

**London Borough of Barking & Dagenham**

**Thurrock Council**

**A Governance Guarantee**

**Objectives:**

The two Councils are committed to continuing to represent the needs, priorities and ambitions of local people in their communities.

We are exploring ways of reducing costs and strengthening our capacity by working together and identifying areas of common interest.

Commissioning or delivering services together is specifically designed to not change how residents receive and experience services unless there is an advantage to do so.

To safeguard local autonomy the Councils confirm the following ten-point governance guarantee:

1. Local residents will continue to elect the same number of councillors to each Council and there will be no change in the name or governance structure of any of the Councils, other than to effect joint decision-making.
2. Each Council will retain its own Constitution, setting out how it makes decisions, organises scrutiny and delegates authority.
3. The boundaries of the areas for each Council will not change.
4. Each Council will continue to set its own Council Tax and publish its own budget and accounts.
5. Each Council will continue to spend its own money to support its local communities.
6. Each Council will continue to be able to set its own spending priorities and its own policies on how services are delivered. The Councils may jointly commission some services from contractors, voluntary bodies and others, but can also decide to commission, or grant aid, on their own.
7. Neither Council can be 'out-voted' by the other Council in a way which requires that Council to make any decision such as adopt a policy, accept a cost or change a priority that its decision makers are not willing to support.
8. The costs of changes and the benefits achieved from change will be fairly attributed and shared to the satisfaction of both Councils.
9. No Council will be obliged to break an existing contract.
10. Each Council will continue to speak up for its own residents, even when there is an apparent conflict of interest between the boroughs.