the formal nomination document.

Following the extensive work of Essex County Council as Commissioner, for which we are extremely grateful, Essex will be exiting from their role from 5 October 2023, and you are nominated as Finance Commissioner for the period from 5 October 2023 to 1 September 2025.

As Finance Commissioner you will have the roles and responsibilities set out in the Directions, a copy of which I enclose, along with a copy of the Explanatory Memorandum. Under the Directions, Commissioners will act jointly or severally and are accountable to the Secretary of State in that you have been nominated by him and can have your nomination withdrawn by him. I have also enclosed terms of engagement that you will need to sign and return; your appointment is made on the conditions set out in the terms of engagement.

You will be entitled to a fee for each day you act as Finance Commissioner. You will also be entitled to reasonable expenses. Under the terms of the Directions, it is the Council's responsibility to meet these costs and the Secretary of State has set these fees for you at £1,100 per day. Fees are payable up to a maximum of 150 days per annum. These limits should not be exceeded without prior approval of the Secretary of State. As to reasonable expenses, we would expect these to be in accordance with the rules for senior officers set out in the Council's staff handbook.

I understand you intend to continue your employment as an officer of Essex County Council and you will ensure that transparent arrangements are agreed between Essex County Council and Thurrock Council that allow you to meet your commitments as a Commissioner.

I also understand this will be subject to agreement by the Council in line with the governance arrangements at this Authority given your current statutory role as Section 151 Officer. I expect Essex County Council to ensure robust governance arrangements are in place that support the continued delivery of services at the standard that residents expect and that you will keep these arrangements under review.

In your role as a public appointee, it may be necessary to disclose information on your remuneration as part of annual accounts and you will be required to consent to the disclosure of this information. By accepting this appointment, you will be indicating your consent to this.

The Secretary of State expects you to take an interest in matters across the Council beyond those functions you are exercising, given the importance of ensuring that the Council is delivering best value in all that it does. You will play an important role in informing Ministers' response to the situation in Thurrock.

You are required to exercise care in the use of information that you acquire in the course of your duties and to protect information that is held in confidence. You must declare any personal or business interests which may, or may be perceived to, influence your judgement in performing your functions. These interests include (without limitation), personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and any such interests of your close family members and/or of people living in the same household as you or your close family members.

You are expected to ensure that acceptance of gifts and hospitality can stand up to public scrutiny. Similarly, care should be taken that no extravagance is involved with working lunches and other social occasions.

In your role as a public appointee, you must act appropriately and in accordance with the required standards. You are required to uphold the standards of conduct set out in by the Seven Principles of Public Life (as amended from time to time). You will be required to demonstrate your commitment to the principles and values of public service throughout your appointment.

Your appointment has the status of an office holder and not of an employee. Nothing in this letter shall be construed as, or taken to create, a contract of service or contract for services between yourself and DLUHC, the Crown, or Thurrock Council.

Should you have any queries or issues either now or during the Directions period please contact me in the first instance.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the work you have already undertaken in the intervention in your role as an employee of Essex County Council. We are very grateful for your commitment to taking up this challenge to improve the performance of Thurrock Council as Finance Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,
Max Soule
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship

NOMINATION UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 (DIRECTIONS UNDER SECTION 15(5) AND (6) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 TO THURROCK COUNCIL, 2023)

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in exercise of his powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and in accordance with the Directions to Thurrock Council dated 16 March 2023 nominates Nicole Wood as Finance Commissioner for the period beginning on 5 October 2023 and ending on 1 September 2025 or such time as the Secretary of State determines.