

Thurrock Council Commissioners

Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL
commissioners@thurrock.gov.uk

Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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Dear Secretary of State,

Welcome to your new role at MHCLG. Following our last report, the previous Minister of State announced an extension to the statutory intervention at Thurrock Council to 30 April 2028, issued new Directions and outlined plans to review these arrangements by Summer 2026. We look forward to engaging closely with you and your Ministerial team on the intervention at Thurrock Council throughout this next phase.

This report updates you on Thurrock Council's progress over the past six months and includes an appendix which summarises recent progress against the revised Directions.

Executive summary

Our last report dated 1 May 2025 acknowledged the significant progress made by the Council since the intervention began but noted that "there are still too many areas of fragility in the Council's recovery and still some major areas of work yet to be done".

Since our last report, the Council has continued to make positive changes. Our previous report noted the Council's achievement in being rated as "outstanding" across all areas in a recent Ofsted inspection of their Children's services. In August, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated Thurrock's Adult Social Care services as "good". This is another hugely positive result for the Council and demonstrates that despite their financial pressures, they have continued to deliver quality services for their residents.

One of the key areas of progress that Commissioners wanted to see from the organisation was its development of a Council-wide transformation roadmap and it is pleasing to report that in conjunction with a strategic partner, there has been considerable progress in this area. Delivery of the transformation agenda will stretch organisational capacity yet further and it will be important that Members and officers are able to demonstrate the leadership capacity to balance implementation of this roadmap with its other major transformation programmes of local government reorganisation and devolution. Furthermore, the Council will need to ensure that it has access to both capacity and capability across and throughout the organisation to meet these challenges.

In May of this year, the Administration had a change of Leader. The transition was smooth and the focus on recovery has continued with considerable Member commitment. There is also a sense of re-invigoration and energy within the political leadership.

The Council continues to retain a tight grip on its finances, both in year and in the medium term. However, the capacity of the finance team remains limited and to a degree, progress is

inhibited by some systems and processes that are still not fit for purpose, which the Council needs to address. The Council also continues to prioritise making the required savings and taking the other necessary steps to reduce its level of debt. Conversations with Government continue and it is vital that the Council develops an agreed understanding about a sustainable level of debt that it could hold.

There is increasing cohesiveness within the Senior Leadership Team, and this will help the Council deal with some remaining issues of organisational fragility, as identified in our previous report. Having a united, collaborative Senior Leadership Team will also enable a smooth transition away from the current arrangements to a Chief Executive model, as our conclusion outlines, but only if a successful recruitment process takes place and a suitable candidate can be identified. Senior officers will need to ensure they continue to support and challenge each other constructively as they transform the Council and as they go through the next phase of their improvement journey.

Progress since previous report

Leadership and culture

There has been a change in leadership since our last report, with Cllr Lynn Worrall now leading the Council. The new Leader and Cabinet have continued to own the recovery agenda and drive forward improvement, demonstrated by their collective support of the new Corporate and Improvement Plan which they endorsed in September before it was agreed at Full Council in October. The Cabinet is building on previous administrations' work to tackle the issues of poor performance of the past, but this is now accompanied by a shift in tone and a more encouraging, optimistic and hopeful narrative about the organisation and its future. However, the administration's ability and willingness to take tough and, at times, unpopular decisions will be tested throughout the upcoming budget discussions and the implementation of the transformation roadmap.

There are mixed levels of experience across the Cabinet, which are being addressed, and there is more to do to ensure Cabinet Members understand the strategic, leadership role they now have in addition to their role representing their ward. Portfolio Holders have been working closely with Executive Directors to provide strategy and direction on their areas of responsibility, however senior officers can continue to support this relationship by ensuring their Portfolio Holders are brought into discussions early, supporting the necessary cultural shift towards ensuring the organisation is member-led. Cabinet Members also need to ensure that they are providing the right balance between support and challenge to their senior officers.

The political leadership is now starting to look beyond the immediate term, ensuring Portfolio Holders set longer-term priorities for the organisation to deliver. Plans are in place for Cabinet Members and the Senior Leadership Team to spend time together collaborating on setting and implementing these strategic priorities. External political advisors are also being included to provide challenge and support in this process. We would encourage these groups to regularly make time for these strategic discussions, both together and as separate cohorts, as these play a key role in strengthening relationships, building trust within teams and ensuring collaboration between members and officers.

There is a strengthened leadership cohort across the Council, as the Senior Leadership Team and Assistant Directors have been operating effectively together across the organisation on major cross-cutting issues including the Council's transformation roadmap. This work has been taken forward collectively with named owners for specific workstreams to ensure accountability for delivery. Leadership development work is also ongoing with the top three tiers of the organisation facilitated by an external provider. This has improved communications

with and between senior leaders, supported greater cross-council collaboration, empowered leaders to have strategic discussions about their priorities as a group and further embeds the organisational culture of learning, development and a one council approach.

Our last report noted that further discovery work was taking place in housing and homelessness, including an external Local Government Association peer review to identify required improvements in Thurrock's social housing service. Independent reviews have now been completed to assess the current state of these services and clear actions for improvement have been identified as a result. It is important the Council prioritises delivering on these recommendations, to ensure they are focused on the right activity within the services, rebalancing resources accordingly and assessing compliance with regulations to help them prepare for any upcoming inspections.

We now increasingly see examples like this of the Council inviting external challenge and third party scrutiny, welcoming independent reviews and assessments and developing action plans based on the recommendations. Further examples include the Council welcoming a review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to reflect on the first year of its new Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) arrangements and identifying a need to amend the arrangements by splitting the work of the People O&S committee into two committees to more effectively manage the workload. There has also been engagement with the Planning Advisory Service in a two stage review of the planning service which we have referred to in previous reports.

We are further encouraged that the findings of these reviews are regularly being discussed publicly at relevant Council Committees, such as the recent O&S Committee item on the deep dive into the homelessness service and all internal audit reports now being shared with Audit Committee. This demonstrates a maturing level of openness and transparency in the organisation, far from the culture described in the Best Value Inspection report where bad news would be concealed and public scrutiny would be avoided.

Staff engagement and internal communications also continue to mature. All-staff briefings now take place monthly, either in person or virtually, with key organisational updates shared by senior leaders or Cabinet Members. Approximately 400-500 staff regularly join these sessions and officers are encouraged to ask questions of the leadership team on a variety of topics, who answer openly and honestly. As the Council implements its multiple transformation programmes over the coming months, maintaining these regular staff engagement opportunities and ensuring robust internal communications will continue to be a priority.

The Council has also taken steps to increase its engagement with residents and communities. Recent activity, for example, includes three "Ask the council!" public engagement events, a survey to understand local views on waste and recycling and communications focused on explaining and engaging residents on devolution and local government reorganisation. Thurrock has also recently concluded its first residents' survey since the intervention began. The survey had over 1,200 respondents and the findings are due to be shared with members imminently. The Council will be further changing how it works with communities once it implements its locality model as part of its new organisational operating model, and conversations have already started in certain parts of the borough for partners to work together using this place-based approach. The positive experience from the recent Communities in Action pilot in Chadwell St Mary provided specific benefits to this particular community and has also helped to inform the Council's plans as it implements this new cross-council approach to local service delivery.

Transformation

The Council has been working effectively with an external strategic partner to produce a detailed, strategic transformation roadmap. In our previous report, we expressed some concern that sufficient progress had not yet been made on transformation, however, there has been significant progress made on this over the summer months, as the pace of this work has increased considerably. The Council is focusing resources on this activity to meet the agreed timelines and rightfully are prioritising this activity until further decisions are made on local government reorganisation. The senior leaders involved in this activity, particularly at the Assistant Director level, have demonstrated effective cross-council working, resilience and commitment to owning elements of this work. There remains a fragility in some of the enabling and support functions to meet the ambitious but necessary scale of transformational change. The Council is aware of these risks and it will require clear action to resolve issues of capacity and capability.

Services and corporate teams have been working together to demonstrate a co-ordinated, one council approach to transformation and the delivery of the associated savings. Business cases for each of the main pillars of work are currently in development and are due to be completed in time for this to feed into the budget setting process for 2026/27. Regular, meaningful engagement with all 49 members and staff across the organisation will be vital once this work moves into its next phase. The Leader and Cabinet members will need to be kept fully informed on progress to ensure that they can speak to the changes publicly and hold their senior officers to account on delivery.

We will be able to update on the deliverability of each of the workstreams and the progress of implementation in future reports but the challenge for the Council will be in ensuring they achieve the tangible benefits in delivering these plans. The scale of the challenge ahead will require senior leaders to work closely together as a leadership group to have the confidence in themselves that they can deliver this transformation and manage the inevitable stresses and strains that will occur throughout implementation, particularly when combined with the Council's other significant transformation programmes.

Finance

The Council has improved its financial monitoring and transparency in reporting to ensure that officers and members have a clear understanding of the Council's financial challenges and a collectively agreed approach to addressing these. The revenue budget for 2025/26 is being well managed with an underspend forecasted on the approved budget, which could provide an opportunity to reduce debt or where appropriate allocate resources for capacity building and to enable transformation.

The Council has recently established a Capital Board, attended by both Members and officers. The Board aims to provide a more robust governance and oversight framework, ensure capital expenditure is strategically aligned, affordable, prudent and sustainable, and projects are delivered on time and within budget.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is currently forecasting a budget gap of £41m for the Council to return to an operational surplus position (excluding debt servicing costs) over the period of the plan. The Council is putting in place a programme of work including transformation proposals, to deliver savings sufficient to bridge this budget gap and deliver operational balance over the period. The refreshed MTFS will be presented to the December Cabinet meeting. The Council is aware of the further work it needs to do in developing a robust and affordable 30-year business plan, to ensure the long-term financial viability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The plan will seek to balance income and expenditure, managing

risks and providing a framework for strategic decision-making regarding regulatory requirements and large-scale investments that meets both the needs of residents and the Council's housing ambition for the borough.

The resources, capacity and capability across key financial services remains a significant vulnerability for the Council. Although significant recruitment has taken place, there has been turnover of staff and there are still 10 roles occupied by interim staff across financial services. Current market conditions are increasing the difficulty in sourcing sufficient quality of staff, and this presents a risk to the Council as it recovers. Mitigations are in place to address these challenges with interim staff being invited to move to fixed term contracts, but balancing improvement and transformation activity with necessary business-as-usual work adds further capacity and capability challenges to already stretched teams.

Meeting deadlines and providing timely reports is crucial for regulatory compliance, ensures the Council's smooth operation and allows for informed decision-making. Across financial services, there is a heavy reliance on a small number of staff who are juggling several competing priorities. This, alongside some residual weaknesses in processes and systems, have contributed to reporting deadlines not being met. The Council will need to determine what steps need to be taken to address the barriers to success and ensure adherence to cooperatively agreed standards.

The Council is robustly delivering its divestment strategy, asset disposal program and pursuing the recovery of funds through litigation, all of which will contribute to a reduction in the level of its debt and associated revenue budget pressure. To identify more opportunities for sales, it is also reviewing its property pipeline and exploring ways to optimize the use of remaining assets, with the goal of meeting the targets set in its MTFS.

It is essential that the Council now prioritises doing further work on benchmarking and comparisons with other authorities to both identify opportunities for service review and demonstrate optimal operation. This should be a fundamental element of the Council's MTFS refresh and will also enable the Council to have an agreed understanding of the level of debt that it can sustainably hold. As the Council continues to engage with Government officials on its financial position and debt reduction strategy, having an evidence based view of the level of debt that Thurrock can sustain as an individual entity will help to guide the Council's approach to these conversations and will strengthen the Council's position during ongoing discussions throughout the local government reorganisation process and the Government's commitment to provide some form of debt support ahead of reorganisation.

Audit and Risk Management

The Council will be subject to its first audit, after a history of disclaimed accounts, and the external auditor will seek to obtain sufficient evidence to have assurance over the Council's 2024/25 in year transactions and most closing balances. In preparation the Council should conduct an audit readiness assessment, which involves checking its compliance, system controls, documentation, policies and processes before the audit begins. The Council's preparation will help identify and address capacity gaps and weaknesses, ensuring a smoother and more successful audit process.

The Internal Audit function is on an improvement trajectory. There is an approved audit plan in place, which is being effectively delivered. There are still capacity constraints within the Counter Fraud and Investigation function of the service, which will need to be resolved to strengthen the Council's ability to adequately prevent and detect fraud, punish offenders and recover losses.

The Council's updated Risk Management Strategy and subsequently developed corporate risk register was approved by Cabinet in May 2025 and is part of a plan to improve risk maturity from 'Risk Aware' to 'Risk Managed'. However, there is currently a lack of evidence of active risk management and reporting, indicating the need for a more active risk management approach to strengthen and embed the processes in all aspects of the Council's operations, with regular reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Audit Committee as part of the oversight framework.

Governance

Work continues on revising the constitution. Progress has been made on updating particular sections, but vital elements of the constitution are still to be updated, and the ongoing delays could risk destabilising progress. The most pressing area that remains outstanding is revising the financial regulations and the scheme of delegation. This work needs to continue at pace so the Council has a fully updated constitution with strengthened internal controls. This will need to be completed ahead of the start of the next municipal year.

The new O&S arrangements have been operating effectively. Chairs are managing meetings well and have taken part in training to support them in their roles. There is ongoing work to ensure timely reports, and collaborative engagement between Chairs, Executive Directors and Portfolio Holders ahead of Committee meetings. Work is ongoing to ensure the work programme is more strategic and is co-produced by Members and officers. There is continued progress in the relationship between Cabinet and O&S, as Cabinet Members and senior officers attend meetings and engage well with committee members. Committee Chairs are also regularly bringing reports or briefing notes to Cabinet meetings with 12 across 2024/25 and 7 reports to date in the current municipal year. We hope to see this positive engagement continue. The next step for scrutiny is to consider the organisation's priorities set out by the administration so that they are scrutinising priority areas for residents in a more systemic way.

The Council's draft Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 went to the Audit Committee over the Summer. The document outlines the improvements made to date on governance and transparently acknowledges further areas for improvement. The authority has also openly reflected on where lessons have been learned and issues rectified, using the example of when there had been "some slippage in the quality and timeliness of reporting" and they had developed an action plan to address this. The high quality of the Annual Governance Statement document itself and the way in which it has been produced and shared with officers, members and the public is evidence of the shift in how seriously the Council now values having rigorous governance processes in place, especially since the statements for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were only finalised at the end of 2024.

A greater corporate coherence is required on asset disposals, facilitated by a strengthened approach to internal governance. This is particularly crucial at this point in time when the Council is considering its approach for its remaining assets, including more operational or more contentious assets, therefore it is vital to ensure that teams, services and members are all engaged on this at an appropriate time in the process.

Priority areas of focus for the next period

The Council has a strong understanding and awareness of the remaining improvement work that it needs to achieve, and the new Corporate and Improvement Plan embeds this into the Council's wider priorities and performance management reporting. The revised Directions also further focus this activity.

As we consider the future trajectory of the intervention and look to reviewing the current arrangements, there are some priority areas that we would encourage the Council to focus on over the next period. These are areas where we want to be assured that the Council has a plan and line of sight to achieving the following:

- 1) Transformation benefits that are sufficiently defined to support the production of the MTFs and successfully achieve the required financial savings, and delivery plans developed and managed by all relevant departments across the Council.
- 2) The revised constitution, financial regulations, and scheme of delegation are all agreed and finalised by the start of the new municipal year.
- 3) Continued delivery of the Council's debt reduction strategy and an agreed understanding of the level of retained debt that the Council can sustainably hold.
- 4) Continued embedding of improvements across the system of internal controls, and action plans in place to ensure compliance with relevant regulatory requirements and standards.
- 5) An effective model of individual performance management agreed and allied with the Council's Corporate and Improvement Plan, service plans and Performance Management and Assurance Framework.
- 6) An embedded programme of meaningful engagement with staff, residents and partners to rebuild trust and confidence in the Council, further building on the positive work to date.

Conclusions and recommendations

In our previous report, we reflected that at some point it may be appropriate for the Council to have the opportunity to recruit their own full time Chief Executive. The Managing Director Commissioner has been in place since March 2023 and since that time, the Council has made improvements at pace and the organisation is no longer in the state of crisis that we saw in the earlier years of the intervention. While improvements remain fragile and will take time to be embedded fully, the political and managerial leadership are all focused on delivering the Council's next phase of its improvement journey and relationships within and between these groups are becoming more collaborative, effective and constructive. Members and officers respond and react to emerging issues appropriately and prioritise work and resources accordingly. The Council has been moving through discovery and recovery phases of the intervention and is now firmly within its transformation phase, although it is possible that more areas for improvement will be unearthed as the organisation evolves.

The Council's political leadership has expressed the view that they feel ready to be given the opportunity to appoint their own Chief Executive. On the condition that a suitable, experienced Chief Executive can be found through an open recruitment process, we would be supportive of this approach, as our position is that the Council has made enough progress and no longer requires the most intensive form of intervention that having a Managing Director Commissioner represents. However, following our last report, we remain of the view that wider commissioner arrangements remain necessary in Thurrock and should be considered again depending on the outcome of any recruitment process.

We recognise that all-out elections and local government reorganisation on the horizon may affect the field of applicants for the Chief Executive role. However we feel assured that the political and managerial leadership have now demonstrated sufficient evidence that they would operate effectively within a traditional Chief Executive model, particularly as improvement activity and transformation is being driven forward by officers across the strengthened leadership cohort. Suitable candidates for the Chief Executive role will need to

demonstrate a commitment to continue to drive forward the Council's improvement and implement the required transformation plans and we would also ensure that we are involved in the recruitment process.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this report in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Gavin Jones
Lead Commissioner

Dr Dave Smith
Managing Director Commissioner

Denise Murray FCCA
Finance Commissioner

Appendix 1 - Progress against July 2025 Directions

Directions	Progress
1a. Ensure compliance with all relevant rules, guidelines and codes relating to the financial management of the Authority.	<p>The Council has been working tirelessly to improve financial management and reporting, and they continue to learn lessons and refine the process for their quarterly reporting. There is more to do to ensure regulatory compliance but in recent months the Council has been working on a self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code. The first draft of this assessment fed into a refreshed finance improvement plan and will be reviewed again to ensure it provides an accurate assessment of the Council's position and provides assurance that the organisation has clear action plans in place to ensure compliance with the code.</p>
b. Strengthen the Authority's system of internal controls, notably risk management and internal audit, and embed governance and culture improvements across the organisation.	<p>The Council continues to take steps to strengthen and embed risk management across the organisation. An updated Risk Management Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2025 and it is expected that the Corporate Risk Register will be reviewed at least monthly and reported quarterly to Audit Committee. The Council is not yet into a regular rhythm of updating this for consideration by the Senior Leadership Team and members. This will need to be a priority along with further risk management training for members and officers.</p> <p>Improvements also continue to be made across the Internal Audit function. Of the 20 audits scheduled in the 2025/26 audit plan, in July it was reported that 50% of the audits had been completed with another 25% in progress. Management actions from reports are all tracked and all reports are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Audit Committee. The next priority for the Council is assessing Internal Audit compliance with the Global Internal Audit Standards, which will include ongoing monitoring, periodic self-assessments, and mandatory external quality assessments. Options for addressing capacity shortfalls and providing longer term service stability for the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud teams will also need to be considered. Regular resource planning is vital across the system of internal controls to ensure the ongoing improvement activity and business-as-usual work can all be effectively delivered.</p> <p>In the covering report, we outline ongoing improvements that continue to be made across both governance and culture. We have confidence that as these new improved processes and systems become routine across the organisation, for example continued all-staff briefings, the performance management framework and regular engagement between committee Chairs, these improvements</p>

		will start to become expected and become part of the organisation's regular way of working. As outlined in its Annual Governance Statement, the Council also has demonstrated that it is willing to learn lessons where things are not working and can adapt accordingly.
c.	Ensure that the Authority has personnel with sufficient capability and capacity including access to appropriate specialist expertise where required, enabled by a strengthened corporate culture, a robust officer structure and an effective framework for performance management across the Authority.	<p>The Council's capacity and capability remains a risk as the organisation is going through multiple significant transformation programmes simultaneously. However, Executive Directors continue to consider the skills and capacity of their teams, restructuring and right-sizing teams where necessary to focus resources on priority work. Work also continues to reduce the unsustainable reliance on interim and agency staff and to make the structures more robust. The Council has also acknowledged where it can benefit from seeking external specialist expertise or third party challenge where necessary, for example by bringing in specialist partners to support with the development of the transformation roadmap or working with the Local Government Association on an independent peer review of social housing.</p> <p>The Council have developed a detailed employee performance management policy, elements of which are due to be introduced in April 2026. Ensuring the changes are clearly communicated to staff, that the process is simple for managers and officers and that senior leaders encourage their teams to engage with the process will be key elements of its success. We are supportive of the plans to ensure that the roll out of this policy will be accompanied by training and development for all managers. The Council must ensure that the phased implementation of this process is delivered at pace to meet their intended timeline of 1 April 2026 or they risk missing the right point in the annual cycle to introduce the new processes. It is vital that a golden thread can be seen running between the Council's priorities, values and plans outlined in its revised Corporate and Improvement Plan and individual objectives through the performance management process.</p>
d.	Define and implement the Authority's proposed operating model. This should be backed by a fully resourced and strategic transformation plan, in line with the council's MTFS, Treasury Management Strategy, and Capital Strategy. The Transformation Plan must incorporate a robust multi-year savings plan, that	The covering report highlights that there has been a significant volume of work done over the summer by the Council's leadership to develop a transformation roadmap. The Council has been working with an external strategic partner to support with this work and members of the Senior Leadership Team and Assistant Directors have clear accountability for delivering specific elements of this work. The roadmap is nearly complete and business cases are currently being finalised for each of the five programmes of work.

	<p>enables financial sustainability and resilience, debt reduction and the delivery of core services and priorities.</p>	<p>A key element of the Council's transformation plan is ensuring that the costs and benefits are sufficiently defined to support the production of the MTFS and successfully achieve the required financial savings, across the period of the plan. All business cases will be subject to the appropriate due diligence, demonstrate Value for Money and ensure this appropriately feeds into the budget setting process.</p>
2.	<p>To develop and maintain a revised Corporate Plan which incorporates and builds upon the enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan and reflects the necessary work remaining to ensure the Authority's compliance with the Best Value Duty.</p>	<p>The new Corporate and Improvement Plan, endorsed by Cabinet in September, has also now been agreed by Full Council. This builds on the previous Corporate Plan and incorporates the remaining activity from the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan to bring these together into one document. Combining these two documents provides clarity on how this work interacts and ensures that improvement work is not viewed separately or as additional to the Council's other priorities. This demonstrates that improvement activity is further becoming embedded into the organisation's culture and ways of working, addressing some of the fragility of the improvements that we noted in our last report. It also further supports the authority's strengthened corporate reporting, as improvement activity can be embedded into the Council's Performance Management and Assurance Framework, rather than reported separately.</p> <p>The Council continues to further refine and improve its corporate reporting and in July, published its Q4 corporate performance report and an Annual Report for 2024/25. These two products outline the Council's successes over the past year since the previous Corporate Plan was agreed and also transparently identify where there is more work to do or where areas are off track or underperforming. We are encouraged that over the course of the year the reporting has further been revised each quarter to improve the quality of information provided to members and the public.</p>
3.	<p>To take steps to ensure that the role of Accountable Body to the Thames Freeport is exercised to the satisfaction of the Commissioners.</p>	<p>Discussions with the Freeport remain positive. The issues that we have raised in previous reports have settled and the necessary internal governance and legal arrangements are now in place. Discussions have now shifted from dealing with these arrangements to more strategic matters. The Council is involved in the discussions with the Freeport on the masterplan for the freeport area and considering the benefits, risks and impacts on local communities to ensure it benefits local Thurrock residents. However, as part of the devolution arrangements and at the appropriate time, Accountable Body responsibility for the Thames Freeport will move from the Council to the newly established Mayoral Combined Authority.</p>

4.	<p>To actively work with Commissioners on the work with other councils in the Greater Essex area for unitary local government and the Devolution Priority Programme on implementing any such proposals later agreed upon.</p>	<p>Thurrock Council have been an active partner in conversations with Government and neighbouring authorities across Greater Essex in relation to both the Devolution Priority Programme and local government reorganisation. The Council has kept Commissioners informed on progress and on the impact of these on their capacity in relation to their improvement work. We hope this positive engagement continues during the next phases of these major transformation programmes.</p> <p>The Council will need to be regularly reviewing its capacity and capability to deliver its improvement and transformation work in addition to these other significant government priorities as well as ensuring it continues to deliver business-as-usual activity and meet its statutory responsibilities. We are encouraged that the Council is prioritising transformation during this period while we await further decisions on local government reorganisation.</p>
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