

# Thurrock Borough Council

## Improvement and 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 Borough 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 (IRP) to address the failures in the finance functions of the council.

On 16 March 2023, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities expanded the intervention in Thurrock Borough Council and directed Commissioners to ensure that the council's IRP addresses weaknesses in the council's governance function, transparency and internal controls.

An Improvement and Recovery Board is required to oversee the work of the intervention and to consider and report on progress as required by the Directions.

The Board will meet monthly.

#### Purpose

The Board will oversee the development and delivery of the council's IRP. It will enable the Commissioners to provide assurance to Thurrock residents and the Secretary of State that the council is taking the right action and has the capacity and capability to deliver the improvement required.

To this end, the Board will:

1. promote a corporate, council-wide culture of effective financial management and review the policies and procedures to be implemented to achieve the financial stability set out in the Directions
2. oversee the delivery of the IRP to ensure desired outcomes are achieved and receive reports on progress from the Finance Recovery Board and Governance Recovery Board
3. manage the formal 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 relating to decision-making to ensure appropriate and timely plans are put in place to deliver value for money
5. provide advice and guidance to the council on the actions required
6. provide challenge to the council on its IRP

7. make sure there is robust programme and risk/issue management to monitor progress against the IRP and its workstreams

It is for the council to take the actions required to deliver the IRP, 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 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 [www.thurrock.gov.uk](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk).

## Membership

Membership of the Board:

- Gavin Jones – Essex County Council Commissioner (chair)
- Nicole Wood – Essex County Council Commissioner
- Dr Dave Smith – Managing Director Commissioner and Chief Executive
- Cllr Andrew Jefferies – Leader of the Council
- Cllr Deborah Arnold – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Transformational Change, Communications and Governance
- Cllr Graham Snell – Cabinet Member for Finance, Human Resources and Payroll
- Cllr John Kent – Opposition Group Leader
- Cllr Lynn Worrall – Opposition Deputy Group Leader
- Cllr Kevin Bentley – Council Leader, Essex County Council
- Patrick McDermott – Chief of Staff to the Commissioners
- Steven Mair – Interim Chief Finance Officer
- Karen Wheeler – Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth
- Jackie Hinchliffe – Director of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Transformation
- Mark Bradbury – Interim Director of Place
- Asmat Hussain – Interim Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
- Jonathan Wilson – Acting Section 151 Officer
- Alix Macfarlane – Intervention Communications Lead
- Luke Tyson – Chief Intervention Officer
- Vince Waddams – Delivery Assurance Manager
- Debbie Knopp – Director of Transformation, Essex County Council

Deputies to attend as required, fully briefed and able to contribute.

### Version control

Document version published 17 July 2023.