



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Denise Murray
By email

James Blythe
*Deputy Director, Local Government
Stewardship and Interventions*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities &
Local Government**
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17 July 2025

Dear Denise,

I am writing to you to confirm that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has, extended your nomination as Finance Commissioner for the purpose of the Directions made on 17 July 2025 under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999, in relation to Thurrock Council. These Directions extend the intervention until 30 April 2028, as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement made today. Ministers intend to review the proposed intervention arrangements in Summer 2026. These Directions replace the Directions issued on 2 September 2022 (updated on 16 March 2023) with immediate effect and will be published alongside the Explanatory Memorandum on gov.uk.

Ministers are very grateful for the rigour and dedication that you have brought to your role supporting Thurrock Council since you were appointed on 27 March 2025. Whilst many challenges remain, the progress made to date by the Council would not have been possible without the oversight and direction provided by you and your fellow Commissioners.

As Finance Commissioner you will have the roles and responsibilities set out in the new Directions, a copy of which I enclose, along with a copy of the Explanatory Memorandum. Alongside this, as Finance Commissioner, you will work in close partnership with the Council during the consultation on proposals for unitary local government and the implementation of any such proposals later agreed upon. Under the Directions, Commissioners will act jointly or severally and are accountable to the Secretary of State, in that you have been nominated by them and can have your nomination withdrawn by them. 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.

Arrangements for your reasonable expenses continue unchanged and you will continue to be entitled to a fee for each day you act as Finance Commissioner. The Secretary of State has set these fees at £1,100 per day. Fees will be payable to you 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 again expect

these to be in accordance with these rules for senior officers set out in the Council's staff handbook.

In your role as 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 continue to take an interest in matters across the Council, beyond those functions Commissioners are exercising, given the importance of ensuring that the Council is delivering best value in all that it does. You will continue to play an important role in informing Ministers' response to the situation in Thurrock, including what the right medium to long term plan might be for Thurrock given the scale of the financial and wider challenges facing the Council.

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 judgements in performing your functions. These interests include (without limitation), personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and, any such interest of your close family members and/or of people living in the same household as you or as 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 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 MHCLG, 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 assisting in this intervention. We are very grateful for your continued commitment to work with the Council in partnership to support focus on recovery and reform.

Yours sincerely,

James Blythe
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship and Interventions

NOMINATION UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 (DIRECTIONS UNDER SECTION 15(5) AND (6) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 TO THURROCK COUNCIL, 2025)

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and in accordance with the Directions to Thurrock Council dated 17 July 2025 nominates Denise Murray as Finance Commissioner for the period beginning on 17 July 2025 and ending on 30 April 2028 or such time as the Secretary of State determines.