

**Thurrock Council  
Governance Recovery Board  
Terms of Reference**

**Context**

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities used his Best Value powers to appoint Commissioners at Thurrock Council on 2 September 2022. He directed the Essex County Council as Commissioners to ensure that the Council prepared and implemented an improvement and recovery plan to address the failures in the finance functions of the Council.

On 16 March 2023, the Secretary of State further directed the Commissioners to ensure the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan included an action plan to strengthen the Authority's governance function and gave them responsibility for all functions associated with the governance, scrutiny and transparency of strategic decision making by the Authority.

A Governance Board is required to oversee work to address the Directions made by the Secretary of State; and to consider and report on progress as required by the Directions.

The Board will meet at least 6 times per year and will report to the Improvement and Recovery Board.

**Purpose**

The Board will oversee the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan to deliver:

- An action plan to strengthen the Authority's governance function, to secure improvements in transparency and formal decision making.
- Measures to improve the Authority's scrutiny function, including the taking and recording of formal decisions.
- Arrangements to secure the proper resourcing and functioning of the system of internal controls, including risk management and internal audit.

The Board will also enable the Managing Director Commissioner as Chair to provide assurance to the Improvement and Recovery Board that the Council has proper management arrangements in place to achieve these objectives.

To this end, the Board will:

1. Promote a corporate, Council wide culture of effective and open governance alongside a culture of trust, collaboration, accountability and transparency and review the implementation of policies and procedures to achieve the improvements set out in the Directions and determined by Commissioners.
2. Oversee the delivery of the governance and scrutiny elements of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and the actions identified within the recent Governance Review to ensure desired outcomes are achieved within a

reasonable timeframe, and report progress to the Improvement and Recovery Board.

3. Manage the formal governance reporting element of the progress reports to the Secretary of State to the timescales set out in the Directions or as determined by the Commissioners.
4. Oversee the forward plan arrangements and improvements relating to the quality of formal decision making and ensure appropriate and timely plans are put in place to deliver appropriate governance and scrutiny.
5. Oversee the review of companies related to Thurrock Council and their governance arrangements.
6. Oversee the process of assurance to Commissioners of the exercise of the Accountable Body for Thames Freeport by Thurrock Council and its other Accountable Body roles.
7. Provide advice and guidance to the Council on the actions required.

It is for the Council to take the actions required to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan, using the policies and procedures it already has in place or introduces to enable the Plan to be delivered.

The Board will act as a consultative forum, providing challenge and advice as appropriate. The Commissioners will exercise the powers given to them by the Directions as and when necessary.

The Board will consider wide-ranging and potentially contentious solutions to rectify the current financial position of the Council. For the Board to operate effectively, it is critical that Board members and deputies agree to treat these sensitive discussions as confidential. The Board will not meet in public. Its Minutes will be published on the Commissioners page on [Thurrock.gov.uk](http://Thurrock.gov.uk).

## **Membership**

Dr Dave Smith – Managing Director Commissioner (Chair)

Cllr John Kent – Leader of the Council

Cllr Lynn Worrall – Deputy Leader of the Council

Cllr Andrew Jeffries – Opposition Group Leader

Cllr George Coxshall – Opposition Group Deputy Leader

Daniel Fenwick - Executive Director of Corporate Services, and Monitoring Officer

Alex Powell – Assistant Chief Executive

Claire Demmel - Interim Executive Director of Place

Paul Turner – Director of Legal and Assurance (ECC)

Luke Tyson – Chief Intervention Officer

Crissy Hall – Chief of Staff to the Commissioners

Deputies to attend as required, fully briefed and able to contribute. Other attendees may be required as determined by the matters considered by the Board.

**Updated:** September 2024