

Report to Cabinet

Report Title	Second Report on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery Report				
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 19 March 2025				
Report Author	Luke Tyson, Chief Intervention Officer – Interim Head of PMO				
Corporate Director	Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive				
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Change and Improvement				
Why is this a key decision?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. Expenditure over £500K</td> <td>no</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards</td> <td>no</td> </tr> </table>	1. Expenditure over £500K	no	2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards	no
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2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards	no				
Wards Affected	(All Wards);				
Appendices (if any)	1. Second Report on Outcomes and Success Criteria				

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the second update report on the progress made on Thurrock Council's improvement and recovery. The detailed information can be found at appendix 1.
- 1.2 This report reflects the current position and the changes since the first report up to the end of December 2024. As such, changes arising from comments from Members when discussing the first report at Full Council in January 2025 will be reflected in the next report.
- 1.3 The implications of devolution and local government reorganisation are under active consideration, however the impact on reporting during this period has been minimal. In due course, discussions with Commissioners will take place to reflect any required adjustments.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, the Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 **note the progress made on the Council's improvement and recovery.**
- 2.2 **refer this report to Full Council for the consideration of all Members.**

3. Commissioner's Comments

- 3.1 Further engagement with Commissioners on this report is planned to take place, and this report will also be considered by Commissioners in detail at the March meeting of the Improvement and Recovery Board.

4. Proposals – the rationale and evidence for the recommendations

- 4.1 In September 2022, the then Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities made directions under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 to implement an intervention package for Thurrock Council, which transferred the financial functions to Commissioners and initiated a Best Value Inspection. Based on the report of that inspection, the intervention was expanded to include governance, officer structure and how the council delivers services. The government also directed Thurrock Council to develop and Improvement and Recovery plan which forms the basis for the council's recovery and charts the course back to being a well-run authority.

Progress since the last report

- 4.2 The full report can be found at appendix 1.
- 4.3 Overall, progress has remained consistent with the 1st report considered by Cabinet in December 2024. Much of the activity continues and is beginning to be embedded within the organisation.
- 4.4 Areas of improvement since the last report include an element of risk management relating to companies and outside bodies, where processes have been put in place relating to decision making on Thames Freeport, and improvements in overall financial management throughout the council.
- 4.5 Improvements in responsiveness to poor performance have seen a positive direction of travel, where the new Assistant Director of HR and OD has embarked on a review of performance management which, subject to approval, will be rolled out during the when the next cycle begins in April 2025/26. It is anticipated that this will be move to Green in the next report.
- 4.6 The impact of the English Devolution White Paper has not had a significant impact on the progress made during this period. However, there is one indicator which has moved from green to amber relating to corporate and financial peer challenges being conducted at least every 5 years. This reflects the relative uncertainty of the future rather than any lack of progress within services.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 Alternative options are not considered as this is a progress update report.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 This report provides a progress update on the Council's Improvement and Recovery Planning with respect to the Outcomes Framework.
- 7.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this update report.
- 7.3 Additional costs associated with any of the individual elements of the Improvement & Recovery Plan workstreams (as set out in Appendix 1) are subject to established governance and reporting arrangements including, but not limited to, the Expenditure Control & Strategic Approval panel processes. This ensures appropriate scrutiny and value for money considerations are taken into consideration prior to the approval of any spending decisions.

Implications Verified by Sima Khiroya
Assistant Director Financial Management & Procurement
Date 3 February 2025

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 As this is a progress update report to note, there are no direct risks associated with the decisions within this report. However, delivery risks are monitored within services conducting the recovery work and are actively managed and escalated where appropriate.

Implications Verified by Kelly McMillan
Chief Risk Advisory
Date 10 February 2025

9. Legal and Governance Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation in this update report.

Implications Verified by Helen Nicol
Assistant Director Legal & Governance
Date 11 February 2025

10. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 10.1 There are no direct diversity and equality implications from the recommendations in this progress update report.

Implications Verified by Roxanne Scanlon
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer
Date 3 February 2025

11. Other Relevant Implications

- 11.1 None

12. Background Documents

- First Report on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery, Cabinet December 2024 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s45762/Thurrock%20Councils%20Improvement%20and%20Recovery%20Report.pdf>
- Documents relating to the intervention in Thurrock Council, MHCLG - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/intervention-at-thurrock-council>
- Improvement and Recovery Plan, Full Council 25 October 2023 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MID=6349#A119348>

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area: Chief Executive's Office

Service Lead: Luke Tyson

Date: 14 January 2025

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service that you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No