



**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

Jim McMahon OBE MP

*Minister of State for Local Government
and English Devolution*

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Florence Eshalomi MP
Chair of the Housing, Communities and
Local Government Committee
By email

17 July 2025

Dear Florence,

I am writing to you as I have today updated Parliament about the steps we are taking in partnership to support four councils to recover and reform: London Borough of Croydon, Thurrock Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Liverpool City Council.

London Borough of Croydon

After considering carefully all the representations and other relevant information since my announcement of 12 June 2025, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has today issued Directions, under the Local Government Act 1999, in relation to London Borough of Croydon. These Directions come into effect immediately and replace those that were previously in place and will be published alongside the Explanatory Memorandum on gov.uk.

When I last wrote to you, I outlined my intention to escalate the intervention and appoint Commissioners to the Council. I have today confirmed that the Secretary of State has appointed Gerard Curran as the Lead Commissioner and Debra Warren and Jackie Belton as Commissioners under section 15(6) of the 1999 Act, and Cllr Abi Brown OBE as Commissioner (Political and Governance) to work in partnership with the Council to support its recovery.

I trust I can rely on your support and engagement including with the Commissioners and helping ensure the Council continues to tackle the improvement needed to provide good services for its residents.

Thurrock Council

After careful consideration of the representations and all other relevant information, the Secretary of State has today made Directions under section 15(5) and 15(6) of

the Local Government Act 1999 (“the Act”) in relation to Thurrock Council to extend the intervention to 30 April 2028. These Directions will come into effect immediately, and the Directions issued on 2 September 2022 (and updated on 23 March 2023) have been revoked.

The Secretary of State has nominated Gavin Jones CBE as Lead Commissioner, Denise Murray as Finance Commissioner and Dr Dave Smith as Managing Director Commissioner. These individuals are best placed to continue in their roles, due to their knowledge and experience in local authority leadership, decision-making, governance and finance. The Secretary of State recognises the expertise of these appointees and is confident that they will work collaboratively alongside the Council to support officers and members in continuing to resolve Thurrock Council's issues.

The Directions will be in place until 30 April 2028. As set out in the announcement on 19 June 2025, I intend to review these arrangements again by Summer 2026, when we would expect there to be further clarity on broader plans for devolution and local government reorganisation across Greater Essex.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

The department has also issued a Best Value Notice (“Notice”) to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. The Notice has been published on gov.uk today.

The Notice is a formal notification that the department has concerns regarding the authority and requests that the authority engages with the department to provide further assurance of improvement.

Liverpool City Council

Finally, I have written to Councillor Liam Robinson to confirm that I am content to end the level of departmental support provided to Liverpool City Council since June 2024.

Since the end of the statutory intervention last June, I have welcomed the Council's engagement with the department and me and we have been pleased to be able to provide ongoing support following the end of the statutory intervention. The establishment of the Improvement and Assurance Board (the Board) has clearly and effectively supported the Council's recovery journey.

I have encouraged the Council to seek independent, external strategic support and maintain a dialogue with the Local Government Association to ensure ongoing improvements.

I have confirmed that the level of departmental support will now reduce but that I would like to stay close to developments in the coming months, and the department will provide a named single point of contact and continue periodic engagement. We have found this can be effective for both parties as departmental involvement is stepped down and means we can step up our support quickly if necessary.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members and officers within the Council, colleagues in Liverpool, and the Improvement and Assurance Board for the hard work and dedication to ensure best possible Council and services for the people of Liverpool and I look forward to seeing how the journey continues.

This government is committed to resetting the relationship between local and regional government and establishing partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration, and meaningful engagement. I trust that I can continue to rely on your engagement and continued support.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim McMahon." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JIM MCMAHON OBE MP

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution