

Thurrock Council

Improvement and Recovery Board

Minutes – 2pm, Monday 19 February 2024

Attendees

Gavin Jones (GJ) – Lead Commissioner (Chair)
Nicole Wood (NW) – Finance Commissioner
Dr Dave Smith (DS) – Managing Director Commissioner and Chief Executive
Alex Powell (AP) – Assistant Chief Executive
Cllr Andrew Jefferies (AJ) – Leader of the Council
Cllr Deborah Arnold (DA) – Deputy Leader
Cllr John Kent (JK) – Opposition Group Leader
Cllr Lynn Worrall (LW) – Opposition Group Deputy Leader
Steven Mair (SMa) – Acting CFO
Asmat Hussain (AH) – Interim Director of Legal and Governance
Alix MacFarlane (AM) – Intervention Communications Lead
Claire Demmel (CD) – Interim Director of Public Realm
Mark Bradbury (MB) – Interim Director of Place
Ian Wake (IW) – Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Pete Pawson (PP) – Interim Programme Director of Change
Luke Tyson (LT) – Chief Intervention Officer
Patrick McDermott (PM) – Chief of Staff to the Commissioners
Tina Dempsey (TD) – Interim Assistant Director of HR and OD
Kerry Thomas (KT) – Chief of Staff to the Chief Executive
Keilah Gallardo (KG) – Business Support Officer, Chief Executive

Apologies:

Sheila Murphy (SM) – Executive Director of Children's Services
Cllr Graham Snell (GS) – Cabinet member for Finance, Human Resources and Payroll

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Matters Arising

- 2.1. Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. There were no further comments on the actions.

3. Lead Commissioner Update

- 3.1. GJ shared with the Board that Commissioners had written their Third Report to the Minister, noting they were hopeful to receive a response before the pre-election period.

4. Managing Director Commissioner Update

- 4.1. DS shared with the Board that the Thames Freeport MoU has been signed, commending colleagues for their hard work.
- 4.2. DS noted that General Services Committee has agreed the proposed changes to the Place Directorate, moving Housing from Adults and Health.

5. Member Engagement Framework

- 5.1. An update was shared regarding the Member Engagement Framework, noting that engagement was carried out with all groups.
- 5.2. There was a note for AH and MB to feed member engagement into member services more generally.
- 5.3. DS shared the intention to eventually move to cross-party engagement. GJ asked Members what they viewed as the benefits of cross-party engagement. LW shared that they would like to see more cohesive Chamber meetings. AJ raised concern of losing member buy-in, suggesting that some form of Commissioner briefing for new members be organised. Commissioners agreed, welcoming the suggestion.

Action: Link Member development and learning in relation to the pre-election period.

Action: Diarise workshop dates for Members to learn about intervention, hosted by Commissioners.

6. Quarter 3 Performance

- 6.1. SW reminded the Board that the reporting was to go to Cabinet in March, with final Q4 Reporting due to go to Cabinet in June/July.
- 6.2. LW raised concerns regarding the recent Corporate O&S meeting being cancelled. DS noted there was scheduling issues, confirming the Chair had been made aware of this.

- 6.3. JK noted that data regarding exit interviews was disappointing, having hoped for more engagement. TD shared that the intention of the Staff Briefing was to compile more data regarding this.
- 6.4. GJ shared there was a similar issue with confidence in exit interviews at Slough, noting that Commissioners can be more involved in this process if the organisation would like this support.
- 6.5. DA noted that the report did not clearly indicate how issues would be resolved. DA also asked whether targets were being regularly reviewed.

Action: Suggest date to the Board when the PMAF Framework is mature enough to have in-depth conversations.

7. Operating Model

- 7.1. DS provided an update on the operating model, noting that a majority of the work taking place currently is through a deficit model. DS noted that in understanding the model for change, the goal has been to illustrate the shift being made.
- 7.2. JK raised concerns about capacity and community engagement. LW also asked how this would be communicated with incoming members. IW noted that this was still a working document.
- 7.3. GJ asked that the operating model be a standing item at IRB to hear the progress.

8. IRP Progress Reporting

- 8.1. SMa noted that budget papers were going to Council shortly.
- 8.2. AH shared that there has been a need to recalibrate risk management and audit. AH noted that because of staff changes, there have been changes to the project. AH confirmed there were workstreams around the transparency and accountability review.

9. Communications & Engagement Update

- 9.1. AM confirmed the Comms review is ongoing and has been positive thus far.

10. AOB

- 10.1. There being no other business, the meeting closed.

Appendix I: Full Meeting Actions

- **Action: Link Member development and learning in relation to the pre-election period.**
- **Action: Diarise workshop dates for Members to learn about intervention, hosted by Commissioners**
- **Action: Suggest date to the Board when the PMAF Framework is mature enough to have in-depth conversations.**