

Thurrock Council, Civic Offices
New Road, Grays
RM17 6SL

01 July 2025

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister for Local Government and English Devolution
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

By email.

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 June regarding the Commissioners' fifth report. On behalf of the council, I want to express our gratitude for the thanks and recognition you rightly show to the Members and officers who continue to work hard on our improvement. As we know and the report clearly states, while significant improvements have been made in many areas – which we are rightly proud of – there remains a long way to go and specific areas which require renewed focus.

The Commissioners' assessment is one we recognise and support entirely. As I stated when I became Leader of the Council, my priority is to steer the organisation to achieve meaningful transformation into a council which delivers sustainable services and meets the budget challenges we face. The Commissioner's report provides a detailed and helpful analysis of priority areas and gives me confidence that our officers have identified the correct areas of focus to meet our Best Value Duty.

I welcome the intervention package and new Directions you have set out. I am committed to delivering the operating model that will transform us and ensure we are ready and in the best shape for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

Extending the duration of the intervention to April 2028 to align with the timescales of Local Government Reorganisation is welcomed. I am particularly encouraged that there will be a review in summer 2026 to consider the arrangements to ensure a level of oversight consistent with the continued improvements we expect to have achieved by then. It is my firm expectation that we will continue to have made significant and evidential progress against the priority areas set out.

As we enter the next phase of the intervention with new Directions, I am keen to work collectively with Commissioners and your officials to develop and agree progress milestones. A clear critical path for the council's improvement should form the basis for considerations around the model of intervention such as the appointment of a Chief Executive and, when appropriate, the transfer of powers back to the council.

To ensure our full focus is aligned to achieving these milestones, the associated priorities and deliverables will be included in our refreshed Corporate Plan as set out in the Directions. This refresh is currently underway and progress will be monitored through our corporate performance reporting to Members and Commissioners.

I fully appreciate the basis upon which Directions relating to the Best Value Duty are produced and the need for consistency across all authorities in intervention. However, given the plan to integrate and embed our continued recovery and continuous improvement into our Corporate Plan, I would ask that language in the Directions is considered in that context to prevent any misunderstanding that two distinct plans will remain. This will ensure there is clarity for the council leadership through a single document.

I look forward to receiving your final decision on the intervention package and continuing our positive working relationship with Commissioners, you and your officials.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynn Worrall', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Lynn Worrall
Leader of Thurrock Council