



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities**
2 Marsham Street
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Gavin Jones
Nicole Wood
Dr. Dave Smith
By email only

www.gov.uk/dluhc

7 March 2024

Dear Gavin, Nicole and Dave,

Thank you for your third report of 22 January, which I am publishing today, and your continued work at Thurrock Council. I welcome the continued progress the Council is making since your last report in July. I note that the Council is taking ownership of its recovery, most notably: the adoption of the Enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan; the improvement in the decision making and; engagement from members. It is crucial all members remain focused on the task ahead, to continue to drive and deliver the necessary changes and improvements.

Your report is clear that while good progress is being made, the scale of the challenge facing Thurrock remains substantial. Over the next phase, I agree the Council needs to address the ongoing governance requirements and ensure it has agreed underpinning plans to implement its recovery. This will include a corporate plan and operating model. I know that the work on governance is broad and being delivered at different speeds. The upcoming governance review you are looking to commission in March will look at how this work can be accelerated. I need to see progress on this at the time of your next report.

There are significant financial choices for the Council ahead. I am pleased to see that Full Council made vital decisions in passing the 2024/25 budget on 28 February. Difficult choices however remain, including how to implement and deliver on these savings over the year. In your report, you reference that it is impossible at this stage to conclude that "Thurrock has a route to full financial sustainability by the end of the Direction period, without further Government support". I ask that you continue to work with my officials to understand the Council's debt and deficit position and to explore potential long-term options to support the Council to financial sustainability.

Thank you again for the important work you are doing, and the Secretary of State and I look forward to receiving your fourth report. I am copying this letter to the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

SIMON HOARE MP
Minister for Local Government