

# Public Document Pack

## Kirklees Council



Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield

Tuesday 10 September 2024

Dear Member

**The Council will meet on Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield.**

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view via the Council's website.

The following matters will be debated:

### Pages

**1: Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive**

To receive any announcements from the Mayor and Chief Executive.

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**2: Apologies for absence**

Group Business Managers to submit any apologies for absence.

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**3: Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 17 July 2024.

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1 - 6

#### **4: Declaration of Interests**

7 - 8

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

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#### **5: Petitions (From Members of the Council)**

To receive any Petitions from Members of the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

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#### **6: Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)**

The Committee will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

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#### **7: Public Question Time**

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

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#### **8: West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Minutes**

9 - 20

To receive the Minutes of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 20 June 2024.

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- 9: Kirklees Environment Strategy: EveryDay Life (Reference from Cabinet)** 21 - 78
- To consider the report.
- Contact: Robert Green, Climate Change
- 
- 10: Council Budget Strategy 2025/2026 and future years (Reference from Cabinet)** 79 - 120
- To consider the report.
- Contact: Kevin Mulvaley, Service Director - Finance
- 
- 11: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - Annual Report 2023/2024 (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee)** 121 - 138
- To receive the Annual Report.
- Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance
- 
- 12: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - Appointment of Second Independent Person (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee)** 139 - 144
- To consider the report.
- Contact: Martin Dearnley, Head of Audit and Risk
- 
- 13: Appointment of Chair - Licensing and Safety Committee** 145 - 146
- To consider the appointment of the Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.
- Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance
-

- 14: Appointment of Chair - Personnel Committee** 147 - 148
- To consider the appointment of the Chair of Personnel Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.
- Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance
- 
- 15: Scrutiny Annual Report** 149 - 204
- To receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/2024.
- Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance
- 
- 16: Written Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokesperson**
- To receive written questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.
- A schedule of written questions and responses will be tabled at the meeting. One supplementary questions will be permitted.
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- 17: Key Discussion - Children's Services**
- A key discussion will take place on Children's Services - Children's social services improvement journey: where we have come from, what we have achieved, and what are the next steps"
- Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 5(5), the Key Discussion Debate shall commence no later than 7.00pm.
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- 18: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Demand for Lasting Peace in Gaza/Middle East**
- To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Pattison, Crook, Kendrick, Turner, Munir Ahmed, A U Pinnock, Addy and Hawkins;
- "This Council notes that Kirklees is a district celebrated for its tolerance, inclusivity and strong stance against all forms of

discrimination. This enables our many and diverse communities to live together in unity.

The current conflict in Israel and Gaza is inflicting intolerable suffering on innocent victims and continues to be the cause of much pain and concern to all communities here in Kirklees. We stand firmly in solidarity with all those suffering from conflict and against all forms of prejudice, including racism, antisemitism and islamophobia.

This Council condemns the loss of civilian life, the destruction of property, homes and essential civilian infrastructure and any taking of hostages.

Furthermore, this Council:

- (i) reiterates our call (Kirklees Labour Motion Amendment, 17th January 2024) for an immediate, permanent and lasting humanitarian ceasefire and for the cessation of all violence in Gaza and the wider region.
- (ii) calls for the immediate, unconditional and safe return of all hostages.
- (iii) acknowledges and endorses the positive move by the new UK government to recommence funding for UNRWA, to help mitigate the suffering of displaced people who are victims of violent conflict.
- (iv) calls for more to be done to provide unimpeded and desperately needed humanitarian aid to all parts of Gaza, including food, water, medicine and fuel.
- (v) calls for international law to be upheld and for a secure two state solution to be urgently sought.
- (vi) acknowledges the efforts made by local community leaders and key representatives working to bring communities together (along with the Police and the Council) and calls for this work to continue in order to maintain community cohesion in Kirklees.
- (vii) applauds the new UK government for stating that the government will not pursue an objection to the International Criminal Court (ICC) issuing an arrest warrant for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

- (viii) calls for restrictions to UK weapons sales to the Israeli Government to ensure that no weapon made partly or entirely in the UK is used against civilian targets on all sides.
- (ix) endorses the intention to fly a flag of peace from Huddersfield and Dewsbury Town Halls to indicate our solidarity with all people suffering from conflict, our strong advocacy of peace and our wish for an end to armed conflict.

Therefore, this Council calls for lasting peace in Gaza and the Middle East.”

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**19: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Gaza - a year on, urgent action is still needed**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J D Lawson, Arshad, Khan, Safdar, Anwar, Kahut and Bramwell.

“This Council notes that nearly a year on from the start of the latest conflict in Gaza:

- a) 10,000's of innocent men, women and children have been killed or seriously injured. Many more are missing in the debris of Gaza.
- b) Gaza is being raised to the ground. There has been indiscriminate bombing of refugee camps, medical facilities, schools, places of worship of all denominations and the general infra structure.
- c) Aid is still not getting into Gaza in the quantity needed due to interference by the Israeli Govt this has resulted in widespread malnutrition and the remaining medical facilities running without even the basic of medical supplies.
- d) That the Israeli government is guilty of war crimes and breaching International Humanitarian Law. Creating an Apartheid State within the Palestinian Territories of Gaza and the West Bank.
- e) The International Court of Justice has declared the situation in Gaza to be genocide
- f) That many residents of Kirklees remain gravely concerned about the ongoing situation in Gaza and wish to see an end to

the genocide in Gaza.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister to urge him to revoke licenses which allow the selling of arms and military equipment to Israel until a time the Israeli Government stops the on-going genocide in Gaza, ceases to occupy the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza, abides by the IJC rulings and the numerous United Nations resolutions. That the Prime Minister lobbies his Israeli counterpart to immediately allow aid to Gaza unfettered by obstructions, in a bid to halt the humanitarian crisis that is occurring within Gaza. And that the Prime Minister uses all diplomatic channels at his disposal to call for a ceasefire and the return of the Israeli hostages

We ask that the Palestinian Flag be flown at Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury Town Halls in an act of remembrance for those who have died. This would be at no expense to local council tax payers as the flags would be purchased by a local group.

We ask that Kirklees Council where at all lawful and practical to avoid purchases of goods from Israeli companies illegally occupying the afore mentioned Palestinian Territories.

That the council commits to conducting a thorough review of its procurement practices to ensure that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are not used.”

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**20: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Hall and Taylor;

“This Council notes:

- The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Kirklees Council and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health

- risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Kirklees Council sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

This Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging her to reverse the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Kirklees Council are supported in claiming their entitlement."

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**21: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Providing Similar Support Mechanisms as Ukraine to those impacted by the Genocide in Palestine**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Darwan, Hussain, Moore, H Zaman, Bramwell, Safdar, Scott, Masood Ahmed, A Zaman, Daji, Kahut and Anwar.



“This Council notes that almost a year ago from the start of the recent conflict in Gaza:

- a) Israel’s ground and air campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,324 people and continuing, mostly civilians, and driven most of the enclave’s 2.3 million people from their homes Plus 90,830 Palestinian people injured and approximately 1,478 Israelis have been reported as killed.
- b) The Israeli crimes violate international criminal laws, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide, which the Israel Defense Forces, the military branch of the state of Israel, has been accused of committing since the founding of Israel in 1948. These have included murder, intentional targeting of civilians, killing prisoners of war and surrendered combatants, indiscriminate attacks, collective punishment, starvation, the use of human shields, sexual violence and rape, torture, pillage, forced transfer, breach of medical neutrality, targeting journalists, attacking civilian and protected objects, wanton destruction, incitement to genocide, and genocide.
- c) Many residents in Kirklees remain gravely concerned about the continued horrifying situation in Gaza. Most societies consider murder to be an extremely serious crime, and thus believe that a person convicted of murder should receive harsh punishments for the purposes of retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, or incapacitation. In most countries, a person convicted of murder generally receives a long-term prison sentence, a life sentence, or capital punishment.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to the UK Prime Minister Kier Starmer and to the Foreign Secretary David Lammy to immediately request the following:

1. Suspend both extant licenses for military equipment and technology and the issuing of new licenses while Israel continues to carry out widespread serious violations with impunity.
2. Adhere to its obligations under international law, respect the International Court of Justice ruling, and advocate for adherence to international law and accountability for all parties.
3. Use every diplomatic and economic lever at its disposal to help secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire, to stop the death and destruction, and to secure the safe release of hostages on both sides.
4. Significant and immediate aid and protection for Palestinians in Gaza who face imminent danger from hunger, disease, and military bombardment.
5. To look at a leadership change in Israel. It appears increasingly clear that a ceasefire will not happen with Netanyahu and his supporters in control of Israel’s policy and military.

6. Control of Gaza to be given to the Palestinian Authority.

In addition to the above we ask that the Council Leader that the Palestinian Flag be flown at Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury Town Halls in an act of remembrance for those who have died. In the past Huddersfield Town Hall have flown the Irish flag. The flags will be donated by a local Kirklees group and at no cost to the Kirklees Council or to the Local Council Taxpayers. Furthermore, we request the Council to stop buying products from Israeli companies, who have illegally occupied Palestinian territories, and to ensure that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are not used.”

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**22: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the proposal to stop the winter fuel allowance for the majority of pensioners be reconsidered.**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors JD Lawson, Bramwell, Arshad, Safdar and Khan;

“This Council notes that some 3 million pensioners are entitled to pension credit which gives a guaranteed income of £17322 for a couple and £11,336 for a single pensioner but it is thought that nearly 800,000 pensioners do not claim Pension Credit. With the governments draconian plans only those entitled to pension credit will receive the winter fuel allowance.

Given that gas and electric are due to rise again by 10% in October, many pensioners will again find themselves living in fuel poverty but will not be entitled to any assistance as their household income will be over the limit to claim Pension Credit some only by a few pounds. Many retired Kirklees residents will find themselves with the choice of either heating or eating this winter.

We ask the leader of the council to write to the Prime minister asking him to look again at this policy and at the very least raise the cut off point for eligibility to a more reasonable amount – the median income with in the UK was £34,963 in 2023.

We also ask that Kirklees runs a campaign to ensure all pensioners who are entitled to Pension Credit are aware of it and how they can apply for it.”

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## **23: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Racist and Islamophobic Violence**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Cooper, Vickers, Allison and Lee-Richards;

This Council:

- condemns the organised racist and islamophobic violence by far right rioters in many towns and cities in England;
- notes the failed Huddersfield riot called for Monday 5th August which drew little support and thanks the police for their robust response;
- believes the divisive rhetoric of some mainstream politicians and media has fuelled the recent violence and the 'Stop the Boats' narrative has contributed to division and has helped further stigmatise migrants and asylum seekers;
- is concerned that even an advisor, appointed by the previous Government, identified that successive governments have failed the British people and left local authorities struggling to deal with extremist challenges;
- recognises the fear of violence and intimidation terrified many people of colour, especially women, and made people feel unsafe in their hometowns;
- acknowledges that the threat of serious violence impacted negatively on businesses in the local economy;
- recognises that migrants have always contributed to our society as workers, taxpayers and citizens and that segregation of asylum seekers into different systems for homelessness, destitution and work creates further division and lack of cohesion in society;
- condemns the policy of austerity, which causes hardship and resentment amongst the communities most left behind;
- welcomes the scrapping of the Rwanda deportation scheme and Bibby Stockholm barge;
- thanks the Police and Crown Prosecution Service for pursuing rightful convictions and for the local press for reporting on the sentences;
- calls on the government to abandon any proposals to place asylum seekers in overcrowded unsuitable accommodation, in

large numbers, that may make them a target for racist and far right violence;

- thanks the people of Kirklees who have spoken out against violence intimidation and racism;
  - believes that the majority of people in Kirklees want an asylum system that is fair, well managed and humane;
  - resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister with a copy of this motion and to ask him to consider implementing a Social Cohesion Strategy for the UK.”
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## **24: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Reforming the Right to Buy Scheme**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J Lawson and Davies;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The Conservative Government, under Margaret Thatcher, introduced the Right to Buy scheme in the United Kingdom. The Right to Buy scheme allows eligible council tenants and tenants in housing associations to purchase their council property, often at a discounted rate;
- 2) When the Right to Buy scheme was introduced in England and Wales in 1980, it was designed to help ‘generation rent’ to get on the property ladder and was seen by some as a means to encourage homeownership and social mobility. Since 1980, more than two million homes have been sold under the scheme;
- 3) Government figures released in February 2024, which show that 22,023 social homes were either sold or demolished in England in 2023, while 9,561 social homes were built, a net loss of 12,462 homes. In the past 10 years, there has been a total loss of 177,487 social homes, while over 1.28 million households in England are currently on council waiting lists for social housing. This is at a time when local authorities in England spent a record £2.29 billion a year in providing emergency temporary accommodation for homeless households between April 2023 and March 2024, a 29% increase from the previous year. In any one year in Kirklees, there are between 19,000 and 20,000 people waiting for a council property, but only around 1,700 to 1,800 homes become available in any given year;
- 4) According to the think-tank, the New Economics Foundation

(NEF), over 40% of council houses and flats sold under the Right to Buy scheme across the country are now owned by private landlords. In the last 10 years alone, over 109,000 former council homes have started being let privately.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Although the Right to Buy scheme has increased home ownership and has made home ownership more accessible to some, the failure to replace homes sold through the scheme has hindered its success. Although there was a commitment to the building of replacement social homes for each one sold when the scheme was set up, less than 5% of homes sold off through the Right to Buy scheme have been replaced since the policy was introduced;
- 2) Increasingly, it is evident that the Right to Buy scheme has failed. It has largely exacerbated rather than alleviated the housing crisis in the UK. While thousands of homes are sold through Right to Buy each year, the number of replacement homes falls drastically short, resulting in a net loss of social homes. This is at a time when the private sector isn't building enough affordable homes and local authorities are unable to do so. While local authorities, including Kirklees Council, endeavour to respond to escalating demand for housing, vulnerable households find themselves locked out of safe and secure social housing;
- 3) The Right to Buy scheme effectively forces many households into private renting, when the properties were built originally with the intention to reduce pressure on social housing waiting lists;
- 4) Allowing tenants to buy their council home has depleted the stock of affordable housing for those in need, resulting in demand far exceeding supply and resulting in rents going up and homelessness increasing;
- 5) Tackling the housing crisis should be one of the biggest priorities in the UK and for the new Labour Government. This Council believes that the loss of our country's social housing stock can, in part, be addressed by reforming the Right to Buy scheme;
- 6) This Council support proposals outlined by the Local Government Association (LGA) to reform the Right to Buy scheme. Measures to reform the scheme, including some

proposed by the LGA, include:

- Giving local authorities, including Kirklees Council, the flexibility to shape the Right to Buy scheme locally, so it works best for their local area, people and housing market. This includes giving the right for councils to discontinue the Right to Buy scheme in their area. Councils should also be able to set the discount levels on which homes can be purchased, and in some areas, this could be at 0%. This localised approach ensures that housing solutions reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities.
  - Protecting a council's investment in social housing to prevent loss-making transactions. This could be achieved by increasing the tenancy requirements to enable Right to Buy to 15 years, for example, exempting newly built and retrofitted homes from Right to Buy, and introducing an indefinite cost-floor protection so the purchase price of the property does not fall below what councils have invested to build and maintain homes.
  - Giving local authorities control over the use of funds raised through the Right to Buy, enabling them to invest in the development, delivery or acquisition of new council homes as per local needs. Local authorities, such as Kirklees Council, understand their local housing needs and the solutions required for their communities best.
- 7) If the Government adopts the reforms set out by the LGA, it could allow local authorities to regain their position as major builders of affordable housing. We must safeguard the future of social housing and uphold the fundamental right for everyone to have safe and secure housing. In essence, the current form of the Right to Buy scheme does not work for local authorities and it is vital that the Government overhauls the existing scheme, which has resulted in our social housing stock significantly diminishing. This would benefit our residents and communities in Kirklees and across the UK;

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, Angela Rayner MP, to ask the Government to consider the LGA's proposals

for reform to the Right to Buy scheme as a matter of urgency, grant local authorities the power to set the Right to Buy discount locally, including discontinuing the scheme, and to make permanent the 100% retention of Right to Buy receipts. The scheme, as it exists, must be significantly reformed to help serve the needs of our diverse communities.”

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## **25: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Winter Fuel Payment Cuts**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Munro and Davies;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits;
- 2) Though many argue that universal winter fuel payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will not now receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million);
- 3) In Kirklees the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 63,108. That means that just under 88% of pensioners in Kirklees currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

This Council:

- 1) Believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for winter fuel payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate;
- 2) Is also concerned by the low take up of Pension Credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we have to play to increase awareness of benefits, such as Pension Credit, to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to;
- 3) Further notes that the price most households pay for gas and electricity will rise by 10% on average from October this year, which combined by the removal of winter fuel payments, will

push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking winter fuel payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for winter fuel payments. Council further requests the Chief Executive write to all MPs covering Kirklees, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the winter fuel payment eligibility;
- 2) Request all group leaders at Kirklees Council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new winter fuel payment policy to be suspended and reviewed;
- 3) Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of Pension Credits. This will include use of council noticeboards, social media, promotion in local press and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.”

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## **26: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Two Child Limit to Benefit Payments**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Davies and Munro;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The two-child limit to benefit payments was introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017 and is currently supported by the new Labour Government. The cap restricts Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit to the first two children in most households;
- 2) The recent research conducted by the End Child Poverty Coalition, which has found that:
  - 1.5 million children in the UK live in households subject to the two-child limit on benefit payments. This is roughly one-in-ten children in the UK.
  - In 2023/24 the two-child limit cost families up to £3,235 per child each year.
  - There is a strong correlation between families affected by the two-child limit and those who are living in



- poverty.
  - Scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty overnight, and significantly reduce the level of poverty that a further 850,000 children live in.
  - Scrapping the two-child limit would cost £1.3 billion. However, it is estimated that child poverty costs the economy over £39 billion a year. This includes increased public service expenditures and lost economic output, due to lower earnings potential among adults who grow up in impoverished conditions.
- 3) New data which reveals that the Yorkshire and Humber region, which includes Kirklees, is a hotspot for children hit by the two-child limit on benefits, with 13% of children in Yorkshire and Humber impacted. As a comparison, across the nations, the figure is 11% for both England and Wales. At the same time, the number of children living in poverty in Kirklees in 2021/22 was 34,969. That is 33.7% of all children living in the district;
- 4) The Liberal Democrat national party has consistently opposed the two-child limit to benefit payments since it was introduced – calling for it to be axed in their 2017, 2019 and 2024 manifestos. Council notes with concern the stance of the Labour Government, who are committed to keeping the cap – going as far as suspending the whip from MPs who rebel against this position.

This Council believes that:

The two-child limit to benefit payments is a cruel and harmful policy that should be scrapped. Research from the University of York has shown that its introduction has had no positive impacts on employment and earnings. Instead, it has dragged thousands of local families into poverty and has been a key driver of child poverty in recent years. Furthermore, the policy has had a negative impact on many people's mental health, increasing stress and anxiety and harming their well-being, with knock-on effects on children's opportunities and wellbeing.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister indicating Kirklees Council's strong belief that the two-child limit to benefit payments should be scrapped – which would help many children and households in Kirklees;
- 2) Further, instruct the Chief Executive to write to all MPs

covering Kirklees Council's area, asking them to commit their public support to the campaign to end the cruel two child limit to benefit payments;

- 3) Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the Council."

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## **27: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Vulnerable Pensioners**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Hussain, Scott, H Zaman, Moore, A Zaman, Masood Ahmed, Bramwell, Anwar, Safdar, Darwan and Daji;

"This Council notes with deep concern the Labour Government's decision to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance, resulting in over 10 million pensioners losing up to £300 a year. This loss is equivalent to more than a week's pension income, and the cuts come just as Ofgem has announced an energy price cap increase of £149 this winter. This represents a devastating double blow for millions of vulnerable pensioners.

We believe that austerity policies such as this are not the answer, and pensioners should not be made to bear the burden of government mismanagement. The wealth exists in our society to provide support where it is most needed. For example, energy companies more than trebled their profits during the pandemic, and the 50 richest families in Britain own a combined £500 billion in wealth – equivalent to half of the UK population's combined wealth. A wealth tax on the richest 1% would raise billions, yet the government has chosen to target pensioners instead of seeking fairer solutions.

Some argue that wealthy pensioners receive the Winter Fuel Payment unnecessarily, but we strongly support the universal nature of this payment. Like the state pension itself, a universal payment ensures that nobody falls through the cracks. Linking the Winter Fuel Payment to pension credit will leave millions of vulnerable pensioners without the extra support they need. Currently, over 850,000 pensioners who qualify for pension credit do not receive it, missing out on an average of £2,677 a year. These same pensioners will now face losing up to £300 more with these cuts. Additionally, Age UK estimates that a further one million pensioners who live just £50 above the poverty line will also lose out on the Winter Fuel Payment, pushing them closer to financial hardship.

It is important to stress that the proposed cuts to the Winter Fuel Payment are expected to save only £1.4 billion a year. However, if all pensioners entitled to pension credit were encouraged to apply as a result of these changes, the cost of paying this unclaimed credit would rise to £2.2 billion annually – meaning the government might save nothing at all from these cuts.

The Chancellor's announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund is a temporary and inadequate measure. It places an additional burden on pensioners, forcing them to rely on charitable grants from their local councils instead of receiving their automatic Winter Fuel Payment. Pensioners, who have worked hard all their lives, should not be forced to go cap-in-hand for basic support.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to the government and demand that they reverse the proposed cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance. Our vulnerable pensioners deserve better, and they should not be made to suffer as a result of government decisions that fail to tax the wealthiest individuals and corporations adequately.

We urge the government to reconsider its approach, seek fairer alternatives, and protect the wellbeing of those who rely on this essential support to stay warm this winter.”

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By Order of the Council



Steve Mawson  
Chief Executive

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Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

## **COUNCIL**

### **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

**At the Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kirklees held at  
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield on Wednesday 17 July 2024**

## **PRESENT**

**The Mayor (Councillor Nosheen Dad) in the Chair**

## **COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Beverley Addy	Councillor Masood Ahmed
Councillor Munir Ahmed	Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Karen Allison	Councillor Ammar Anwar
Councillor Zarina Amin	Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Ali Arshad	Councillor Timothy Bamford
Councillor Donna Bellamy	Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Tanisha Bramwell	Councillor Aafaq Butt
Councillor Andrew Cooper	Councillor Moses Crook
Councillor Aziz Daji	Councillor Hanifa Darwan
Councillor Paola Antonia Davies	Councillor Eric Firth
Councillor Charles Greaves	Councillor David Hall
Councillor Tyler Hawkins	Councillor Lisa Holmes
Councillor Caroline Holt	Councillor James Homewood
Councillor Yusra Hussain	Councillor Zahid Kahut
Councillor Viv Kendrick	Councillor Musarrat Khan
Councillor Jo Lawson	Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards	Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor Gwen Lowe	Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Harry McCarthy	Councillor Tony McGrath
Councillor Hannah McKerchar	Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Paul Moore	Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Darren O'Donovan	Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Amanda Pinnock	Councillor Andrew Pinnock
Councillor Kath Pinnock	Councillor Ashleigh Robinson
Councillor Jane Rylah	Councillor Imran Safdar
Councillor Angela Sewell	Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor Joshua Sheard	Councillor Will Simpson
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje	Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Mohan Sokhal	Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Mark Thompson	Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Sheikh Ullah	Councillor Adam Zaman
Councillor Habiban Zaman	

**20 Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive**

The Mayor clarified a procedural matter arising from the Annual Meeting, confirming that the role of appointed Spokespersons of External Bodies was to respond to relevant questions raised at meetings of Council, subject to information being requested not being of a confidential nature.

In acknowledgement of the recent General Election, the Mayor conveyed thanks to the former Kirklees area MPs for the work that they had done in representing local residents over their years of service, and also welcomed the newly elected MPs. The Mayor also conveyed thanks to Electoral Services staff for the organisation of the election and count.

**21 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Burke, P Davies, Lees-Hamilton, A Smith and Vickers.

**22 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Leadership of the Council**

It was moved by Councillor Pattison and seconded by Councillor Crook that

“We, as signatories, call for a Vote of No Confidence to remove the current Leader of the Council under section 7.6.1 of the Council's Constitution.

We believe that the current Leader and their new group have no legitimate mandate from this Council or from the people of Kirklees. Leadership from this small and newly formed minority party is not sustainable.

We therefore resolve to see the current Leader removed from office and for a new Leader be properly elected by this Council.”

Whereupon it was moved by Councillor Cooper, and seconded by Councillor Jo Lawson, by way of amendment that an additional paragraph be added as follows;

“Furthermore this Council believes that the Labour Party also has no mandate to run the Council because:

- It only secured 31% of the vote in the May Council elections compared with 38% in 2023.
- Labour lost 6 seats in the local elections.
- Labour has gone from 39 seats to 24 seats since May 2023. A total loss of 15 seats.
- In addition it has lost an MP in the Dewsbury and Batley Constituency.
- A party which can only secure 31% of the vote should not have 100% of the power over decisions in Kirklees.

This Council therefore asks the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to consider recommending replacing the unrepresentative Strong Leader and Cabinet Model to a modern Committee System that involves Councillors of all parties and Independent Councillors, in decision making, at the earliest opportunity.”

## Council – 17 July 2024

The amendment, upon being put to the vote, was not carried. The Substantive Motion was therefore put to the vote and it was

**RESOLVED** – That the Motion be carried.

Following this resolution, it was moved by Councillor Crook and seconded by Councillor Sokhal that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15(5) the Election of the Leader of the Council be considered as a Urgent Item of Business. Upon being put to the vote, it was:

**RESOLVED** - That Election of the Leader be considered by Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15(5).

(Adjournment)

### 23 **Election of the Leader of the Council**

It was moved by Councillor Crook and seconded by Councillor Sokhal that Councillor Pattison be elected as Leader of the Council, whereupon it was moved by Councillor Moore and seconded by Councillor Masood Ahmed that Councillor H Zaman be elected as Leader of the Council.

Upon being put to the vote, the nomination of Councillor Pattison was carried and it was therefore;

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Carole Pattison be elected as Leader of the Council, in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution.

(Adjournment)

### 24 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of Annual Council, held on 22 May 2024, be approved as a correct record.

### 25 **Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### 26 **Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)**

Council received (a) deputations from (i) Mick Donoghue (Unison) – Customer Service Centre Closures (ii) Kasia Akhtar – Reopening of Batley Baths and (iii) Mudassa Iqbal – Boycotting of produce from illegal settlements in the West Bank, and (b) a petition from Kasia Akhtar regarding the future use of Batley Baths.

### 27 **Public Question Time**

No questions were asked.

### 28 **Petitions (From Members of the Council)**

Council received petitions from (i) Councillor Hawkins requesting the enforcement of planning conditions at Laneside Quarry and (ii) Councillor Munir Ahmed on behalf of the Friends of Kirkheaton Library requesting that the Council retain the current levels of support provided to the library.

The Mayor advised that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9(3), the subject matter of the petitions be referred to the relevant Executive Director.

**29 Petitions Debate (Car Parking Charges - Cleckheaton)**

Council held a petition debate on the potential impact of parking charges. This matter was considered alongside the Agenda Item 10 (Petitions Debate – Car Parking Charges Honley/Meltham).

**30 Petitions Debate (Car Parking Charges - Honley/Meltham)**

Council held a petition debate on the potential impact of parking charges. This matter was considered alongside the Agenda Item 9 (Petitions Debate – Car Parking Charges - Cleckheaton).

**31 West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Minutes**

The Minutes of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 7 December 2023, 1 February 2024 and 14 March 2024 were received and noted.

**32 Financial Outturn Report 2023/2024 (to include the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position and Annual Report on Treasury Management (Reference from Cabinet))**

It was moved by Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Pattison and

**RESOLVED;**

- 1) That in regards to the General Fund (i) revenue outturn position of +£7.3m overspend for 2023/2024 be noted (ii) the year end position on reserves and balances of £61.2m (excluding Statutory Reserves), particularly that the level of general reserve at £25m is the desirable level on a risk based approach as presented in the 2024/2025 be noted (iii) the application of the Council's flexible capital receipts strategy to the value of £3.3m applied against eligible transformation costs in 2023/2024 be noted (iv) it be noted that regular monitoring and review of corporate reserves in 2024/2025 will be submitted to Cabinet as part of the quarterly financial monitoring cycle and (v) the year end deficit position on the Collection Fund of £8m, along with the position on the DSG as part of the Council's Safety Valve Agreement be noted.
- 2) That the Housing Revenue Account revenue outturn position of +£1m deficit for the 2023/2024 and the year end reserves balance of £33.9m be noted.
- 3) That in regards to the Capital Budget, (i) the capital outturn position at £148.2m for 2023/2024 be noted (ii) the £22.3m capital slippage from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025 be noted (iii) the revised capital plan for the period 2024/2025 on wards (after taking into account the rephrasing of schemes and additional grant funding assumptions) be noted (iv) approval be given to £0.75m additional borrowing for the in-house fleet for home to school transport pilot (v) approval be given to the extension of the existing Property Investment Fund loan facility for Kingsgate Shopping Centre for a further nine months, at the prevailing interest rate (cost neutral for the Council) and (vi)



## Council – 17 July 2024

approval be given to the use of £0.14m Libraries Improvement Grant Fund towards spend on the Kirklees Open Access pilot project.

4) That the Review of Treasury Management activity for 2023/2024 be noted.

33 **Environment Strategy: Everyday Life (Reference from Cabinet)**

Item deferred.

34 **Pay Policy Statement (Reference from Personnel Committee)**

It was moved by Councillor Pattison, seconded by Councillor Kendrick and

**RESOLVED** – That the Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025 be approved.

35 **Appointment of Chair - Health and Wellbeing Board**

It was moved by Councillor Pattison, seconded by Councillor Crook and

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Beverley Addy be appointed as Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

36 **Written Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons**

Item deferred.

37 **Minutes of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee - Local Issues**

Council received and noted the Minutes of (i) Cabinet held on 23 January, 13 February, 20 February, 12 March and 9 April 2024 and (ii) Cabinet Committee – Local Issues held on 22 November 2023, 31 January 2024 and 22 March 2024.

38 **Holding the Executive to Account**

Item deferred.

39 **Minutes of Other Committees**

Council received and noted the Minutes of (i) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee held on 24 November 2023, 19 January 2024, 8 March 2024, 19 April 2024, 10 May 2024 (ii) Corporate Parenting Board held on 5 December 2023, 23 January 2024, 5 March 2024, 23 April 2024 (iii) Health and Wellbeing Board held on 18 January 2024 (iv) Licensing and Safety Committee held on 14 February 2024 (v) Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 5 December 2023, 9 January 2024, 27 February 2024 (vi) Personnel Committee held on 8 November 2023 (vii) Standards Committee held on 20 March 2024 and (viii) Strategic Planning Committee held on 7 December 2023, 25 January 2024, 22 February 2024, 28 March 2024 and 16 May 2024.

40 **Oral Questions to Committees/Sub Committees/Panel Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies**

Council received oral questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13(4).

41 **Response to Motion - School Uniform Costs**

Council received and noted the response of the Department of Education to the Motion approved on 17 January 2024.

**42 Response to Motion - Water Quality and Sewage Discharge**

Council received and noted the response of the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, and of Yorkshire Water, to the Motion approved on 17 January 2024.

<b>KIRKLEES COUNCIL</b>				
<b>COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC</b>				
<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>				
Council				
Name of Councillor				
<b>Item in which you have an interest</b>	<b>Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")</b>	<b>Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]</b>	<b>Brief description of your interest</b>	

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

## NOTES

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

- (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
- (b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 JUNE 2024 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1,  
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 40-50 WELLINGTON STREET, LEEDS**

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**Present:**

Mayor Tracy Brabin (Chair)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Council
Councillor Jane Scullion	Calderdale Council
Councillor Habiban Zaman (Substitute)	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Councillor Denise Jeffery	Wakefield Council
Councillor Sue Holdsworth	Calderdale Council
Councillor Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Mandy Ridyard	West Yorkshire Business Board
Councillor Peter Kilbane (Substitute)	City of York Council

**In attendance:**

Ben Still (Chief Executive)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Alan Reiss (Chief Operating Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Warburton (Executive Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Dave Haskins (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Felix Kumi-Ampofo (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Angela Taylor (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Caroline Norreys (Assistant Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Myles Larrington (Officer)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**1. Membership of the Combined Authority**

The Chair commenced the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the first Combined Authority meeting of the second mayoral term. The Chair introduced several new members, Cllr Habiban Zaman (substitute for Cllr Cathy Scott), Cllr Carole Pattison (Labour political balance member), and Cllr Peter Kilbane (substitute for Cllr Claire Douglas).

The Combined Authority considered a report on the appointments and voting rights of members to the Combined Authority. Officers introduced the report, detailing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's positions, political balance requirements and the voting rights of certain members and their substitutes.

**Resolved:**

(a) That the following actions as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted :

- (i) The position of Mayor as Chair of the Combined Authority by virtue of that office,
- (ii) The ongoing appointment of the Deputy Mayor by the Mayor,
- (iii) The appointment of Constituent Combined Authority Members and their Substitutes by the Constituent Councils and
- (iv) The appointment of the Non-Constituent Council Member and Substitute by York City Council

(b) That Mandy Ridyard be appointed as the West Yorkshire Business Board (WYBB) Member of the Combined Authority, (formerly known as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)), and Asma Iqbal as substitute WYBB Member to act in the absence of the WYBB Member.

(c) That the Non-Constituent Council Combined Authority Member may exercise one vote at any Combined Authority meeting (including any decision-making committee or sub-committee to which the Non-Constituent Council Combined Authority Member is appointed) only in respect of any decision which gives rise to a direct and significant financial liability for the Non-Constituent Council.

(d) That the Substitute Non-Constituent Council Combined Authority Member may exercise the voting rights granted to the Non-Constituent Council Combined Authority Member when acting in the absence of the Non-Constituent Council Member.

(e) That the WYBB Member may vote at any meeting of the Combined Authority (including any committee or sub-committee to which the WYBB Member was appointed) on any decision, except in matters pertaining to budget and levy setting, as well as the adoption of implementation plans attached to the Local Transport Plan specific to the Combined Authority's area, namely West Yorkshire.

(f) That the Substitute WYBB Member may exercise the voting rights granted to the WYBB Member when acting in the absence of the WYBB Member.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cathy Scott (Kirklees Council) and Claire Douglas (York Council). Cllrs Habiban Zaman (Kirklees Council) and Peter Kilbane (York Council) were in attendance as substitutes.

**3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests at the meeting.

#### **4. Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There were no items present on the agenda which required the exclusion of the press and public.

#### **5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 14 March 2024**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 14 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

#### **6. Mayor's Update**

The Chair remarked that it was the first Combined Authority meeting of her second mayoral term. She noted the pre-election period and commented that due to this several decisions had been deferred to the July meeting. The Chair expressed her pride in the role and highlighted the collective goal of improving life for West Yorkshire residents, the achievements with local partners and the commitment to new initiatives such as tackling street violence, affordable housing and economic growth. She also emphasised the importance of inclusive growth, skills enhancement and looked forward to continued collaboration with regional mayors.

#### **7. Committee Arrangements and Appointments**

The Combined Authority considered a report which sought to appoint committees, members, Chairs, and Deputy Chairs, the granting of voting rights and confirmation of Independent Persons. The report recommended the establishment and appointments for various committees, the merging of certain committees, granting voting rights, and confirming the continuation of Independent Persons' roles.

##### **Resolved:**

(a) That in relation to appointment of committees -

(i) That the following statutory committees be appointed on the terms of reference set out in the relevant Appendix attached to the report:

- Governance and Audit Committee (Appendix 1)
- Scrutiny Committee (Appendix 2).

(ii) That the following decision-making committees be appointed, on the terms of reference set out in the relevant Appendix:

- Business, Economy, and Innovation Committee (Appendix 3),
- Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee (Appendix 4),
- Culture, Heritage, and Sport Committee (Appendix 5),
- Employment and Skills Committee (Appendix 6),
- Finance, Resources, and Corporate Committee (Appendix 7),

- Place, Regeneration, and Housing Committee (Appendix 8),
  - Transport Committee (Appendix 9).
- (iii) That the proposal to merge the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee and the Employment and Skills Committee to provide for a new Economy Committee be agreed in principle and that the next steps as set out in the report be noted.
- (iv) That the arrangements made by the Mayor and Chief Constable of West Yorkshire for the Joint Independent Audit Committee be noted.
- (b) That, in relation to the appointment of committee members -
- (i) The Combined Authority appoints its members to the Governance and Audit Committee, as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report, together with Debbie Simpson as an independent member of the Governance and Audit Committee for this municipal year.
- (ii) The Combined Authority notes that, in line with their previous delegation, the Assistant Director Legal, Governance & Compliance will progress recruitment to the independent member vacancy on the Governance and Audit Committee, including convening an interview panel to make recommendations to a subsequent meeting of the Authority.
- (iii) The Combined Authority approves the recruitment of a third independent member to the Governance and Audit Committee and notes that the Assistant Director Legal, Governance & Compliance will progress recruitment in line with the existing delegation.
- (iv) The Combined Authority appoints Jocelyn Manners-Armstrong as an independent member of the Finance, Resources, and Corporate Committee for this municipal year.
- (v) The Combined Authority appoints Combined Authority Members as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report, to each of the decision-making committees.
- (vi) That the Combined Authority appoints members as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report to the scrutiny committee.
- (vii) That the Combined Authority co-opts members to committees of the Combined Authority as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report.
- (c) That in relation to voting right for committee members (in addition to any Combined Authority Member on the committee exercising one vote)
- 
- (i) That any Independent Member of the Governance and Audit Committee shall be a voting member of that committee.



- (ii) That any Independent Member of the Finance, Resources, and Corporate Committee shall be a voting member of that committee.
- (iii) That it be noted that any member of a Constituent Council appointed to an overview and scrutiny committee has one vote and that this may be exercised in their absence by their substitute.
- (iv) That any Co-optee from a Constituent Council on any ordinary decision-making committee shall be a voting member of that committee (and of any sub-committee to which they might be appointed by that committee).
- (v) That any Co-optee who is Deputy Chair of a committee shall be a voting member of that committee (and of any sub-committee to which they might be appointed by that committee).
- (d) That the Combined Authority appoints the Chairs and Deputy Chairs to committees, as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report.
- (e) That Ian Brown and Carolyn Lord continue as Independent Persons in relation to complaints concerning allegations of a breach of the Combined Authority's Members' Code of Conduct on the existing terms for remuneration, until the Combined Authority's annual meeting in 2025.

## 8. Representation on Outside Bodies

The Combined Authority considered a report on its representation on outside bodies. Officers introduced proposed appointments for the 2024/25 municipal year, including various committees for Transport for the North (TfN), Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities and NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board. Changes were noted due to the establishment of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

**Resolved:** The Combined Authority approved the appointments to the outside bodies for the municipal year 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

## 9. Officer Arrangements

The Combined Authority considered a report to approve the Officer Delegation Scheme for Non-Mayoral Functions. Officers introduced proposed changes aimed at enhancing the organisation's efficiency in delivering outcomes for West Yorkshire residents, delineating delegations to Statutory Officers and broader functional and organisational delegations to Executive Directors and senior officers which will progressed via the Chief Executive's sub-delegation scheme which will be published once finalised.

The Assistant Director for Legal, Governance and Compliance clarified that the appendix was not in tracked changes as referenced in the agenda pack. Correct versions of the appendix were distributed to members at the meeting.

**Resolved:** That the Officer Delegation Scheme in relation to Non-Mayoral Functions attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

## **10. Constitutional Arrangements**

The Combined Authority considered a report to confirm its constitutional arrangements.

**Resolved:** That the Combined Authority approves:-

- (i) The minor amendments to Constitution documents, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
- (ii) Article 10 of the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.
- (iii) The Scrutiny Standing Orders, as set out in Appendix 3 to the submitted report.
- (iv) The remaining unamended Constitution documents for the next municipal year.

## **11. Corporate Governance Code and Framework**

The Combined Authority considered a report seeking approval for the Code of Corporate Governance and noted the steps for the Annual Governance Statement. Officers highlighted revisions, organisational changes, and future plans for enhanced accountability. The Code follows the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) guidance and is annually reviewed and revised.

**Resolved:** That the Code of Corporate Governance as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved and it be noted that a draft Annual Governance Statement would be brought forward for approval to a future meeting.

## **12. Members' Allowance Scheme**

The Combined Authority considered a report in respect of the Members' Allowance Scheme, including a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) making recommendations for remuneration for members of the Scrutiny committee following a review of the Scrutiny function. Members considered the IRP report and its recommendations and also noted the proposed minor changes to the Allowance Scheme.

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the Combined Authority approves the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on remuneration for Scrutiny members as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
- (b) That the Combined Authority adopts the Members' Allowances

Scheme, as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report, as amended for the municipal year 2024/2025 to reflect matters outlined in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4 of the submitted report.

### **13. Calendar of Meetings 2024-25**

The Combined Authority considered a report setting out a proposed calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

**Resolved:** That the calendar of meetings of the Combined Authority and its committees for 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

### **14. Bradford Interchange Update**

The Combined Authority considered a report on Bradford Interchange bus station, seeking delegated authority for the Chief Executive to approve change requests. Officers introduced the report, detailing the station's closure, ongoing structural issues, disruption impacts, investment plans, and steps to address public safety and support users amid continued closure.

The Chair referred to the disruption caused by the closure and acknowledged the frustration felt by passengers and businesses. Efforts to decide on the Interchange's future, emphasising public safety, were ongoing. Progress on potential temporary station options were highlighted, with a commitment to continue investing in Bradford.

Members discussed the disruption caused by the Interchange closure. Ongoing efforts focused on determining the Interchange's future with the priority on public safety and investing in Bradford. Cllr Hinchcliffe emphasised the need for a swift resolution and proactive planning regardless of the survey outcomes. A member highlighted the urgent need to address accessibility issues affecting bus users, noting difficulties such as buses parked inconveniently and challenges for visually impaired passengers. The Chair acknowledged operational challenges and committed to resolving bus parking issues. The Executive Director for Transport agreed to update members on staff deployment and operational plans. All members concurred on the need for transparent communication and support for affected residents.

**Resolved:** That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Noted the report, endorsed the proposed next steps to better support travellers, and noted that options relating to the future of Bradford Interchange bus station would be presented to the September meeting of the Combined Authority.
- (ii) Delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Transport Committee, approval of change requests concerning the Bradford Interchange Station Access scheme.

### **15. Project Approvals**

### **15a (i) CRSTS Safe Roads**

The Combined Authority approved that:

- (i) The CRSTS Safe Roads Programme, for the 2024/25 financial year (Year 3), proceeded through Decision Points 2 and 4, and delivery continued until the end of 2024/25, with work commencing on the development of the strategic outline case for Year 4.
- (ii) Full approval to delivery costs of £6,014,643 were approved for the CRSTS Safe Roads Programme (Year 3). The total allocation up to the end of Year 3 was £16,661,643.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into addendums to the existing funding agreements with the five partner councils to include the expenditure of £6,014,643 for the 2024/25 financial year, with up to £1,224,000 allocated to City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, £340,000 to Calderdale Council, £925,000 to Kirklees Council, £2,775,643 to Leeds Council, and £750,000 to Wakefield Council.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

### **15a (ii) TCF Horsefair Gateway**

The Combined Authority approved that, subject to the conditions set by the Executive Director of Transport:

- (i) The TCF Horsefair Gateway scheme proceeded through decision points 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Full approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £2,595,787. The total scheme value was £3,979,770.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into a funding agreement with Wakefield Council for expenditure up to £2,595,787.
- (iv) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

### **15a (iii) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund Phase 1**

The Combined Authority approved that, subject to conditions set by the Executive Director of Transport:

- (i) The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund (Phase 1) proceeded through decision points 2-4 (business justification) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).

- (ii) Full approval was given to the Combined Authority's contribution of £1,500,000. The total scheme value was £4,219,025.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into funding agreements with West Yorkshire District Partners for expenditure of up to £282,000 each with Bradford Council, Calderdale Council, Kirklees Council, Leeds City Council, and Wakefield Council.
- (iv) Approval of the LEVI Phase 2 Business Case was delegated to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive.
- (v) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

#### **15a (iv) LEVI Capability Fund**

The Combined Authority approved that:

- (i) Full approval to the change request to the LEVI Capability Fund, increasing the total scheme cost from £1,316,000 to £1,502,709 (an increase of £186,709), was approved.
- (ii) Funding Agreement Letters were entered into with West Yorkshire District Partners as follows: Bradford Council received £235,995 (an increase of £51,515), Calderdale Council received £232,318 (an increase of £37,318), Kirklees Council received £238,757 (an increase of £59,939), and Wakefield Council received £232,939 (an increase of £37,936).
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

#### **15a (v) Active Travel Capability Funding 2024**

The Combined Authority approved the following change request:

- (i) Full approval for additional funding of £2,518,865 from the Active Travel Capability Fund 2024 was added to the ATF4 programme, increasing the indicative approval to the Combined Authority's contribution from £24,309,438 to £26,828,303. The total scheme value was £26,828,303.
- (ii) The DP5 completion of delivery date for the Active Travel Capability Fund 2024 was extended from December 2024 to December 2025. Activity 5 (Delivery) continued.
- (iii) The Combined Authority entered into new grant funding agreements or addendums to the existing funding agreements with each partner council for the following amounts from the Active Travel Capability

Fund 2024: Bradford Council received up to £412,000, Calderdale Council received up to £157,600, Kirklees Council received up to £315,800, Leeds City Council received up to £599,400, and Wakefield Council received up to £253,300.

- (iv) A delegation to the Executive Director of Transport was approved to allow allocated funding amounts released as part of this decision to be amended as required.
- (v) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

### **15a (vi) Delegated Decisions**

The Combined Authority approved funding for several transport projects to move forward:

- (i) **Leeds City Bus Station Roof:** £375,000 to progress planning (total project value £3.5 million, fully funded by the Combined Authority).
- (ii) **Dewsbury Town Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements:** Up to £10.25 million from the Combined Authority for a £12.2 million project.
- (iii) **South Bradford Park and Ride and Expressway:** £12.09 million from the Combined Authority for a £33.7 million project.
- (iv) **Bus Fares and Network Plan:** £44.3 million from the Combined Authority for a multi-year plan with the total value still under estimation.
- (v) **Corridor Improvement Programme:** Holmfirth Town Centre: Up to £10.2 million from the Combined Authority for a £10.5 million project.
- (vi) **Wakefield City Centre Bus, Cycle and Walking Improvements:** An additional £297,680 to progress planning (total project value £2.7 million, fully funded by the Combined Authority).
- (vii) Several infrastructure projects, such as Park & Ride facilities, safety improvements, and bus route upgrades, were completed, totalling £183.6 million in funding from the Combined Authority. Additionally, additional funding was approved for Wakefield's transport improvement scheme. Note: This summary does not include the funding details for all the closed projects.

### **15b Project Approvals – Investment Priority 3 Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure - West Yorkshire Health Innovation and Digital Tech Investment Zone Programme Update**

The Combined Authority approved that:

- (i) Authority was delegated to the Combined Authority's Section 73 Officer to sign and accept the Memorandum of Understanding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the West Yorkshire Investment Zone Programme.
- (ii) Authority was delegated to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive, in consultation with either the Chair of the Business, Economy and Innovation Committee or the Chair of the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee, depending on relevance, to remove and accept new projects onto the Investment Zones Programme pipeline.
- (iii) Future approvals were made in accordance with the assurance pathways and approval routes outlined in this report, subject to remaining within tolerances.

## 16. Local Growth Plan

The Combined Authority considered a report on the development of a Local Growth Plan for West Yorkshire. The report detailed the plan's framework, priorities for addressing regional challenges and alignment with local and national opportunities. The final draft was set to be presented in July, with a launch event planned in Autumn.

Members endorsed the plan as a catalyst for business engagement and regional transformation. They recognised the plan's grounded approach, focusing on transport and sustainability. Members emphasised increased investment in skills and the role of universities in research partnerships. They stressed inclusive regional development and cross-Combined Authority collaboration for broad Yorkshire benefits. Members highlighted potential trans-regional growth and stressed the significance of cluster developments, despite potential challenges in measuring economic impacts.

**Resolved:** The Combined Authority noted the proposed draft framework for the Local Growth Plan set out in Appendix 1, provided feedback, and endorsed a full narrative to be produced from the framework document to be agreed at the July meeting.

## 17. Devolved Adult Education Budget

The Combined Authority considered a report which provided an update on the progress of the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) and sought approval to retain current rules on prior attainment. Officers introduced the report, highlighting positive performance in skill development and employment outcomes and outlined procurement and budget plans for 2024-2025.

**Resolved:** The Combined Authority approved the recommendation to retain the current rules on prior attainment and to deviate from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules for the current year, rather than follow the national changes in line with priorities outlined in the AEB strategy. This decision would be reviewed and revisited ahead of the 2025/26 academic

year.

## **18. Corporate Delegations**

The Combined Authority considered a report on extending delegation to the Chief Executive for creating and appointing Director-level roles, crucial for the Authority's priorities.

The Chief Executive clarified that officers would seek confirmation during Combined Authority meetings or through the delegation if timing was an issue. Members were assured of participation on selection panels. After identifying suitable candidates, officers would finalise appointments and report back to the Combined Authority.

**Resolved:** That the Combined Authority agreed:

- (i) The delegation approved at the Combined Authority meeting on 14 March 2024, enabling the Chief Executive to create, revise, and appoint director-level roles, was extended to the end of the current calendar year (31 December 2024).
- (ii) This delegation was to be exercised in consultation with the Mayor and only following engagement with Combined Authority members.

## **19. Minutes for Information**

The Combined Authority noted a report which provided details of published minutes and notes since the last meeting.

## **20. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to be held on Thursday 25 July 2024.



**Report title:** ‘Environment Strategy: Everyday Life’

*(Key Words: Environment, Sustainability, Top-Tier, Strategy)*

<b>Council Date</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Council Member:</b>	Cllr Ahmed – Environment and Highways
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	Yes
<p><b>Purpose of Report:</b>                  To note the contents and ambitions of the ‘Environment Strategy: Everyday Life’ as developed by a process of co-design with people who live work and study in Kirklees.                   To seek Council approval for the adoption of the ‘Environment Strategy: Everyday Life’.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations:</b>                  Following the recommendation by Cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, for Council to adopt the Environment Strategy and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the Partnership Pledge and associated monitoring and evaluation process via the Environment Strategy Partnership Group.</li> <li>• Establish the governance structure, associated board and necessary policies and procedures to effectively govern the implementation of the strategy within the Council.</li> <li>• Deliver any future minor alternations for the strategy.</li> <li>• Meet the ambition (targets and objectives) outlined within the ‘Environment Strategy, Everyday life.’</li> <li>• Apply for and accept external (i.e., non-council) funding for the implementation of the partnership pledge process and any actions associated with achieving the strategies targets, in accordance with the Council’s Financial Procedure Rules.</li> <li>• Collect and analyse data for the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, with the support of necessary service areas which hold, or have responsibility for collecting this information.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>                  Cabinet recommend adoption of the strategy by the Council, as to achieve ‘Our Vision’ and ‘Shared Outcomes’ outlined within the Council Plan 2024 / 2025, alongside the Council Leaders priority for ‘delivering a greener Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency’, we need to address the environmental challenges we face. Our social and economic ambitions are all underpinned by the environment – it’s the air we breathe, the resources we use, the food we eat, where we live, work, and relax.</p> <p>Cabinet recommend delegating authority to the relevant Executive Director to help translate the strategy from paper into on-the ground action and impact. These steps are necessary to effectively embed practices into Council operations, track progress against the ambition of the strategy whilst influencing, guiding, and encouraging partners across the district to take action.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Implication:</b>                  There is no direct capital investment associated with this strategy.</p>	

The management and delivery of the strategy will require dedicated human resource within the Council. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining external funding to 'capitalise' this capacity is being considered.

The strategy will also help coordinate the existing internal and external resources currently being used for environmental workstreams, enabling us to maximise resource efficiency through the identification of gaps and the duplication of effort.

**Date signed off by Executive Director & name:**

**David Shepherd** Executive Director of Place,  
12<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?**

**Kevin Mulvaney**, Service Director Finance (S151 Officer). 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2024

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?**

**Samantha Lawton** Service Director, Legal, Governance & Commissioning. 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2024

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** All ward councillors were consulted via their political party group meetings on two occasions: December 2022 and March 2023. More details on this consultation can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes

## 1. Executive summary

### 1.1. Context to the strategy:

The 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life' is a high-level framework to help inform and provide direction for action across the district, not just within Kirklees Council.

This strategy does not just look at climate change, but the broader environmental picture – addressing the ecological and the climate emergencies, whilst tackling social and economic challenges through environmental action.

It is a reflection of the people who live work and study in Kirklees, having been developed via a process of co-design, involving 1039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions, and community groups across Kirklees.

Partners were engaged with on multiple occasions, helping evolve the content over time to deliver a strong, ambitious, and successful strategy for all, that is both realistic and achievable.

### 1.2. What is the strategy's ambition?

The strategy's vision is to: *"Make the environment a priority in all decision-making, whether big or small. We want to harness the power of the natural environment to enhance the lives of the people who live work and study in Kirklees, fostering healthy, happy, and better-connected communities."*

This vision is encompassed within four themes, which contain 12 headline targets and 31 wider objectives, all underpinned by our three always-on priorities. (see Appendix 1 to this report for detail).

### **1.3. Why is the strategy needed?**

The environment underpins everything. Our survival and wellbeing depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. It is our home. It gives us the air we breathe, places to relax and resources for our businesses and jobs. To achieve the social and economic ambition of our Council Plan 24/25 and the other top tier strategies, we must also tackle environmental issues.

Addressing environmental sustainability is also what people who live work and study in Kirklees told us matters to them - they care about those broader environmental issues and its day-to-day problems.

This strategy builds upon the Climate Emergency declared by Kirklees in 2019 and will help address the Council Leader's key priority for the Council in "Delivering a greener and healthier Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency" by taking a bigger picture approach to environmental issues. Reducing our carbon emissions and building resilience to severe weather events are a vital part of this strategy, but it also factors in the ecological emergency and how we can use environmental action to tackle broader social and economic challenges.

This strategy also helps to address key environment targets set by national government, such as the Environment Act 2021, whilst also laying foundations within Kirklees Council for the impending legislative reporting requirements on biodiversity, as set out in the 2023 update to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

### **1.4. What will the impact of this strategy be?**

By tackling all our environmental challenges, we can improve the health, wealth, and happiness to our residents.

The strategy is structured by four themes ('Closing the Loop', 'Bringing it Home', 'Nurturing Nature' and 'Kirklees on the Move') which represent the areas and activities where action and change would have the biggest positive impact on our environment, society, and economy.

Our three-always on priorities ('Sustainable Economic Development', 'Resilient Futures', 'Environment for All') represent the benefits that can be experienced by taking environmental action.

This strategy will help develop a greater resilience of our people and places to future challenges, a just transition with a focus on equity, make the environment accessible to all.

It will also help save people money, which is more important than ever given the heightened need for greater energy resilience and the resultant impact this has on people's wallets.

## **2. Information required to take a decision.**

### **2.1. Background**

The Strategy is one of the council's four top-tier strategies, sitting alongside the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Inclusive Communities Framework, and the Inclusive Economies Strategy.

Each of these top-tier strategies support the others to achieve the overall vision of the Council Plan 2024/2025. Success in one, translates into success in another.

This strategy is also key in helping achieve the 'Clean and Green' shared outcome within 'Our Council Plan 2024/25', which aims to "Ensure people in Kirklees experience a high quality, clean, sustainable and green environment".

Furthermore, this strategy is also fundamental in achieving one of the Council Leader's key priorities for the Council – "Delivering a greener and healthier Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency".

## **2.2. Cost breakdown**

To effectively manage and embed this strategy within Council operations, dedicated human resource within the Council will be required. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified external funding to 'capitalise' this capacity is being considered.

The strategy also aims to co-ordinate existing resource and actions across partners and within the Council, maximising resource use and community capital.

The approval of this strategy will not result in a direct need for capital investment.

Action that stems from this strategy – delivered through the action plans and policies that will feed into it, will also focus on cost-positive measures (ultimately action that saves or even generates residents and the Council money), alongside cost-neutral (i.e. invest to save action).

## **2.3. Timescale**

The strategy sets ambitious targets with dates to drive progress. While some of these targets extend to 2038 and 2050, it will be essential to establish interim / steppingstone targets that reflect the urgency of immediate actions and facilitate effective monitoring of progress. These interim / steppingstone targets will be incorporated within the associate plans, policy and strategies that sit beneath the top tier Environment Strategy.

By implementing both long-term targets and interim milestones, we can effectively drive progress towards the ultimate vision of environmental sustainability in Kirklees, whilst tracking and evolving our approach along the way to ensure maximum effectiveness.

The timeframe of the decision-making pathway for the Strategy through Kirklees Council governance is set out in section 6 of this report.

## **2.4. Expected impact/outcomes, benefits & risks (how they will be managed)**

The positive impacts and outcomes from this strategy include:

- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing for our residents, as the Strategy promotes a cleaner and healthier environment.
- The creation and development of green jobs, fostering economic growth while ensuring a sustainable workforce equipped with green skills and knowledge.
- Enhanced social engagement, cohesion, and inclusivity across all our communities and places. The Strategy aims to create spaces and initiatives that bring people together, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.
- Inspiring and empowering our young people, providing them with opportunities to actively engage in environmental initiatives and becoming champions of sustainability.
- Establishing a renewed reputation for our district as a green leader, where our actions speak louder than words. This will enhance our standing among other communities and attract attention as a place committed to sustainable practices.
- Saving people money, addressing fuel poverty, and offering value for money in delivery.
- Co-ordinating and bringing together environmental activity across Kirklees, bringing people together under a shared vision, focusing work, generating maximum value and impact for the district.

Through the careful management of risks and proactive measures via the monitoring, evaluation and reporting process outlined within the strategy, any potential risks associated with implementing the strategy will be effectively mitigated.

## **2.5. Evaluation**

As detailed within the strategy, the delivery of its ambition (targets and objectives) will be monitored and evaluated through a pre-agreed process, involving partners via the Environment Strategy Partnership Group.

## **2.6. Sustainability**

Sustainability lies at the heart of this strategy, driving its vision and objectives. The strategy recognises that addressing environmental sustainability in Kirklees goes beyond just minimising negative impacts. Instead, it focuses on maximising the wider co-benefits that sustainable practices bring to our community.

The vision, themes, and targets are firmly grounded in the principles of sustainability. They are designed to create a balance between environmental, social, and economic considerations. By aligning with the three always-on priorities of sustainable economic development, resilient futures, and environment for all, the Strategy ensures a holistic approach that promotes long-term sustainability.

## **2.7. Services & agencies involved.**

The development of this Strategy has been a collaborative and inclusive journey, involving council colleagues, elected members, the Kirklees Climate Commission (KCC), partner organisations and community groups.

This collaborative approach fosters a shared sense of responsibility and ownership, whilst ensures that all voices are heard, and that the Strategy reflects the diverse perspectives and expertise within our community.

In total, the co-design process incorporated 1039 residents and 549 representatives of organisations, involving 14 separate occasions of engagement with Council Colleagues and Ward Councillors, 8 with the Kirklees Climate Commission and 9 with residents.

Implementing the Strategy will require concerted efforts from all sectors of the council, as well as active participation from local businesses and residents. It is through this collective action that we can drive meaningful change, promoting sustainable practices, and nurturing a thriving and resilient Kirklees for current and future generations. We need to work together to make a lasting and positive impact on our environment and community.

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Working with people**

This strategy is a partnership document at its core and recognises that we all have a part to play in delivering successful environmental sustainability. That is why the development of this strategy has been centred around a co-design process, involving the people who live, work and study in Kirklees, enabling the targets and objectives to be a reflection of the thoughts and ambitions of Kirklees in the round.

Our commitment to 'Shared by People' has meant that we have actively sought input from the people of Kirklees to help shape this Strategy and we have followed the 'Working Alongside' and the 'Kirklees Inclusive Communities Framework' guidance.

### **3.2 Working with partners**

As a continuation of our co-design process, to successfully deliver this ambitious strategy we need collaborative participation, involvement, and ownership from partners across Kirklees. That is why we encourage people, organisations, and businesses across Kirklees to sign up and pledge their support to deliver our collective ambition for a greener Kirklees.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, we have 10 signed pre-approval pledges: Home-Start Kirklees, River Holme Connections, Moors for the Future Partnership, Uniform Exchange, Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership, Greenhead College, Success 2 Recovery, Kirklees Active Leisure, Kirklees Climate Commission and Third Sector Leaders.

### **3.3 Place based working**

The strategy acknowledges the different needs of communities in Kirklees and promotes a tailored approach to address specific environmental challenges. By adopting this strategy, the Council can create localised solutions, engage communities effectively, address disparities and promote fairness.

The co-design process for the strategy ensured that all 'places' across Kirklees were worked with. During the citizen sessions undertaken, specific consideration was given to those places and communities which are more commonly under-represented in processes of engagement – as emphasised by the resident survey.

Adopting a place-based approach in the delivery of the 'Environment Strategy; Everyday, Life' can help foster a thriving community by aligning environmental initiatives with each area's unique characteristics and aspirations. It can help ensure a sustainable future that benefits all residents in Kirklees.

### **3.4 Climate change and air quality**

Having a positive impact climate change and air quality is fundamental to the 'Environment Strategy; Everyday Life.' The strategy incorporates the Councils 'Net Zero and Climate Ready by 2038' targets, aligning its vision and targets towards achieving the objectives set out within the Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan (as approved by Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022).

As a core aspect of the Councils Clean and Green shared outcome, improving air quality is considered one of the expected impacts from implementing this strategy. This is demonstrated by the dedicated objective for air quality within the 'Kirklees on the move' theme, being: *"Continue to reduce air pollutant emissions and subsequent improved air quality for all in Kirklees. (RF) (E4A)"*

### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

The four themes and three always-on priorities within the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life' can help to create environments that prioritise the well-being and development of children, providing them with healthier, safer, and more sustainable surroundings to grow and thrive. They support the "Best Start in Life" and "Aspire and Achieve" outcomes.

### **3.6 Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications of approving this strategy on the people who live work and study in Kirklees.

However, indirect financial implications will be seen from the action that stems from this strategy – delivered through the action plans and policies that will feed into it. This includes reduced energy bills by improving energy efficiency of buildings, reduced cost to our health services by improving air quality, access to greenspace and enabling active travel modes, and a reduction in recovery costs from severe weather events by helping to improve the resilience of our people and places to climate change.

The Council is not required to commit any capital investment by approving this strategy.

To effectively manage and embed the strategy within Council operations, dedicated human resource will be required. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified external funding to ‘capitalise’ this capacity is being considered.

Various funding streams available at a regional, national, and international level will also be explored to help Kirklees maximise opportunities for securing financial support, grants, and partnerships to implement the strategy effectively.

It is also important to note that as a top-tier strategy, the support of all areas of the Council is required to help deliver it successfully – the resource implications and follow-on action should not be held by one service area alone.

### **3.7 Legal implications**

There are no direct legal implications or binding issues associated with this strategy.

The adoption of the non-statutory Environment Strategy – Everyday Life as part of the Council’s Policy Framework under Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution is a decision for full Council.

The council must have regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and Integrated Impact assessment before making any decision to recommend adoption and adopt the Environment Strategy.

Local authorities have a general power of competence to, “do anything that individuals may do” subject to restrictions or limitations in other legislation (section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and acting reasonably in public law terms. This will authorise the strategy.

The UK legal framework is set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended in 2019) and commits the UK to achieving “net zero” by 2050 by placing a legal duty on the Secretary of State to ensure that by 2050 the net zero carbon account is reduced by 100% compared to 1990 levels. There are no legal target obligations on local authorities. The Council’s climate emergency declaration improves on the UK 2050 target. However, there are numerous government plans and strategies which emphasise the importance of action by local authorities which are key to understanding the available funding, challenges, and opportunities, including the ten Point Plan for Green Industrial Revolution (Nov 2020); the Heat and Building Strategy (2021); the Net Zero strategy (2021); and the British Energy Security Strategy (2022).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) imposes duties on the Council in relation to biodiversity when exercising its functions.

The strategy could indirectly influence council policy or plans with legal status in the future, such as the Local Plan, which would give consideration to strategies such as this.

### **3.8 Other (e.g. risk, integrated impact assessment or human resources)**

#### **3.8.1 Risk**

The approval of this strategy will have no direct impact on the Councils Corporate or Service Area specific risk.

The implementation of this Environment Strategy would function as a mitigating control / action to 'Key Corporate Risk 8 – Climate Change', by helping to embed best-practice environmental and climate change thinking into policies, procedures and decision making throughout the council to reduce risk and address challenges.

The delivery of the strategy will have no direct impact on the Armed Forces Covenant. By delivering against our Always-on priorities and working towards a just transition, action stemming from the strategy will generate benefits that the Armed Forces Community would be able to access.

#### **3.8.1. Integrated impact assessment (IIA)**

An IIA has been completed as part of the development of the strategy, the detail of which can be found on the Council website. [Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/IntegratedImpactAssessments-IntegratedImpactAssessment). The case I.D is IIA549496696.

#### **3.8.2. Human resources**

The management and delivery of the Environment Strategy Partnership Group will require dedicated human resource within the Council. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified future resources is being considered.

The Environment & Climate Change Service Area has had success in obtaining external funding to capitalise full-time council officer roles, through mechanisms such as West Yorkshire Combined Authority, which is an option that will be explored for the strategy.

### **4. Consultation**

As part of the development of this Cabinet Report, the following colleagues were consulted, completing a review of this document and its Appendices.

- Strategy & Policy Team: Completed by Nick Howe (Strategy & Policy Service Manager)
- Portfolio Holder Cllr Aafaq Butt on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2024.
- Executive Leadership Team: 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2024
- Executive Board: 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2024
- Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny: 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2024.
- Legal Team: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- Finance Team: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024
- Cabinet: 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2024
- Portfolio Holder Cllr Munir Ahmed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.
- Council: Attendance on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

The Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny Panel recommended.

1. It be made clear in the strategy that the projected cost of transition was a combination of public and private investment.
2. The reference to high inflation rates be revisited prior to Cabinet to ensure current information was included at the time of consideration.
3. It be referenced in the Strategy that reliance on fossil fuels increased vulnerability to national inflation pressures.
4. Elected members continued to be engaged in the delivery of the strategy.
5. The language used in relation to actions and targets be reassessed to ensure the information was accessible as a public facing document.



6. A glossary setting out definitions of key terms and acronyms be included at the close of the strategy to increase accessibility.
7. The Panel's comments in relation to revisiting targets including (i) clarity of language (ii) influence and impact of individual behaviour change and (iii) scope for delivery be reflected upon and reshared with the Panel as an additional stage in the flightpath.
8. Regular updates on progress be provided to the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel during delivery of the strategy.

A response to these recommendations was provided by Officers to the Scrutiny Panel via e-mail, accompanied by an updated, tracked-changed version of the Environment Strategy report to demonstrate where revisions were made.

## 5. Engagement

This strategy has been co-designed with the people who live, work and study within Kirklees, enabling it to be a reflection of the thoughts and ambitions of Kirklees in the round, and not just those of the council. This includes:

- **Tailored for Kirklees:** Partners asked for the Environment strategy to take a 'tailored for Kirklees' approach, rather than follow an existing technical off-the-shelf model, to enable the unique characteristics of Kirklees and its people, to stand out.
- **Designed with, not for:** Involving 1039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions, and community groups across Kirklees. Partners were engaged with on multiple occasions, helping evolve the content over time to deliver a strong, ambitious, and successful strategy for all.
- **Engage those who have not yet had their say:** We engaged community groups from across Kirklees who are not commonly involved in the process of helping create a Kirklees-wide strategy. We gave everyone a voice, developed relationships, and sought to incorporate a wider variety of perspectives.

As part of the strategies co-design process, all of Kirklees' Ward Councillors were given an opportunity to be engaged on two-occasions, via their political party group meetings (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green and Independents), held both in-person and virtually.

All ward Councillors were firstly given the opportunity to comment on and influence the ambition outlined within the strategy, before then being fed-back the changes made because of their input, confirming the outcome.

## 6. Options

### 6.1 Options considered

The options considered for recommendation are:

- To recommend that this strategy should be adopted.
- To recommend that this strategy should not be adopted.

### 6.2 Reasons for recommended option

By adopting this strategy, we will demonstrate straight that, as a Council and as a District, Kirklees takes Environmental issues and challenges seriously and are committed to achieving the Clean and Green Shared outcome in 'Our Council Plan 2024 / 2025', the Council leaders' key priority for the Council to deliver a greener Kirklees and lead on the Climate Emergency, alongside addressing the Ecological emergency.

The strategy will also help generate numerous co-benefits for the people who live work and study in Kirklees, supporting our social and economic ambitions.

## **7. Next steps and timelines**

The strategy will be officially launched shortly after approval by Council. This launch will activate our communication strategy and dedicated webpage on the Council website, the publication of the Partnership Pledge, alongside the Councils internal 'Learning & Organisational Development Module' on the strategy.

## **8. Contact officer**

Robert Green – Senior Climate Change Officer

Robert.green@kirklees.gov.uk

Int: 71984 Ext: 01484 221 000

## **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

The Council declared a 'climate emergency motion' in January 2019 and established the cross-party Climate Emergency Working Party (CEWP) to identify practical measures to reduce emissions across the district. Found here:

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=10123>

A Climate Emergency was first declared for Kirklees at the Council Meeting of January 2019 considering growing global awareness of the detrimental effects of climate change on people and the environment worldwide. Found here:

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=10123>

Kirklees council has not before had a co-designed top tier environment strategy.

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix 1: 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life' Report

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment: [Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

## **11. Service Director responsible**

Katherine Armitage – Service Director Environment and Climate Change

Katherine.Armitage@kirklees.gov.uk

Int: 75302 Ext: 01484 221 000



# Environment Strategy

Everyday, Life.

## PARTNERSHIP FOREWORD

We are proud to present Kirklees' new 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life.' This strategy is not just a document, but a collective vision that serves as a guiding light for a greener, more resilient future for our people and places.

As we stand on the precipice of unprecedented global challenges, it has never been more important to commit to a more environmentally sustainable Kirklees.

In an era defined by climate change, biodiversity loss and resource depletion, collaborative action and partnership working is critical. Together, we recognise that addressing these challenges requires unity, determination, and innovative solutions.

Our collective of partner organisations, representing diverse sectors across Kirklees, has come together to co-create this strategy. Underlining our shared commitment to making a difference.

The foundation of this strategy is the belief that a thriving environment is inextricably linked to the health and prosperity of our communities. We recognise that the pursuit of environmental sustainability is not just a matter of choice, but a fundamental responsibility. By working together, we aim to close the loop, nurture nature, improve our buildings and homes and get people and goods moving across Kirklees in a greener, more sustainable way.

As partners, we acknowledge that our journey towards sustainable development is not without its challenges. It requires investment, adaptability, and a commitment to learn from our successes and failures in equal measure. By working together across all sectors, sharing knowledge, building on our existing work, raising awareness, and cascading key messages and information across our networks and the local community, we will be better equipped to tackle these challenges head-on.

We invite you to join us on this journey. Together, we can create a future that is not only sustainable but also vibrant, thriving and enriched by our natural surroundings. It is our shared legacy, our gift to current and future generations.

[Kirklees Active Leisure](#)

[Kirklees Climate Commission](#)

[Support 2 Recovery](#)

[Home-Start Kirklees](#)

[Greenhead College](#)

[Uniform Exchange](#)

[Moors for the Future](#)

## COUNCIL FOREWORD

Welcome to our 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life.' The goal of this strategy is to outline our collective vision for the environment and provide a framework for its delivery.

Since declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, we have taken important steps to become Net Zero and Climate Ready by 2038, demonstrated by Kirklees Council winning the ['Award for Impact'](#) from the Royal Meteorological Society and an A grade for environmental reporting from CDP.

However, we recognise that our ambitions for Kirklees need to go further than the climate emergency. We need to focus on broader environmental issues too, such as the ecological emergency, while also generating benefits for our residents and our places.

The environment underpins everything we do. Without a thriving healthy environment, all the other plans we have for a better future for Kirklees cannot succeed. We are making the environment a priority.

By taking action to improve the environment, we will generate broader benefits such as improving our health and wellbeing, stimulating sustainable economic development, and creating a more inclusive society.

Co-designed with people who live, work and study in Kirklees, this document becomes the Council's fourth top-tier strategy, giving the planet a seat at the table. The strategy brings together and helps coordinate the environmental work partners are already delivering across Kirklees and identifies new work to deliver a sustainable Kirklees.

Through our co-design journey, the structure of this strategy has evolved to become a reflection of the ambition, hope and expectation of people, organisations, and business across Kirklees.

But our joint working doesn't stop with co-design. We intend to co-deliver too. We have developed a partnership pledge open to all people, organisations, and businesses across Kirklees.

I invite you to pledge your support to help achieve our vision and ambition for a greener Kirklees. Together we can make a difference.

**Councillor Munir Ahmed**



**Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways**

# Everyday, Life

## An Environment Strategy for Kirklees

One of our four 'top-tier' priority strategies



This means the environment will be considered as a central priority in every decision we make.

**Why?** Because we know that our wellbeing and our economy, depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. **It underpins everything.**

### Our vision is of...

Making the environment a priority in all decision-making, whether big or small. We want to harness the power of the natural environment to enhance the lives of the people who live work and study in Kirklees, fostering healthy, happy, and better-connected communities.

Our strategy has four thematic areas...



**Nurturing Nature:** Green spaces, nature recovery and biodiversity.



**Bringing it Home:** Good buildings, clean energy and more sustainable neighbourhoods.



**Closing the Loop:** Taking radical action on circularity in resources.



**Kirklees on the Move:** Better, greener transport options for all.

And three 'always-on' priorities...

**Sustainable Economic Development:** Supporting progressive, sustainable opportunities for prosperity.

**Resilient Futures:** Greater ecological, social, and economic resilience, including strong action on climate adaptation, particularly to protect the most vulnerable.

**Environment for All:** Supporting fairness, greater inclusion, diversity and accessibility.

Delivering co-benefits of...

- Better physical, mental health and wellbeing for residents.
- The provision and development of green jobs, skills and improved productivity.
- Greater social engagement, cohesions and inclusivity across all our communities and places.
- Providing inspiration to and encouraging greater engagement with our young people.
- A renewed reputation as a green district, where our actions speak just as loudly as our words.

### Our 12 headline targets



Zero avoidable waste by 2038.



Growing the sharing economy in Kirklees to be a national leader.



Nature in Recovery by 2030.



All degraded peatland to be in restoration by 2038.



Increase Kirklees tree canopy cover to 21% by 2050.



All people who live work and study in Kirklees to have access to high quality green and blue and space within 5-10 minutes / 500m walk by 2038.



Good buildings - all buildings in Kirklees to be energy efficient, at a minimum of EPC C by 2030.



Net Zero Energy supply by 2038.



Sustainable neighbourhoods programme launched by 2026.



60% of journeys within Kirklees to be Sustainable Journeys by 2030.



100% of fleet vehicles to be zero carbon by 2038



All of Kirklees homes to be within 1km of public transport connection point via safe pedestrian route by 2038.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Kirklees, we know that the environment matters. Without a thriving, healthy environment all the other plans we have for a better future cannot succeed.

The environment **underpins everything**.

It is our home. It gives us the air we breathe, places to relax, resources for our businesses and jobs. It's where nature can thrive.

**We want to make sure the environment is a priority.** That's why we have made this a top tier strategy alongside the 'Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy', 'Inclusive Communities Framework' and 'Inclusive Economy Strategy'.

Our top tier strategies are interconnected and cover all areas of sustainable development – environmental, economic, and social. Together, they are helping us to **deliver a sustainable Kirklees**.

We know the environment is not something any one organisation can address alone. That's why this strategy has been co-designed, bringing together council officers, key partners and people who live work and study in Kirklees.

As a result, this strategy **encompasses the environmental work delivered by Kirklees Council and partners** and **captures new, ambitious ideas** for the future. Ideas that will take our action to a new level.

We will deliver the strategy in the same way we have produced it – together. Like all our top tier strategies this is a **partnership document**.

## WHAT IS OUR AMBITION

The ambition of our strategy is encompassed within a **vision and four themes** which contain **12 headline targets** and **31 objectives** all underpinned by our **three always-on priorities**.

### VISION

We are committed to making **the environment a priority in all decision-making**, whether big or small, to create a flourishing and sustainable Kirklees. We want to harness the power of the natural environment to **enhance the lives of the people who live work and study in Kirklees**, fostering **healthy, happy, and better-connected communities**.

To deliver this strategy, we will work together as **a partnership**. Our commitment is to ensure that Kirklees is a place where it's easier than ever to make clean, green choices and that **fairness** is a factor in the decisions we make.

When it comes to the environment, we all have a part to play and this is **one strategy, for all**.

## THEMES

Our strategy is structured in four themes:



**Closing the Loop:** Taking radical action on circularity and resources.



**Nurturing Nature:** Green spaces, nature recovery and biodiversity.



**Bringing it Home:** Good buildings, clean energy, and more sustainable neighbourhoods.



**Kirklees on the Move:** Better, greener, and more affordable transport options for all.

## ALWAYS-ON PRIORITIES

Each of the four themes is underpinned by our ‘**Always-on**’ priorities. These are the three principles by which we have developed and will deliver the strategy:



**Sustainable Economic Development (SED)** how the Kirklees environment strategy only supports progressive, sustainable opportunities for prosperity and wealth creation across the borough, and actively seeks to counter short term economic growth plans that work against our nature and climate targets.



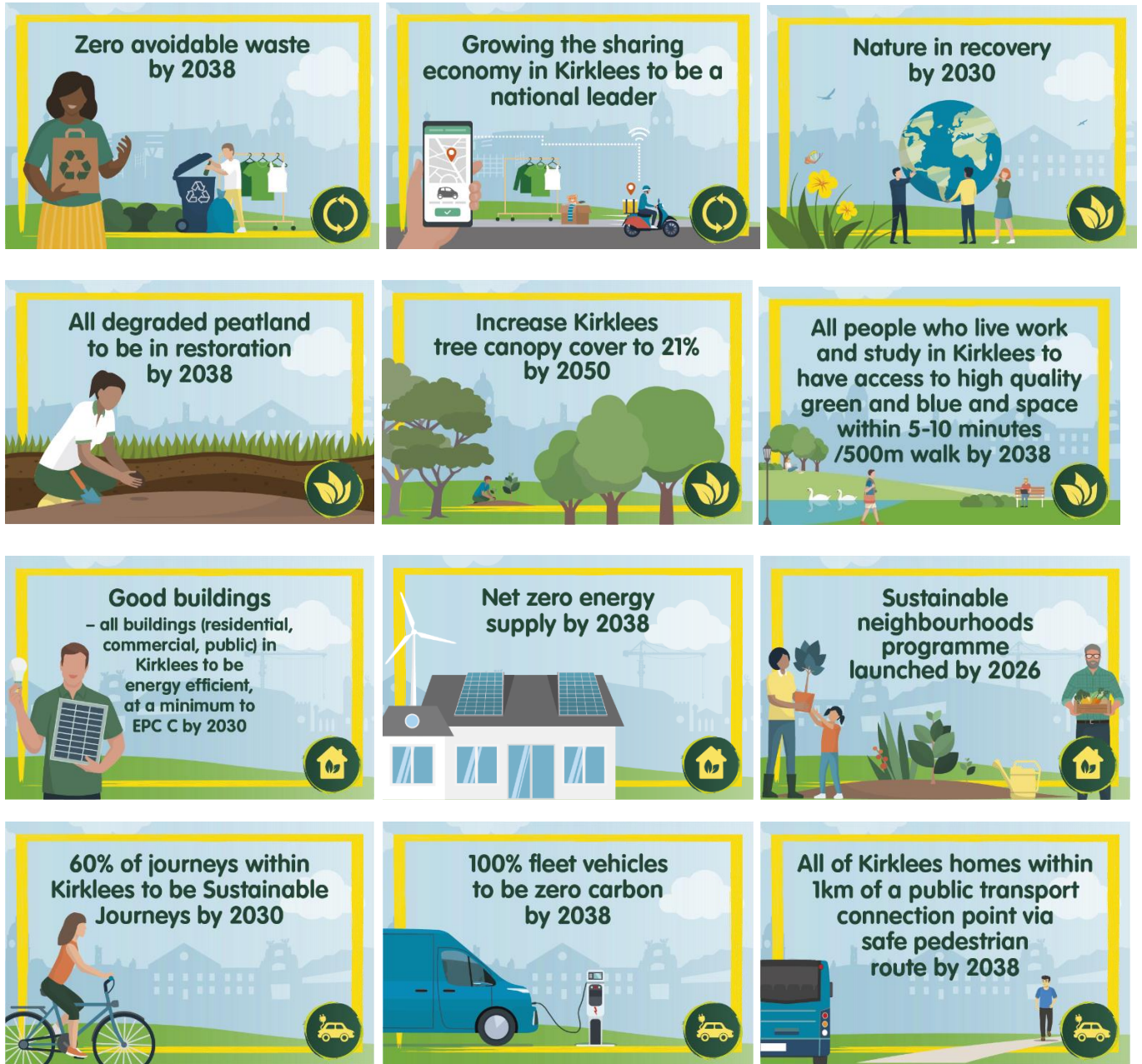
**Resilient Futures (RF)** how the Kirklees environment strategy delivers greater ecological, social, and economic resilience for the future, including strong action on climate change adaptation, particularly to protect the most vulnerable people. This theme also ensures that our people are resilient and ready for the future, not least through learning new, transferable green skills.



**Environment for All (E4A)** how the Kirklees environment strategy can support fairness, greater inclusion, diversity, and accessibility, particularly for people from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with disabilities. These groups have routinely been given less support on environmental issues and are also proven to be most at risk when it comes to environmental pressures.

## TARGETS

Our strategy has **12 headline targets** split across our four themes:



We also have **our climate emergency target**, which applies to all our themes, being:

- Net Zero by 2038.
- Climate Ready by 2038.

A graphic outlining more detail on these targets, how they link to the always-on priorities, who can pledge to them and a definition for each target, can be found in Appendix B.

## WHY IS THIS STRATEGY NEEDED

Our strategy is based around the core principles of environmental sustainability, with an understanding that **our survival and wellbeing depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment.**

Living more sustainably is crucial because our planet, like a delicate balancing act, has certain limits or 'planetary boundaries' that we must not exceed to maintain a stable and habitable place for us to thrive.

Think of Earth as a spaceship with finite resources and a delicate life support system. When we exceed the limits on things like carbon emissions, deforestation, and biodiversity loss (or in the case of the spaceship – food, water, and oxygen) we risk disrupting the balance that sustains life as we know it. Living sustainably is about ensuring we stay within these limits, preserving the health of our planet to secure a liveable future for generations to come.

## WHAT WILL THE IMPACT OF THIS STRATEGY BE?

By becoming a more environmentally sustainable district we will deliver health, wealth, and happiness to the people who live, work, and study here.

This strategy is structured by our four themes as they represent the areas and activities within Kirklees that put the most pressure on our environment, and those areas and activities where action and change would have the biggest positive impact.

We have made the three Always-on priorities a vital part of our strategy as they represent the benefits that can be experienced by taking environmental action across the four themes. These demonstrate that it's not just the environment that will profit from this strategy, and that our efforts to become more sustainable do not come at the expense of households or the wider Kirklees economy.

For many households in fuel poverty continuing to take measures to decarbonise social housing will see monthly bills come down as we become more sustainable. More widely, some of the important technologies we need to deploy, such as electric vehicles or heat pumps, are increasingly comparable in cost to their less sustainable alternatives and can offer considerable cost savings in the longer term.

Action to reduce waste will save the district money. At a household level, everything from reducing food waste to adopting more re-use and repair, will also save money. More sustainable travel choices can reduce costs too, particularly if residents can dispense with one car, which in the UK costs the average household between [£3,000 - £5,000 each year](#).

The [Institute for Government](#) outlines that the overall cost of achieving Net Zero by 2050 in the UK will involve considerable investment (probably around £1.4 trillion) but will result in an overall return on investment of over £200 billion. As one of the largest local authorities in the UK, it's vital that Kirklees sees that sustainable wealth creation opportunity unlocked for our residents.

### **Impact Case Study – The Northern Forest**

*Launched in 2018, the Northern Forest is transforming large areas of Northern England with through an ambitious tree planting programme. Together, the Woodland Trust and four of England's northern Community Forests are planting at least 50 million new trees across 10,000 square miles of land, stretching from Liverpool to Hull, with a considerable number being planted in Kirklees. After the first five years, a study by Liverpool John Moores University assessed the programme's impact and found it has:*

*Put 302,000 extra households within a 10 minutes' walk from a publicly accessible woodland.*

*Created 423,626 m<sup>3</sup> of water storage, delivering a 33% improvement in flood mitigation.*

*Delivered an 11.6% improvement in air purification and sequestered 19,000 tonnes of carbon each year; and*

*Delivered an overall associated annual economic uplift worth over £43 million in ecosystem services.*

*For more information please visit: [The Northern Forest: Planting 50 Million Trees | The Woodland Trust](#)*

## **SAVING PEOPLE MONEY**

As work on this strategy has progressed, the context has shifted. The people of Kirklees have witnessed a global energy crisis with huge increases in their monthly bills, a cost-of-living crisis and subsequent pressure on those with mortgages have seen interest rates double or even triple. It will be vital that every aspect of this strategy is shown to:

1. Offer excellent value for money and efficiency in delivery, minimising the impact on Council funds and ensuring other services can continue to be delivered;
2. Delivers opportunities to save our residents money through lower bills, general lower costs, and no-cost benefits like access to nature;
3. Supporting the idea of a 'just transition' in that poorer households are not disadvantaged by for example, a transition to Net Zero; and
4. Bring direct economic benefits to the region through new jobs, business opportunities and an upskilled and efficient economy.

## **HOW WILL THIS STRATEGY BE DELIVERED**

This strategy is a high-level framework to provide direction for action. Being Kirklees Council's first Environmental Strategy, it will become the **Council's fourth top-tier strategy**, sitting alongside the 'Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy', 'Inclusive Communities Framework' and 'Inclusive Economy Strategy'.



These four strategies will work in harmony to deliver their individual and collective aims, ultimately helping to implement Kirklees’ Council Plan 2024/25.

As a high-level document, the Environment Strategy provides the ambition for Kirklees Council and partners to achieve. It is not a detailed action plan – the detailed actions will come through the plans that feed into our strategy.

For the Council, examples of documents that provide this detail include, but are not limited to, the [Kirklees Waste Strategy 2021–2030](#), the [Air Quality Action Plan 2019–2024](#), the [White Rose Forest Plan 2021–2025](#) and the [Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan](#).

Partners also have their own action plans and strategies. Our strategy is designed to support these, providing an area-wide ambition, commitment, and partnership to continue to deliver this vital work.

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL PLAN 2024/25**

Our Council Plan 2024/25 is the driving force for the four top-tier strategies, providing a mandate for their development and ultimate delivery. It creates a shared sense of purpose, aiming to bring together our collective insight, expertise, and resources **to achieve greater impact** and make our **local places even better**.

A more in-depth summary of how our strategy addresses the Council Plan and its shared outcomes is outlined in Appendix C.



# CLOSING THE LOOP



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*“Creating opportunities for communities to share and reuse items to reduce consumption is key.” (Resident voice)*

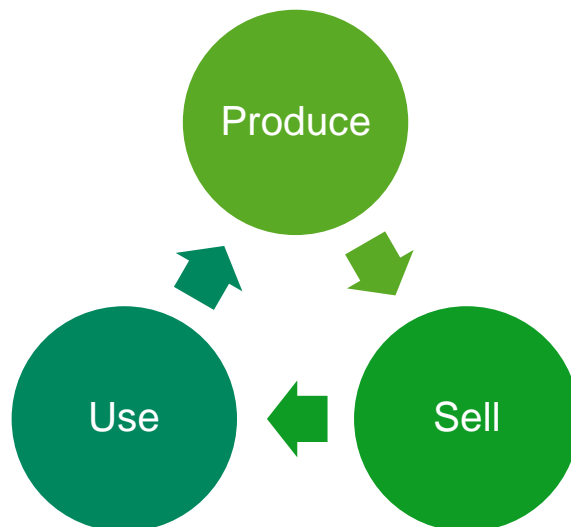
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**We want to make the most of every resource we have, reduce waste, or even stop it from happening in the first place. We want to create a district where products are made with sustainable materials then reused, repurposed, or recycled so they are used to their fullest extent.**

Locally and globally people are consuming more and that has an environmental impact. The way we make and use products contributes to climate change and biodiversity loss. According to [WRAP](#), 45% of global emissions can only be tackled by changing the way we make and consume products and food. We need to move from a linear economy to a circular one.

A linear economy is one where natural resources are taken out of the ground, turned into goods, then often put back into the ground as landfill or incinerated.

A circular economy is different. It designs out waste and pollution at the start by trying to make goods from sustainable materials, ensure goods are made to last and can be easily and affordably repaired. Then it keeps those materials in use as long as possible, increasing the sharing of products, reusing, remanufacturing, and recycling.





A circular economy might sound like an abstract future concept, but it's not. The circular economy is already contributing to reducing emissions and economic growth. [A report by WRAP](#) from November 2021, shows that in the UK between 2014 and 2019 almost 90,000 new jobs were created in the circular economy. It's expected to create 550,000 jobs by 2030.

We also want to promote a greater sharing economy within Kirklees.

The circular and sharing economies are complementary, working together they will have a more profound impact on our environmental challenges. Where the circular economy is about how the goods are manufactured and then taken apart and re-made or used as new goods, the sharing economy is more about what we do with these goods during their lifespan, how we maximise the full potential of something.

The sharing economy can refer to activities such as ridesharing, the use of a holiday let, renting out a parking space or driveway for a limited period or even sharing goods and resources, such as lawnmowers or bikes, with your neighbours and friends.

### **In everyday life 'closing the loop' might mean...**

- more opportunities for residents to save money through sharing, like being able to pick up a power-tool from the library alongside a book.
- communities where people are involved in growing food and reducing food waste; where residents can walk to buy fresh, affordable produce; and where everyone has the skills to prepare healthy and sustainable food.
- building on our textile heritage to become a centre for sustainable textile innovation alongside encouraging new green industries that boost skills, opportunities, and economic growth.

## **WHAT WE'VE DONE**

Across Kirklees we have a track record of taking action to shape consumer behaviour and re-use, re-imagine and re-purpose our waste.

Organisations and individuals have shown how circularity is good for the planet, our pockets and is supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis. Since 2011, Kirklees' [Uniform Exchange](#) has had 295,000 items donated, supported 182 schools and given 15,000 bags of uniform to families.

[Woven In Kirklees'](#) 2023 celebration of innovation in textiles focused on the environmental impact of textiles. As Kirklees is home to a huge number of textile manufacturers, retailers, artists, and designers it's no surprise that 15,000 people took part in over 100 events. From an Upcycled fashion show in Dewsbury, Mission to Mend roadshows and growing natural dyes, the festival linked sustainability and Kirklees' unique textile heritage.

Repair cafes have been established in Huddersfield, Holmfirth and Dewsbury, fixing everyday objects from clothing to electronics, while the third sector organised a ['Zero Waste and the Circular Economy'](#) conference in April 2023 to bring together c.100 delegates from businesses, organisations and individuals across Kirklees and the Yorkshire Region to work together to 'Close the Loop'.

### **Partner Case Study 1: University of Huddersfield and UK Fashion and the UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT)**

Huddersfield University and the UK Fashion and Textile Association are working together to find a solution to the huge problem of fashion waste.

We throw away enough clothing every year to fill Wembley stadium 17 times over. Huddersfield University and UKFT, are developing new ways to recycling fibres and yarns for use in agriculture and in the built environment.

As well as helping solve some of the fashion industry's most pressing environmental problems, the projects are looking at how the growth of the circular economy can boost manufacturing opportunity, jobs, and the economy in Kirklees.

[Future Fashion Factory.](#)

### **Partner Case Study 2: New Huddersfield Reuse Shop**

A new re-use shop, run by partner organisation [Revive](#), opened on Upperhead Row, Huddersfield in February 2023.

During its launch, over 97 tonnes of items were donated by residents to be sold on in the shop including unwanted textiles, small electricals and furniture. The delivery of this re-use shop is a milestone action within Kirklees Councils Resources and Waste Strategy, with the objective of supporting the circular economy in the district – all while raising funds for good causes and generating jobs and volunteering opportunities for local people.

[New reuse shop on the Kirklees Together website.](#)

A summary of data for Closing the Loop can be found in Appendix D.

## **WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE**

### **TARGETS**

- Zero avoidable waste by 2038 (SED).
- Grow the sharing economy in Kirklees to be a national leader (SED).

#### ***Zero Avoidable Waste Explained***

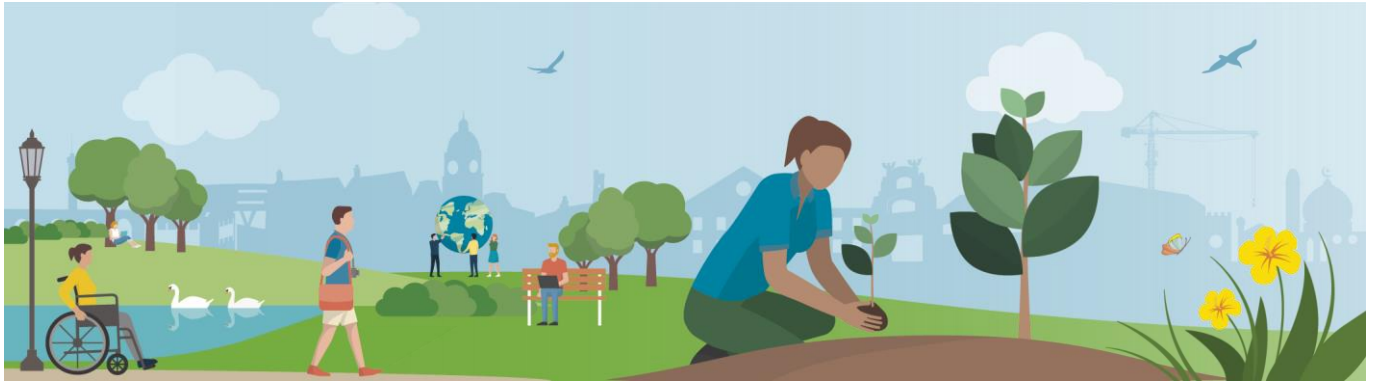
*The term avoidable means eliminating waste where it is technically, environmentally, and economically practical to do so, covering all waste streams: residential, commercial, construction and industrial.*

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Adopting circular economy principles (where little or nothing is wasted) and becoming more responsible producers and consumers. (SED)
- Putting re-purposing, reuse and repair before recycling and disposal, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. (SED)
- Securing 95% diversion from landfill by 2030. (RF)
- Providing separate food waste kerbside collection by 2028. (SED)
- Achieving a 60% reduction in food waste by 2030. (SED)
- Designing our buildings, industrial practices, and urban infrastructure to minimise the resources they use and the waste they produce. (SED)
- Helping Kirklees to continue its journey to be leading circular textile innovators. (SED)
- Ensuring our decision making and policy supports a shift towards a sharing-economy. (SED, E4A)
- Supporting sustainably produced, locally grown and reared produce. (SED)
- Making Kirklees is an epicentre for sustainable and resilient food production, consumption, and waste practices. (SED, RF)
- Develop skills for the circular economy, creating new job opportunities and appropriate education and upskilling resources. (SED)
- Reviewing procurement policies and practice to embrace a circular economy approach. (SED)

KEY: SED = Sustainable Economic Development; RF = Resilient Futures; E4A = Environment for All.

## NURTURING NATURE



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*“Local residents are passionate about the natural environment and feel that protecting this is protecting part of their personal identity.” (Political voice)*

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**We want to protect and expand existing natural habitats and create new spaces for wildlife. We want to ensure that everyone has access greenspace and can benefit from the natural environment.**

Set against the backdrop of the Pennine Moors and Peak District parkland, we have some of the UK’s most stunning countryside.

From the blanket bogs on our moors and ancient woodlands on our steep valleys, to rare flowers such as marsh helleborine on our old industrial sites, Kirklees is rich in nature.

When surrounded with Kirklees’ great greenspaces it might be easy to think the nature crisis is restricted to far-off places like the Amazon or Great Barrier Reef. It’s not. It’s right here on our doorstep. Nature in the UK is in decline, and we are a country that is already one of the most nature depleted in the world. The [State of Nature Report 2023](#) shows that since the 1970s UK species have declined by 19% and nearly 15% of species are currently classified as threatened with extinction.

It’s not just nature reserves or protected habitats and species that matter. All greenspaces matter, from gardens to grass verges and parks. Greenspaces and parks make us happier and healthier, so much so that according to research completed by [Field In Trust](#), across the UK they provide £34.2 billion of wellbeing benefits, reduce heart disease, obesity, and depression – saving the NHS over £111 million per year.

Our natural environment also performs valuable services, like reducing flooding, storing and cleaning our drinking water and absorbing carbon. The Sphagnum moss that grows on Kirklees moorlands can absorb 20 times its weight in water and the Peatlands can contain more than twice the amount of carbon stored in forests.

### **In everyday life, this might look like...**

- all residents in Kirklees having access to a rich, thriving natural environment, which improves their physical and mental wellbeing.
- our buildings and infrastructure enhancing the natural environment they are in, supporting local biodiversity, acting as a catalyst to nature recovery.

– our industries and communities working together to conserve our natural environment, adding to the value and services it provides so we can continue to benefit from them.

## WHAT WE'VE DONE

Actions to clean up, protect and restore our greenspaces and local wildlife is the focus of many organisations, businesses, and individuals within Kirklees.

We have planted 59ha of new trees across the district through community partnerships and volunteers, helping to absorb carbon emissions, bring together communities and restore shared community spaces.

Third sector organisations, such as [Natural Kirklees](#), [EPIKS](#) and [River Holme Connections](#), work tirelessly to improve our natural environment. From making footpaths more accessible and planting new woodlands, to working in partnership on landscape recovery projects that will deliver benefits to our rural communities by improving soils, increasing biodiversity, enhancing water quality, and reducing flood risk.

Educating individuals on the natural environment has also been a core theme of action. The 'Outdoor Study and Conference Centre' at [Cliffe House](#) runs child-centred nature-based educational activities for all, while the third sector organisations such as [Support 2 Recovery](#) offer the 'The Great Outdoors Project', working with adults in Kirklees to take their first steps into nature.

### Partner Case Study 1: Moors for the Future Partnership – MoorLIFE 2020

MOORLife was an ambitious five-year project, investing €16 million (EU funded) to protect areas of blanket bog. Its conservation work resulted in stabilising and revegetating 52.5ha of bare peat; installing 16,432 mini-dams for re-wetting; planting nearly three million sphagnum plug plants; working with 334 land managers to share best practice; and ultimately protecting 95 sq.km of active blanket bog.

For more information, [MoorLIFE 2020 | Moors for the Future](#)

### Partner Case Study 2: White Rose Forest and Woodland Creation

Kirklees Council is a key partner and the accountable body of the White Rose Forest, which has the aim of establishing 2,500ha of new tree canopy cover in our river catchments and 1000ha of new tree canopy in our urban areas and along our major transport routes by 2025.

Since declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, Kirklees Council has created 59ha of new tree canopy cover across the district.

For more information, [Woodland creation | Kirklees Council](#)

A summary of data in Kirklees for Nurturing Nature can be found in Appendix D.

# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

## TARGETS

- Nature in recovery by 2030. (RF)
- All degraded peatland to be in restoration by 2038. (RF)
- Increase Kirklees tree canopy cover to 21% by 2050. (RF, E4A)
- All people who live work and study in Kirklees to have access to high quality green and blue and space within 5-10 minutes / 500m walk by 2038. (E4A)

### ***'Green and Blue Space' Explained***

*Green spaces include parks, recreation grounds, public or private gardens, playing fields, play areas, woodland, and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments, green roofs, and green walls, as well public right of ways (PROWS), such as bridleways, footpaths, canal towpaths and disused railway lines.*

*Blue space includes canals, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs.*

### ***'High Quality' Explained***

*Quality of green and blue space looks at the physical, social, environmental, and visual qualities of each space and the value it adds to the people who use it, dependent on its intended function.*

*For more information on how this is currently assessed, please look at section 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 in [Open Space Study 2015 \(revised 2016\)](#) ([kirklees.gov.uk](http://kirklees.gov.uk)).*

## OBJECTIVES

- Conserving, enhancing, and investing in our natural environment and biodiversity, looking at issues like peatland restoration and invasive species management, eradicating pollution, and re-imagining management practices. (RF, E4A)
- Prioritising green and blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions in all activities, refurbishments, and developments to restore and improve our natural environment. (RF)
- Taking a biodiversity first approach to new development that supports nature recovery and biodiversity net gain. (SED, RF)
- Making regenerative agriculture (the conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming) a common practice in Kirklees. (SED, RF)
- Supporting our Community Forest partnership for the region, White Rose Forest, to plant more trees as part of the wider 50m tree Northern Forest. (RF, E4A)

KEY: SED = Sustainable Economic Development; RF = Resilient Futures; E4A = Environment for All.

## BRINGING IT HOME



*“We really, really need to insulate our homes, both for the environment and to reduce energy poverty.” (Resident voice)*

**We want to enhance the places we call home by making them more sustainable, with people living and working in buildings that are good for them and the planet. We want our neighbourhoods to be places we are proud of, which improve our health and wellbeing, giving us a platform from which to thrive.**

The places in which we live, work and study in Kirklees are a mix of the traditional and the modern, centuries old villages steeped in local history and legend; buildings and locations made famous by writers, film, and television; and vibrant towns full of art, creativity, and local produce.

The quality of our homes and the strength of our communities has a massive impact on our quality of life. This theme is all about enhancing that quality by creating sustainable buildings and neighbourhoods that are energy efficient, affordable, and conducive to modern living and the social, economic, and environmental challenges we face.

In the UK, the [NHS spends an estimated £1.4 billion each year](#) on treating people affected by poor housing. In 2021, 17.3% of Kirklees’ households were classified as ‘fuel poor’, which means after paying for heating, the households disposable income puts them below the official poverty line.

Ways to address these challenges exist. According to the [Energy Saving Trust](#) improving the energy efficiency of homes through loft insulation could save £240 per year on energy bills for a mid-terrace house and up to £445 per year on for a detached house, and replacing single-glazed windows with A-rated double glazing could save £165 per year.

### **In everyday life this might look like...**

- neighbourhoods where people can easily meet their daily needs, socialise, and feel safe.
- high quality urban environments where homes and buildings have been designed and built to a sustainable standard, keeping the occupants warm in the winter, cool in the summer and don’t cost the Earth to run.
- Kirklees being home to sustainable neighbourhoods that feature everything from community allotments and gardens; community renewables; sustainable education programmes; a sustainable food strategy; and tough action on antisocial behaviour such as fly tipping and littering.

## WHAT WE'VE DONE

Developing our skills and providing funding, support, and guidance to 'bring it home' is the primary focus of many partners across Kirklees.

Third Sector Leaders run a '[Community Buildings and Energy Project 2023](#)'. It aims to improve the quality of community buildings in the district by providing the skills needed to manage the buildings and helping communities to access the necessary finance and technical advice needed to do improvement works.

This is coupled with '[Community Grants for Climate Projects](#)', run in partnership with Kirklees Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, which offers £5,000 to £50,000 to support climate friendly projects such as local, clean energy solutions and energy efficient buildings.

Organisations such as [One Community](#) also facilitate the provision of Household Support for food, cost of living or energy poverty, where grants of up to £10,000 are available for eligible people through either the 'Household Support Fund' or the 'West Yorkshire Mayor's Fund'.

### Partner Case Study 1: Retrofit at Abbey Road

Kirklees Council carried out the first full house retrofit in the district. Run as a pilot scheme to help measure carbon reduction and inform future schemes, eight properties in Abbey Road, Fartown had a 'fabric first' approach of insulating loft, cavities, and the external walls as well as the installation of renewable technologies, including a heat pump for heating and Solar PV/solar thermal panels.

The Abbey Road scheme made the finals in the 'Best Social Housing Category' at the MJ awards, which recognise excellence and innovation in Council Services.

For more information; [Abbey Road Retrofit Scheme, Huddersfield | INCA \(inca-ltd.org.uk\)](#)

### Partner Case Study 2: Free energy-saving health checks

All Kirklees Council housing tenants have been offered free energy health checks to reduce carbon and save them money.

3,500 houses across Kirklees were offered energy health checks. Tenants' energy tariffs were reviewed to make sure they were not overpaying on their bills. Qualified surveyors recommended the most energy efficient settings for boilers, and identifying repairs that could make homes warmer and cheaper to run. The health checks also offered tips on how to stay warm, offered debt advice, and support on claiming benefits where eligible.

For more information: [Council housing tenants receive free energy-saving health checks on their homes – Kirklees Together.](#)

A summary of data for 'Bringing it Home' can be found in Appendix D.



# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

## TARGETS

- Good buildings - all buildings (residential, commercial, public) in Kirklees to be energy efficient, at a minimum of EPC C by 2030. (RF, E4A)
- Net Zero energy supply by 2038. (SED, RF)
- Sustainable neighbourhoods programme launched by 2026. (RF, E4A)

### ***'Sustainable Neighbourhoods' Explained.***

*Helping communities in Kirklees achieve a balance between the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability, in line with the unique needs of that community. A sustainable neighbourhood has three key features: a vibrant street life, walkability, and affordability.*

*For more information [A New Strategy of Sustainable Neighbourhood Planning Five principles.pdf \(unhabitat.org\)](#).*

## OBJECTIVES

- Ensuring that good energy efficient homes (new or renovated) are accessible to all residents, irrespective of economic standing. (RF, E4A)
- Increasing our energy independence and resilience through low-impact, renewable sources. (SED, E4A)
- Enhancing the resilience of our buildings to the physical impact of future environmental change, with a focus on reducing the vulnerability of occupants. (RF)
- Making all new buildings built in Kirklees climate ready and operationally Net Zero. (E4A)
- Adopting a fabric first approach<sup>1</sup> in all new builds and building refurbishment practices. (RF)
- Reduce the building performance design gap (this is the gap between the predicted energy use at the design stage, versus the actual energy use when occupied). (RF)
- Developing a dedicated sustainable neighbourhood's programme featuring everything from educational programmes on sustainable lifestyles to allotments and community-owned green space. (RF, E4A)

KEY: SED = Sustainable Economic Development; RF = Resilient Futures; E4A = Environment for All.

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the sub and superstructure of the building and how it is constructed to minimise heat loss, including levels of insulation, detailing and airtightness.

# KIRKLEES ON THE MOVE



*We should be striving to make our district somewhere where it's simple, sustainable, and safe for everyone to get around (Resident Voice).*

**We want to get the district moving in a more sustainable way. Connecting communities across Kirklees and giving residents equal access to opportunities through affordable, reliable, and sustainable travel choices.**

The need to move people and goods are essential to our everyday lives – enabling people to get to work, socialise and access services.

Kirklees is a varied district – comprising of key commuter hubs such as Dewsbury and Huddersfield with well-connected regional train stations, coupled with rural communities that have more limited public transport options.

The transport sector is a significant polluter. Emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles are major issues when it comes to climate change and are the primary source of poor air quality in Kirklees. A [government report in 2022](#) shows the devastating impact poor air quality is having on public health, contributing up to 36,000 premature deaths a year and costing the NHS and social care system an estimated £1.6 billion between 2017 and 2025.

The cost of running a car is unaffordable for some of our residents, with the [2021 census](#) showing 22.7% of Kirklees households do not have access to a car or van. These individuals, primarily on low incomes, need to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport.

The 2021 Census also shows that driving a car or van is the district's leading choice for commuting to work, used by 53.1% of residents, with 20.6% choosing a more sustainable option such as walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport.

We want active and sustainable travel options to be the obvious and easy choice. Active travel not only improves people's health and wellbeing, but a recent report by [Sustrans](#) shows that it's worth £36.5 billion a year to the UK economy.

## **In everyday life this might look like...**

– easy and affordable ways to get to where we need to go with minimal impact on the environment.

– walking, wheeling, and cycling becomes the most attractive choice for short journeys, with public transport made convenient, reliable, and affordable for longer ones.

– if we need to use a car, we are met with less congestion and a greener more affordable vehicle option. Businesses have green fleets and appropriate charging is available for all electric vehicles.

## WHAT WE'VE DONE

The transport sector and people's behaviours are changing. From 2021 to 2022, we saw an 8% increase in commuters choosing a more sustainable mode of transport over a private car or van.

We're investing in our infrastructure, encouraging behaviour change and making sustainable modes the easy and affordable choice. Dewsbury and Huddersfield will benefit from the multi-billion-pound [TransPennine Route Upgrade](#) investment, making the trains more frequent, faster, cleaner and reliable between Manchester, Leeds and York.

Walking and cycling within Kirklees has been improved, building on the success of the 7.3 mile [Spenn Valley Greenway](#). The Canal towpath between Slaithwaite and Milnsbridge is part of a £2.7 million investment to develop long-term accessibility on a continuous active travel route to Huddersfield Town Centre.

A £14 million revamp of [Dewsbury Bus Station](#) has been announced to make bus travel more attractive for residents, businesses, and commuters. Coupled with the 'Mayor's Fares' £2 cap on bus tickets, buses are becoming the affordable choice for people to move within Kirklees and to neighbouring places like Halifax, Wakefield, Bradford and Bingley.

Local people and organisations are also making a huge difference. Cycle and scooter storage has been installed in local schools through the '[Mac's Bikes](#)' memorial fund to promote active travel by students and teachers, with the charity '[Streetbikes](#)' striving to transform people's lives by providing cycling sessions for all abilities and repairing and re-homing unwanted or donated bikes back into the community.

### Partner Case Study 1: Seven Schools achieve Modeshift Stars Awards

Ashbrow School, Birkby Junior School, Bramble Primary Academy, Golcar Junior and Infant Nursery School, Hartshead Junior and Infant School, Kirkheaton Primary School and Pentland Infant and Nursery School have all been presented with the Modeshift Stars Bronze standard for their commitment to sustainable travel.

When the pandemic hit, the schools continued their journey to improve the health and wellbeing for their children, encouraging parents, pupils, and staff to choose healthier and more climate friendly modes of transport to and from school.

For more information: <https://kirkleestogether.co.uk/2022/03/21/seven-schools-achieve-modeshift-stars-awards/>

### Partner Case Study 2: Environmental Projects in Kirklees (EPIKS)

EPIKS is a not-for-profit business that runs environmental projects across Kirklees.

They operate a fleet of e-bikes and offer taster sessions, training and led rides so that people can experience the value of e-bikes as a low carbon mode of travel. This involves taking e-bikes

to places of work, community groups and events. Their 'Walk, Wheel, Ride' project also gives tailored support to people on all aspects of active travel.

For more information, please visit: [E-Bikes Projects | EPIKS - Environmental Projects In Kirklees](#) or [Walk Wheel Ride: cycling, wheeling and walking in Kirklees](#).

A summary of data for Kirklees on the Move can be found in Appendix D.

## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

### TARGETS

- 60% of journeys within Kirklees to be Sustainable Journeys by 2030. (SED, E4A)
- 100% of fleet vehicles to be zero carbon by 2038 (RF).
- All of Kirklees homes to be within 1km of public transport via a safe pedestrian route by 2038 (E4A).

#### ***Sustainable Journeys Explained***

*Sustainable journeys covers modes of transport that have low to no impact on our environment when used, such as walking, cycling, public transport (buses and trains), alongside electric and low emission vehicles.*

### OBJECTIVES

- Prioritising public or active modes of transport over private vehicle use wherever feasible. (E4A)
- Ensuring that our infrastructure (i.e. transport, highways, electric vehicle charging) can function and operate as normal in the face of future environmental challenges. (RF)
- Making our transport network and infrastructure<sup>2</sup> accessible, affordable, and reliable for all in both urban and rural areas. (E4A)
- Delivering the infrastructure that promotes and facilitates the safe use of active travel modes such as cycling and walking. (E4A)
- Ensuring that our decision-making and policies actively support low-traffic neighbourhoods with a shift towards more active and public forms of transport. (E4A)
- Continuing to reduce air pollutant emissions and subsequent improved air quality for all in Kirklees. (RF, E4A)
- Develop a reliable and resilient electric charging network for the district. (E4A, RF)

KEY: SED = Sustainable Economic Development; RF = Resilient Futures; E4A = Environment for All.

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<sup>2</sup> Refers to networks and infrastructure associated with all modes of transport (i.e. mass transit, active, electric vehicle charging network).

## DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY TOGETHER

### PLEDGE TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

The vision for a more environmentally sustainable Kirklees can only be achieved by communities, business, residents, organisations, and the public sector working together.

To achieve this, we have developed our Partnership Pledge. Whether you are a business, organisation, or an individual – we are asking you to voluntarily pledge what you can to both help support and deliver our collective ambition.

#### HOW DOES PLEDGING WORK?

A pledge is individual to you or your organisation. It can be made around the strategy and its vision, one or more themes or even a single or a group of targets. All pledges, however large or small, help achieving our ambition.

The various options for pledging for organisations, businesses and individuals are:

1. **Strategy** – pledge to support the strategy in its entirety.
2. **Theme(s)** – pledge to support one or more of the themes.
3. **Target(s)** – pledge to support one or more of the individual targets.

#### WHAT DOES PLEDGING MEAN?

Signing a pledge is a two-fold commitment. Firstly, it is to support and take action to contribute to achieving our overall vision for a more Environmentally Sustainable Kirklees. Secondly, it's to participate in our monitoring, evaluation and reporting process. All pledges are voluntary and legally non-binding.

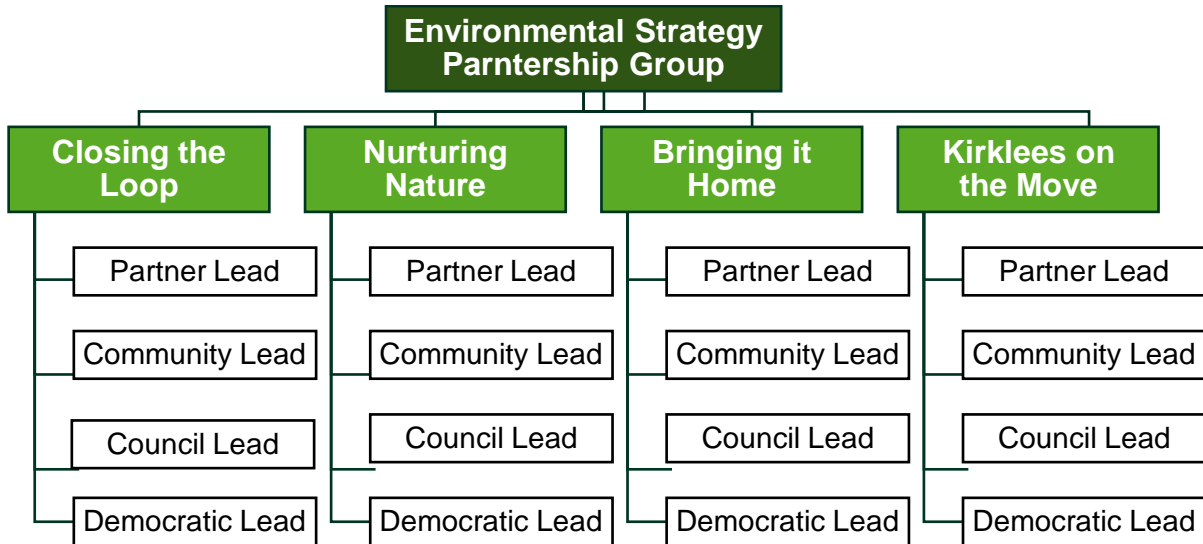
### HOW WILL THE STRATEGY BE GOVERNED

An 'Environmental Strategy Partnership Group' will be established with the following objectives:

- To facilitate the sharing of best practice and collaborative, joined-up environmental actions across the district.
- To monitor, evaluate, and report on progress against the vision and ambitions outlined within this document on an annual basis.

Chaired by the Service Director for Environment and Climate Change at Kirklees Council (on an interim basis until an appropriate independent chair can be identified), the partnership group will meet quarterly and be made up of pledgers who represent partner organisations, the community, and Kirklees Council.

The partnership group will be indicatively structured across four sub-groups which align with the four core themes of the strategy. Each sub-group could contain four leads who will sit on and report into the partnership group:



The scope of these lead roles are as follows:

- **Partner Lead:** A member of a partnership organisation, they will provide technical direction and oversight for their theme.
- **Community Lead:** A representative of a community group or a Kirklees resident, they will focus on the ‘Always on’ priorities in relation to their theme.
- **Council Lead:** A Kirklees Council employee who represents a relevant service area to their theme, they will help co-ordinate the sub-group and the annual monitoring, evaluation, and reporting process.
- **Democratic Lead:** A Kirklees Council Ward Councillor who acts as a democratic representative for the associated theme.

Each of the sub-groups will be made up of pledgers, those who sign up to the partnership pledge, whether individual residents or representatives of organisations, businesses, agencies, and community groups.

## RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

This top-tier strategy for Kirklees is an ambitious one, and a clear question to be answered is ‘**how will it be resourced?**’

This is both a critical and a common question for local authorities, many of which have declared climate or nature emergencies but are also working within the context of over a decade of budget cuts and austerity, exacerbated by strains brought about through the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the Local Government Association (LGA) this key issue of how to fund climate action is one of their member’s major concerns.

Help is available and blending diverse resource streams to meet the challenge is possible. The LGA itself has comprehensive ‘green ambition’ advice for local authorities on financing their sustainability commitments. Also, the 3Ci Commission on climate investment is developing a new model focused on how to invest in Net Zero.

More widely, there are many innovative (and mainstream) ways to resource the measures from both the public and private sector, outlined in this strategy, some of which the Council already adopts including:

- Co-funding with a Combined Authority or National Government
- Public-Private Partnerships, particularly with property sector
- Leveraging spend on other programmes (e.g. infrastructure, transport, housing).
- Recirculating cost savings in areas such as reduced energy use
- Accounting for local economic impact of co-benefits (e.g. jobs created or better health outcomes).
- Pursuing major national funding programmes (e.g. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, Levelling Up, Nature for Climate).
- Major programmes exploring the Public Works Loan Board and UK Infrastructure Bank.
- Procurement value added (e.g. through Social Value frameworks).
- Section 106.
- Retained Business Rates for sustainable business programmes.
- Town or city-centre based work within budgets of Business Improvement Districts.
- Biodiversity offsets, net gain, and natural capital accounting.
- Co-delivery through utility funds for land management.  
Nature-related financial disclosures from private sector partners to support strategic aims.
- Green Bonds, Community Investment Bonds, and debt finance.
- Levy mechanisms which can directly fund sustainable projects.

With so many schemes and resources available, having a well set-out and clear strategy for action such as this one makes bidding for resources faster and more efficient.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REPORTING OUR PROGRESS**

This strategy is a high-level framework to help inform and provide direction for action, much of which will sit underneath this document, within action plans and associated documents that are developed and delivered by organisations and business (including Kirklees Council) across the district.

We will monitor, evaluate, and report progress against the ambition within the strategy via the following mechanisms:

- Quarterly 'Environmental Strategy Partnership Group' meetings to share best practice, facilitate networking and updates on reporting.
- Annual data collection and subsequent reporting against the ambition of this strategy (targets and objectives).
- Collation and advertisement of case studies, sharing of best practice.

As part of the pledging process for this strategy, pledgers commit to participating in this monitoring and evaluation process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

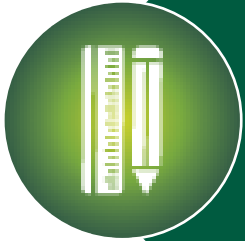
Thank you to all who shared their vision, ambitions, and opinions, donating your time to help co-develop this strategy to achieve a better, more environmentally sustainable Kirklees.

A special thank you to [Creative Concern](#) for facilitating our co-design journey, and for [Support To Recovery](#) for helping engage local community groups.



## APPENDIX A: OUR CO-DESIGN JOURNEY

This appendix outlines the work undertaken as part of the co-design process to develop the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life' for Kirklees.



### Tailored for Kirklees

- Partners asked for the Environment Strategy to take a 'tailored for Kirklees' approach, rather than follow an existing technical off-the-shelf model, to enable the unique characteristics of Kirklees and its people, to stand out.



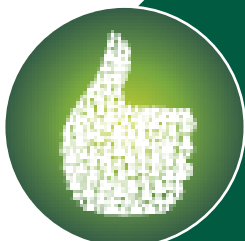
### Designed with, not for

- Involving 1,039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions and community groups across Kirklees.
- Partners were engaged with on multiple occasions, helping evolve the content over time to deliver a strong, ambitious, and successful strategy for all.



### Engage those that haven't yet had their say

- We engaged community groups from across Kirklees who are not commonly involved in the process of helping create a Kirklees-wide strategy. We gave everyone a voice, developed relationships and sought to incorporate a wider variety of perspectives.



### It's got to be about everyday, life

- Partners emphasised how the strategy and its targets need to be simple, accessible, relatable, tangible and meaningful.
- The focus needs to be on collective action – making people and organisations feel engaged, included and accountable.

# KIRKLEES COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

Sitting as Kirklees Council's fourth top-tier strategy, the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life' provides a mandate for all council activity to implement its vision and ambitions, so environmentally sustainable practice becomes the business-as-usual approach. Therefore, it has been imperative for Council Colleagues and Elected Members to be included within the co-design journey of the strategy, to create buy-in and ownership of what it is aiming to achieve.

Figure 1 below outlines the steps taken on this co-design journey (excluding the governance/decision making process to approve the strategy).

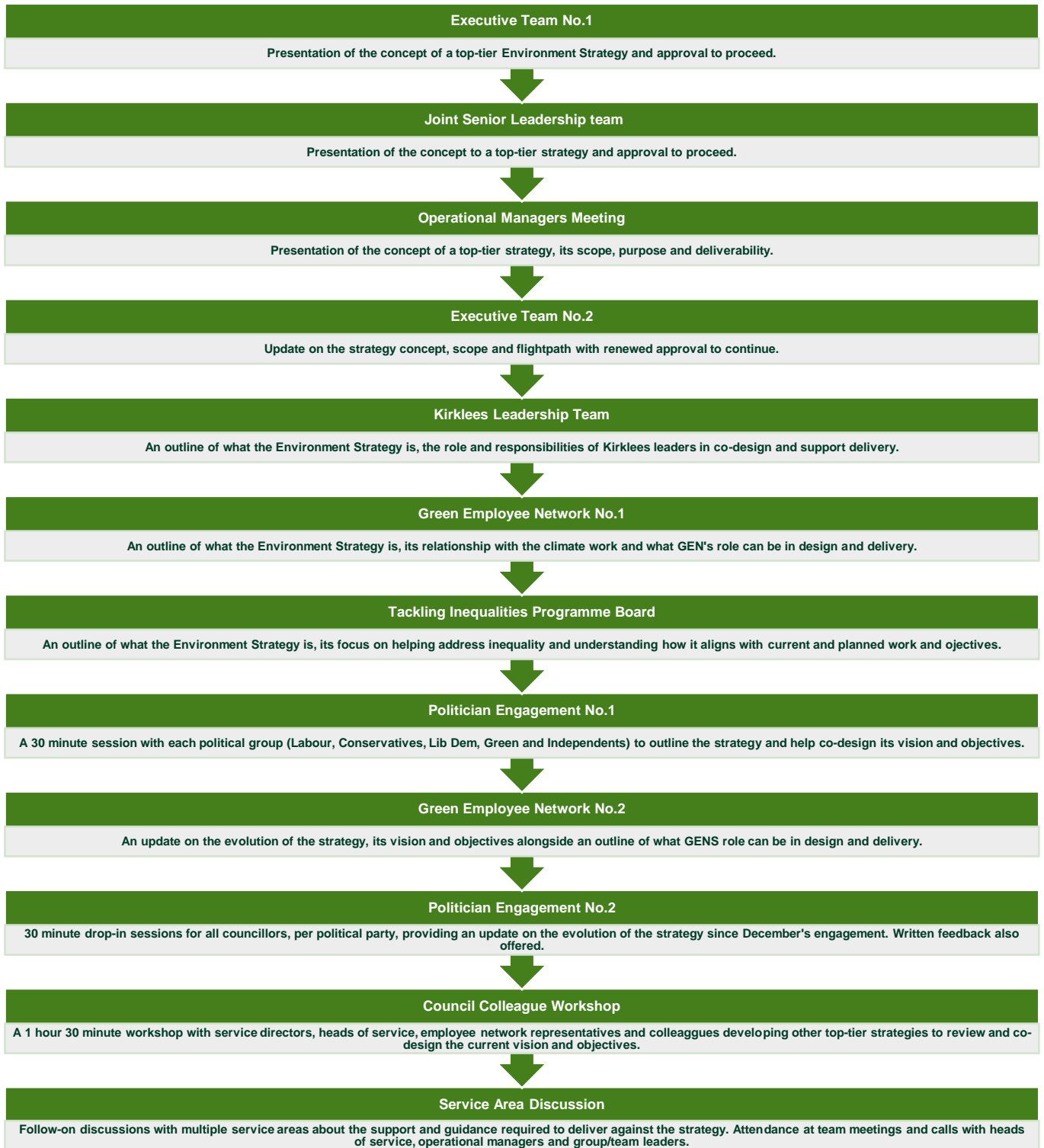


Figure 1: The co-design journey for Kirklees Council Colleagues and Elected Members

# PARTNERS

The ‘Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life’ is a partnership document at its core. Embarking on a clearly communicated co-design journey with partner organisations, businesses, institutions, agencies, and residents is essential to the success of the strategy.

Figure 2 below outlines the steps taken on this journey. Steps 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9 (dark blue) were dedicated to the Kirklees Climate Commission; the other steps involved all other partners (green).

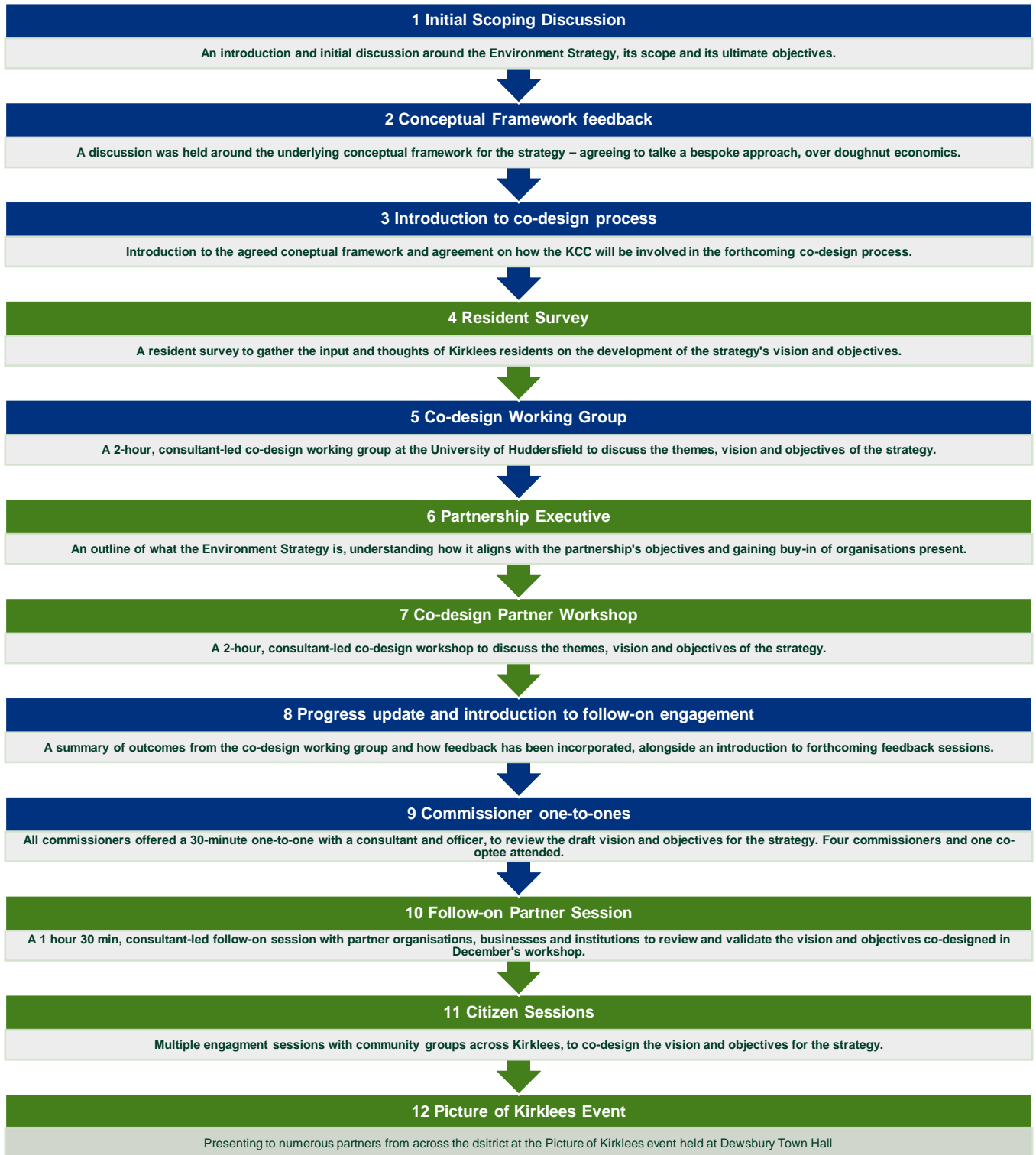






































Figure 2: The Co-design journey of the strategy with internal partners

# APPENDIX B: 'OUR TARGETS' PLAN ON A PAGE

Our targets	'Always-on' priority	Who could pledge to this target?	More about this target...
 <p><b>1</b> Zero avoidable waste by 2038.</p>			<p>'Avoidable waste' refers to the things that we throw away that could have been prevented or avoided in the first place. It's the things we discard that still have value or could have been used more efficiently. Examples of avoidable waste include the food we throw away because it's gone bad before we could use or sell it, or designing out avoidable waste in our manufacturing and industrial processes – making them more efficient and less resource intensive.</p>
 <p><b>2</b> Growing the sharing economy in Kirklees to be a national leader.</p>			<p>The 'sharing economy' is about sharing resources, like cars, bikes, skills and equipment. It's focused on making more efficient use of these resources, whilst saving money and reducing waste. Examples include passing un-wanted clothing on to others rather than throwing it away, using tool libraries to borrow a drill rather than buy a new one, the use of car clubs, or community spaces that have multiple uses i.e. village halls used for exercise classes and makers markets.</p>
 <p><b>3</b> Nature in Recovery by 2030.</p>			<p>Nature recovery is the journey our district undertakes to enhance the health of our landscapes, wildlife and habitats by restoring them naturally. These areas have suffered damage or harm from things like pollution, deforestation and climate change. Activities include protecting wildlife and planting forests. Nature recovery is important because it helps protect the environment and keep ecosystems working properly – ensuring that we have clean air, water and places to enjoy nature.</p>
 <p><b>4</b> All degraded peatland to be in restoration by 2038.</p>			<p>Peatland is one of Kirklees most precious natural habitats and is located in areas such as Marsden Moor and Holme Moss. Unfortunately, a lot of our peatland has been damaged or deteriorated over time due to human activity or changes to our weather and climate. Restoration is about returning the peatland back to it's original state or condition, so the services it provides our communities can be enhanced – such as helping protect us from flooding, improving local water quality, storing carbon and supporting local biodiversity.</p>
 <p><b>5</b> Increase Kirklees tree canopy cover to 21% by 2050.</p>			<p>Tree canopy cover looks at the amount of ground area in the district covered by branches, leaves and stems from trees as viewed from above. This target is designed to ultimately increase the amount of trees within Kirklees. Tree canopy cover is important as it provides shade and helps regulate local temperatures in hot weather (especially in our towns and villages), provides a home for birds and other animals, whilst also helping to clean the air we breathe and absorb carbon dioxide.</p>
 <p><b>6</b> All people who live work and study in Kirklees to have access to high quality green and blue and space within 5-10 minutes / 500m walk by 2038.</p>			<p>'Access to green and blue space' simply means having easy ways for everyone in Kirklees to get to natural areas like parks, forest, gardens and bodies of water such as lakes, rivers and reservoirs. When we talk about access, we're talking about making sure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and spend time in these natural areas due to their benefits for our physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>
 <p><b>7</b> Good buildings – all buildings in Kirklees to be energy efficient, at a minimum of EPC C by 2030.</p>			<p>Buildings are where we live, work, socialise and relax. This target is about improving the quality of those buildings to ultimately reduce how much energy they take and money they cost to run. EPC stands for Energy Performance Certificate. These are the nationally recognised way by which we grade the energy efficiency of our homes – they show how much energy the building uses and give it a rating from A to G, A being the best, G the worst.</p>
 <p><b>8</b> Net Zero Energy supply by 2038.</p>			<p>This target focuses on how we can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions we produce when generating the heat and electricity we use. When we talk about 'net zero' we're aiming to produce as much clean, renewable energy (like solar or wind power) as we consume. We can do this by using energy more efficiently, investing in renewable sources and finding ways to offset any remaining emissions. We ultimately want to find a balance where the energy we use doesn't harm the planet and we're not using more energy than we can sustainably produce.</p>
 <p><b>9</b> Sustainable neighbourhoods programme launched by 2026.</p>			<p>Sustainable neighbourhoods is all about making our neighbourhoods healthier, happier, safer and more sustainable for everyone who lives there, now and in the future. The focus is on making it easier to walk, wheel or cycle around, improving public transport connections and creating places where people can gather and connect with each other. It's about making sure that the way we live, work and play in our neighbourhoods helps everyone who lives there to have a good quality of life, whilst not impacting our natural environment.</p>
 <p><b>10</b> 60% of journeys within Kirklees to be Sustainable Journeys by 2030.</p>			<p>Sustainable journeys are about finding ways to travel that are good for the planet and our health, without compromising on cost or convenience. This involves making choices that reduce our impact on the planet, whilst still getting where we need to go. Examples might be to choose electric cars over petrol / diesel if you can afford too, choosing to cycle or walk / wheel for shorter journeys if you're able, or using public transport like trains and buses where feasible.</p>
 <p><b>11</b> 100% of fleet vehicles to be zero carbon by 2038.</p>			<p>Applicable to businesses and organisations with a vehicle fleet, this target is about having a fleet of vehicles which don't produce carbon emissions when they are being used. This can be achieved by replacing diesel / petrol cars with electric or other alternative fuels that don't produce harmful emissions. This will help improve the air quality of the areas where these fleets operate, whilst reducing the carbon footprint of the organisation or business.</p>
 <p><b>12</b> All of Kirklees homes to be within 1km of public transport connection point via safe pedestrian route by 2038.</p>			<p>Simply put, this target is about having easy ways to access public transport connection points like bus stops or train stations. We want to make it more convenient for residents to use public transport to get around. A 'safe pedestrian route' is a path or a way for people to walk or wheel to and from these connection points – making it easy and safe for them to do so.</p>

## APPENDIX C: KIRKLEES COUNCIL PLAN 2024/25

Our Council Plan 2024/25 has an overarching vision for Kirklees to be:

*A district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives.*

This vision is supported by **eight shared outcomes** and **four top tier strategies** with recognition that changes in any one of these outcomes impacts the others. For example, a healthier and thriving environment within Kirklees will improve the wellbeing and health of the population – meaning a stronger workforce and a more sustainable economy – and a sustainable economy means more disposable income to help children to have the best start in life. There are countless other examples.

Our ambition in this strategy is for Kirklees to become an environmentally sustainable place, and we have a **shared commitment to achieve this in a fair and just way**. This means ensuring we maintain a sustainable economy, improving the health and wellbeing of the people who live within Kirklees, while tackling inequalities, guaranteeing the outcomes for local places and communities to be fair and equal.

Our **equally weighted** four top tier strategies are partnership-led. The **Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life** will sit alongside the **Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, the in-development **Inclusive Economy Strategy**, and the **Inclusive Communities Framework**.

Collectively, these documents explain where we are at in Kirklees – what our opportunities and challenges are, what we most need to do to improve, and the role partners can play to make this happen. **Success in one strategy depends on the others.**



With a shared sense of purpose, we can bring our collective insight, expertise, and resources together **to achieve greater impact** and make our **local places even better**.

### The Councils Eight Shared Outcomes

[Our Council Plan](#) has eight shared outcomes – each of which are addressed by one or more of the four tier strategies in Kirklees. For the Environment Strategy, these shared outcomes are as follows:

## Clean and Green

This strategy forms an important part of the Council's overarching Clean and Green shared outcome within 'Our Council Plan 2024/45'.

The objective of this shared outcome is:

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*People in Kirklees enjoy a high quality, clean and green environment.*

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Our built and natural environment contributes to people's quality of life and makes the district a more attractive place in which to live and invest. We want to connect people and places, improve air quality and green infrastructure and be resilient in the face of extreme weather events and climate change, as well as helping people reduce waste and recycle more.

## Shaped By People

Shaped by People is a shared goal, created by our citizens. It was introduced as a foundational shared outcome in 'Our Council Plan 2024/25' (see [www.Kirklees.gov.uk/ShapedByPeople](http://www.Kirklees.gov.uk/ShapedByPeople)). Shaped by People describes how people in Kirklees want things to be in the future. It's about enabling more people to come together to make local places even better, through the shared aspiration that:

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*We make our places what they are.*

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This sense of personal agency in the places where we live, work and study is important for the natural environment we call home. By enabling more of this to happen, we can help our environment to thrive.

We have co-developed the vision and ambitions of this strategy in partnership with people who live, work or study in Kirklees. Through a series of engagement activities, we worked with residents, local organisations, agencies, and businesses, enabling them to shape the environmental ambition for our district.

If we are to successfully deliver and achieve this ambition, we must continue to work in partnership, sharing power with all people, organisations, and businesses. By doing this, we can all make a positive change to our environment. We've been told many times during our co-creation process that a culture shift is needed on the environment for Kirklees. This can only happen if the vision has been Shaped by People.

Our shared commitment to Shaped by People means that through the delivery of this strategy, our work will help more people feel inspired to take part, give people confidence to act, help people feel included, respected, and listened to, and help people get to know others in their communities well. We will continue to enable and encourage individuals from all backgrounds, and from all our local places, to share their experiences, ideas, and solutions.

To ensure this strategy's work is shaped and powered by people who live, work and study in Kirklees, we will also be guided by our '**Working Alongside**' shared values (see [www.WorkingAlongside.org.uk](http://www.WorkingAlongside.org.uk) and the [Kirklees Inclusive Communities Framework](#)):

- Recognise everyone.
- Involve others early.
- Recognise we are coming from different places.
- Work on mutual trust.
- Grow mutual confidence.
- Be flexible with each other.
- Take courage from kindness.
- Share with each other.
- Be open and honest.
- Listen with curiosity.
- Be flexible in our approaches.
- Learn by doing

## APPENDIX D: SAMPLE STATE DATA PER THEME

This Appendix provides a summary of baseline data for each of the four core themes; helping provide context to the targets and objectives outlined within our strategy.

More detailed state data is expected to be provided in the “how we are going to achieve this” plans, policies and strategies which will sit beneath the strategy.

### CLOSING THE LOOP

The latest data for local authority collected waste in Kirklees, as published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs for 2020-21, is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Local Authority collected waste generation data and National Average Data for England from April 2020 to March 2022. EfW = Energy from Waste

Area	Landfilled	Incineration with EfW	Incineration without EfW	Recycled-Composted
Kirklees	11.6%	64.2%	0.5%	25.3%
England Average	7.8%	47.7%	0.5%	41.4%

The updated [Kirklees Council Resource & Waste Strategy 2023](#) has a target to achieve a recycling rate of at least 70% at household waste & recycling centres by 2030, recycle at least 65% of municipal waste by 2035 and achieve a 95% diversion from landfill rate by 2030.

There is currently no data which provides information on the sharing economy within Kirklees.

### NURTURING NATURE

Kirklees covers a land area of 40,860ha, of which 11.2% (4,569ha) sits within the Peak District National Park. The 2022 land-use statistics for Kirklees, outlined in Table 2, show the extent of our existing natural environment, which covers 25.8% of land-area within Kirklees. Importantly, 42.1% of our land is used for agriculture, with outdoor recreational spaces occupying 3.31%.

Table 2: Land-use statistics for Kirklees, 2022 (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

Land-use Type	Area of Land (Ha)	% of Total Kirklees Land Area
Forestry and Woodland	3,934ha	9.6%
Natural Land	4,002ha	9.8%
Rough Grassland	2,599ha	6.4%
Agricultural Land	17,208ha	42.1%
Outdoor Recreation	1,355ha	3.31%
Residential Gardens	4,184ha	10.2%

Through the local plan, there is also land designated or protected for biodiversity importance in Kirklees as seen in Table 3 below.

In 2022/23 the total land area of biodiversity importance in Kirklees is 6,506ha (which does not include double counted land with more than one designation i.e., ancient woodland that is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSS)).

Table 3: Land Designated or Protected for Biodiversity Importance in Kirklees (Kirklees Council Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report 2022/23)

Designated or Protected Category	2020/21 Area of Land (Ha)	2021/22 Area of Land (ha)	2022/23 Area of Land (Ha)
Site of Special Scientific Interest	4,845	4,845	4,845
Local Wildlife Sites	1,187	1,187	1,187
Local Geological Sites	83	83	83
Ancient Woodlands	1,083	1,083	1,083
Habitats of Principal Importance	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

A distinct characteristic of Kirklees’ natural environment is its rarest habitat – peatland. Inventoried in January 2022 by Moors for the Future Partnership, this ecosystem covers approximately 7,900ha. When in good condition, this provides a huge number of benefits to the district and the people who live, work, study, and visit here – storing carbon; improving water quality; helping to reduce the impacts of flooding; and supporting a rich variety of plants and animals.

As outlined in Table 4, Kirklees has 4,230.91ha of deep peat and 3,711.09ha of wet peat. Wet peat is classified as being in good condition, whereas all the deep peats (otherwise known as blanket bogs) are degraded to some degree.

Table 4: Total amount of peat, by type, in Kirklees (Kirklees Peatland Inventory Report – January 2022).

Peat Type	Land Area (Ha)
Deep Peat (over 40cm deep):	4,230.91
Wet Peat (10 to 39cm deep)	3,711.09
<b>Total Amount of Peatland:</b>	<b>7,942</b>

On the flip side, without the continued protection and restoration of this ecosystem, Kirklees’ peatland will generative negative impacts, with the potential to emit ~77,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, which is equivalent to driving a Ford Focus 20 miles every day, every year, for 38,500 years.

**Peatlands Explained**

Peatland covers around 12% of the UK land area. It is made up of three broad types - Blanket Bog; Raised Bog and Fen. Ultimately peatland is carbon-rich wetlands, made up of peat soil – formed by partially decayed material that is slowly built up, and natural vegetation such as mosses, sedges, and shrubs.

For more information on peatlands and why they are important, see the Peatland factsheet.pdf (ceh.ac.uk).

As part of the White Rose Forest initiative, Kirklees has access to BlueSky tree canopy cover data, which provides an understanding of the land area (ha) that has tree canopy cover across the district, which is outlined in Table 5. As of 2023, Kirklees has 15.17% tree canopy cover.

Table 5: Current % of Tree Canopy Cover for Kirklees (BlueSky Tree Canopy Cover Data 2023)

Kirklees	Current Tree Canopy Cover In 2023 (Ha)
Total Area	40724.72
Canopy Cover	6178.75
<b>Percentage Coverage</b>	<b>15.17</b>



Based on an indicate, high-level analysis undertaken by the Kirklees GIS team, 99.7% of residential properties within Kirklees lie within 500m of green space, blue space, or public rights of way (PROW) within 500m of their homes. Figure 3 portrays the analysis – with the purple overlay acting as the 500m buffer zone around the green and blue spaces mapped.

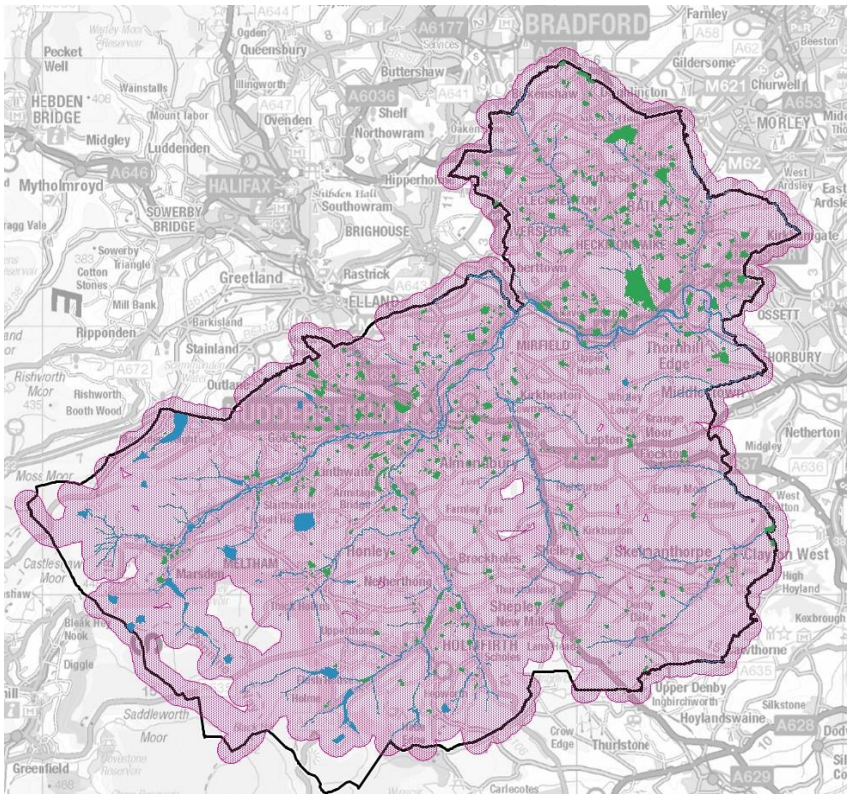


Figure 3: Map of Kirklees showing the 500m buffer zone (purple) around accessible green and blue space (Kirklees GIS Team - November 2023). This is based on the “OS Public Greenspaces” dataset and the “Water Features Attribute Management” dataset – which may differ from those used in Local Planning policy by Kirklees Council.

## BRINGING IT HOME

As of 2021, the Government's [sub-regional fuel poverty data](#) shows that Kirklees has 182,834 households, 17.3% of which are classified as ‘fuel poor’. This is 0.5% higher than for West Yorkshire as a whole.

### ***‘Fuel Poor’ Explained***

*A household is considered fuel poor if they are living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D or below and when they spend the required amount of time to heat their home, they are left with the residual income below the official poverty line.*

*For more information, visit [What is Fuel Poverty? | National Energy Action \(NEA\)](#).*

### ***EPCs Explained***

*Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) tell you how energy efficient a building is and give it a rating from ‘A’ (very efficient) to ‘G’ (inefficient). They’ll tell you how costly it will be to heat and light your property, and what its carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be, alongside providing possible recommendations for how the rating can be improved.*

*For more information, visit [the Guide to Energy Performance Certificates - Energy Saving Trust](#)*

Kirklees has a total of 160,395 EPC registered for residential properties with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (cumulative figure).

In total, 35.1% of these residential EPCs are rated C or above. The EPC rating with the largest percentage is D, at 42.3%, which is below our headline target objective of a C.

Table 6: Percentage of Kirklees households organised by EPC Rating. Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities - Energy Performance of Buildings Data, 28th February 2023

EPC rating	% of Cumulative Kirklees Certificates
A	0.2%
B	7.6%
C	27.3%
D	42.3%
E	17.5%
F	3.8%
G	1.3%

As a district, Kirklees used 4,993.62 GWh of energy (heating and electricity) in 2021. Based on the UK Energy Brief Data, only 12% of this consumption has been generated by renewable energy sources.

From an organisation perspective, 30.4% of Kirklees Councils 2022/23 energy use (heat and electricity) was generated by renewable sources.

## KIRKLEES ON THE MOVE

As of April 2022 in Kirklees, 99.1% of the residential dwellings across the district are within a 500m radius of public transport options – with 97.5% within 500m radius of routes with one or more bus per hour.

In Kirklees, we have 2,129km of local access footways, ~44km of cycle lanes and ~52km of cycle routes, compared to a total of 2784km of road network (from motorway to local road).

Commuter data for Kirklees in 2021 and 2022 is broken down in Table 7 below. For 2021, 38.9% were classified as ‘zero carbon commuters’, whereas for 2022 this has reduced to 29.8%. The cause of this reduction is due to the shift in working at home to working in the office as we recover further from the Covid-19 pandemic. If you exclude those individuals who work from home, the figures are significantly reduced, being 12.6% for 2021 and 20.6% for 2022 – showing an annual increase in sustainable transport modes by 8%.

Table 7: Commuter Data for Kirklees, 2021 and 2022. Mobility ways, February 2023.

Mode	Year	Work at Home	Walk/Run	Cycle	Bus/Coach	Tube/Metro/Tram	Train	Motorcycle	Lift sharing	Drive Alone	Taxi	Other
% of Kirklees population	2021	26.3%	7.1%	0.7%	3.7%	0.0%	1.1%	0.3%	4.9%	53.1%	1.8%	1%
% of Kirklees population	2022	9.2%	9.3%	0.9%	7.7%	0.0%	2.7%	0.7%	12.8	55.39%	0.9%	0.4%

As of October 2023, Kirklees Councils Electric Vehicle Fleet was 6.9% of total Council fleet.

## APPENDIX E: IDEAS BOARD FOR ACTION

Below is an ideas board for actions that would contribute to achieving our environmental ambitions, as mind mapped during the co-design process by partners and stakeholders.

These ideas should be treated as quotes taken directly from the workshop, so contain elements of technical language used by participants.

We have included this ideas board as inspiration for subsequential action. It is not an agreed list of actions that has been committed too by partners of this strategy.

Table 8: A list of potential ideas, suggested by partners in the co-design process, for action to achieve our environmental ambition. SED = Sustainable Economic Development, RF = Resilience Futures, E4A = Environment for All.

No.	Idea	Theme	Always-On	Targets
1	<i>Look at micro-scale hydro generation potential for waterways in Kirklees.</i>	Bringing it Home	SED, RF	8
2	<i>Build genuinely affordable net zero new houses with low carbon heating and power generation technologies i.e. heat pumps, solar PV, and hot water.</i>	Bringing it Home	SED, RF, E4A	7, 8
3	<i>Refurbish the Council housing stock so that they are energy efficient and use low-carbon sources of heat such as air source heat pumps.</i>	Bringing it Home	RF, E4A	7
4	<i>Develop a Sustainable Food Plan that has a radical new level of ambition of local food production, waste and resilience.</i>	Closing the Loop	SED, RF, E4A	1, 2, 3
5	<i>Encourage industrial symbiosis.</i>	Closing the Loop	SED, RF	1
6	<i>Establish an innovative mattress recycling or re-purpose programme.</i>	Closing the Loop	SED	1
7	<i>Have a comprehensive Climate Adaptation Plan for the Region.</i>	Cross-Cutting	RF, E4A	
8	<i>Further develop educational programmes for behaviour change and culture shift to more sustainable society.</i>	Cross-Cutting	E4A, RF	All

9	<i>Calculate and communicate how much it would cost residents, and the district in the future, if we do not act on climate change.</i>	Cross-Cutting	RF, SED, E4A	
10	<i>Encourage car share schemes.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A	10, 11
11	<i>Install more on-street charging infrastructure.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A	10, 11
12	<i>Pilot car free streets for 1 day a year in urban centres.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A	9
13	<i>Incentivise more e-delivery cycling schemes via Cargo Bikes, such as 'Holme Delivery'.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	SED	10
14	<i>Create an interchange hub at Waterloo to connect smaller rural services with the larger urban bus services.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	SED, RF, E4A	9
15	<i>Create safer and connected active travel routes, such as greenways, or cycle lanes.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A, RF	10, 12
16	<i>Work with West Yorkshire Combined Authority to radically improve bus transport through a new headline transport vision for the region.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A, SED, RF	10
17	<i>Implement a quiet streets programme for all key neighbourhoods across Kirklees.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	E4A, RF	9, 10
18	<i>Develop mobility hubs in Kirklees to achieve greater connectivity between transport modes within Kirklees and regionally.</i>	Kirklees on the Move	SED, RF, E4A	10
19	<i>Revise Local Planning Policy to better support our environmental and climate ambitions.</i>	Nurturing Nature	SED, RF, E4A	All

<b>20</b>	<i>Leverage parks and public greenspaces to greater effect - making them exemplary locations that have multifaceted benefits for nature and people.</i>	Nurturing Nature	RF, E4A	3, 5, 6
<b>21</b>	<i>Develop a maintenance plan for our parks and greenspace such as Allerton Waste Recovery Park in North Yorkshire.</i>	Nurturing Nature	RF, E4A	3, 5
<b>22</b>	<i>Adopt a biodiversity first approach in the Local Development Plan and any supplementary planning document.</i>	Nurturing Nature	SED, RF, E4A	3
<b>23</b>	<i>Fully map Kirklees' Natural Capital, with the view of informing nature recovery plans for the district.</i>	Nurturing Nature	SED, RF	3
<b>24</b>	<i>Develop a rewilding plan for Kirklees.</i>	Nurturing Nature	RF, E4A	3, 4, 5
<b>25</b>	<i>Focus on nature-based solutions in all new infrastructure.</i>	Nurturing Nature	RF	3
<b>26</b>	<i>Protect and restore our peatlands.</i>	Nurturing Nature	RF	4
<b>27</b>	<i>Encourage regenerative agriculture techniques.</i>	Nurturing Nature	SED, RF	3

## APPENDIX F: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Table 9 contains several technical terms that are used throughout this document, accompanied by a definition.

Table 9: A glossary of technical terms used throughout the Environment Strategy.

Term	Definition
<b>Accessible</b>	Something that is easy to reach, understand or use, especially for people with disabilities or limitations. It implies that something is available or can be approached without difficulty, barriers, or obstacles.
<b>Adaptation / Adaptability</b>	The process of an adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
<b>Affordable</b>	Describes something that is reasonably priced or within financial reach for most people.
<b>Air Pollution</b>	The contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agent that changes the natural characteristics of the atmosphere. Pollutants include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide.
<b>Avoidable</b>	Something that could have been prevented or circumvented if appropriate measures or certain actions had been taken.
<b>Biodiversity Net Gain</b>	Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity it encourages developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected in such a way it is hoped that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted and ecological networks can be restored
<b>Biodiversity offsets</b>	Measurable conservation outcomes deigned to compensate for adverse or unavoidable impacts on biodiversity by projects. These should be done in addition too, not replacement of prevention and mitigation measures.
<b>Climate Change</b>	Refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.
<b>Energy Efficient</b>	The practice of using less energy to provide the same amount of useful output from a service (such as heating water, lighting, or cooling a fridge).
<b>Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>	A strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for leisure and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

<p><b>Green and Blue Space</b></p>	<p>Green spaces include parks, recreation grounds, public or private gardens, playing fields, play areas, woodland, and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments, green roofs, and green walls, as well public right of ways (PROWS), such as bridleways, footpaths, canal towpaths and disused railway lines.</p> <p>Blue space includes canals, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs.</p>
<p><b>Industrial Symbiosis</b></p>	<p>The collaborative relationship between different businesses or companies within industry. This can be through the exchange of resource – i.e. the waste or by-product of one business, is the raw material used by another. This reduces waste and makes better use of resources.</p>
<p><b>Natural Capital</b></p>	<p>Refers to the Earth’s natural resources and ecosystems that provide valuable services to humans and other species. These resources include things like clean air, fresh water, fertile soil, biodiversity, forests, and oceans.</p> <p>Just like financial capital, which we use to invest and create wealth, natural capital is essential for our well-being and survival.</p>
<p><b>Nature Based Solutions (NbS)</b></p>	<p>Approaches to addressing environmental and societal challenges by working with nature or mimicking natural processes. Instead of relying solely on traditional engineering or technological solution, NbS harness the power of ecosystems and biodiversity to provide sustainable and cost-effective solutions.</p>
<p><b>Nature Recovery</b></p>	<p>The process of returning nature to a previous state or condition after experiencing a setback, regaining health.</p>
<p><b>Net Zero Emissions</b></p>	<p>Net-zero emissions are achieved when emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals.</p>
<p><b>Peatland</b></p>	<p>A type of wetland characterised by the accumulation of peat, which is partially decayed organic matter. It forms in waterlogged conditions where the rate of plant growth exceeds the rate of decompositions, leading to a gradual build-up of organic material over thousands of years.</p>
<p><b>Regenerative Agriculture</b></p>	<p>A farming technique that focuses on soil health and ecosystem wellbeing. When soils are healthy, it produces more food and nutrition, stores ore carbon and increases biodiversity. An example is crop rotation to prevent soil depletion or contour ploughing.</p>
<p><b>Resilience</b></p>	<p>The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding of reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure.</p>
<p><b>Rewilding</b></p>	<p>The large-scale restoration of nature – allowing ecosystems to take care of themselves and thrive without human intervention – restoring habitats, natural processes</p>

<b>Sustainability</b>	The use of resources so that they last a long time and don't harm the environment or future generations.
<b>Sustainable Neighbourhoods</b>	Helping communities in Kirklees achieve a balance between the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability, in line with the unique needs of that community. A sustainable neighbourhood has three key features: a vibrant street life, walkability, and affordability.
<b>Tree Canopy</b>	The amount of ground area covered by branches, leaves and stems from trees as viewed from above.
<b>Vulnerability</b>	The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.





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**Council Budget Strategy Update: 2025/26 and future years** (Reference from Cabinet)

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council (Referred from Cabinet 10/9/24)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18th September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr Graham Turner</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>Yes Yes</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report :</b> To determine the Cabinet’s approach to the annual update of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This is reported to Council each year and sets a framework for the development of draft spending plans for future years by Officers and Cabinet.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations of Cabinet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the key risks to the delivery of the budget in 2024/25 and that these will be subject to consideration as part of the Budget Monitoring reports submitted to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis;</li> <li>• note the continued uncertainty with the future funding outlook for the Council;</li> <li>• note the update and the revised budget gap to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 as shown at <b>Appendix A</b> and that in view of the uncertainty with some of the assumptions upon which the Strategy is based, that it will remain under review as the Council’s budget process progresses;</li> <li>• note that there is a significant gap of c£30m in 2025/26 which requires either reduction in budget pressures or increased savings proposals to be brought forward at pace.</li> <li>• note the scenario analysis shown at <b>Appendix C</b> which models ‘worst’/‘best’ case scenarios around the baseline MTFP as part of the assessment of potential risks facing the Council;</li> <li>• agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in the report;</li> <li>• note that as delegations allow, and in view of the significant financial challenge faced by the Council, early action will be taken to identify and implement budget reduction measures (consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out above) as a means of reducing the funding gap set out in this report;</li> <li>• in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members, request Officers to identify and bring forward proposals consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in this report for consideration by Cabinet (and then Council) as part of their development of the budget for 2025/26;</li> </ul>	

- note the timetable set out in **Appendix E** of the report for the development of the Council's Budget for 2025/26;
- agree that, subject to consideration by respective Portfolio Holders, any budget proposals arising from the work above be considered by the Cabinet in due course (and subject to the proposal on consultation below);
- note that it is proposed to undertake consultation on the budget proposals in late 2024 with a view to informing decisions on the Council's budget for 2025/26.
- subject to the continuation of the Business Rates Pooling arrangements, give delegated authority to the Chief Executive and the Service Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader and the Finance and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, to determine whether the Council should continue as a member of the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool in 2025/26

### Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council has a sustainable budget over the medium term to deliver the Council's priorities.

### Resource Implications:

This report develops the financial planning framework for the 25/26 budget and all relevant financial implications are contained in the report and appendices.

Date signed off by **Strategic Director** & name

**Rachel Spencer Henshall – 2 September 2024**

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?

**Kevin Mulvaney – 2 September 2024**

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?

**Samantha Lawton – 2 September 2024**

**Electoral wards affected: All**

**Ward councillors consulted: All**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes – there is no personal data within the budget details and calculations set out in this report and accompanying Appendices

## 1. Executive Summary

The appended report was submitted to the meeting of Cabinet on 2 September 2024 for consideration, and for Cabinet to make a recommendation to Council.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

(see appended report)

### **3. Implications for the Council**

(see appended report)

### **4 Engagement**

(see appended report)

### **5 Options**

(see appended report)

#### **5.1 Options considered**

(see appended report)

#### **5.2 Reasons for recommended option**

(see appended report)

### **6 Next steps and timelines**

6.1 Subject to approval, work will be undertaken on the identification and development of draft budget proposals and options (with supporting documentation) within the framework set out. Budget Planning Totals for Directorates have been developed to facilitate this work.

6.2 Where existing delegations set out in the Council's Constitution allow, and in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members as appropriate, early action will be taken to implement proposals to reduce the funding gap identified in this report. Where this is not possible, proposals will be developed in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members and will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet and, where it is necessary to do so, ultimately by Council as set out in the Constitution.

6.3 The culmination of this work on the development of proposals will be that Cabinet will bring forward its initial budget proposals in December 2024 for consideration. The final budget for 2025/26 will be at Budget Council in February/March 2025.

Subject to Member approval, capital slippage proposals and the update of the multi-year capital plan will be incorporated into in year financial monitoring in 2024/25 and reported quarterly to Cabinet from Quarter 1 onwards.

### **7 Contact officer**

Kevin Mulvaney	Service Director – Finance
Jacqui Fieldhouse	Head of Finance
John Bartlett	Acting Head of Commercial Services
James Anderson	Head of Accountancy
Sarah Hill,	Finance Manager

## **8 Background Papers and History of Decisions**

[Annual Financial Outturn Report and Rollover Report 2023/24 \(Item 12\)](#)

[Annual Budget Report 2024/25 and future years \(Item 7\)](#)

[Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25 \(Item 9\)](#)

## **9 Appendices**

See appended report

## **10 Service Director responsible**

Kevin Mulvaney, Service Director – Finance.

**Report title:** Council Budget Strategy Update: 2025/26 and future years

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup>September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (if applicable)</b>	<b>Cllr Graham Turner</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b>          To determine the Cabinet’s approach to the annual update of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This is reported to Full Council each year and sets a framework for the development of draft spending plans for future years by Officers and Cabinet.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b>          Cabinet recommend the following for approval by Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the key risks to the delivery of the budget in 2024/25 and that these will be subject to consideration as part of the Budget Monitoring reports submitted to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis;</li> <li>• note the continued uncertainty with the future funding outlook for the Council;</li> <li>• note the update and the revised budget gap to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2025/26 to 2029/30 as shown at <b>Appendix A</b> and that in view of the uncertainty with some of the assumptions upon which the Strategy is based, that it will remain under review as the Council’s budget process progresses;</li> <li>• note that there is a significant gap of c£30m in 2025/26 which requires either reduction in budget pressures or increased savings proposals to be brought forward at pace.</li> <li>• note the scenario analysis shown at <b>Appendix C</b> which models ‘worst’/‘best’ case scenarios around the baseline MTFP as part of the assessment of potential risks facing the Council;</li> <li>• agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in the report;</li> <li>• note that as delegations allow, and in view of the significant financial challenge faced by the Council, early action will be taken to identify and implement budget reduction measures (consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out above) as a means of reducing the funding gap set out in this report;</li> </ul>	

- in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members, request Officers to identify and bring forward proposals consistent with the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in this report for consideration by Cabinet (and then Council) as part of their development of the budget for 2025/26;
- note the timetable set out in **Appendix E** of the report for the development of the Council's Budget for 2025/26;
- agree that, subject to consideration by respective Portfolio Holders, any budget proposals arising from the work above be considered by the Cabinet in due course (and subject to the proposal on consultation below);
- note that it is proposed to undertake consultation on the budget proposals in late 2024 with a view to informing decisions on the Council's budget for 2025/26.
- subject to the continuation of the Business Rates Pooling arrangements, give delegated authority to the Chief Executive and the Service Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader and the Finance and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, to determine whether the Council should continue as a member of the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool in 2025/26

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- To ensure that the Council has a sustainable budget over the medium term to deliver the Council's priorities.

#### **Resource Implications:**

This report develops the financial planning framework for the 25/26 budget and all relevant financial implications are contained in the report and appendices.

**Date signed off by Strategic Director & name**

**Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 2 September 2024**

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?**

**Kevin Mulvaney – 2 September 2024**

**Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?**

**Sam Lawton – 2 September 2024**

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward Councillors consulted:** All

**Public or private:** Public

Have you considered GDPR: Yes – there is no personal data within the budget details and calculations set out in this report and accompanying Appendices



## 1. Summary

- 1.1 Under the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet is required to submit a provisional Budget Strategy Update to the Council no later than October in each year. Commonly known as the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), this report sets out a framework for the subsequent budget setting process and future financial planning.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Council approved its Budget for 2024/25. As part of this, approval was also given to the MTFS for the period to 2026/27. The MTFS sets out the Council's financial plans detailing income and expenditure over the medium term. Acknowledging that the Council is operating in a dynamic environment and that the assumptions underpinning the MTFS are subject to change, it is good practice to review and update the Strategy on a regular basis to ensure that the Council has a good understanding of its forward financial forecasts and to support planning for the development of the budget in 2025/26 and subsequent years.
- 1.3 The update to the MTFS is also necessary in the context of the Council's outturn for 2023/24, reported to Cabinet/Council on 9<sup>th</sup> /17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and the Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring position for 2024/25 reported to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The outturn position on the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget was an overspend of £7.3m and the latest monitoring position indicates the Council is forecast to overspend by £12.8m in 2024/25. Should the forecast outturn position for 2024/25 be sustained until the year end, the Council's Unallocated Reserve could fall below the minimum level. This means that for the purposes of planning the budget for 2025/26, there is no scope to use these reserves and the funding gap must be bridged by reductions in the base budget, whether that is less expenditure, more income or a combination of the two.
- 1.4 In response to the Budget Monitoring for 2024/25, a series of additional mitigating measures are being considered to reduce the Council's net expenditure. At the same time, a review of the Council's Capital Programme is underway. These actions are being implemented in the context of the Council Plan priorities so that the Council's activities continued to support the delivery of services towards the shared outcomes set out in the Plan.
- 1.5 There is a forecast deficit on the Medium Term Financial Strategy of £40.9m by 2029/30 with the most immediate issue being a funding gap in 2025/26 of £29.3m. This is partly caused by the continuation of the overspend in 2024/25 as a result of the continuing impact of the cost and demand pressures particularly in the social care sector, shortfalls in income and the rising cost of temporary accommodation.
- 1.6 In view of this significant funding deficit, the Council must identify ways to achieve a sustainable budget at the earliest opportunity. Given the significant reduction in reserves over recent years, there is also a need for the Council to ensure it can maintain an adequate Minimum Working Balance and start to build back reserves to provide the Council with financial resilience and capacity.
- 1.7 It is important that the development of the MTFS is undertaken in the context of the Council Plan, which was approved by Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 alongside the 2024/25 Budget. It sets out the ongoing commitment to a vision and shared outcomes over the medium term

but in the context of the economic and financial challenges currently facing the Council and the Borough. The four key Council priorities are:-

- Address our financial position in a fair and balanced way;
- Strive to transform council services to become more efficient, effective, and modern;
- Continue to deliver a greener, healthier Kirklees and address the challenges of climate change;
- Continue to invest and regenerate our towns and villages to support our diverse places and communities to flourish.

**2. Information required to make a decision**

**Budget Strategy for 2024/25**

2.1 In setting the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25, the Council agreed the following key matters are part of the budget strategy:-

- net budget growth of £33.1m to reflect increases in demand for services, structural deficiencies in some income budgets and inflationary pressures;
- savings totalling £42.6m to be implemented so that the full effect of the saving impacted in 2024/25;
- drawdown of £11.4m from Earmarked Reserves to support expenditure in the budget.

**Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring**

2.2 At the last meeting of Cabinet in August 2024, Councillors considered a report on the Council’s Quarter 1 General Fund Revenue Budget monitoring position. This estimated that the Council is forecast to overspend by £12.8m in the current financial year as summarised in the Table below:-

**Table 1: Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring 2024/25**

	Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Children and Families	80.6	86.3	5.7
Adults and Health	120.1	122.1	2.0
Growth and Regeneration	42.1	48.8	6.7
Corporate Strategy, Comm and Public Health	57.4	61.1	3.7
Central Budgets	64.8	64.8	-
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>365.0</b>	<b>383.1</b>	<b>18.1</b>
Demand Reserve Drawdown	3.0		(3.0)
Social Care Contingency Budget Release		(2.0)	(2.0)
Waste Inflation Budget Release		(0.3)	(0.3)
<b>General Fund Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>368.0</b>	<b>380.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>

2.3 Executive Directors have been asked to bring forward proposals to bring the projected overspend back into a balanced position. Should the forecast overspend remain unchanged, the Council’s balance of Unallocated (General) Reserves could fall below what is considered to be the minimum working balance level of £15m, although as part of the

Budget setting process the minimum working balance will be reviewed to ensure it is still the correct level.

2.4 Members will be aware that several actions have already been taken to control net expenditure. These include:-

- cessation of all but priority expenditure (limiting spending to maintaining health and safety, meeting statutory service requirements, fulfilling contractual obligations, preventing further costs and to helping generate income);
- stricter controls on recruitment whereby all posts subject to release are approved by the relevant Executive Director and the Council's People Panel, but stopping short of a total recruitment freeze;
- an ongoing review of all discretionary fees and charges to seek to ensure full cost recovery in line with the Council's approved fees and charges policy.
- accelerating the sale of assets that the Cabinet has already agreed to dispose of and bring forward further options for assets disposals (both to reduce the operating cost of the Council's Estate and to generate capital receipts);
- continuing to explore all external funding opportunities to bring additional income into the Council;
- undertaking a review of the Council's Capital Programme to determine to what extent schemes can be rephased, deferred, stopped or not started at all to the reduce the cost of borrowing to the Council and to free up capital receipts so that they can be reallocated to essential spending commitments. To date over £62m of spend has been slipped from 2024/25 into future years which has reduced Council borrowing requirements to be in line with the budget.

2.5 Whilst these actions are having some effect in helping to mitigate the Council's financial position, it is evident that these actions need to go further and quicker to reduce the in year overspend and the potential impact on reserves.

2.6 In the view of the Service Director Finance, these actions remain necessary to avoid the need to issue a report under s114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The need to issue such a report will remain under review depending on the success or otherwise of the implementation of the actions set out above.

2.7 In summary, the Budget Strategy for 2024/25 and the forecast overspend for the year continues to provide the backdrop for the significant ongoing financial challenge faced by the Council and many other authorities across the country.

### **Overarching Principles of the Financial Strategy**

2.8 A sustainable financial plan is required to help ensure the Council is well placed to achieve its ambitions as set out in the Council plan.

- 2.9 The Council will become more sustainable by reducing the reliance of one off funding sources, such as reserves, to fund recurring expenditure and it must to continue to make an appropriate provision to top up its unallocated (general) reserve to ensure that on a risk based approach this reserve is always above a minimum level.
- 2.10 The strategy will also provide specific funding for the creation of certain earmarked reserves to continue to fund transformation costs that will be required to deliver service change across the Council. This change can help deliver its ambition of being modern efficient Council.
- 2.11 The strategy also recognises the need to provide the Council's agreed contribution to the SEND Safety Valve plan at c£10m.
- 2.12 This financial plan aims to provide funding to address known pressures in the base budget and will make appropriate provision for inflation (pay and prices) and a reasonable assessment of demand pressures based upon the latest available information. In the main these are the demand pressures being reported in Q1 financial monitoring.
- 2.13 In general, fees and charges to the public are assumed to be increased annually by 3%; however where costs rise beyond this, for example in those traded services who may be impacted more acutely by National Living Wage increases, or services who have not yet achieved full cost recovery, services will continue to seek to recover full costs in line with the Council policy on fees and charges so as to not to create additional burdens on the general fund. Charges for users of Adult Social Care services will continue to be based on assessment of a clients ability to pay.
- 2.14 The Capital plan, currently £1.29bn over five years will continue to be subject to review and presently no new schemes have been added to those already in the plan. It is likely that as part of the ongoing review, some schemes will need to be slipped or removed from the capital plan. At Quarter 1 2024/25, around £62m (£23m of general fund borrowing) has been slipped from the current financial year into future years which has brought this year's Treasury budget into balance.
- 2.15 New capital schemes will be considered for inclusion in the Capital plan if they deliver ongoing revenue savings against the base budget; or are required to meet health and safety priorities or on the basis that new bids are assessed as a greater priority than existing Council funded schemes which would subsequently be removed.
- 2.16 Collectively, these principles are designed to create a more stable base budget from which Members can make decisions on savings proposals that will be required to delivered a balanced budget and set the framework for the setting of the 2025/26 budget to be considered at Cabinet in December 2024 and subsequently approved at Budget Council in early 2025.
- 2.17 Had there been little or no recognition of ongoing pressures, there is an increased risk that a budget for 2025/26 may not have been considered robust with the resulting implication that it could not be signed off by the S151 officer.

## **Risk and Uncertainty within the Financial Strategy**

- 2.18 The Government's future spending plans for 2025/26 will not be known until the Autumn of 2024 and those plans may differ from the assumptions made in this strategy. The new Government has indicated it will undertake a spending review in the Spring of 2025 with a view to providing multi year settlements to Council's. Whilst this will not directly influence the 2025/26 budget, the offer of certainty a multi year settlement will bring will aid financial planning beyond 2026.
- 2.19 There is a risk that the political priorities of the Government continue to direct resources towards the traditionally protected departments of Health, Defence and Education and that unprotected departments face budgets being capped either in cash terms or increases limited to CPI. This Council along with its partners continues to lobby to ensure local government is seen as a priority.
- 2.20 There remain uncertainties around Business Rates Reform and the Fair Funding Review meaning funding allocations to Councils will continue, at least in the short term to reflect spending needs from 2013/14 and will continue to not take account of how those needs have changed (in relative terms) since that time. Financial modelling indicates that Kirklees could benefit from an additional £18m per annum, although any gains/losses would almost certainly be subject to a cap and collar.
- 2.21 Pay and inflationary pressures remain a risk over the longer term. Whilst inflation is now nearing the Bank of England target level of 2% which should reduce the impact of the inflation within the sector, the impact of pay awards, national living wage increases and ongoing inflation within those budgets subject to significant demand variations rising beyond the assumed levels in the financial plan will add to the gap.
- 2.22 There are a number of significant budgets particularly in social care and certain income budgets which are subject to demand and demography changes. Whilst this plan tries to adequately reflect those pressures based on the latest information, there is a risk that these pressures are understated.
- 2.23 There is a risk that the predicted reductions in interest rates are not realised which increases the cost of the capital plan to levels which are not affordable within the overall funding envelope. This would result in a potential reduction in the total capital plan from the current £1.2bn level.
- 2.24 Whilst no new burdens responsibilities are assumed in this plan, should any arise it is expected that these will come with the appropriate level of funding.

## **Update of Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue) 2025/2030**

- 2.25 Since the meeting of Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 work has continued to update the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period to 2029/30. A summary of the updated MTFS is provided in the Table 2 below with an analysis by Directorate shown at **Appendix A**:-

**Table 2: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/30**

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
<b>Opening Balance</b>	-	29.3	34.7	43.5	41.6
<b>Funding &amp; Reserves Changes</b>	<b>(7.6)</b>	<b>(30.6)</b>	<b>(12.9)</b>	<b>(20.6)</b>	<b>(19.6)</b>
Add back 24/25 savings fall out	2.6	-	-	-	-
Demand pressure	16.5	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.6
Inflation/pay pressure	18.0	15.6	13.2	13.5	13.8
Treasury management pressure	10.9	16.2	2.9	1.9	2.2
Other pressure - expenditure	5.7	(0.7)	2.7	4.8	-
Funding fall-out	2.3	0.9	-	-	-
Other pressure - income	1.6	-	-	-	-
Funding increase	(4.4)	(1.7)	(4.6)	(9.0)	(4.7)
Existing Approved Savings	(16.3)	(2.2)	(0.3)	(0.3)	-
<b>Total Spend Changes</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>18.9</b>
<b>Funding 'Gap'</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>40.9</b>
<b>In Year Funding Gap</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>

See Appendix A

- 2.26 As the table indicates, the forecast funding gap for the period to 2029/30 is now estimated to be £40.9m with the most immediate issue being a funding shortfall in 2025/26 of £29.3m.
- 2.27 To put these variations into context, the net base budget for 2024/25 is £363.4m. For 2025/26 specifically, total available budget is forecast at £371.1m with an initial assessment of spending need identified by Directorates at £400.4m which creates 'the gap' of £29.3m. Further details of the assumptions and main pressures are outlined below.
- Specific Funding Assumptions (£7.6m)**
- 2.28 The Council's net revenue budget is primarily determined from the amount of Council tax collected and funding provided from the Government Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) with adjustments made with either contributions to or from reserves to support the overall total base budget for service provision.
- 2.29 Given the funding settlement for 2024/25 is for one-year only, and the limited details provided in the Local Government Finance Policy Statement, it remains difficult to estimate with any certainty the likely level of funding the Council will receive onwards.
- 2.30 In respect of Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept, this plan assumes an annual increase equivalent to 4.99%. This is based on the increases of core council tax (2.99%) and the social care precept of 2%. A reduction of 1% would result in a reduction in council tax funding of c£2.4m per annum and would have a compounding effect if this was applied in the early years of the plan.
- 2.31 There is an assumed increase in the Council tax base of 0.7%, equivalent to circa 800 Band D homes per annum.

- 2.32 The Government SFA, which includes Revenue Support Grant, is assumed to increase by c2% per annum for the duration of the MTFS. Retained Business Rates income and associated grants are uplifted by the same percentage.
- 2.33 Other un-ringfenced grants, including New Homes Bonus and Services Grant, are assumed to remain relatively stable over the MTFS period.
- 2.34 It is also assumed that the Social Care grant funding provided to the Council and which are budgeted for in the Directorates, totalling around £69.3m in 2024/25 and including grants such as the Improved Better Care Fund, Social Care Support Grant, Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund will be c£4m higher than the levels currently provided. Further announcements on specific government funding in relation to social care are expected as part of the upcoming budget.
- 2.35 The 2024/25 base budget is supported by the use of £11.4m of one off reserves which will no longer be available
- 2.36 The table below summarises the total and assumed variations in funding available to support the budget next year.

2025-26 FUNDING BUILD UP (£000)	COUNCIL TAX INCOME	BUSINESS RATES RETAINED INCOME	GOVERNMENT FUNDING	COLLECTION FUND REPAYMENT	USE OF RESERVES	TOTAL
<b>24-25 FUNDING</b>	<b>(236,391)</b>	<b>(63,169)</b>	<b>(70,684)</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,795</b>	<b>(363,449)</b>
FUNDING INCREASE	(14,790)	(708)	(1,725)			(17,222)
FUNDING FALL-OUT			135		4,650	4,785
OTHER					4,759	4,759
<b>25-26 FUNDING</b>	<b>(251,181)</b>	<b>(63,877)</b>	<b>(72,274)</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>13,204</b>	<b>(371,128)</b>

## Executive Director Portfolio Assumptions:

### Children & Families

- 2.37 As part of the MTFS approximately £6m of additional funding is proposed to be invested into Children's Services for 2025/26 (prior to savings targets). A large part of this (£3.9m) is to support demand led sufficiency pressures such as External Residential Placements, Leaving Care Supported Accommodation 18+, Special Guardianship Orders and Educational Psychology. Inflationary pressures are also proposed to be supported at a cost of £1.4m and a further £0.7m is to be invested to support Corporate Parenting pressures.

### Adults & Health

- 2.38 As part of the MTFS approximately £14.2m is added in relation to Adults demand led pressures. Of this, £7.6m is related to demand and £6.6m is inflationary (around CPI and the impact of the National Living Wage). However, as part of last years budget, the Directorate has significant savings targets c£12.7m to deliver in

2025/26 which will need to be reviewed to test whether they can be delivered or whether alternative proposals are required.

## **Place**

- 2.39 Significant pressures have been identified in the Place Directorate and various measures have been put into action to mitigate these wherever possible. However, there are still a number of budget pressures that require specific funding by adding to the base budget.
- 2.40 A total of £3m is proposed to be added to the Waste Management budget for 2025/26 primarily for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) at £0.7m, Landfill tax £0.3m, Chemical treatments costs £0.3m, £0.9m for the extension of the Suez contract and £0.8m to provide the required vehicle hire budget pending the arrival of new fleet vehicles.
- 2.41 A sum of £0.8m has been added to reflect the costs of maintenance and other costs in the Core Estate, £1.1m for specific operational demand issues across the Directorate including increased budgetary provision for expected increases in costs of Home to School transport and maintenance of fleet vehicles.

## **Public Health and Corporate Resources**

- 2.42 The council currently has a significant pressure relating to Housing Benefit Subsidy, linked to homelessness activity and the use of bed and breakfast and other forms of temporary accommodation for which Councils are unable to reclaim full subsidy. An amount of £4.6m has been added to bring the base budget up current spending levels. A homelessness board has been established to try and reduce spending pressures (subsidy loss) and it is expected actions agreed by this Board can help reduce this pressure going forward.
- 2.43 In addition, the Welfare and Exchequer base budget had assumed Household Support Funding would continue, but this is looking less likely adding a further pressure of £0.8m. Other significant base budget pressures include a reduction in court cost fee recovery relating to Council tax and business rates at £0.5m and a fall out of the one-off saving in Public Health of £0.9m.

## **Other Cost Pressures**

### *Pay Awards*

- 2.44 As the Cabinet may be aware, the pay award for 2024/25 has not yet been agreed and given the position of both the National Employers Organisation and the Trade Unions, it appears it is unlikely to be agreed until later in the year. The current pay offer, a flat rate of £1,290 per FTE, made by the employers is in line with the amount provided for in the 2024/25 budget at c£10m.
- 2.45 Looking ahead, and with CPI inflation currently at 2.2% (August 2024) and near to Bank of England target levels, the MTFs assumes pay awards of 3% for each of the



remaining years of this plan. Each 1% costs broadly £2.5m per annum on the Council's existing payroll costs.

- 2.46 Budgets for pay awards and inflation continue to be held centrally until they are agreed nationally or are contractually committed.

#### *National Living Wage and Impact on Pay Structure*

- 2.47 In broad terms, the change in the National Living Wage (NLW) impacts the Council in the following ways:-

- the Local Government Employers Organisation, which represents most Local Authorities in pay negotiations with the Trades Unions, is committed to pay staff above the NLW. Given the current NLW is only marginally below the lowest hourly rate paid to Local Government staff, in recent years the increase in the NLW has required increases in the lowest hourly rates that, when applied to the whole pay spine, are not affordable.

Consequently, in the last 3 years, the National Employers Organisation has offered flat rate pay awards on each point of the Local Government Pay Spine which, whilst progressive, is leading to a flatter pay spine. This is not considered sustainable and may require a complete review of the Pay Spine (akin to a national job evaluation exercise) which could have significant implications for pay costs for all Councils;

- the Council uses the National Living Wage as one of the key components in its determination of the amounts payable for Adult Social Care commissioned services. Given the value of the commissioning arrangements, which is c£104m net annually (c£141m gross), and that wages represent on average c70% of Providers Costs, the change in the National Living Wage has a significant bearing on the cost of these services to the Council. The change in the NLW for 2025/26 will not be known until later in the year but is assumed in the MTFP to increase by c3.9% (mid-point of the potential envelope being considered by the Low Pay Commission).

#### *Treasury Management*

- 2.48 Updated Treasury management budgets assume that the Bank of England base rate of 5.00% (as at 1st August 2024) is estimated to fall towards 3.00% by the end of 2025/26. The updated MTFP reflects an assumed an average consolidated borrowing rate of 4.69% in 2025/26. This is based on the continuation of current borrowing strategy, which combines the use of both short and long term borrowing as set out in the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy report so as not to expose the Council to significant changes in interest rates in any given year.
- 2.49 Treasury management budgets also take account of updated capital plan borrowing requirements and associated annual revenue resources to be set aside to service Council debt. A 20% potential slippage factor (previously 30%) has also been applied to borrowing across all schemes over the updated multi-year capital plan, with the exception of the Cultural Heart scheme which is assumed to be delivered

in line with projected timelines. This is considered a reasonable assumption at this stage given the nature and scale of strategic priority investment, and potential range of factors that can cause such programmes/schemes to slip over such a protracted timeline. However, best practice is that Treasury budgets should be based upon the most realistic timeline of capital plans and not simply assume a level of slippage. It is intended that this strategy will be developed over time.

#### *Other Matters which may impact the Strategy*

2.50 As well as the range of pressures affecting the Council's financial position overall set out above, there are some specific service related matters that may equally have a bearing on the Council's financial position. These include, but are not limited to, for example:-

- **Social Care Reforms (including Market Sustainability and the Fair Cost of Care)** – although the Government has cancelled the implementation of reforms on social care (including the cap on maximum amount a person would spend in their lifetime) there is, nevertheless, a need for the Council to ensure the sustainability of the local care market and to plan for increases in demographics and in complexity of care need. Whilst funding continues to be available from the Government to support Social Care, this may not be sufficient to cover increased demand. Equally, much will depend on the integration of health and social care and what that might deliver in terms of efficient and effective services;
- **Preparing for Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection** – the Cabinet has received various updates on the CQC's mandate to independently review and assess the quality of care provided by Local Authorities. It is not clear when the Council will be subject to this review, but significant work has been undertaken to be prepared. Again, from the updates provided, the outcome of the review is uncertain and with that the extent of any actions, and therefore resources, that may be necessary in response to the review;
- **Managing Demand in Children's Social Care** – the Council has invested in early intervention in Children's Social Care which has meant the numbers of Looked After Children are low in relative terms when compared to other 'like' Councils. However, both the mix of placements and associated costs are creating pressure on the budget which will need to be actively managed to ensure expenditure remains within the resources available. This is particularly the case with the SEND service where there is significant transformation activity being driven by a need to reduce the historic deficit on the High Need DSG budget.
- **Environment Act 2021** – The Act has a wide range of changes that will impact on the Council, generally in relation to environmental matters and more specifically as both waste collection and waste disposal authority. This includes, for example: -
  - the collection of glass, metal, plastic, paper/card, film/foil and cartons from households for recycling.

- Councils will be legally required to have separate food waste collections at least once a week for recycling and composting.
- the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (where consumers pay a deposit for a single-use container at the point of purchase which is then refunded to the consumer when they return the container for recycling).
- the Extended Producer Responsibility which makes sure producers pay the 'full net cost of recovery' for the packaging that they produce (considered by MHCLG to be a substantial new income source for the Council, although this has yet to be verified)

The implementation of some measures in the Act is due for most authorities in April 2026, however, this Council has an exemption until April 2028 due its specific issues regarding the Waste Management contract. For those with the April 2026 date, capital funding has been provided by Government for new food waste vehicles and receptacles, although revenue funding has yet to be announced. On this basis it is reasonable to assume that New Burdens funding will be provided to meet the requirements of the Act and therefore no provision is included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the impact of the Environment Act 2021 at this time.

## Balances and Reserves

- 2.51 Any consideration of the Council's Medium Term Financial position needs also to consider what reserves and balances are available and whether they are adequate. The Council holds both "earmarked" and "general/unallocated" reserves. The strategy for the use of these is outlined below; with forecast reserves balances illustrated in Appendix B.
- 2.52 **Earmarked Reserves** (for discretionary use) will only be used for the purposes for which they have been set aside and will be subject to annual review. The updated MTFs assumes a net transfer of £11.7m into Earmarked Reserves in 2025/26 to support specific spend requirements, including DSG Safety Valve repayments and replenishment of the Service transformation reserves and insurance provisions.
- 2.53 **General Reserves** are balances held as contingencies against risks such as emergency events. A risk assessment of the Council's level of reserves is carried out each financial year, when setting the budget and updating the financial plan. It is updated regularly during the financial year as part of the formal financial management reporting process. The risk assessment is based on the following key factors and an underlying presumption that significant risks need an appropriate level of cover: -
- a) a review of known provisions and contingent liabilities;
  - b) the likelihood of overspend for either revenue or capital;
  - c) the likelihood of any additional income that would be credited to reserves;
  - d) the robustness of the Council's revenue budget proposals;
  - e) the adequacy of funding for the Capital Programme; and
  - f) any potential significant expenditure items for which explicit funding has not yet been identified.

2.54 Appendix F provides the risk assessment of the Council's level of general reserves, which estimates the value of the risks at £15.0m. Therefore, a current **Minimum Working Balance** of at least £15.0m needs to be maintained throughout the life of the current MTFP. The **Desirable Balance** calculation is £25m which is the current level of the reserve. As part of the budget setting process the risk assessment on the level of reserves will be refreshed.

2.55 The below table shows the projected level of General/Unallocated Reserve over the duration of the MTFP and reflects an assumption of annual contribution of £1.5m to the reserve. These figures include the Minimum Working Balance as outlined above.

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2028 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2029 £m	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2030 £m
(25.0)	(25.0)	(26.5)	(28.0)	(29.5)	(31.0)	(32.5)

2.56 The Council will ensure the reserves remain at an adequate level to manage effectively all future risks and liabilities, in particular whilst operating in the current volatile and uncertain environment.

2.57 The assessment of general and usable reserves is used by MHCLG, CIPFA and the Council's external auditors as a key measure of the Council's ability to deal with pressures that could not be reasonably anticipated when setting the budget

2.58 It is worthwhile reiterating that the reserves are a finite source of funding and should not be relied upon to support the Council's budget other than as part of the clear strategy to achieve a sustainable budget in the medium term. Acknowledging this, the Cabinet should note that any use of reserves will only be permissible with the agreement of the Service Director Finance.

### **General Fund Revenue Budget - Scenario Planning (Sensitivity Analysis)**

2.59 As mentioned above, the MTFP is based on a range of assumptions which impact on both income and expenditure. Changes in these assumptions can have a fundamental effect on the Council's funding gap and the level of savings the Council will be required to make.

2.60 The Cabinet will appreciate that it is good practice to model scenarios based on changes to some of the key assumptions in the MTFP. The purpose of this sensitivity analysis is not to predict or forecast the future, but rather test and understand the Council's sustainability into an uncertain future given alternative plausible scenarios for the key drivers of costs, service demands, funding and key risks to which the Council is exposed. Such 'stress testing' is considered to be good practice and acts as an indicator of the Council's financial sustainability.

2.61 The sensitivity analysis gives some indication of the likely range of the Council's deficit position bounded by realistic worst- and best-case scenarios. The key variables that have been modelled with the results of this analysis are provided at **Appendix C** and summarised in Table 3 below:-

**Table 3: Scenario Analysis**

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Best Case	26.7	32.0	40.7	38.7	37.9
<b>Base Position (Table 2 above)</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>40.9</b>
Worst Case	36.8	49.2	65.0	70.1	78.8

See Appendix C

2.62 As the table indicates, the range of potential positions is a deficit of c£26.7m to a deficit of £78.8m. These scenarios are provided to reflect the level of potential volatility in the assumptions and reinforces the uncertainty with future budget estimates..

### Update of Medium Term Capital Plan 2024/29

2.63 At the last meeting of Cabinet, Members considered an update position on the Councils capital plan. Around £62m of spend has been slipped from 2024/25 into future years. The current budget of £278.7m for 24/25 remains under review. The latest Medium-Term Capital for 2025/26 onwards is summarised in the table below and the funding breakdown is provided in more detail at **Appendix D**.

**Table 4: Medium Term Capital Plan 2025/26**

	2024/25 £m		2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 – 31/32 £m	Total £m
Children and Families	19.0		41.0	15.2	4.7	3.0	82.9
Adults, Housing & Health	8.1		3.3	8.2	2.0	0.4	22.0
Regeneration & Growth	191.9		196.5	113.3	80.1	217.1	798.9
Corporate Strategy, Commissioning & Public Health	11.9		13.3	1.1	0.9	3.1	30.3
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>230.9</b>		<b>254.1</b>	<b>137.8</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>223.6</b>	<b>934.1</b>
							-
<b>HRA</b>	<b>47.8</b>		<b>53.0</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>110.6</b>	<b>356.0</b>
<b>Council Total</b>	<b>278.7</b>		<b>307.1</b>	<b>211.5</b>	<b>158.6</b>	<b>334.2</b>	<b>1290.1</b>

2.64 Notwithstanding the economic growth aspirations of the Council, there is need for the Council's Capital Programme to remain prudent, affordable and sustainable. This is particularly in the context of the significant pressure on the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget as set out above and as described above, specifically the significant increase in treasury management charges.

2.65 As referred to above a review of the Capital Programme has commenced. Given the extent of borrowing that underpins the Programme, and the current and forecast cost of that debt, the focus of the review is to consider what scope there is to reduce the

Capital Plan for the Council. This is being balanced against the future investment needs of the Council, both in maintaining the delivery of essential services, providing match funding where it is necessary to leverage external funding and to deliver ambitions around growth and regeneration.

- 2.66 Without pre-empting the outcome of the review, it is inevitable that the projects within the Programme will need to be reduced, deferred or even stopped. Further details of the review and, indeed, the proposed Medium Term Capital Programme for 2025-2032 will be brought forward for consideration by the Cabinet in due course.

## **Collection Fund**

### *Collection Fund – Council Tax*

- 2.67 The Collection Fund – Council Tax accounts for the income and expenditure associated with the collection of Council Tax. Council Tax receipts from residents are paid into the Fund. Precept payments to the Council, Major Preceptors (Police, Fire) and Parish Councils are paid out of the fund. Any surplus or deficit on the Fund is distributed to the Council and Major Preceptors.

- 2.68 In relation to Council Tax, it is assumed that the Council Taxbase will grow by 0.8% (c800 Band D Properties) annually over the life of the MTFP. This will be reviewed as more information becomes available around the impact of any changes in Government policy with regard to planning and housebuilding. The ultimate collection rate is assumed to remain constant at 98.5%.

### *Collection Fund – Business Rates*

- 2.69 The Collection Fund – Business Rates accounts for the income and expenditure associated with the collection of Business Rates. Business Rates receipts from businesses are paid into the Fund. Payments to the Government (50% of net debit collected), the Council (49%) (otherwise known as locally retained rates) and Fire Authority (1%) are made from the Fund. Again, any surplus/deficit on the Fund is distributed to the aforementioned bodies in the proportions set out.

- 2.70 The Council's share of locally retained Business Rates is supplemented by both a top up payment and section 31 grant payments from Government, with the latter compensating Councils for any loss of income relating to changes that affect retained business rates. This includes the impact of freezing the business rates multipliers (or uplifting them by less than CPI). For the purposes of the MTFP it is assumed that together, the Council's share of locally retained Business Rates plus these grant payments from Government will increase by 2% per annum.

- 2.71 As Cabinet will be aware, the Council is currently part of the Leeds City Business Rates Pool in 2024/25. That arrangement applies for 1-year only given the Government's tendency to seek applications to renew such agreements as part of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement. The benefit of the Pooling arrangement to the Council is the opportunity to receive a share of the retained levy on business rates growth across all Councils in West Yorkshire (the Council's share is estimated to be £0.4m for 2024/25).

2.72 Whilst no such request for applications to renew the Pooling arrangement for 2025/26 has yet been published, and subject to other Councils in West Yorkshire agreeing, it is assumed for the purposes of the Medium Term Financial Plan that the Pooling arrangement will continue in its present form. As this is the case, and to ensure the Council is in a position to respond accordingly if a request for applications is made, it is recommended that Cabinet given delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Service Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader and the Finance and Regeneration Portfolio Holder to consider options and determine whether (or not) the Council should continue as a member of the Pool in 2025/26.

### **Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG)**

2.73 As Cabinet may be aware, Dedicated Schools Grant is paid to the Council in support of the Local Authority's Schools budgets. It comprises four blocks of funding – the Schools Block, the Central School Services Block, Early Years Block and High Needs Block. It is the responsibility of the Council, in conjunction with their local Schools Forum, to determine the split of funding between their own expenditure and the Individual Schools Budget.

2.74 A more detailed report on Schools Funding arrangements will be presented to the Cabinet once details of the DSG Settlement are known for 2025/26.

2.75 In the meantime, in relation to the High Needs DSG Block and the Council's accumulated funding deficit, the Cabinet is aware from previous reports on this matter that the Council is part of the national Safety Valve Programme with the Department for Education. Under the Agreement with the DfE, which aims to bring back into balance the annual budget for High Needs provision and to reduce the historic deficit to nil, the Council will receive funding of £33.5m. The Safety Valve agreement for Kirklees has been extended from 2026/27 until 2029/30 as a result of increasing pressures relating to demand and complexity. Payments in relation to the agreement have been re-profiled to equal annual payments of £2.3m across 2024/25 – 2029/30 - £19.7m of safety valve funding has been received by 31/03/24.

2.76 The Council's SEND Improvement Plan includes significant capital investment in District SEND placement sufficiency over the next 5 years; including the re-location and placement expansion of two existing special schools (includes £9m Government capital grant contribution and c£28m Council prudential borrowing), alongside Government further capital funding of £8.2m to support Alternative Resource Provision across the District's maintained schools. The Improvement Plan also includes a Council-contribution of £10.8m and annual Council savings against High Needs spend which by year 2029/30 should see the budget in balance. The Improvement Plan resourcing assumptions described here are incorporated into the updated baseline MTFP and funding assumptions in this report as appropriate.

## Kirklees Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

### Background

- 2.74 The Council is required to maintain a self-financing Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is ring-fenced from the Council's other budgets and is a record of all revenue expenditure and income relating to the authority's own housing stock. It is the responsibility of all councils with an HRA to ensure it sets a balanced budget and make provision for adequate resources to invest in council properties. This is to keep tenants safe and ensure that they are living in properties that meet a decent home standard including energy efficiency which will support tenants with the cost of living.
- 2.75 The Council regularly reviews and updates the HRA business plan with the aim to produce a self-financed and balanced budget position over the 30-year plan that delivers the key objectives. Over the next five years there is a cumulative deficit of £4.7m.

### Medium Term Financial plan 2025-2030

SERVICE ACTIVITY	24-25 BUDGET AMENDED	25-26 BUDGET PROPOSAL	26-27 BUDGET PROPOSAL	27-28 BUDGET PROPOSAL	28-29 BUDGET PROPOSAL	29-30 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Total Expenditure	112,332	113,039	113,451	115,014	116,935	119,625
Total Income	(107,837)	(108,321)	(111,605)	(115,134)	(117,825)	(120,515)
Net Operating Expenditure	4,495	4,718	1,846	(120)	(890)	(890)

### Key Income Assumptions

- 2.76 Rental Income - In February 2019 the Government confirmed that a return to a rent formula of CPI+1% for 5 years from 2020/21 and therefore 24/25 was the last year of this agreement. It is worth noting that in 2023/24 Government did intervene and capped rent increases at 7% when inflation was 10.1%.
- 2.77 It is expected that the Government will announce the continuation of CPI +1% policy for allowable rent increases and as such this plan makes that assumption on rent increases over the period. The total forecast rental income is also adjusted for the impact of decanting tenants from Berry Brow and Sycamore Grange (236 properties totalling £1.02m) and the net difference between forecast Right to Buy (RtB) sales and additional housing stock from buy backs and new build properties in the Housing growth programme.
- 2.78 Right to Buy Sales - The current plan assumes 200 sales per year for the rest of the plan. RtB discounts remain a considerable incentive for many people when considering when to purchase their Council home, however there has been a slowdown in sales recently which may result in diminishing RtB sales in the future.



2.79 Other Income - The financial plan assumes service charges will rise in line with rental income. A review of service charges is being carried out where the aim is, following consultation to move to a full cost recovery position over a three-year period.

2.80 PFI Grant - This grant remains fixed at £7.9m over the life of the PFI contract.

### Key Expenditure Assumptions:

2.81 Pay Award and Price Inflation – A pay award of 3% for the period 2025-26 to 2030/31. Price inflation is generally assumed at CPI levels in the plan.

2.82 Energy Costs - Gas and electricity are forecast based on the latest assumptions from the energy team.

2.83 Repairs - An additional £2.1m has been added to the repairs budget to carry out stock condition surveys and water quality assessments over a three-year period, the repairs budget is assumed to be inflated by CPI and adjusted to reflect the forecast changes in stock numbers.

2.84 Disrepair Provision - Resolving disrepair remains a priority for the service. The financial plan assumes an annual budget of £1m for legal costs including disrepair.

2.85 Provision for Bad Debt - A bad debt provision is provided for based on 90% of former tenant arrears and 20% of current tenant arrears. A budget of £1m is provided to maintain the provision at this level. It is assumed that this level of provision will remain static and will be kept under review.

2.86 Capital Programme - (Annual Investment). The annual capital investment requirement in the HRA is over £50m per annum. The table below outlines the initial capital plan, however, due to limited resources within the HRA, this will need to be reassessed and reprofiled with regard to its affordability.

Capital Plan	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000	Total £000
Strategic Priorities Total	14,152	14,059	35,225	32,299	7,471	1,292	2,204	106,702
Baseline Total	33,688	38,894	38,469	38,595	36,110	35,521	28,045	249,323
Overall Total	47,840	52,953	73,695	70,894	43,581	36,813	30,249	356,025
<b>FUNDING SUMMARY</b>								
Borrowing	8,708	9,111	23,990	17,465	3,813	646	1,102	64,835
Grants	870	1,509	8,228	5,486	545	226	226	17,089
Contributions	322	-	-	-	-	-	-	322
Capital Receipts	2,152	1,356	3,233	9,575	3,340	646	1,102	21,403
HRA RCCO	11,013	15,702	12,468	12,094	9,109	8,520	1,044	69,951
HRA MRR	24,775	25,275	25,775	26,275	26,775	26,775	26,775	182,425
Overall Total	47,840	52,953	73,695	70,894	43,581	36,813	30,249	356,025

2.87 Additional interest on borrowing charges - The plan reflects increased costs associated with servicing the HRA's debt to fund the Council's Housing Growth Programme (CHGP). The table shows the planned spend and the need to borrow circa £41.8m over the next 3 years. Maximum use of RtB receipts (now 50% of any scheme) will be made to minimise the impact of borrowing. The borrowing figures reflect the assumptions used by the Council's Treasury team with regard to the

interest rates (less 0.4% for any borrowing undertaken before June 25). Whilst there is a risk that interest rates will be higher than assumed and will add further pressures to the current gap within the HRA, this is considered relatively low at this stage of the economic cycle.

2.88 Recharges to the HRA - Recharges to the HRA relate to services provided from other parts of the Council on behalf of the HRA. These include, for example, back-office services such as HR, Finance, and IT as well as front facing services such as the contact centre, hubs, community safety and environmental services. All these costs are subject to an annual review.

2.89 **HRA General Reserve** -The level of the HRA general reserve is forecast to be £10.5m on 31st March 2025 which is approximately 10% of total spend and averages c£500 per property (Based on 21,729 properties on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024). Discussion with a HRA Finance peer group indicate this figure is in line with other Councils. However, a review of the risk based approach to the calculation of the required level of general reserve will be undertaken ahead of the budget proposals in December 2024.

HRA RESERVES	Balance at 31 March 2024	Contributions to reserves	Contributions from reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Set aside for business risks	(15,000)	-	4,495	(10,505)
Set aside to meet investment needs	(18,942)	(24,775)	35,788	(7,929)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(33,942)</b>	<b>(24,775)</b>	<b>40,283</b>	<b>(18,434)</b>

2.90 **Major Repairs Reserve** - The major repairs reserve is estimated to reduce to c£8m by the year end following the impact of significant annual investment in the existing stock (annual spend of over £25m]. To maintain this level of annual investment may require further borrowing which can only be afforded by reducing spending elsewhere within the HRA.

2.91 The strategy to mitigate this cumulative deficit (£4.7m over the next 5 years) on the Housing Revenue Account is in line with the approach being taken for the rest of the Council. Options for balancing will include savings that can be generated from business-as-usual proposals and those that require more specific service reviews to deliver savings.

2.92 All areas of HRA spend and income will be considered when finalising the detail of the 2025/26 budget with appropriate consultation:

- Rental income increases will be adjusted to reflect any changes in CPI, government cap and consultation with Elected Members.
- Service charges will be reviewed with an option to increase these above the current assumptions to get closer to full cost recovery of these costs from the tenants that benefit from the additional services.
- The annual investment programme will be reviewed with options presented to reduce or realign the programme. Should additional funding become available, then this could be used to reduce the HRA revenue contributions.
- Other capital programmes could be delayed or reduced.
- A review of staffing levels and removal of budgeted vacant posts will be considered.

- All expenditure lines, including repairs, will be reviewed to ensure resources are directed into priority areas of the budget.
- A review of HRA earmarked reserves will be completed as a mechanism to help smooth out specific one-off pressures to be paid back later.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

#### **3.1 Working with people**

Whilst there are no specific proposals from this report, proposals to bring the budget into balance are considered likely to have some effect upon the workforce and the total number of staff employed by the Council. Each savings proposal brought forward by services will clearly identify if there any staffing implications.

#### **3.2 Working with partners**

There are no specific proposals in this report which affect partner organisations. However, savings proposals brought forward by services may impact on these organisations. Where this is relevant, partners will be consulted.

#### **3.3 Place based working**

N/A

#### **3.4 Climate Change & Air Quality**

N/A

#### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

N/A

#### **3.6 Financial Implications**

The financial implications for the Council are as set out in the report.

The report identifies a significant funding gap in 2025/26 (and over the medium term) that the Council must address. Given it is not prudent to use reserves to help meet the funding gap, the Council must identify ways of reducing its net expenditure either through less spending, more income or a combination of the two to comply with its statutory obligation of setting a robust balanced budget

#### **3.7 Legal Implications**

The Council is under a statutory obligation (s31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992) to set a balanced budget on an annual basis. Considering the financial challenge described in this report, a proposed MTFS is set out which, if implemented, provides a framework for the Council to comply with its statutory obligation in this respect.

The Service Director Finance is required under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to provide the Council with a report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when considering the Council's budget for the forthcoming financial year. As is normally the case, that report will be provided alongside the main report on the Budget for 2025/26 as part of the Budget/Council Tax setting for 2025/26.

Once the budget is agreed, s28 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to monitor its income and expenditure against the agreed budget. This legislation supports the requirement for the Council to monitor performance against budget during the year.

Section 65 Local Government Finance Act 1992 and regulations thereunder require the council to consult non-domestic ratepayers; and the Council's Budget and Policy Framework set out in part 4.3 of the Constitution further requirements about consultation with service users, residents and stakeholders on the budget proposals.

### 3.8 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

The development of the MTFS is set against a backcloth of a range of strategic, tactical and operational risks faced by the Council. The Council has in place good arrangements for both identifying and mitigating those risks. Details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register are reported to Cabinet on an ongoing quarterly basis.

Further work is required to develop and implement proposals that will allow the Council to bring its net expenditure in line with its income. There may be legal implications arising out of these proposals that will, as required, be considered as part of the development and implementation of those proposals. Where it is considered necessary to do within the bounds of the Council's Constitution, details of these legal implications will be shared with Cabinet as required. In particular, the Council has an obligation under s149 of the Equalities Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty when developing budget proposals. To this end, Integrated Impact Assessments will be produced as required to ensure decision makers have due regard to the Council's equality duty.

### 3.9 **Consultation**

This report has been prepared by the Service Director - Finance, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

## 4. **Engagement**

The Council's overall financial planning framework includes consideration of wider engagement, consultation and timetabling on residents and other stakeholder views on high level priorities in resource allocation, including consultation with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers.

In addition, there may be a requirement for more detailed service consultations, led by the relevant services, on specific service budget proposals. These will engage service users as early as possible and target the groups most likely to be affected

It is good practice for Councils to consult on proposals that may affect the delivery of services including those related to budget savings and/or income generation. Indeed, the Value for Money Assessment undertaken by the External Auditors specifically questions whether the Council has asked '*Are stakeholders consulted during the development of savings plans? Depending on the nature of the savings plans, stakeholders could include staff, local residents, service users, the voluntary sector and local businesses*'.

Further to that, the Budget and Policy Framework at Section 3 of the Council's Constitution does provide for the Cabinet to set out its arrangements for consultation of budget proposals and that at the end of any such consultation, the Cabinet will draw up proposals having regard to consultation responses.

In compliance with this requirement, and subject to budget proposals coming forward, it is proposed that, as in previous years, some form of public consultation on the budget proposals should take place later in 2024 with a view to informing decisions on the Council's budget for 2025/26. The form and content of such a consultation will be determined in due course.

**5. Options**

**5.1 Options Considered**

N/A

**5.2 Reasons for Recommended Option**

N/A

**6. Next Steps and timelines**

6.1 Subject to the Cabinet agreeing the MTFs as set out above, work will be undertaken on the identification and development of draft budget proposals and options (with supporting documentation) within the framework set out. Budget Planning Totals for Directorates have been developed to facilitate this work.

6.2 Where existing delegations set out in the Council's Constitution allow, and in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members as appropriate, early action will be taken to implement proposals to reduce the funding gap identified in this report. Where this is not possible, proposals will be developed in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members and will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet and, where it is necessary to do so, ultimately by Council as set out in the Constitution.

6.3 The culmination of this work on the development of proposals will be that Cabinet will bring forward its initial budget proposals in December 2024 for consideration. The final budget for 2025/26 will be at Budget Council in February/March 2025.

**7. Contact Officer and Relevant Papers**

Kevin Mulvaney	Service Director – Finance
Jacqui Fieldhouse	Head of Finance
John Bartlett	Acting Head of Commercial Services
James Anderson	Head of Accountancy

**8. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- [Annual Financial Outturn Report and Rollover Report 2023/24 \(Item 12\)](#)
- [Annual Budget Report 2024/25 and future years \(Item 7\)](#)
- [Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25 \(Item 9\)](#)

**9. Appendices**

Appendix A – Updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/30  
Appendix B – Balances and Reserves 2025/30  
Appendix C – Best/West Case Scenario Analysis  
Appendix D – Capital Programme to 2031/32  
Appendix E – Outline Corporate Budget Timetable  
Appendix F – Minimum Working Balance

**10. Service Director Responsible**

Kevin Mulvaney      Service Director – Finance

## GENERAL FUND SUMMARY 2025-30

## APPENDIX A

	2024-25 CONTROLLABLE GROSS EXPENDITURE	2024-25 CONTROLLABLE INCOME	2024-25 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET	2025-26 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET	2026-27 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET	2027-28 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET	2028-29 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET	2029-30 NET CONTROLLABLE BUDGET
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Directorate Budgets</b>								
Children & Families	408,607	(328,554)	80,053	85,445	86,523	87,892	89,261	90,630
Adults & Health	281,848	(165,308)	116,540	113,295	122,967	130,767	137,017	143,267
Place	139,592	(84,574)	55,018	60,181	59,881	59,481	59,481	59,481
Corporate	184,408	(136,226)	48,182	55,442	55,917	55,682	56,287	56,387
Central	70,781	(7,125)	63,656	86,068	111,210	124,393	134,941	146,089
<b>Total Budgets</b>	<b>1,085,236</b>	<b>(721,787)</b>	<b>363,449</b>	<b>400,431</b>	<b>436,498</b>	<b>458,215</b>	<b>476,987</b>	<b>495,854</b>
<b>Funding and Reserves</b>								
Council Tax Income			(236,391)	(251,180)	(265,560)	(280,764)	(296,838)	(313,831)
Retained Business Rates			(63,169)	(63,877)	(64,592)	(65,316)	(66,047)	(66,787)
Government Funding			(70,684)	(72,274)	(74,025)	(75,820)	(77,655)	(79,533)
Collection Fund Repayment			3,000	2,999	999	999	-	-
Net Transfer to Reserves			3,795	13,204	1,400	6,150	5,150	5,150
<b>Total Funding/Reserves</b>			<b>(363,449)</b>	<b>(371,128)</b>	<b>(401,778)</b>	<b>(414,751)</b>	<b>(435,390)</b>	<b>(455,001)</b>
<b>Budget Gap</b>			<b>-</b>	<b>29,303</b>	<b>34,720</b>	<b>43,464</b>	<b>41,597</b>	<b>40,853</b>

GENERAL FUND RESERVES

APPENDIX B

	Reserves position as at 31st March 2024	Budget report Approved Movements	Revised reserves position at 1st April 2024	Estimated Movements In-Year	Reserves position as at 31st March 2025	Estimated Reserves position as at 31st March 2026	Estimated Reserves position as at 31st March 2027	Estimated Reserves position as at 31st March 2028	Estimated Reserves position as at 31st March 2029	Estimated Reserves position as at 31st March 2030
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Statutory (School Reserves)</b>										
Schools Balances	(11,597)	-	(11,597)	369	(11,228)	(11,228)	(11,228)	(11,228)	(11,228)	(11,228)
Public Health	(1,119)	-	(1,119)	560	(559)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Statutory (School Reserves)</b>	<b>(12,716)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(12,716)</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>(11,787)</b>	<b>(11,228)</b>	<b>(11,228)</b>	<b>(11,228)</b>	<b>(11,228)</b>	<b>(11,228)</b>
<b>Earmarked</b>										
Ward Based Activity	(693)	-	(693)	347	(346)	-	-	-	-	-
Place Standard	(556)	-	(556)	278	(278)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub Total (member led)</b>	<b>(1,249)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,249)</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>(624)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Apprenticeship Levy	(3,574)	-	(3,574)	500	(3,074)	(2,574)	(2,074)	(1,574)	(1,074)	(574)
Transformation	(3,067)	-	(3,067)	1,534	(1,533)	-	-	-	-	-
Demand Reserve	(3,000)	-	(3,000)	3,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Development Funding	(621)	-	(621)	621	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Grants	(9,020)	-	(9,020)	4,510	(4,510)	-	-	-	-	-
Stronger Families Grant	(784)	-	(784)	392	(392)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	(1,953)	-	(1,953)	977	(976)	-	-	-	-	-
Specific Risk Reserves	(3,500)	3,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WYCA Returned Levy	(9,424)	9,400	(24)	-	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)
Voluntary Revenue Provision	-	(15,195)	(15,195)	-	(15,195)	(25,999)	(25,999)	(25,999)	(25,999)	(25,999)
<b>Earmarked reserves sub-total</b>	<b>(36,192)</b>	<b>(2,295)</b>	<b>(38,487)</b>	<b>12,159</b>	<b>(26,328)</b>	<b>(28,597)</b>	<b>(28,097)</b>	<b>(27,597)</b>	<b>(27,097)</b>	<b>(26,597)</b>
<b>General Balances</b>	<b>(25,045)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(25,045)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(25,045)</b>	<b>(26,545)</b>	<b>(28,045)</b>	<b>(29,545)</b>	<b>(31,045)</b>	<b>(32,545)</b>
<b>Total usable reserves</b>	<b>(61,237)</b>	<b>(2,295)</b>	<b>(63,532)</b>	<b>26,779</b>	<b>(51,373)</b>	<b>(55,142)</b>	<b>(56,142)</b>	<b>(57,142)</b>	<b>(58,142)</b>	<b>(59,142)</b>
<b>Grand Total All Reserves</b>	<b>(73,953)</b>	<b>(2,295)</b>	<b>(76,248)</b>	<b>26,779</b>	<b>(63,160)</b>	<b>(66,370)</b>	<b>(67,370)</b>	<b>(68,370)</b>	<b>(69,370)</b>	<b>(70,370)</b>



## Glossary of Reserves

RESERVE	DESCRIPTION
<b>School Balances</b>	Statutory reserves relating to both individual schools' balances/deficits carried forwards.
<b>Public Health</b>	Timing issues on Public Health grant spend commitments (Public health grant is statutorily ring-fenced)
<b>Ward Based Activity</b>	Set aside reflecting timing issues on ward-based activity spend commitments
<b>Place Standard</b>	Set aside to support the resourcing of emerging Place Standard action plans.
<b>Apprenticeship Levy</b>	Set aside to fund future payments into the Apprenticeship levy
<b>Transformation</b>	Set aside for strategic transformation developments over the next 12 to 24 months.
<b>Demand Reserve</b>	Set aside to mitigate the impact/volatility of a range of potential demand risks on statutorily provided service activity
<b>Development Funding</b>	To address the scale of development costs required to support targeted development and the upscaling of capital investment activity and major project activity over the MTFP.
<b>Revenue Grants</b>	Represents grants and contributions recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement before expenditure has been incurred.
<b>Stronger Families</b>	Set aside reflecting timing issues on expenditure commitments supporting a range of Stronger Families activity, funded from external grant.
<b>Other</b>	A range of smaller reserves earmarked for specific purposes.
<b>Specific Risk Reserves</b>	Set aside to manage specific risks, including the potential risk of future loan defaults and managing the volatility surrounding treasury management budgets with respect to both potential changes in interest rates and the level of delivery of the capital plan.
<b>WYCA Returned Levy</b>	Returned levy income from WYCA that will be drawn down in 2024/25 (as per the approved 2024/25 Annual Budget Report).
<b>Voluntary Revenue Provision</b>	To fund voluntary overpayments of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).
<b>Unallocated Reserves</b>	General reserve to support Council working capital and cashflow requirements, and unbudgeted/financial resilience risks highlighted in the Council's corporate risk register.

BEST CASE SCENARIO	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>BASELINE BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>40.9</b>
<b><u>FUNDING</u></b>					
Government Funding 2025/26 onwards: SFA uplift increased to 2.2% (compared to 2% baseline level)	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.5)
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>(0.2)</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>	<b>(0.4)</b>	<b>(0.5)</b>
<b><u>SPEND</u></b>					
Pay Uplift 2024/25: reduce to 4% (compared to 5% baseline level)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(2.5)
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGES FROM BASELINE</b>	<b>(2.6)</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>	<b>(2.8)</b>	<b>(2.9)</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>
<b>BEST CASE SCENARIO - BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>37.9</b>

WORST CASE SCENARIO	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>BASELINE BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>40.9</b>
<b><u>FUNDING</u></b>					
Council Tax 2025/26 onwards: Overall referendum limit at 4% p.a.; compared to 5% baseline level	2.4	4.8	7.2	9.6	14.4
Government Funding 2025/26 onwards: SFA uplift decreased to nil (compared to 2% baseline level)	1.4	2.8	4.2	5.6	7.0
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>21.4</b>
<b><u>SPEND</u></b>					
Pay Uplift 2025/26 onwards: Increased to 4%; compared to 3% baseline level	2.5	5.0	7.5	10.0	15.2
Social Care Demand Pressures 2025/26 onwards: additional 10% compared to baseline level	1.2	1.9	2.6	3.3	4.0
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>16.5</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGES FROM BASELINE</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>37.9</b>
<b>WORST CASE SCENARIO - BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>78.8</b>

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary	Revised Capital Plan					Total £'000
	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29- 2031/32 £'000	
<b>General Fund:</b>						
Children and Families	19,008	41,022	15,219	4,684	3,000	<b>82,933</b>
Adults, Housing & Health	8,100	3,291	8,196	1,995	400	<b>21,982</b>
Regeneration & Growth	191,898	196,476	113,236	80,131	217,119	<b>798,860</b>
Corporate Strategy, Commissioning & Public Health	11,863	13,314	1,116	876	3,144	<b>30,313</b>
<b>General Fund Capital Plan</b>	<b>230,869</b>	<b>254,103</b>	<b>137,767</b>	<b>87,686</b>	<b>223,663</b>	<b>934,088</b>
<b>HRA Capital Plan</b>	<b>47,840</b>	<b>52,953</b>	<b>73,695</b>	<b>70,894</b>	<b>110,643</b>	<b>356,025</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>278,709</b>	<b>307,056</b>	<b>211,462</b>	<b>158,580</b>	<b>334,306</b>	<b>1,290,113</b>

## Capital Plan Funding Summary

## Appendix D

General Fund Funding Summary	Revised Capital Plan					Total £'000
	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29- 2031/32 £'000	
<i>Direct / Earmarked Contributions to Schemes</i>						
Capital Grants/Contributions	139,344	121,190	37,747	48,835	72,344	419,460
Earmarked Capital Receipts	5,998	2,990	16,691	990	390	27,059
Service Funded Prudential Borrowing	20,956	7,736	100	140	2,050	30,982
Revenue Contributions	35	0	0	0	0	35
<i>Pooled Resources</i>						
Non-Earmarked Capital Receipts	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	20,000
Corporate Prudential Borrowing	60,536	118,187	79,229	33,721	144,879	436,552
<b>GENERAL FUND FUNDING</b>	<b>230,869</b>	<b>254,103</b>	<b>137,767</b>	<b>87,686</b>	<b>223,663</b>	<b>934,088</b>

Housing Revenue Account Funding Summary	Revised Capital Plan					Total £'000
	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29- 2031/32 £'000	
Capital Grants/Contributions	1,191	1,509	8,228	5,486	997	17,411
Earmarked Capital Receipts	2,153	1,356	3,233	9,574	5,087	21,403
Reserves / Revenue Contributions	19,496	196	0	0	0	19,692
Reserves - MRR	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	75,000	175,000
Corporate Prudential Borrowing	0	24,892	37,234	30,834	29,559	122,519
<b>HRA FUNDING</b>	<b>47,840</b>	<b>52,953</b>	<b>73,695</b>	<b>70,894</b>	<b>110,643</b>	<b>356,025</b>

## Appendix E – 2025/26 Budget Timetable

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Cabinet considers Medium Term Financial Strategy	This report
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Council considers Medium Term Financial Strategy	
September -November 2024	Budget Savings Proposals produced	
	Review of Existing Pressures	
	Review of Funding Assumptions	
October 30 <sup>th</sup> 2024	Autumn Budget – Chancellor	
	Consideration of impact of budget	
December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2024	Cabinet/Council Report on 2025/26 Budget Proposals	
	Cabinet/Council considers HRA Budget including Rent and Service Charges	
	Cabinet / Council Report on School Funding Reports	
December 2024-January 2025*	Public consultation on Budget Proposals	
Mid December*	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	
January 2025*	Council Tax Base Report (Delegated to S151 Officer)	
January 2025*	Scrutiny Panels consider budget	
February 2025*	Final Local Government Finance Settlement	
11 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Cabinet considers budget and Council Tax	
February 2025*	Opposition Budget Amendments	
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Council sets budget and Council Tax	

- **Precise dates tbc**

### Assessment of the level of the Council's General Fund Working Balance

1. Reserves are sums set aside to meet possible future costs where there is no certainty about whether or not the costs will actually be incurred. The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require billing and precepting authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
2. When reviewing their medium term financial plans and preparing their annual budgets local authorities should consider the establishment and maintenance of reserves. These can be held for three main purposes:
  - a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves;
  - a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this also forms part of general reserves;
  - a means of building up funds, often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted requirements; earmarked reserves are accounted for separately but legally remain part of the General Fund.
3. Local authorities also hold other reserves that arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practice. These are reserves, which are not resource-backed and cannot be used for any other purpose. An example is the Revaluation Reserve which is a reserve that records unrealised gains in the value of fixed assets. The reserve increases when assets are revalued upwards, and decreases as assets are depreciated or when assets are revalued downwards or disposed of. Reserves of this type do not form part of the annual review of the adequacy of reserves.
4. Section 25(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Director of Finance to report to the Council on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. Guidance is published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the establishment and maintenance of local authority reserves and balances. The level and utilisation of reserves will be determined formally by the Council, informed by the advice and judgement of the Director of Finance.
5. In support of this requirement, and as part of the development of the budget for 2025/26, a risk assessment has been carried out to establish the minimum level of the General Fund Working Balance for Kirklees. Details of this assessment are provided below in **Table 1** which indicates that the minimum working balance should be **c£15.0m**.

## Appendix F

**Table 1: Risk Assessment for General Fund Working Balance – 2025/26**

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
1,200	2,500	<p><b>Pay</b> – the opening MTFP includes annual provision for a 4% pay award for 24/25 and 2% thereafter. This has been increased by 1% across all years as part of the current MTFP update and the budget gap updated accordingly.</p> <p>As future pay awards within the MTFP period are not yet agreed, there is a risk of the current assumptions on pay being at variance to the budget as the pay claim received by the employees' side is often in excess of the budgeted provision. An increase of 1% in the annual pay award would result in an increased cost of £2.5m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0-2.5m    Medium £2.5m    High £6m-£6.5m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1.2m</b></p>
1,000	1,500	<p><b>Prices</b> – the budget assumes that, in the main, price inflation can be managed by Departments within a zero cash-limited increase or specific inflation allowances for designated expenditure (e.g. National Living Wage, IT software, Utilities). Inflation is now nearing the Bank of England target level of 2% which should reduce the impact of the inflation within the sector. Inflation contingency in central budgets only covers the waste contract and energy inflation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0.5m    Medium £1.0m    High £1.5m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1.0m</b></p>
500	500	<p><b>Litigation Claims</b> – as the Council faces reductions in resources for future provision of services, there is an increased risk of litigation beyond that which would otherwise be covered by insurance arrangements.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £1.0m    Medium £2.0m    High £3.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1m</b></p>
1,000	1,000	<p><b>Income from Fees and Charges</b> – With continuing impact of the cost of living crisis combined with a relatively benign outlook for economic growth, the Council's income streams may continue to be impacted. Whilst some budgets have been reduced to reflect more realistic income levels, it is the case that a number of services are also price sensitive and delivered in competition with other providers (e.g. trade waste / building control).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0.5m    Medium £1.0m    High £2.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1.0m</b></p>

## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
4,000	5,000	<p><b>Demand Led Pressures on Services</b> – the most significant is likely to be the ongoing impact of the cost of living and how this could potentially create additional demand for Council services and/or place pressure on the Council's income.</p> <p>Both Adult and Children's Social Care can be subject to significant demand-led pressures. This can vary from one year to the next and both have been significantly impacted by post Covid-19 'bounce' and the continuing backlog of pressures in the Health Service, alongside recent increased costs for refugees (incl Ukraine).</p> <p>Both Housing and Council Tax Support may also come under pressure given the prevailing economy and associated risk of increasing unemployment due to both the cost of living crisis and the potential for a downturn in the economy. The Council spends c£60m on Housing Benefits whereas the cost of Council Tax Support (applied as a discount on council tax bills) is estimated at c£36m.</p> <p>Qualifying expenditure on Housing Benefit is <i>generally</i> matched by Government subsidy in full, however, an increase in, say, supported services (referred to below) at a lower rate of recovery, can increase the overall net cost to the Council.</p> <p>In recent years, the Council has experienced an increase in Supported Accommodation enquiries and applications. The rate of subsidy for this category of accommodation is 60% and not 100% if the landlord is not a Registered Social Provider. Notwithstanding, an estimate is provided in the budget, if this trend continues this additional provision will not be sufficient to cover the Council's financial risk exposure. Pressures in current year are c £4.4m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £3.0m Medium £4.0m High £5.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £4.0m</b></p>
500	500	<p><b>Grant income</b> – there is a risk that the MTFs is built on optimistic assumptions of income that may prove unsustainable over the life of the plan; especially assumptions on growth in Adults grant income.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0.5m Medium £1.0m High £2.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0.5m</b></p>



## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
3,000	4,000	<p><b>Non-achievement of Savings</b> – the scale of savings required by the Council to achieve a balanced budget in 2025/26 (and across the rest of the MTFS period) is such that it will require a fundamental shift in how the Council operates which may not be possible in the time available. Whilst arrangements are in place to manage the implementation of the savings it is recommended that additional cover be provided to mitigate the risk of some not being realised or implementation lead in times being longer. This recognises the amount of savings achieved since 2010 and the fact that decisions on budget savings may become increasingly difficult. It should be noted that this MTFP does not contain any future years where the core funding level of the Council is known, so increasing the degree of uncertainty within the budget assumptions made on high value budgets.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £2.0m    Medium £3.0m    High £4.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £3.0m</b></p>
500	500	<p><b>Unforeseen / emergency expenditure</b> – there is a risk that unexpected events may occur which require expenditure to be incurred or income to be foregone that has not been budgeted. Examples might include, adverse weather, flooding, business continuity linked to loss of key service/building (to the extent not covered by insurance)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £500k    Medium £1,000k    High £1,500k</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low (assuming Bellwin scheme would apply in certain cases)</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £500k</b></p>
1,000	1,000	<p><b>Unbudgeted borrowing costs</b> – there is a risk that unbudgeted in-year financial losses are funded by a reduction in reserves. This may necessitate the Council having to undertake external borrowing at a time when interest rates are rising (as the Council cannot borrow internally). The interest cost of a £20m loan at 5% would be £1m per annum.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £500k    Medium £1m    High £2m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1m</b></p>

## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
1,000	1,000	<p><b>Delay in repayment or default on loans made by the Council</b> – there is a risk on loans made by the Council to third party organisations (including: 103 New Street £12.2m, KSDL £3.8m, Kirklees College £13.3m, Kingsgate £5.5m at 31.3.24) potentially resulting in the need to write off the loans, or to agree to extend loan repayment periods, with a resulting cashflow cost.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £500k    Medium £1m    High £2m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1m</b></p>
0	0	<p><b>Changes in fair value of Council long-term investments</b> – there is a risk that the deterioration in the capital value of the Council's investments (in the CCLA) that, without the statutory override, would otherwise have to be charged to the Council's revenue account. The cost on the initial investment was £10m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0    Medium £1m    High £2m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0m</b></p>
0	5,000	<p><b>Safety Valve Programme</b> – there is a risk that if the savings on the High Needs Budget are not achieved in line with the requirements of the Safety Valve Agreement, it may be withdrawn and once the statutory override allowing Councils to carry the High Needs Budget deficit on the Balance Sheet (rather than charge it to revenue) expires, the Council will have to fund it. Depending on the scale of the deficit at the time, it would likely result in a s114 notice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0m    Medium £5m    High £10m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0m</b></p>
0	0	<p><b>Receipt of Capital Resources/ Capital Plan Funding</b> – the overall capital programme assumes a level of income from asset disposals / grants – as the timing of these can sometimes be uncertain it is sometimes considered prudent to set provision aside for additional revenue to help offset any shortfall if expenditure cannot be delayed.</p> <p>The current Capital Strategy reflects substantial levels of capital receipts each year to fund the capital programme (2024/25: £12.2m, 2025/26: £8.4m, 2026/27: £23.9m; 2027/28: £14.6m; 2028/29: £5.9m). Further borrowing or revenue contributions could be required in lieu of capital receipts being realised (unless other funding sources can be found or expenditure delayed), with the risk that further borrowing is not prudent, sustainable or affordable as required by the Prudential Code.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0k    Medium £1.0m    High £2.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0k</b></p>

## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
0	0	<p><b>VAT- Partial Exemption</b> – If the PE limits are breached there is a risk that c£3m could be potentially lost (based on £60m input tax in 2022/23 &amp; a 5% PE limit). Anything above that would depend on the VAT incurred on the project(s) that was the cause of the partial exemption breach. There is the possibility a breach could be managed through HMRC’s averaging rules which looks at partial exemption over 7 years (which can be a combination of actual and forecast) – if the average over 7 years is less than 5%, repayment to HMRC is not required.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0m    Medium £0m    High £3m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0m</b></p>
1,300	2,600	<p><b>Collection Fund –</b>            Business Rates: Given the volatility inherent in the current rates retention system and the regime’s imminent overhaul, it is considered prudent to set aside a level of funding within the working balance to help manage the associated risks.            Taking into account Collection Fund monitoring to date, the provisions made to cover the risk of appeals and bad debts and an amount held for the volatility in Business Rates, it is proposed to set aside a minimum amount for 2024/25. A 1% reduction in collection equates to c £0.5m for Business Rates.</p> <p>Council Tax: alongside potential shortfalls in new build projections in the Council Tax base there is an increased risk of bad debts as a consequence of the ongoing cost of living crisis. A 1% reduction in collection equates to c £2.1m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £1.3m    Medium £2.6m    High £3.9m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1.3m</b></p>
15,000	25,100	<b>Total</b>

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**REPORT TITLE: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr Tyler Hawkins</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report:</b> This report sets out a summary of the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee during 2023/24. It also provides assurance that the Committee complies with the CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>Council is requested to note the assurances set out in this report that the Committee complies with CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police;</p> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> In accordance with best practice published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), this report demonstrates how the Committee has discharged its responsibility.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b> There are no resource implications.</p>	
<p><b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b></p> <p><b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b></p>	<p><b>Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 10.07.24</b></p> <p><b>N/A</b></p> <p><b>Samantha Lawton - 02.07.24</b></p>

**Electoral wards affected: Not Applicable**

**Ward councillors consulted: Not Applicable**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered?** There are no GDPR implications

**1. Executive Summary**

This report sets out the draft annual report of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year

**2. Information required to take a decision**

The report demonstrates how the Committee supports the Council's governance and audit arrangements, and in doing so supports the Council to deliver the vision and priorities set out in the Council Plan.

**3. Implications for the Council**

**3.1 Council Plan**

Strong, effective corporate governance and audit assurance underpins the work of the Council in delivering all of its priorities outlined in the Council Plan.

**3.2 Financial Implications**

Not applicable.

**3.3 Legal Implications**

Not applicable.

**3.4 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

Not applicable.

**4. Consultation**

Not applicable.

**5. Engagement**

Not applicable.

**6. Options**

Not applicable.

**6.1 Options considered**

Not applicable.

**6.2 Reasons for recommended option**

Not applicable.

**7. Next steps and timelines**

Not applicable.

**8. Contact officer**

Nicola Sylvester, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer. 01484 221000

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

None

**10. Appendices**

Appendix 1 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Activity – 2023-24

**11. Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton – Service Director – Legal Governance and Commissioning.

# Corporate Governance & Audit Committee





# Annual Report of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee 2023/24

## Foreword by James Homewood – Chair

I am delighted to introduce an annual report of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, summarising the contribution we have made during the Municipal Year to the achievement of good governance and internal control within the Council.

This report seeks to chart our progress during the 2023/24 Municipal Year in providing that degree of independence, challenge and questioning across a wide range of control and corporate governance matters, and I thank all Members for the contributions they have made.

We have:

- Overseen the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 22/23.
- Approved the Council's accounts for 22/23.
- Overseen the work of internal audit, established a risk-based audit plan and reviewed the quarterly and annual report from the Council's Internal Audit team.
- Reviewed the Constitution, Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.
- Ensured that assurance reports have been reviewed in detail on the key aspects of the Council's internal control arrangements including:
  - Risk management
  - Business Continuity
  - Financial management (including arrangements for Treasury management)
  - Customer access and complaints handling
  - Information governance
  - Health and Safety arrangements
- Considered the statutory polling district and places review.
- Provided robust challenge to our arrangements and monitoring for areas in need of improvement.

The Committee is supported by a number of officers who attend regularly and bring expertise in relation to governance, internal audit and finance. Without the support of the staff, it would not be possible for the Audit Committee to be as highly effective as it is. I would like to thank everyone who took time to contribute to our extensive work programme.

In addition to the work undertaken through our formal meeting cycle, I have been pleased, as the Committee's chair, to engage in the Yorkshire and Humberside Audit Chairs forum of which I was appointed Chair.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Governance in, and of the public sector, continues to be high profile with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) supporting good practice in local government. The Local Government Association also produces substantial useful material on how a successful local authority should be governed. Being well managed and well governed are important attributes in helping to improve performance and in reducing the risk of failing to achieve our objectives and providing good service to our community.

This Annual Report to Council demonstrates the importance Kirklees Council places on the authority's governance arrangements. The report on the work of the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee demonstrates:

- How the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee has fulfilled its terms of reference.
- The extent to which arrangements comply with national guidance relating to audit Committees.

The benefits to the Council of operating an effective Audit Committee are:

- Maintaining public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting.
- Reinforcing the importance and independence of internal and external audit and any other similar review process; for example, reviewing and approving the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement, and the Quarterly Reports from Internal Audit and the Annual Report from the Head of Audit.
- Providing focus on financial reporting both during the year and at year end, leading to increased confidence in the objectivity and fairness of the financial reporting process, including specific review on behalf of the Council of specialist accounting policy and practice – such as Treasury Management.
- Enabling the co-ordination of sources of assurance and, in so doing, making management more accountable.
- Providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review.
- Raising awareness within the Council of the need for governance, internal control, and the implementation of audit recommendations.
- Monitoring of related areas such as the Council's approach to threats from fraud, bribery, and corruption.
- How the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee has contributed to strengthening risk management, internal control, and governance arrangements.

This report provides additional assurance and links to the Annual Governance Statement, which is approved by the Committee.

## 2. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

### Audit Committee Membership

Seven elected members and one independent member served on the Committee in 2023/24:

- Councillor James Homewood (Chair)
- Councillor Yusra Hussain
- Councillor Kath Pinnock
- Councillor Harry McCarthy
- Councillor Naheed Mather
- Councillor Melanie Stephen
- Councillor John Taylor
  
- Chris Jones (Independent Person)

Substitutes were invited to attend and contribute to all meetings and training.

### Training

The Committee continues to undertake training, and this year they have received training in relation to:

- Treasury Management, provided by Arlingclose (independent treasury advisers)

## 3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee met on nine occasions during the year with meeting dates structured around the regular receipt of annual assurance reports, external and internal audit reporting cycles, and the statutory requirements around the production of the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. The Committee adds value through its questioning and challenge whilst receiving additional information as requested at meetings. Meetings are open to the public, so they can witness in person the challenge the Committee bring. Part way through the year web broadcasting was added to further enable public access and oversight.

This frequency of meetings ensures the Committee can fulfil its responsibilities in an efficient and effective way and has been benchmarked against the CIPFA recommended practice and arrangements in other local authorities.

A list of the reports considered by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee can be found in **Appendix A**. The main outcomes of the Committees work in relation to its core functions can be summarised as follows:

# Accounts & Treasury Management

Council has delegated to the Committee authority to approve the Statement of Accounts including whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are any concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit.

The Committee also considers matters related to Treasury Management matters prior to recommending these to Council who formally determine treasury management policy.

The Committee has:

## Account Authorisation

Received and considered the Council's Final Accounts 2021/2022 and 2022/23 incorporating the Annual Governance Statement. There is delegated authority for the Chair of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and the Service Director – Finance to sign the final accounts once external auditor had issued the audit opinion. A positive success was noted in concluding the 2022/23 accounts and Value for Money work in January 2024.

## Treasury Management

- Received the Annual report on Treasury Management 2022/23, incorporating Treasury Management activities for the previous financial year which reviewed borrowing and investment performance.
- Received the Mid-year report on Treasury Management 2023/24, providing assurance that the Council's treasury management function was being managed prudently and pro-actively, and complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.
- Received the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy 2024/25, providing information on (i) the outlook for interest rates and credit risk, and a recommended investment strategy (ii) the current and estimated future levels of Council borrowing (internal and external) and a recommended borrowing strategy (iii) methodologies adopted for providing for the repayment of debt and a recommended policy for calculating minimum revenue provision (iv) other treasury management matters including the policy on the use of financial derivatives, prudential indicators, the use of consultants and the policy on charging interest to the housing revenue account and (v) recommended an annual investment strategy (Non-Treasury Investment) for the Council in 2024/25.

## Other Financial Management

- Considered the Annual report on bad debt write-offs which detailed the debts written off in the financial year 2022-23. It was noted that business rate write-offs were down compared to the previous year and that the service was carrying out a single person discount review for council tax.

# External Audit

The external auditors for both financial years were Grant Thornton. The firm was appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) (a subsidiary of the Local Government Association) who manages the appointment of external auditors for the vast majority of English local authorities. Following a further competition PSAA reappointed Grant Thornton as auditors for the financial year 2023/24, and the next four years.

In keeping with many other authorities, the final sign-off for the accounts for 2021/22 took place during the municipal year 2023/24, approximately one year later than was intended, following clarity on the national approach to the authorisation of certain types of accounting entries. The external auditors were also able to present their report on the accounts that related to the financial year 2022/23 only slightly behind the national target times, so the council's auditors presented opinions on two years to accounting information during 2023/24.

The Committee played a significant role in overseeing the Council's relationship with its appointed external auditors, Grant Thornton, and took an active role in reviewing the external audit plan and updates alongside the finding of the value for money review.

The Committee has:

- Received the external audit interim plan 2021/22, which set out a summary of the work of the Auditors with specific regard to financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Council, and discussed the importance of the value of more regular performance reporting and questioned the capacity of the Council to meet the financial challenge it faced.
- Received the Audit Plan 2022/23, which advised that the Council had set a balanced budget for 2023/24 against the backdrop of significant financial challenges and embarked on and noted that the Council was embarking on a transformational savings programme, requiring rigorous monitoring, which aimed to restore financial balance and avoid the depletion of reserves to an unsustainable level. It was reported that the 2021-22 audit had not yet concluded due to delays in obtaining appropriate assurances from the auditor of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund.
- Received the External Audit Findings Report 2021/22. Grant Thorntons work was substantially complete and there were no matters that required modification to their audit opinion or material changes to the financial statement subject to the outstanding matters in the report.
- Received the interim External Audit Findings Report 2023. Grant Thorntons work was substantially complete and there were no matters that required modification to their audit opinion or financial statement shown in the report. It was anticipated that the audit report opinion would be unqualified and discussed (i) audit findings around SAP controls (ii) the minimum revenue provision (iii) the progress in relation to financial sustainability and the achievement of identified savings (iv) the recovery plan in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- Received the Auditors Annual Report 2022/23. The report set out a summary of the work of the Auditor's with specific regard to financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Council. The auditors report highlighted concerns about financial sustainability and the challenges of the savings planned, which they believed that the council needed to address through its budget setting process for 2024/25. As the auditors issued their key recommendation in July 2023, it was appropriate that the significant weakness in financial sustainability identified at that point remained in place for the current year of audit

(2022/23) and discussed the sharing of information with Committee members, the culture of staff understanding the importance of making savings and working differently with Communities.

- Assurances were sought from the external auditors on how confident they felt that the Council were on track with addressing the significant financial challenges due to the continuing overspend in all areas.
- Received the Audit Progress Report and Sector Update. Grant Thornton advised on the audit teams changes following conclusion of the 2022-23 audit cycle along with the update including a summary of emerging national issues and developments that were relevant along with a number of challenging questions in respect of emerging issues.
- The Committee noted that both the value of money and final accounts audit assurance reports included recommendations to mitigate risks or avoid recurrence of issues (in areas such as budget management, IT controls etc). They determined that they felt that officers of the council needed to be clearer about actions taken and asked for a routine reporting back (which will start in 2024/25) re the 2021/22 and 2022/23 external auditors report.
- Received a report on Informing the Audit Risk Assessment for Kirklees Council which asked council officers to complete details which consisted mainly of a schedule of issues relating to (i) General Enquiries of Management (ii) Fraud (iii) Fraud Risk Assessment (iv) Laws and Regulations (v) Impact of Laws and Regulations (vi) Related Parties with whom the council had or recorded transactions (vii) Going concerns (viii) Accounting Estimates (ix) Accounting Estimates – General Enquiries of Management.
- Received the External Audit Plan 2023/24, which advised that Grant Thornton was responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the council and groups financial statements that had been prepared by management with the oversight of those charges with governance which included (i) Significant risks (ii) Group Audit (iii) Materiality (iv) Value for Money arrangements (v) Audit logistics.

## Internal Control

The Council has delegated to the Committee authority to approve the Annual Governance Statement and the Committee works closely with the internal audit functions, both overseeing the independence and effectiveness of the service, and receiving assurance to the adequacy and effectiveness for the Council's internal control environment.

The Committee has:

- Noted and received the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23, prior to it being signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, which concluded that overall, the governance arrangements remained fit for purpose. The statement highlighted a number of 'Significant Governance Issues'. The actions and controls the Council is taking were contained within a recommended action plan which was intended to be the subject of internal monitoring, with reporting back to Executive Team and the Committee during 2023/24.
- Noted information relating to internal audit work. In Quarter 1 to 4 of 2023/24 (the final quarterly report was considered at the May 2024 meeting) which included the number of audits completed and the assurance relating to the audits. During the year, the format of these quarterly reports was amended, so that more information was contained within a public report.

The Committee discussed topics such as assurance on budget management and forecasting processes and determined that in order to improve the awareness of the committee as regards the implementation of audit recommendations, they would ask Internal Audit to make changes to their follow up work, so that the Committee were aware of the progress made.

- The committee acknowledged that there had been no regulation of Investigatory Powers Act activity during the periods 2023/24.
- An Internal Audit update during summer 2023 set out the proposed audit plan for the second half of 2023/24 was also received. The committee considered the allocation of resources and noted that greater emphasis during school audits was to be put on those with budget deficits.
- The Committee agreed the Internal Audit Plan for Spring and Summer 2024 and the indicative plan for Autumn /Winter 2024/25. They asked that timings for audits be identified quarterly to improve incentives on auditors and management to complete work promptly and asked that further analysis take place as they noted that on balance internal audit work on schools, including those with risks, were probably disproportionately resourced compared to other areas of internal audit activity where assurance was sought. The committee also asked that additional resource be devoted to areas with a regulatory risk, particularly in relation to social housing.
- Received and Noted the Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24. The report explained that robust risk management was a central feature of good governance and the Council's approach to risk management had built on the success of the previous year with proactive risk management continuing. Although significant progress had been made, there remained a level of inconsistency in the extent that risk management was embedded within the day-to-day operations and the culture of the council. It was still necessary to drive greater improvements which needed to be both realistic and proportionate as set out in the report and discussed the risk framework used at a strategic level, the procedure if a risk remained unchanged for 12 months and how the framework was used to inform decision making.
- Received a progress report against the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 action plans which advised that issues identified in the 2022/23 statement would form part of the draft 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement. Further actions taken and planned actions in 2023/24 were provided.
- The committee was informed that the regulator of Social Housing had submitted notice to make improvements to the standards of fire safety, damp and mould. It was noted that Kirklees had self-referred to the regulator and understood its responsibilities. The Committee noted that the housing improvement board had been established which should help to strengthen governance, and they asked that the internal audit plan for 224/25 include resources to assist and assess the improvement plan.
- Considered the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 which provided independent assurance about the business processes for the Council following a programme of work to give coverage across the organisation's areas of risk. The Committee suggested that the housing system (CX) to be implemented should be included within the Audit plan.
- The Democracy Commission was referenced, with a suggestion that an update on the Democracy Commission recommendations to be provided at future meeting. It was noted that the Committee felt the Annual Governance Statement was unclear on the impact of delivery on services and focussed more on process.
- The Committee reflected on the agenda items of the Committee and requested that documents and agenda items that complimented each other were on the same agenda, along with an agenda plan to be published.

## Corporate & Other Organisational Assurance

The Committee plays a significant role in reviewing assurance reporting from other areas of the Council.

The Committee has:

- Received the emergency planning and business continuity annual report which provided a snapshot of the work of the Emergency Planning Team and provided assurance to the Committee that they were compliant with the core duties in the Civil Contingencies Act and discussed the proportionate approach to the risks and threats faced by the Council and areas of weakness within Emergency Planning.
- Received a report providing an update on the Information Governance service and offer outlining key events and activities across the year. Members acknowledged the increased number of Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests along with measures in place to deal with backlogs.
- Considered the interim and annual reports on Corporate Customer Standards 2022/23, providing examples of complaints and discussed how the corporate customer standards complaints process was looking to develop and improve over the next couple of years whilst welcoming the work being undertaken with the Restorative Practice Team.

The Committee plays a significant role in overseeing the work of those areas of the council designed to ensure strong corporate governance.

The Committee has:

- Considered changes proposed to both the Planning Scheme of Delegation and to Planning Committees which included moving from the current three committee structure to two planning committees. Suggested recommendations from the committee were put forward that the wording in relation to proposed changes to the scheme of delegation in relation to applications for the modification of the definitive map and statement under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and to the Planning Committee Protocol.
- Considered the Annual report on bad debt write-offs which detailed the debts written off in the financial year 2022-23. It was noted that business rate write offs were down compared to the previous year and that the service was carrying out a single person discount review for council tax.
- Received a report setting out a review of the Council's polling districts and polling places, which had been conducted in conjunction with the (Acting) Returning Officer to seek improved accessibility to polling stations for electors within the defined areas and ensured that Kirklees had a polling scheme in place which reflected the new Parliamentary constituencies.
- Received a report which set out a provisional schedule of Council meeting dates for 2024-25 municipal year and highlighted that there were no planned meetings between Feb 25 and July 2025 apart from the meetings solely for consideration of the Budget and AGM.



- Received an update on representation on Outside Bodies, The Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning has delegated authority in consultation with Group Business Managers to receive and process nominations to the Outside Bodies. Changes to the Council's Outside Body representation had occurred and had been incorporated into the Council's database of outside body representation.
- Received an update of Democracy Commission recommendations of retaining the current Leader and Cabinet model of governance whilst strengthening the existing scrutiny functions, increasing dialogue with Cabinet Members on key strategic issues to increase transparency and develop formal and informal engagement with members, along with identifying potential barriers preventing some members being appointed to committees/panels due to timing, frequency, and location. Members noted that pre-decision scrutiny worked well when there was open and transparency in sharing information and that pre-decision scrutiny recommendations should be added into officer's reports.
- Received proposed revisions of the Terms of Reference for the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board 2024/25 ensuring that the Board would meet its statutory obligations and fulfil the local and national policy commitment to partnership-based approaches to improving health and wellbeing suggesting that Schools/Colleges be represented on the Board.
- Received the proposed amendment of arrangements for Corporate Parenting Board which advised that to support the establishment of broader partnership arrangements, and to strengthen current arrangements in supporting child in care and care leavers, it was proposed that the current arrangements be amended to reflect that the Board would be a closed partnership meeting following the revision of the terms of reference and revised corporate parenting strategy.
- Received proposed amendments to contract procedure rules advising that the proposed changes were minor updates to the procurement threshold limits and updated rule 8 disposals.
- Received proposed amendments to financial procedure rules advising that the proposed changes related to capital budgeting, budgetary control arrangements and minor changes regarding grants.
- Received proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution which proposed changes in relation to different parts of the constitution. It was noted there had been some changes using delegated authority granted to the Monitoring Officer to reflect changes to officer's titles, typing or grammatical errors, old references and new legislation. Suggestions were made to define wording in the constitution. Members supported the changes for the process for responses to written questions at full council meetings, but not for the proposed amendments to questions at Cabinet and wider committee/Board/Panel meetings. It was noted that this change along with speaking rights for Member and public at committees be considered as part of a future review.

**Matters identified during consideration of items at the meetings were:**

- Follow up and receive additional information on the Audit findings for Kirklees Stadium Development Ltd.
- Follow up on assurance on budget management and forecasting processes.
- Lead Members to be asked to consider a meeting of Council between February and July 2025.
- An agenda plan of the Committees agenda items to be published.
- An update on the Democracy Commission recommendations.
- Services that had not implemented audit recommendations be invited to committee meetings to provide updates.

**Knowledge and Skills Framework**

Members bring with them a range of knowledge and skills from their working life and elected representative roles to the work of the Committee. The Committee's skills and knowledge was further complemented by the non-voting co-opted independent member, who was able to bring professional knowledge, skills, and experience to assist the committee with its work in seeking assurance and actions from management. The Committee intends to self-evaluate their effectiveness in providing assurance to the Council, as a part of good practice (this will be done early in the 2024/25 municipal year).

As in previous years, the Head of Accountancy provided training to the Committee in preparation for their examination of the Accounts and further training is provided to Members as necessary.

**Looking Forward**

I'm pleased to pass the role of Chair on to Councillor John Taylor who has been an active member of the committee for several years, and I am sure will steer the Committee through the challenges we all face together in the year ahead.

The Committee will continue with its regular receipt of reports, and the Committee will provide the usual level of robust challenge to corporate governance and audit practice and procedure across the authority to ensure that our arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, communicated, embedded, and routinely complied with. In addition, the Committee will be more involved in setting the agenda, looking to take further deep dives into areas of concern, with the aim of the Committee adding more value and further strengthening our governance approach.

**Councillor James Homewood**

Reports		June 23	July 23	Sep 23	Nov 23
Annual Report on Treasury Management 22-23					
Corporate Customer Standards Interim Report 22-23					
Kirklees Auditors Annual Interim Report 21-22					
Corporate Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Report					
Audit Plan 22-23					
Draft Annual Governance Statement 22-23					
Planning Scheme of Delegation and Planning Committees					
CGA Annual Report					
Internal Audit Update 22/23					
Annual report on bad debt write-offs 22-23					
Annual Governance Statement 22-23					
Corporate Customer Standards Annual report 22-23					
Draft Audit Findings Report					
Half Yearly Monitoring Report on Treasury Management Activities 22-23					
Audit Findings Report					
Statutory Polling District and Places Review					
Quarterly Report of Internal Audit Q2 22-24 July 2023 to September 2023					
Information Governance Annual Review					
Audited Financial Statements					

Reports	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	Apr 24	May 24
Auditors Annual Report 2022/23					
Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24					
Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy 2023/23					
Dates of Council Meetings 2024/25					
Quarterly Report of Internal Audit Q3 2023/24					
Audit Findings					
Approval of the Council's final accounts for 2021/22					
Risk Management Update					
IT Audit Controls Update					
Representation on Outside Bodies					
Annual Governance Statement progress report					
Audit Progress Report and Sector Update					
Implementation of Democracy Commission Recommendations update					
Proposed revisions to the terms of reference for the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board 2024/25					
Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 and Associated matters					
Informing the Audit Risk Assessment for Kirklees Council					
Kirklees Council External Audit Plan 2023-24					
Proposed Amendment of arrangements for Corporate Parenting Board					
Proposed Amendments to Contract Procedure Rules					
Proposed Amendments to Financial Procedure Rules					
Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24					
Internal Audit Plan 2024/25					

Quarterly report of Internal Audit Q4 – Jan 24-March 24					
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## REQUEST FOR A SECOND INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

(REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE)

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No</b> <b>No – Information report</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b> To request approval from Council to appoint a second Independent Member for the Corporate Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That approval be given to the appointment of a second Independent Member to the Corporate Governance &amp; Audit Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reason for Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent members provide an opportunity for the Corporate Governance &amp; Audit Committee to benefit from additional financial skills and relevant audit and governance experience from outside the Council, and continuity of membership.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee currently has one Independent Member. A second Independent Member would bring greater resilience to this arrangement and enable the committee to benefit from a wider skill and experience base.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor additional cost as this post is paid a nominal allowance (typical of other local authorities)</li> </ul>	
<b>Date signed off by Executive <u>Director</u> &amp; name.</b>	Rachel Spencer Henshall 2 September 2024
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	6 September 2024

**Electoral wards affected:** all

**Ward councillors consulted:** none

**Public or private:** public

**Has GDPR been considered?** yes

## **1. Executive Summary**

The Corporate Governance & Audit Committee currently has one Independent Member who was appointed in March 2023. There is a good practice recommendation that local authority audit committees should have two Independent Members, and the matter has been raised by the external auditor. At its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee considered the potential advantages and disadvantages of having a second Independent Member of the Committee and agreed to request permission from Council to appoint a second member.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

- 2.1 In summer 2022, the government indicated an intention to create a statutory obligation for local authorities to have an Audit Committee, including an Independent Member, although initially this would be on a voluntary basis. This matter has never been progressed formally. However, in discussion on this, the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee considered that there would be merit to adopting the proposal and agreed to seek an Independent Member.
- 2.2 Following approval by Council, the Committee progressed a competitive recruitment process, and an Independent Member was appointed in March 2023.
- 2.3 Independent members can bring experience of wider governance and control, from organisation in different sectors. The involvement of the current independent member has strengthened the committees skills particularly with regard to financial knowledge and financial governance. A second Independent Member would facilitate a further broadening of that skill and knowledge base.
- 2.4 The term of engagement for the first Independent Member was for 3 years, (nominally 3 x annual appointment, but terminable by either party at any time) with the intention that recruitment takes place for replacement at that stage.
- 2.5 The CGAC Independent Member is, like Independent Members appointed to the Council's Scrutiny Panels, a co-optee, without formal voting rights.
- 2.6 The role carries a nominal payment, similar to that offered by local authorities (although less than other public bodies, or the private sector), but recognises that the participant is being asked to add "professional skill and knowledge."
- 2.7 Recruitment for the first Independent Member was through the same council processes as is used to recruit independent members to other council committee and forums. (the current role profile is attached)
- 2.8 Taking on board the recommendation of the external auditor, and CIPFA, the Committee considered the appointment of a second Independent Member.
- 2.9 Matters considered as a part of this were:
  - a) A second Independent Member would enable a continuity when there is a change in the other Independent Member and or normal councillor nominees.
  - b) It is important that any Independent Member complements and adds to the skills of the committee. Where there are two independent members, they ideally should have different skill sets- to avoid any kind of group think or repetition.



- 2.10 As a part of this reconsideration the Committee also considered the tenure of the independent members. It is important that this is not perpetual, as the nature of independence is that they are not inculcated into the practices and rituals of the organisation, but an extension to say a 4-year maximum term may be appropriate.
- 2.11 If authority to recruit a second ember is given, the Committee will then need to agree the role description and establish the methodology for recruitment.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

Having an effective Corporate Governance & Audit Committee is a part of demonstrating sound overall control arrangements in the Council. Having independent co-optees supplements the skills and experiences already brought by elected members.

#### **3.1 Working with People**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.2 Working with Partners**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.3 Place Based Working**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.6 Financial Implications**

Independent members should in part assist implementation of strategic and operational financial and business controls. The role is paid a nominal sum of c £1,000 per annum.

#### **3.7 Legal Implications**

No directly applicable.

#### **3.8 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

A strong and effective Audit Committee should ensure effective corporate governance of the Council. Many of these aspects will be about financial achievements and control, but there are other aspects (as 3.1 to 3.5 above) where an effective contribution by an independent members should enhance the assurance and oversight, and thus the achievement of successful performance against all aspects of service provision.

### **4. Consultation**

None directly

### **5. Engagement**

None directly

**6. Options**

The Committee considered the following questions. (*answers*)

- a. Does it wish to seek authority to appoint a second independent member at this time?  
(*yes*)
- b. Does it wish to seek to extend the term of the current independent member and new member to a period of up to 4 years each (by annual incremental stages)?  
(*yes*)
- c. Does it wish to appoint in a similar way to that used to select the current independent member or to change the way in which nominees are sought to ensure a greater diversity of applicants?  
(*to be discussed at a future meeting*)

**7. Next steps and timelines**

If Council approves this request, a further meeting of the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee will consider a further report to finalise the role description and recruitment arrangements.

**8. Contact officer**

Martin Dearnley Head of Audit & Risk.

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

CGAC report 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**10. Appendices**

Co-optee role profile – Appendix 1

**11. Service Director responsible**

Martin Dearnley (The Head of Risk & Internal Audit holds responsibility for the planning, operation and reporting by Internal Audit).

The statutory officers with a responsibility for overseeing the internal audit function are:

- Samantha Lawton Service Director for Legal Governances & Commissioning.
- Kevin Mulvaney Service Director for Finance.

## **Corporate Governance & Audit Committee Co-optee Role Profile**

### **Definition:**

#### **What is a Co-optee?**

A Co-optee is a lay person, with an interest in oversight and governance of decisions and administrative actions that are being made by the council.

A Co-optee will contribute equally to the constructive work of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

When decisions are taken by vote, the Co-optee will have the right to participate in the discussion but will not have the right to vote.

### **Experience, Skills and Knowledge:**

What are the key experiences, skills, and knowledge do you need to effectively carry out the role?

- Knowledge as a finance professional (demonstrated by qualifications held, or gained, or experience in a large organisation).
- Experience of dealing with professional experts and advisors (such as external auditors).
- Experience of corporate governance, gained by working with, or within, a complex multifunctional organisation in any sector, including national or international commercial organisations.
- Effective communication.
- Listening, questioning and constructively challenging.
- The ability to look at issues from a broad perspective across Kirklees and beyond.
- Knowledge of the Kirklees area, its demography, and its challenges.
- The ability to work as a team with other Committee members and officers.
- The ability to weigh up information to reach conclusions and recommend actions.
- An interest in local matters.
- The ability to listen with an open mind to the points of view of others.
- The ability to not pre-judge outcomes or show bias, for example, party political bias.
- An ability to attend meetings of the committee, held during the daytime, in person wherever possible.
- A level of IT skills and connectivity (to participate in online virtual meetings if necessary).

### **Key tasks:**

What are the key tasks associated with the role?

- Attending Committee meetings, approximately six times per year (additional meetings on an exceptional basis) with a commitment to attend most, if not all meetings. Please note that there is an expectation that you will attend meetings in person rather than virtually
- Attending the compulsory training provided.
- Reading papers and reports in preparation for meetings.
- Asking appropriate questions on issues.
- Assessing the evidence and information provided at meetings to form views and opinions.
- Contributing to discussions and to consideration of proposed actions.
- Undertaking work on assigned tasks (limited).





**REPORT TITLE: Appointment of Chair – Licensing and Safety Committee**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No – Non Executive Decision</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b> - This report seeks the appointment of the Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>That Council appoint the Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee, with immediate effect, for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.</p> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b></p> <p>In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 38(9), the position of Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee is now vacant following the appointment of Councillor Amanda Pinnock to Cabinet. Council is therefore asked to appoint a Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.</p>	
<b>Resource Implications:</b> Not applicable	
<b>Date signed off by Executive <u>Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>Rachel Spencer Henshall 13.8.24</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>Kevin Mulvaney</b> Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Samantha Lawton 13.8.24</b>

**Electoral wards affected: Not applicable**

**Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable**

**Public or private: Public**

## **Has GDPR been considered? There are no GDPR implications**

### **1. Executive Summary**

This report seeks the appointment of the Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

### **2. Information required to take a decision**

Licensing and Safety Committee currently comprises of 15 Members. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 38(6) the appointed Chair shall be a Member of the Committee (which they are appointed to Chair).

### **3. Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Council Plan** – Not applicable

3.2 **Financial Implications** – Not applicable

3.3 **Legal Implications** - Not applicable

3.8 **Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)** – Not applicable

4. **Consultation** – Not applicable

5. **Engagement** – Not applicable

### **6. Options**

6.1 **Options considered** – Not applicable

6.2 **Reasons for recommended option** - Not applicable

### **7. Next steps and timelines**

To follow up associated administrative matters related to the appointment.

### **8. Contact officer**

Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions** – Not applicable

10. **Appendices** – Not applicable

### **11. Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton – Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning



**REPORT TITLE: Appointment of Chair – Personnel Committee**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (if applicable)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No – Non Executive Decision</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b> - This report seeks the appointment of the Chair of Personnel Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>That Council appoint the Chair of Personnel Committee, with immediate effect, for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.</p> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b></p> <p>Pursuant to the resignation of Councillor Scott from the position of Chair of this Committee (effective from 6/9/24), Council is asked to appoint a Chair of Personnel Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.</p>	
<b>Resource Implications:</b> Not applicable	
<b>Date signed off by Executive <u>Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>Rachel Spencer Henshall 9.9.24</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>Kevin Mulvaney</b> Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Samantha Lawton 9.9.24</b>

**Electoral wards affected: Not applicable**

**Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered? There are no GDPR implications**

**1. Executive Summary**

This report seeks the appointment of Personnel Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

**2. Information required to take a decision**

The position of Chair of the Committee is currently vacant and Council is therefore asked to appoint a Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

**3. Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Council Plan** – Not applicable

3.2 **Financial Implications** – Not applicable

3.3 **Legal Implications** - Not applicable

3.8 **Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)** – Not applicable

**4. Consultation** – Not applicable

**5. Engagement** – Not applicable

**6. Options**

6.1 **Options considered** – Not applicable

6.2 **Reasons for recommended option** - Not applicable

**7. Next steps and timelines**

To follow up associated administrative matters related to the appointment.

**8. Contact officer**

Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions** – Not applicable

**10. Appendices** – Not applicable

**11. Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton – Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning





## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No</b> <b>No</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b> In line with constitutional requirements, this report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the 2023/24 municipal year to Council.	
<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That Council receive and note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24.</li> </ul> <b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be in line with constitutional requirements to submit an Annual Report to Council.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resource Implications:</b>  None	
<b>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 19.8.24
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b>	Samantha Lawton – 19.8.24

**Electoral wards affected:** None specific.

**Ward councillors consulted:** Not applicable.

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?**

Yes GDPR has been considered. This report contains no information that falls within the scope of the General Data Protection Regulations.

- 1. Executive Summary**  
The Annual Report sets out a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Committee and Panels during 2023/24.
- 2. Information required to take a decision**  
The Council's Constitution requires the Chair of Scrutiny to submit a report to Council at the end of each municipal year, highlighting Overview and Scrutiny work in the previous twelve months.  
  
Attached at Appendix One is the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24. The Council is asked to receive and note the Annual Report.
- 3. Implications for the Council**  
The work of the Overview and Scrutiny contributes to all the Council priorities set out within the Council Plan by considering proposals and pieces of work that contribute to delivering the priorities.
- 4. Financial Implications**  
There are no financial implications for people living or working in Kirklees.
- 5. Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**  
The Annual Report is submitted in line with the requirements of the Constitution. There are no Legal, Risk or Human Resource implications.
- 6. Next steps and timelines**  
Following consideration by Council, the Annual Report will be available for information on the Council's website.
- 7. Contact officer**  
Helen Kilroy, Assistant Democracy Manager  
Tel 01484 221000 Email: [helen.kilroy@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:helen.kilroy@kirklees.gov.uk)
- 8. Background Papers and History of Decisions**  
None
- 9. Appendices**  
Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24
- 10. Service Director responsible**  
Samantha Lawton, Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2023/24



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## Chair's Foreword

The start of 2023/24 municipal year saw the appointment of four Scrutiny Panel Chairs and a number of new Scrutiny Chairs were appointed during the year and I would like to thank these members for their hard work and contributions.

I would also like to pay particular tribute to our eight Voluntary Co-optees, for their valuable input to the scrutiny process in Kirklees, and express my gratitude to all the local groups, organisations and individuals who have attended meetings, made presentations and provided evidence. Council officers and Cabinet Members are also to be thanked for their attendance and contributions to the scrutiny process.



Council, in January 2023, agreed to the following recommendations, as proposed by the Democracy Commission, that:

- A review of Scrutiny be undertaken (which has resulted in the current structure)
- There should be an increased focus on pre-decision scrutiny; and
- Scrutiny Training be provided to all Councillors, Scrutiny Members and Chairs.

I am pleased to see that pre-decision scrutiny is becoming an integral part of the Scrutiny process. This is helping to ensure that Scrutiny is given the opportunity to have an input, be consulted and comment on key decisions being taken by the Council and policy development and is able to make recommendations which can be included in the Cabinet reports.

I can also confirm that Scrutiny Training was provided to Councillors and Co-optees in 2023-24 and a full training programme is now available for current and new Councillors, Scrutiny Members and Chairs, which will normally take place at the start of each new municipal year.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of scrutiny being seen as a 'critical friend' and Scrutiny Committees and Panels being able to work with the Cabinet, whilst maintaining their independence; enabling scrutiny members to have the flexibility to be able to focus on and scrutinise areas which affect the people living in Kirklees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth Smaje".

**Councillor Elizabeth Smaje**

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Yusra Hussain (May to August 2023)
Councillor Jackie Ramsay (May to August 2023)
Councillor Moses Crook (September to November 2023)
Councillor Jo Lawson (September 2023 to March 2024)
Councillor Hannah McKerchar (March to April 2024)
Councillor Shabir Pandor (November 2023 to April 2024)

## Work programme 2023/24

- Leader's and Corporate Portfolio's Priorities
- Financial Management of the Council
- Council Plan – Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Crime and Disorder:
  - Communities Partnership Plan 2022-27
  - Annual Refresh of the Strategic Impact Assessment
  - Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Local Flood Risk Management:
  - Annual Review
  - Revised Local Flood Management Risk Strategy – Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Corporate Performance and Impact – End of Year Report
- Kirklees Active Leisure and the Leisure Centre Review Programme
- Procurement
- West Yorkshire Joint Services
- Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Progress Report
- Corporate Property Strategy
- Communications Strategy
- People Strategy
- Technology Strategy

In addition to the formal meetings of the Committee, informal sessions also took place to facilitate, amongst other things; pre-decision scrutiny and comment on the Council Plan; formulation of recommendations in relation to the Committee's work on the issue of social connectivity in Kirklees; and the introduction of the Council's Revised Integrated Impact Assessments Process.

The Chair of Scrutiny also received briefings during 2023/24, across a range of subjects and held regular meetings with the Cabinet Members for the Finance and Corporate Portfolios and relevant Strategic Director.

## Committee Highlights

### Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder Priorities 2023-24

The Leader of the Council attended the meeting of the Committee in October 2023 to set out her portfolio priorities.

**The Leader explained that a new Council Plan was in development and would be finalised in early 2024 and detailed her four core priorities under the following headings:**

- Address the financial position in a fair and balanced way.
- Strive to transform Council services to become more efficient, effective and modern.
- Continue to deliver a greener, healthier Kirklees and address the challenges of climate change.
- Continue to invest and regenerate our towns and villages to support our diverse places and communities to flourish.

The Leader responded to comments and questions from the Members of the Committee.

**The Corporate Portfolio Holder attended the meeting in August 2023 and presented his priorities, under the following headings:**

- Finance – The measures being taken to address the challenges facing the Council and to achieve financial stability, including plans to reduce the cost base and to increase income, but with the clear aim that the provision of the services and support that residents needed would continue.
- Cost of Living – In light of the continued pressures on local people, approaches would aim to address the short, medium and longer term, would be integral to the Council's work across all directorates and would work towards improved resilience within communities. There was also a continued commitment to support and develop the local economy and regeneration.
- Assets – A core portfolio of retained assets would be developed with an understanding of what was needed to facilitate the provision of services and good working conditions, within the existing financial constraints.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from Members of the Committee.



## Financial Management

Throughout the year the Committee undertook scrutiny of the financial management of the Council at every meeting.

As a result of the change in structure of the standing Scrutiny Panels for 2024/24, the Committee assumed responsibility for the scrutiny of the financial management of the Council, and a relevant item was considered at every meeting throughout the year.

**This included consideration of the quarterly Corporate Financial Management Reports, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Annual Budget Report and a deeper focus on the following issues:**

- The Council's arrangements and budgets for energy.
- The Council's Cost of Living Programme
- The Housing Revenue Account
- Capital and Borrowing

### Outcomes

On all occasions, the Committee provided challenge to the Section 151 Officer and the relevant Cabinet Member, with questions and comments being put forward for their consideration in each case.

## Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan 2022-2027 Refresh and Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment

In March 2023, the Committee received a report which set out the high-level findings emerging from the annual refresh of Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment and the suggested priorities for the Communities Partnership Plan refresh for 2024-25.

The report also highlighted the work that had taken place in 2023/2024, with a specific focus on serious violence, the Inclusive Communities Framework and drugs and alcohol.

The Committee heard that the Partnership Plan was overseen by the Communities Board. It was currently being reviewed for 2024/25 and any feedback from the Committee would be reported to the Communities Board in May when the priorities for 2024/25 would be formalised.

An overview was given in respect of the four strategic outcome themes contained within the plan and the approach taken by the Partnership. It was noted that the themes had been consistent for the last couple of years.

Partner representatives from West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Fire Service contributed to the discussion.

## **Outcomes**

### **The Committee:**

- Endorsed the themes and priorities set out in the Communities Partnership Plan.
- Expressed concern that a lack of data/evidence in respect of non-injury road traffic accidents could impact on the ability to take action to reduce risk at locations of concern and noted that this data may be accessible from other sources, such as insurance companies.
- Welcomed the work by the Road Safety Partnership to build a wider package of data.
- Supported the efforts to increase awareness of 'Operation SNAP', as a positive initiative to assist in enforcement against driving offences.
- Requested that baseline data be collated in respect of tenancy outcomes, to assess if the introduction of the 'tenancy ready' training is effective and supports the roll-out of this training to all care leavers.

## **Local Flood Risk Management**

In December 2023, the new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024 was brought to the Committee, for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to its submission to the Cabinet for approval in early 2024.

The strategy set out how the Council would undertake its flood risk management responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

The Committee recommended that reference within the strategy to the work and engagement undertaken with, and alongside, other local authorities in respect of surface water should be strengthened.

## Annual Review

In February 2024, a report was submitted which provided an annual review of activity in respect of local flood risk management.

### **Presentations were given in respect of:**

- An ongoing Mental Health and Wellbeing Project. This pilot project had been developed in partnership with the West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Project (WY FLIP) and alongside the Yorkshire Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme (ICASP). WY FLIP was an innovative, collaborative approach, involving the five West Yorkshire local authorities, which had been developed to share ideas and experience and to identify innovative ways to secure investment into flood resilience. ICASP was a support service with links to local universities.
- The approach from the aspect of emergency planning, including the Kirklees Severe Weather Plan, which dictated how the Council responded to the impacts of a range of weather and how the plan could be activated at three levels, which could be triggered by warnings and alerts from partners.

### **Outcomes**

#### **The Committee:**

- Welcomed the Mental Health and Wellbeing Project as an excellent initiative.
- Requested that efforts be made to raise awareness amongst all Councillors in respect of the benefits and possibilities of the use of property level protection against flooding.
- Recommended that engagement with Yorkshire Water be pursued at a regional level to examine the potential to reduce contamination spills from combined sewer overflows in severe weather; and
- Suggested that consideration be given to providing information, in the event of severe weather, to ensure that people who may be experiencing flooding for the first time were aware of who to contact for advice and assistance.

## Kirklees Active Leisure

**In August the Committee received a presentation in respect of Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) which included:**

- The background to the establishment of KAL (an independent not-for-profit charitable trust) in 2002, to manage leisure facilities throughout Kirklees.
- The partnership agreement with the Council, which had been extended for a period of twenty years in 2012.
- The current key challenges for the organisation and the measures taken, and being taken, to respond to the financial pressures.
- The Leisure Centre Review Programme, which was taking a strategic approach to the future offer and long-term operating model for the leisure centres.
- The range of potential options for the model of operation.
- Next steps and timeline.

In December 2023, a report was submitted which provided a briefing on the early analysis of the Leisure Centre Consultation. The Committee's views were also sought in respect of a report to Cabinet about the future offer for the leisure centres.

### **Outcomes**

**The Committee's response, which was reported to the meeting of Cabinet on 12th December 2023, included stressing the importance of:**

- Ensuring sustainability for the future and building headroom into the budget to respond to future challenges, such as a rise in energy costs.
- The development of a forward plan for future capital investment across all sites.
- Systems to ensure oversight by the Council and early identification of any future funding issues.
- Developing and building upon the relationships and partnerships that have been established with community groups and other stakeholders in order to; maximise the possibilities for external funding opportunities and fundraising, and exploring all options in respect of the future model, including pricing structure.
- Effective communication with residents about the benefits of retaining the current partnership model and to ensure understanding of the issues and the implications of the proposals.
- Establishing a timetable for the establishment of the future model.
- The recognition that the facilities contribute to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Kirklees and have a positive impact in terms of social connectivity.

Acknowledgment of the significant response to the consultation and the work undertaken to analyse the responses and welcoming the proposed review to identify any lessons learned for future Council consultations.

Recognising the benefits of fundraising by community groups being directed towards supporting capital projects; and

**Noting:**

- That a future plan for physical activity across Dewsbury was to be developed and the feasibility of keeping dry-side facilities at Dewsbury Sports Centre will be explored, whilst balancing the sustainability of the whole of the model. It is recommended that timescales for this work should be put in place.
- That Deighton Sports Arena will remain open, and continue to be operated by KAL, in the short term so that options to maintain community access to the facility could be explored.
- That the position in respect of the revised treatment of VAT for leisure centres was to be explored.
- The re-modelling of finances undertaken by KAL to increase income.

## **Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant**

The Committee received a report, in June 2023, which gave an update on the work of the Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Board since the introduction of the Armed Forces Bill in 2021.

**Outcomes**

The Committee welcomed the work being undertaken with housing services, to help Armed Forces Personnel navigate the housing process, and the one-off budgetary provision that had been made for work on the Covenant. (This was an issue that the Committee had requested the Cabinet Member to consider, in December 2021, to support the work needed in response to forthcoming changes to legislation)

Members also suggested that a survey be developed to hear the voice and understand the needs of Armed Services personnel locally.

## West Yorkshire Joint Services

The Director of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) attended the Committee and gave a presentation about the work of the organisation, with a particular focus on work within Kirklees. A briefing note had been included with the agenda for the meeting which explained that WYJS delivered a number of shared services, including a number of statutory services, on behalf of the five West Yorkshire Councils.

### Outcomes

The Committee thanked the Director for attending the meeting to highlight the important work undertaken by West Yorkshire Joint Services in Kirklees.

## Procurement

A report giving an update in respect of procurement was considered by the Committee in January 2024.

**In November 2022, Cabinet had approved the new Procurement Strategy for Kirklees, which focused on five strategic themes;**

- Delivering Social Value
- Promoting Inclusive Procurement
- Continuing to Develop the Category-Led Approach
- Striving for Innovation and Improvement in all Areas
- Good Governance

Since that point the team had focused upon delivery of the new strategy, alongside normal business activity, there had also been a focus on activity in anticipation of new procurement legislation.

### Outcomes

The Committee requested another report be presented, further to the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, to provide an update in respect of how the work was progressing and an assessment of its impact.

## Corporate Property Strategy

The Committee received a report which provided a summary of the approach to property asset management, and the use of good practice in developing and bringing forward the Council's Corporate Property Strategy.

The aim of the strategy, which was at a formative stage, was to provide a fit-for-purpose, modern, effective and efficient estate to support and facilitate Council services; promote and enable the Council's corporate priorities; and link and collaborate with key strategic partners and local interest organisations and groups. The current approach followed good practice and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) professional standard for strategic asset management of local authority assets.

### Outcomes

It was requested that the strategy be brought back to the Committee for further consideration at an appropriate point.

## Social Connectivity in Kirklees

The Committee continued with its work to examine the issue of social connectivity with the aim of helping to inform and shape the approach in responding to this issue, in light of the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of local people.

The Chair met with the Council's 'Our Voice' Team, to discuss the insights identified by their report 'Insights into Youth Loneliness Sept 22 – May 2023', further to work undertaken with students at Kirklees College and Huddersfield University. A meeting also took place with Yorkshire Children's Centre (now called Fresh Futures) to look at the research and engagement with young people undertaken as part of the creation of a new pilot service for young adults aged 18 – 26 and living in Kirklees.

### Outcomes

The Committee produced a final report, including a number of recommendations which will be shared with the Cabinet Member. The report and the Cabinet Member's response will be formally submitted to the Committee in 2024/25.

## Notice of Concern – proposals to increase car parking charges

A Notice of Concern was submitted by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to the 14 November 2023 Cabinet meeting in respect of proposals to increase car parking charges. The notice was submitted in accordance with Section 17 of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and set out a number of concerns in relation to budget assumptions; lack of financial detail; and the fact there was no accompanying economic impact assessment. The Monitoring Officer summarised the concerns that had been set out within the submitted Notice at the Cabinet meeting and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Greener Kirklees provided a verbal response to the Notice of Concern prior to Cabinet giving consideration to the report. The response did address some of the concerns set out in the Notice but not all elements were addressed, with some of the outstanding issues forming part of the subsequent call-in notice.

## Looking forward to 2024/25

**The Committee will maintain it's focus on the financial management of the Council and plans to look at the following issues:**

- The Council Plan
- Pre-decision scrutiny of the revised Inclusion and Diversity Strategy
- The Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan
- Procurement
- Final report on Social Connectivity
- Pre-decision scrutiny of the refresh of a number of Council strategies

## Comments

Councillor Elizabeth Smaje, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, expressed her thanks to all Members of the Committee, the many officers who had presented reports and kept Members updated on relevant issues, and all those who had participated to assist the Committee in its work throughout the year.



# Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Bill Armer (Lead Member)
Councillor Jo Lawson
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Beverley Addy
Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Habiban Zaman
Helen Clay (Co-optee)
Kim Taylor (Co-optee)

## Work programme 2023/24

- Resources of the Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care Economy
- Capacity and Demand - Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care System
- Joined up Care in Kirklees Neighbourhoods
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Managing Capacity and Demand
- Maternity Services
- Access to dentistry
- Kirklees Safeguarding Adults Board (KSAB) 2021/22 Annual Report
- Adults Social Care/CQC Inspection
- Consultation on the closure of Claremont House and Castle Grange
- Joined up hospital services in Kirklees
- External Consultancy
- Carephone Restructure
- Non-Surgical Oncology

## Panel highlights

### Maternity Services in Kirklees

In the Panel's meeting held in November 2023 representatives from Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT) and Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust (MYHT) attended the meeting to present an update on the provision of maternity services in Kirklees.

Areas that were discussed included: maternity services workforce; work being done to reintroduce birthing centres in Kirklees; the timeline for reopening services and proposed model for Kirklees; and next steps in the approach to communicating and publicising.

In relation to the reopening of the Huddersfield Birth Centre, the Panel heard that staffing deficits were forecast into the New Year with recruitment campaigns not securing enough experienced midwives for the free-standing birth centre. A re-evaluation would take place in Quarter 1 2024/25 once new graduates were in post to assess if the staffing position had changed to enable a responsive model utilising community Midwifery.

Regarding Dewsbury And District Hospital Bronte Birth Centre, a new full time experienced Birth Centre Manager had been recruited, and assuming newly qualified midwives completed supernumerary periods as expected, the plan was to reopen before 1 April 2024.

As part of their continuing review into maternity services in Kirklees, panel members visited Pinderfields Birthing Centre on 16 October 2023 to have a tour of the Birthing Unit and Labour Ward.



### **Visit to Pinderfields Birthing Centre and Labour Ward on 16th October 2023**

#### **Outcomes**

As a result of the discussion, the Panel believed the model proposed by Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT) and Mid Yorkshire NHS Teaching Trust (MYTT) to the midwife led birthing units would be a substantial change of provision and that further in-depth scrutiny take pace to consider the protracted closure of the midwife led birthing units, the timeline for reopening and the proposed model in relation to any future sustainability. Officers of the Council were instructed to liaise with Calderdale Council and Wakefield Council on the impact that the continued closures and proposed.

## **Consultation on the closure of Claremont House and Castle Grange**

The Panel included in its work programme a focus on the proposed closures of Claremont House and Castle Grange Care Homes.

The Panel was advised that both care homes were owned and run by the Council for people over the age of fifty-five with a Dementia diagnosis and each had 30 long and short stay beds. It was noted that Castle Grange was temporarily accommodating a Dementia Day care service. The Panel was reminded that the Cabinet proposals asked for approval, subject to stakeholder consultation, for the Council to withdraw from the long stay residential care market and to focus direct care delivery in parts of the care market where there were fewer providers and options for people.

A consultation was launched on 11th October 2023 until 3rd January 2024 where engagement with family members and other stakeholders continued for the duration of the consultation, with ongoing focussed meetings driven by the consultation needs of the families.

### **Outcomes**

A number of concerns highlighted by the Panel were addressed that included the effect of moving patients with dementia on their long-term health and longevity, and capacity in local care homes for current residents. The Panel requested that further information around the financial implications of the closure of care homes be provided.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

In the Panel's meeting held in August 2023, Older people's inpatient mental health services transformation programme was considered, that included older people's mental health inpatient wards, improvements to older people's mental health in the community, and why proposals were being considered to transform older people's inpatient mental health services in Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

The Panel was advised that where a substantial development or variation affected more than one local authority area, then those local authorities were required to establish a joint overview and scrutiny committee.

### Outcomes

The Panel felt that the formal proposals that were being developed to change inpatient mental health services for older people were likely to constitute a substantial development or variation in health services and authorised officers to start making the necessary arrangements required to support the next phase of scrutiny activity.

## Looking forward to 2024/25

### The Panel will scrutinise the following key areas -

- Resources of the Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care Economy
- Capacity and Demand - Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care System
- Communities Accessing Care
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) Updates
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Kirklees Safeguarding Adults Board (KSAB) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Adult Social Care/CQC Inspection
- Joined up hospital services in Kirklees
- Dentistry

## Comments

### **Kim Taylor – Scrutiny Co-optee**

Working as a voluntary co - optee on the Adult Health and Social Care scrutiny panel has given me the opportunity to be part of the panel's decision-making process and to use my experience of working in the NHS to influence and constructively challenge the way that services in Kirklees are delivered.

As a lay member of the scrutiny panel, I am always mindful to consider the effect of any proposed changes or concerns about the quality of services delivered by the council and its partner organisations, and what these would mean to me, my family and friends, and the wider community. I particularly enjoy the panel discussions on unplanned care and it was interesting to be part of the discussion about the work being done in the community to reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital.

There is always a full agenda at panel meetings and given the many national challenges in Adult Health and Social Care, it sometimes feels that we are only scratching the surface and that there are very limited solutions to the issues that are debated. That said I always find the panel meetings productive and informative. The other panel members are always welcoming and supportive and as Principal Governance Officer, Nicola, provides plenty of background information before the panel and is always happy to answer any queries.

As my time on the panel has progressed, I feel more confident to ask questions during the panel meetings and understand that there is no such thing as a silly question!

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a co-optee and feel privileged to be part of the council's decision-making process in this important area of work.

## Comments

### **Councillor Bill Armer – Lead Member**

I have had an interesting year leading the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel, and have been ably supported by my colleagues on the Panel and by two Kirklees officers, originally Yolande Myers and more recently Nicola Sylvester. This panel is quite unique, in that most of the services it scrutinises are provided by the NHS or, in the case of Adult Social Care, largely by the private sector. The Council only has direct control of two care homes, of which more below.

There have been frustrations during the year, notably around the difficulties faced by both the NHS Trusts involved (Mid-Yorkshire and Calderdale and Huddersfield) in forecasting future staffing levels for the two midwife-led birthing centres (Dewsbury and Huddersfield) in Kirklees. It had been the case that, apart from home deliveries, there was no opportunity for children to be born within Kirklees for a number of years. Despite the ensuing uncertainties in both the dates when services could be recommenced, it appeared to the Panel that both Trusts were proposing significant changes to their birthing provisions. Officers were requested to make further enquiries of colleagues in both Wakefield and Halifax, and this work is ongoing.

There was a great deal of concern raised by relatives of residents of the two Kirklees Council-owned residential care homes, at Claremont House and Castle Grange, following proposals to close these facilities, and the Panel took an interest in these cases. Relatives of residents of both homes were invited to give evidence to the Panel. Concerns were raised about the effects on future health of moving such patients, and the Panel requested that active consideration be given to transferring ownership of the premises as going concerns, or otherwise to avoid closure. Ultimately, Cabinet decided on a refreshed approach to the issue.

The NHS Trusts covering Kirklees, and further afield, had been considering their future offer for inpatient options in the area of the mental health of older people. These considerations were reported to the Panel, and it was considered that they amounted to a substantial development. Acting on advice, the Panel requested officers to liaise with their colleagues in Wakefield and Calderdale in order to take the necessary steps to arrange a tripartite Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to fully consider these proposals.

A major source of frustration for me, and for the Panel, has been the apparent shortcomings in NHS dentistry provisions in Kirklees, and perhaps particularly in the north of the Borough. It was noted that there were inequalities in levels of provision, but it did not prove to be possible to receive a report as to any underlying reasons for this. In this, it did seem that the local situation reflected national problems in this service area.

Overall, a busy and productive year for this Panel.

# Growth and Regeneration Panel 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Yusra Hussain (Lead Member June 2023 - August 2023)
Councillor Moses Crook (Lead Member September 2023 - October 2023)
Councillor Shabir Pandor (Lead Member November 2023 - March 2024)
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Manisha Kaushik
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor Tyler Hawkins
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards
Chris Friend (Co-optee)
Jonathan Milner (Co-optee)



## Work Programme 2023/24

- Introduction to Growth & Regeneration
- Housing Growth
- Small Centres Programme
- Damp Mould and Condensation
- Tenant Safety
- Local Plan Review
- Economic Strategy Refresh
- Skills (post 16)
- Interim Housing Position Statement for Boosting Supply
- Cultural Heart updates
- Corporate Risk
- Transport Strategy
- Transport Programme
- Complaints Handling (Council Housing Tenants/Private Sector)
- Building Safety & Compliance Combined Action Plan

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel was newly established in the 2023/24 municipal year, and at the work programme development workshop, in June 2023, it became apparent that it would be a busy work programme and additional meetings would be required to deal with the scope of the panel's work.

### Panel highlights

#### Small Centres Programme

At the panel meeting on the 3rd July 2023, the Panel received a report on the four towns, in the Small Centres Programme namely, Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth. The Panel learned that the programme is the council's attempt to strengthen local centres, recognising these are important places for people to live, work and do business. It is an important program that is being expanded to include a fifth centre in Marsden. The Panel was given a breakdown on the progress being made in each of the centres and informed that there has been a lot of work undertaken, and some centres were more advanced than others and some had been more challenging. Progress was being made and a number of these town centre schemes had secured funding which had been welcomed.

## **Outcomes**

The Panel felt that it was positive that Kirklees was able to continue to invest in the towns, as local residents need this kind of aspirational project and the jobs and economic development that it would result in, and was positive and very much needed. The Panel agreed to continue to receive updates as the Small Centres Programme progressed.

## **Damp, Mould and Condensation**

At the panel meeting, on the 14th August 2023, the Panel considered a report on the current situation with regard to damp, mould and condensation in Council Homes. The Panel was advised that this is a major issue being faced both locally and nationally, and the report being presented to the Panel aimed to show the response to tackling cases in Kirklees. It was explained that the government had put a lot of attention on this issue, and at that point in Kirklees, there were eight hundred open cases of damp, mould, and condensation and there had been a growing number of cases being reported into the service. The Panel was informed that in response to addressing the issue, a task and finish group was formed with officers from across the council. The aim was to deliver changes to the short-term approach to damp, mould, and condensation, with a focus on dealing with, and resolving the current caseload. All the work that had been carried out to date had been around dealing with the existing caseload, putting in place, systems and processes, and gathering information and intelligence to use to better understand how to deliver and target services in the future.

In addition, the Panel learned that a dedicated IT system was being developed, where all relevant information about damp, mould and condensation was brought together in one place. There was also a dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) made up of officers, who deal with all incoming calls about damp, mould and condensation, and information held in the system was being used to triage and categorise cases. All officers in Homes and Neighbourhoods and Kirklees Direct had access to this system and had received guidance on how to use it.

The Panel was informed that an additional piece of work, that had been running in parallel, was redesigning the whole of the system for delivering and responding to damp and mould, and the current piece of work around dealing with the backlog was still ongoing.

## **Outcome**

The Panel welcomed the update and asked that the guidance and training materials provided to staff to help them triage, and effectively deal with calls, be shared with the staff within the MP's offices as they were often the first contact.

## Economic Strategy Refresh

At the panel meeting on the 10th October 2023, the Panel received a report which outlined the refresh on the Inclusive Economy Strategy. The Panel was informed that it was recognised that the Economic Strategy needed revisiting, and rather than a wholesale rewrite, the strategy would be refreshed. The Panel heard that many of the principles and aims of the strategy is based on an inclusive economy and attracting inward investment to create a strong vibrant local economy. Since the strategy was created, there have been changes both nationally and internationally, and therefore a refresh was necessary.

The Panel was informed that macroeconomic factors of Covid, the cost of living crisis, the impact of the war in Ukraine, energy prices and inflation had a greater impact on the Kirklees economy than factors that could be controlled locally. Whilst it is not possible to control the economy, the aim is to influence the local economy while being cognisant of the bigger economic factors, while accentuating the positive opportunities, by influencing and being aware of macroeconomic factors using proactive resources with partners.

The Panel was further informed that in refreshing the strategy, the aim is to reach multiple audiences, is concise, speaks to its democratic accountability and political leadership and is readable. It is important that the strategy is not just a Council document, but is owned by a wider set of stakeholders and anchor institutions such as the college or the university. The strategy should be reflective of Kirklees, translating West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and Mayoral priorities down to a local level is also important.

### Outcomes

The Panel supported the overall strategy, and noted the continuing impact of Covid and the cost of living crisis, and the corresponding mitigations for this within the strategy. The Panel also noted the persistent economic lag for the lowest decile in comparison to overall growth, and observed the persistence of deprivation and the aim of the strategy to combat this.

## Looking forward to 2024/25

The Panel met in July 2024, to agree its work programme priorities for the year ahead. The Panel agreed that the areas of focus will include, Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy, Damp Mould and Condensation Policy and site visits as part of the Cultural Heart and wider Blueprint.

## Comments

### **Cllr Zarina Amin, Panel Member**

As a Panel member for the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, the Panel were able to scrutinise a number of key and important issues such as the Damp, Mould and Condensation following the issue being highlighted nationally. It is vitally important that the Panel continues to focus on this issue to ensure that Kirklees Council fulfils its obligations to tenants and residents of Kirklees.

### **Chris Friend Voluntary Co-Optee**

There have been a wide range of topics discussed in the Growth and Regeneration Panel meetings this year. Many have been forward looking topics covering Housing Growth, Small Centres, Cultural Heart, Transport Programme and have been very interesting to a Co-optee like myself. In addition, there have been a number of more challenging topics such as the issue of Damp and Mould which is regularly discussed.

The appropriate Council Officers have attended all meetings as needed and have always proven very knowledgeable on the key subjects and have provided clear rationales for many decisions and initiatives. One area that I have found invaluable is the provision of follow up material; on occasion, certain information has not been to hand at the Panel meeting, but this has been provided promptly post-meeting by the Scrutiny support team. The Panel members have generally asked very tough and challenging questions on the topics being discussed but in a non-confrontational way, exactly what you would expect of a Scrutiny Panel.

# Children's Scrutiny Panel

## 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Andrew Cooper (Lead Member)
Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Paul Moore
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Eric Firth
Oliver Gibson (Co-optee)

## Work Programme 2023/24

- Review of the Improvement Journey – Inspection of Local Authorities Children’s Services (ILACs)
- Review of Children’s Residential Homes and functions
- Quality Assurance – impact of auditing the Children’s Service
- Educational and learning Outcomes - Our Kirklees Futures Learning Strategy
- Sufficiency for Children’s Service (places/staffing resources)
- Potential changes to Young People’s Activity Team (YPAT) provision
- Partnership Arrangements
- Voice of the Young Person
- Special Educational Needs and High Needs (SEND) and Post 16 Home to School Transport
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGO’s)
- Mental Health in Schools - Provision of service & Waiting lists
- Emotional Wellbeing Provision in Kirklees
- Transition of young people to adults
- Emerging Risks
- Performance Information (Children’s Service)

## Panel Highlights

### 2022-23 Kirklees Annual Education Quality and Standards

In September 2023, the Panel received for information an overview of the statutory outcomes achieved by learners in Kirklees during the academic year 2022-2023. The report covered outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage, Phonics (Year 1), Key Stage 1 (Year 2), Key Stage 2 (Year 6), Key Stage 4 (GCSE) and Key Stage 5. The early Kirklees Annual Educational Quality and Standards Report 2022-23 was presented to establish a shared understanding about the performance of our children and young people in terms of Educational Outcomes across the district, so that the partnership could identify where to prioritise collective efforts for improvement.

## Quality Assurance

In December 2023, the Panel considered a briefing note giving an overview of the main areas of learning and development that had arisen from learning conversations and Practice Learning Days.

### Outcomes

The Panel agreed to consider a future update report once the process had embedded.

## Working Together to Safeguard Children

In January 2024, the Panel considered a report on Working Together to Safeguard Children explaining that in December 2023, the Department for Education published new statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children and the report will give a summary of the changes made.

### The Panel asked questions relating to the following areas –

- Was the new guidance being implemented by all Local Authorities and Practitioners in the country?
- How could the Panel be kept informed of the key elements of the changes and new arrangements, in particular, in relation to implementation and good practice?

### Outcomes

The Panel agreed to invite the Independent Scrutineer to a future meeting during the 2024-25 municipal year to discuss and reflect on the new arrangements and changes and how the service had acted as a safeguarding multi-agency partnership. The Panel also agreed to receive a copy of the latest Annual Report currently produced by Kirklees Safeguarding Partnership Board, so that they could see the work that was being undertaken.

The Panel agreed to attend appropriate meetings and events to observe the key elements of the changes and new arrangements on working together to safeguard children, with a particular focus on the implementation of the new service and good practice.

## Post 16 Home to School Travel

In September and December 2023, the Panel received updates, as part of -pre-decision scrutiny, on the Consultation process for the Post 16 Home to School Transport and Travel, explaining that the consultation of the draft post 16 Transport statement would run until 31 December 2023. Following the consultation, the responses would be taken into account on the final Statement and a decision made by Cabinet in March 2024.

### Outcomes

The Panel agreed to consider an update on the consultation for the Post 16 Home to School Travel in January 2024 as part of pre-decision scrutiny.

## Post 16 Transport Statement 2024/25

In March 2024, the Panel considered a report giving an update on the proposed changes to Kirklees Council's Post 16 Transport Statement for 2024/25.

The Home to School Transport Team ensured compliance with statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 and statutory guidance, arranging home to school transport for all eligible children, in the main for students between the ages of 16 and 19.

The Service was seeing significant year on year cost increases due an increase in demand and the number of Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the number of routes increasing (especially single taxi routes), increasing costs from suppliers, supply and demand issues and cost of living/operating costs rising.

The proposed changes to Post 16 Passenger Travel included a move to policy where a personal travel payment was the default, moving away from physical transport except where Special Educational Need necessitated Council arranged transport.



## **The Panel asked questions on the following themes –**

- Was the system working well in other Local Authorities?
- How would vulnerable children and young people be safeguarded if parents were to change their child's mode of transport and look for more financially viable options?
- Would parents be exposed to price hikes, for example, fuel increases?
- How would the in-house fleet operate, what was the cost benefit of the proposal and how would the vehicles be utilised out of school time and what income might be raised?
- What were the low carbon vehicle alternatives and would vehicles be to a Euro 6 standard?

## **Outcomes**

The Panel noted that the report would be considered at Cabinet on the 9th April 2024. Cabinet approved that the Post 16 Transport Statement be adopted and would take effect from 31st May 2024 and be applied to existing and new students at the start of the 2024 academic year.

## **Partnership arrangements and visits by the Panel**

The Panel visited both internal teams and external partners during the 2023/24 municipal year. The following information gives a summary on some of the visits that took place during the year -

## **Our Kirklees Futures Learning Summit and Joint Headteacher Session on 27th June 2023**

Members of the Panel attended the "Our Kirklees Futures Learning Summit" on the 27th June 2023. The event centred around the theme of transition in a child's school journey. It looked at the critical challenges and opportunities that students faced during their educational transitions. Coming together as a system provided an invaluable platform for education professionals to exchange ideas, share best practices, and explore innovative approaches to supporting students through these significant milestones.

The workshop sessions allowed attendees to delve into areas such as seamless transitions between schools, effective collaboration between educational institutions, emotional well-being during transition periods, and the role of parents in supporting their child's educational journey.



### **Visit to the Our Kirklees Futures Learning Summit and Joint Headteacher Session on 27th June 2023**

### **Visit to Education and Learning Partnership Board (ELPB) on 27th September 2023**

The Chair of the Panel attended the Education Learning and Partnership Board (ELPB) on the 27th September 2023 as part of the Panel's focus on exclusions and suspensions in Kirklees' schools.

#### **The following key areas were considered –**

- Exclusions and suspensions, including data taken from 2022/23; and
- Support approach in place, including new DfE guidance published in May 2022.

### **Visit to Early Years Conference on 12th October 2023**

The Panel attended the Professional Development Conference for early years' partners on the 12th October 2023 to see some of the work being undertaken with the wider schools system to secure positive outcomes for Kirklees Children and Young People. Work force development and prioritising the early years were two clear areas showcased at the event.

## Looking forward to 2024/25

### **The Panel will scrutinise the following key areas –**

- Educational Outcomes
- Children's Scrutiny Ofsted Inspection – outcomes and recommendations
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan and Sufficiency of SEND and mainstream capacity
- Quality Assurance – impact of auditing the Children's Service
- Health provision for Children and Young People and Emotional Wellbeing Provision for children in Kirklees and Mental Health in Schools
- Review of the Provision of Short Breaks and Respite Care for Parents and Carers
- Review of Children's Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements

## Comments

### **Councillor Andrew Cooper – Lead Member**

Many thanks to officers and my fellow panel members for their support throughout my year as Chair of Children's Scrutiny.

What has impressed me is the strong grasp on performance demonstrated by officers, When probed it was clear that their understanding and interpretation of the data they were presenting was very apparent. This boded well for the OFSTED inspection which finally happened after my tenure as Chair of the Panel.

I very much enjoyed being a fly on the wall at training events and sitting in briefings for staff. The professionalism and commitment to getting better outcomes for Kirklees children was very clear from what I witnessed.

Two areas in particular that we scrutinised were SEND provision and Home to School Transport. These are recognised nationally as areas where councils have huge cost pressures and where demand for provision far outstrips supply. There needs to be an ongoing engagement with users of these services to get their perspective on how the Council is doing and how easy it is, or is not, to engage with Kirklees.

Thanks again for all the help I've received and the insight it has provided me, and other panel members, into the work of the Council.

# Environment and Climate change Panel 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Hannah McKerchar (Lead Member)
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Will Simpson
Councillor Tim Bamford
Jane Emery (Co-optee)
Garry Kitchen (Co-optee)

## Work Programme 2023/24

During the 2023/24 municipal year the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel focused on climate impact and delivery of net zero targets as the key areas of consideration 'golden threads' when scrutinizing the following issues:

- Cumulative Impact Assessment
- White Rose Forest – Summary Review 2022/23
- Waste Strategy Update
- Snow Warden Volunteer Scheme Update
- Council Owned Tree and Woodland Management Policy
- Air Quality Update
- Call in of Cabinet Decision in relation to the Revision of Car Parking Tariffs/Charges
- 2 Year Highways Capital Plan Update
- Highways and Road Safety
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Waste Disposal Contract Procurement

## Panel Highlights

### Snow Wardens Volunteer Scheme

At the meeting held on 30th August 2024, the Panel considered a report on the Snow Wardens Volunteer Scheme as part of the Panel's continuous review of winter maintenance.

The Panel were informed that the scheme enabled the Council to equip residents with grit, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which would allow them to clear snow from residential areas that gritters would not cover. The Scheme was flexible allowing residents to decide how much time they would like to dedicate to the scheme, and to choose their own hours and locations of work.

#### Outcomes

The Panel welcomed the scheme as well as noting the ambition to engage more community groups and Parish Councils in the scheme as it expanded.

To help achieve the ambition, a key discussion was held around the issue of communications and the Panel highlighted the importance of taking a consistent approach to raising awareness of the scheme across the Council, including through the provision of social media guidance.

The Panel also suggested the use of handouts (for elected members) to share with residents and help to promote the scheme within communities, as well as encouraging the exploration of ways to promote the scheme in rural areas through community events such as agricultural shows.

## Energy from Waste Facility and Materials Recycling Facility Scrutiny Visit

Arising from the Panel's scrutiny of the Re-Profile of Kirklees Resource and Waste Strategy 2021-2030, Panel members were invited to visit the Energy from Waste Facility and Materials Recycling Facility in Huddersfield.

The visit took place on 27th September 2023, where Panel members undertook a tour of the waste and recycling facility located on Diamond Street in Huddersfield.

### Outcomes

During the tour, Panel members were shown how recyclable material was processed, separated, and baled ready for re-use, and how non-recyclable material was put to good use as an alternative to fossil fuels creating enough electricity to power over 15,000 homes. The Panel also noted the risks that disposable vapes posed to the recycling centre and felt that messaging to raise awareness amongst communities was important.



Visit to Waste Facility and Materials Recycling Facility on 27th September 2023

## **Call in of Cabinet Decision in relation to the Revision of Car Parking Tariffs/Charges**

At the meeting held on 6th December 2023, the Scrutiny Panel considered the grounds of a call-in request, in respect of the final decision taken by Cabinet on 14 November 2023 to relating to the Revision of Car Parking Tariffs/Charges.

**The two decision making areas which were the focus of the call-in review meeting were;**

- Clarity – Issues related to clarity of aims and desired outcomes, including
- Clarity of cost or revenue implications of the decision.
- Options: No details of the reasons for the decision or the alternative options considered were presented as part of the Cabinet report.

At the review meeting the Scrutiny Panel considered verbal submissions from councillors who were signatories to the call in and views from ward councillors affected by the decision. The Panel also considered the response of the Cabinet Member and senior officers of from Highways and Streetscene.

### **Outcomes**

That the decision taken in relation to car parking charges be freed for implementation.

**In respect of the decision the Panel, wish to make the following comments as learning points:**

1. That within all future Cabinet reports the reasons for the decision, the financial implications and options considered should be included.
2. The Panel were satisfied with the level of financial detail provided at the meeting, and request that this be included in the future report to the meeting of the Cabinet Committee (Local Issues).
3. The Panel acknowledged the value and importance of the pre-decision scrutiny process which may have mitigated the call-in. Whilst acknowledging the urgency of the decision every effort should be made in future to factor in pre-decision scrutiny.



## Kirklees Highways Safety Update

At the meeting held on 10th January 2024 the Panel considered the Kirklees Highways Safety Update report which set out the work delivered within the financial year (2023/24). The Panel were informed that the key ambitions of the work of the Highways team were establishing patterns of behaviour for the next generation, supporting the councils shared ambitions to the climate change agenda, supporting active travel and making a meaningful contribution to keeping communities safe and healthy.

Key highlights of work undertaken noted by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Highways included an extensive education programme to support the safety of young people and to support the Councils shared 2038 climate change targets.

### **This included delivery of;**

- Training programmes to 4847 school children
- 6456 'Bikeability' training sessions
- The 'Theatre in Education Programme' which had been delivered to 1360 secondary school children

Alongside the comprehensive training programme, was the promotion of the mode shift programme and once schools had signed up there had been demonstrable reduction in car use by 6.3%.

### **Outcomes**

In the discussion that followed, the Panel explored several issues including the scope of the school streets trial, the collision data, the reduction in casualty figures and the possible link to preventative measures, the plans to expand the Modeshift programme and the future promotion of Vision 0. The Panel further noted the following key points made recommendations as follows:

- Driver behaviour was a key influential and unavoidable factor resulting in collisions and it was recommended that the collision data be filtered to differentiate between avoidable and unavoidable cases, highlighting where targeted action could be taken.
- There was a need to understand more about the difference between the nature of collisions in urban and rural areas, and it was recommended that the collision data be filtered to demonstrate this.
- There were concerns that multiple minor incidents in one location were not recorded in the data and it was recommended that ways to record multiple minor incidents be investigated.
- It was highlighted that it was important to showcase examples of success in relation to interventions made in high-risk areas to demonstrate which schemes were effective, it was recommended that officers undertake work to highlight successful outcomes.

## 2 Year Highways Capital Plan Update

At the meeting held on 10th January 2024, the Panel considered a report setting out the progress of the 2 Year Highways Capital Plan 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Highways explained that the programme was essential as well-maintained highways were safer and led to a reduction in carbon emissions. It was through this programme of work, that Kirklees kept the road network running smoothly despite challenges such as the impact of climate change, increased traffic and funding issues. The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which funded a large portion of the programme stipulated the promotion of active travel, public transport, and modal shift which in turn supported the Councils 2038 climate change ambitions. Highlights of the work undertaken included the street lighting programme - leading to a significant reduction in electric use over time, the Local Base Unclassified Roads (LBUR) programme, and the continuing maintenance of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network.

## Outcomes

In the discussion to follow, the Panel explored several issues including the; inspection frequency of roads, the governance arrangements, how changes to national policy and climate change targets might impact local schemes, the process for removing hazards on the highways, the approach to bringing street lights in line with current standards and highways drainage. The Panel also particularly welcomed the commitment to good governance, and the emphasis of net zero and climate change objectives in the report.

### **The Panel further noted the following key points made recommendations as follows:**

1. Gratitude was expressed to the Highways team for the work undertaken over the Christmas period during the inclement weather, and it was agreed that thanks be given to officers.
2. In relation to Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS), it was clarified that there could be room for minor alternations to the location of a SID and if residents or ward councillors had suggestions or questions, they should contact the service by email. In response to a request from a Panel member with regards to updates of future moves and planned locations it was agreed that the specific area be investigated.
3. In relation to the potential impact changes to national policy and climate change targets may have on local schemes, it was agreed for a discussion to be held with officers in the Councils Transportation team and for an update to be provided to the Panel thereafter.
4. In relation to Highways drainage, the importance of minimising flooding from blocked drains to mitigate the risk of further damage to the highways was noted. It was advised that due to the budget, a reactive approach to blocked drains was currently taken but a review of funding was to be undertaken with the ambition to re-introduce a limited amount of cyclic cleaning. It was also highlighted that the Council could only clear gullies on the public highway and that clearing blockages in private carrier drains relied on working closely with Yorkshire Water and Private Landowners. It was further agreed that the specific location where there were issues with blocked drains raised by the Co-optee be visited and investigated.
5. It was requested that further opportunities for pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the Capital Plan be considered.

## Environment Strategy: Everyday Life

At the meeting held on 21st February 2024, the Panel considered the Environment Strategy: Everyday Life prior to the strategy progressing to Cabinet for approval.

The Panel were informed that the Environment Strategy aimed to address the climate emergency whilst also tackling the ecological emergency and broader social /economic challenges. It was a high-level framework which aimed to achieve a more environmentally sustainable future and had co-designed with key stakeholders including 1039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions and community groups.

### Outcomes

In the discussion to follow the Panel raised a number of questions and considerations including the delivery of targets, how success would be measured, the use of language and accessibility and elected member engagement. It was recommended that:

- It be made clear in the strategy that the projected cost of transition was a combination of public and private investment.
- The reference to high inflation rates be revisited prior to Cabinet to ensure current information was included at the time of consideration.
- It be referenced in the Strategy that reliance on fossil fuels increased vulnerability to national inflation pressures.
- Elected members continued to be engaged in the delivery of the strategy.
- The language used in relation to actions and targets be reassessed to ensure the information was accessible as a public facing document.
- A glossary setting out definitions of key terms and acronyms be included at the close of the strategy to increase accessibility.
- The Panel's comments in relation to revisiting targets including
  1. Clarity of language
  2. Influence and impact of individual behaviour change and
  3. Scope for delivery be reflected upon and reshared with the Panel as an additional stage in the flightpath.
- Regular updates on progress be provided to the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel during delivery of the strategy.

## Waste Disposal Contract Procurement

At the meeting held on 27th March 2024, the Panel considered a report on the Waste Disposal Contract Procurement.

The Panel were informed that it was proposed that the interim arrangements for the waste Private Financial Initiative (PFI) contract be extended for a further three years with a revised expiry date of March 2028 (the maximum extension allowed) to allow more time for statutory service changes to be brought in at a national level and prepare for the procurement of a new contract that was in line with these changes. It also allowed time to benefit from the current cost-effective interim contract.

### Outcomes

In the discussion to follow the Panel raised several key points including the potential introduction of food waste collection and kerbside collection for tetra packs/glass (referencing the recent glass collection trail) and were advised of the key benefits and risks in doing so. The Panel also asked questions around savings proposals, the future proofing of the Energy from Waste Facility, the disposal of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and the interdependencies between the waste contract and the Heat District Energy Network (HDEN)

### The Panel also highlighted that:

- The recent operational issues of the day-to-day waste collection service and
- The regular occurrence of containers being too full to use at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) despite complaints being raised were key areas of concern.

### It was recommended that:

- The Panel's feedback with regards to tetra pack recycling and occurrences of the receptacles being too full regularly be communicated to the HWRC's.
- More workshops in relation to the action taken to address missed waste collection services be offered to all elected members as a priority.
- An update on waste collection services be provided to the Panel.
- An update on following the development of the full business case for the HDEN be considered for the scrutiny 2024/24 work programme.

## Looking forward to 2024/25

Looking forwards to 2024/25 the Panel plan to give consideration to the following themes and issues:-

- Waste Collection Performance
- Waste Procurement
- Fly tipping
- Road Safety
- 2 Year Highways Capital Plan
- Public Space Protection Orders
- Events
- Kirklees Internal Carbon Reporting
- The Lane Rental Scheme
- The Kirklees Statement of Licensing Policy
- The Parks and Greenspace Vision
- Huddersfield Heat Network : the development of the full business case
- Fleet Replacement Programme and O Licence compliance
- Air Quality

## Comments

### **Councillor Hannah McKerchar - Lead Member**

I would like to thank everyone on the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel, elected members and our dedicated co-optee, including the other Councillors who held the position of Chair of the panel during the municipal year, for their commitment to the work of the Panel. They have all made contributions to effective scrutiny through their thoughtful and thorough consideration of the complex and important issues put before them. Key priorities of the Panel in the 2023/24 year included examination of the overarching Environmental Sustainability Strategy for Kirklees, while maintaining a continued focus on environmental matters at all levels of policy and implementation in relation to the climate emergency, as well as giving scrutiny to the Waste Disposal Contract Procurement process which will have significant impact going forward.

We were asked to consider the grounds for a call-in request regarding the Cabinet decision relating to the Revision of Car Parking Tariffs/Charges, which procedure only emphasised the importance of pre-decision scrutiny to the effective implementation of a robust and constructive scrutiny process.

During a busy work programme for the Panel, we also considered matters relating to interesting topics as varied as the Snow Warden programme and the Tree and Woodland Management Policy. Throughout the 2023/24 year, all members continued to further the aims of the Panel to drive improvement through strong and robust scrutiny.

# Calderdale and Kirklees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Joint Chair)
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Beverley Addy



During the 2023/24 municipal year, the committee continued its focus on the reconfiguration of services at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT). The Committee held three formal meetings in November 2023, March, and June 2024.

The Committee was delighted to attend an open day at the new Accident and Emergency Department at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary in September 2023. Whilst the opening was delayed due to a technical issue, the new state-of-the-art department opened in May 2024.



### **Visit to Open Day at the new Accident and Emergency Department at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary in September 2023**

At its meeting in November 2023, the Committee received information regarding CHFT's reconfiguration at Calderdale Royal Hospital (CRH) which included establishing ten new wards, a new A&E department, a new paediatric emergency department and re-locating the learning and development centre, as well as the construction of a multi-storey carpark.

The meetings in March and June discussed Maternity Services, along with the proposed re-opening of the Bronte Birthing Unit at Dewsbury District Hospital. The re-opening of the birthing unit at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary will be considered during the 2024/25 municipal year.

# West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Joint Chair)
Councillor Beverley Addy

The JHOSC met three times during 2023/24 and covered a variety of issues that had implications for the West Yorkshire region.

Issues covered included: consideration of an Urgent Care Service Review, Dentistry and Oral Health, Winter Planning, Harmonisation of Commissioning Policies across the West Yorkshire footprint, proposed changes to Non-Surgical Oncology, Health Inequalities and Prevention along with Workforce Priorities.

## Older People's Mental Health Services Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

Committee Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Shabir Pandor

The JHOSC was established to consider proposals from South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) and NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board to improve mental health care for older people and address the challenges of mixed patients wards (organic needs and functional needs).

At its first meeting in November 2023, the Committee was presented with information in relation to the transformation business case, options development and consultation plan.

A further meeting was held in February 2024 ('mid-point review') which helped the Committee understand how the consultation phase was progressing and to identify any gaps in the scope of the consultation i.e. areas of under representation.

The final consultation findings will be considered during the 2024/25 municipal year.

## West Yorkshire Combined Authority Scrutiny 2023/24

Proposals on a review of the structure of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) scrutiny function were considered by the Combined Authority on the 14th March (arising from the publication by government in November 2023 of a new Scrutiny Protocol setting out best practice for accountability and scrutiny within mayoral combined authorities, and subsequent review) and consequently WYCA agreed to adopt a single committee model as opposed to the 3 committees which were in place.

An Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was convened to assess member allowances according to the revised committee structure and new role profiles, which sought to enshrine the principle that most overview and scrutiny work takes place outside of formal committee meetings. The IRP increased allowance levels to take these new duties into account, which were approved at the Combined Authority annual meeting on the 20th June alongside the formal appointment of a single committee of 15 members from the constituent councils, together with 1 member from the non-constituent council of York, with each member having a Deputy Member (formerly substitutes).

The Combined Authority also appointed Cllr Barry Anderson (Leeds, Conservative) as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, with the Committee having authority to appoint up to 2 Vice-Chairs. The terms of reference and Scrutiny Standing Orders have also been reviewed and updated to reflect the single-committee structure and proposed new ways of working .

The WYCA Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023/24 will likely be considered by the WYCA Scrutiny Committee for approval on the 20th September 2024 and will be published.

## Contact the Governance Team at:



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