

# Public Document Pack

## Kirklees Council



Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield

Tuesday 9 September 2025

Dear Member

**The Council will meet on Wednesday 17 September 2025 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**

1 - 12

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

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

13 - 14

Members will be asked to advise if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in the discussion or vote on any of 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)**

Council 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**

15 - 32

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 19 June 2025.

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**9: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee)** 33 - 56

To receive a summary of the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee during 2024/2025.

Contact: Nicola Sylvester, Governance

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**10: Council Budget Strategy Update - 2026/2027 and future years (Reference from Cabinet)** 57 - 106

To consider the financial planning framework for the 2026/2027 budget and beyond.

Contact: Kevin Mulvaney, Finance

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**11: Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework (SDF) Development Plan Document (Reference from Cabinet)** 107 - 116

To consider the commencement of the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document.

Contact: Mathias Franklin, Planning Services

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**12: Overview and Scrutiny Report Annual Report 2024/2025** 117 - 184

To receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/2025.

Contact: Helen Kilroy, Governance

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

To receive written questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

One supplementary oral question will be permitted.

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## **14: Key Discussion**

A Key Discussion will take place on Road Safety.

Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 5(5), the Key Discussion debate shall commence no later than 7pm.

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## **15: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Cuts to Disability and Long-Term Sickness Benefits**

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

“This Council notes with serious concern:

- (i) That the Government is planning to review and potentially reform Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and long-term sickness benefits through an upcoming Green Paper.
- (ii) That PIP is a non-means-tested benefit, designed to support people with the additional and unavoidable costs arising from disability or chronic ill health. It is not linked to employment status and provides vital support for transport, care, mobility, equipment, and daily living.
- (iii) That Government briefings and national media reports suggest potential measures including freezing PIP payments from 2026 and tightening eligibility criteria, including more frequent reassessments.
- (iv) That such proposals would represent a significant regression in social policy and risk inflicting harm on millions of disabled and long-term sick individuals, including many vulnerable residents within Kirklees.

This Council further notes:

- (i) That the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recently confirmed, in response to a Freedom of Information request by the *Benefits and Work* campaign group, that 1.3 million people could lose their PIP entitlement under the Government’s proposed changes.
- (ii) That recent research by Health Equity North—conducted by academics from the universities of Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield, along with the Northern Health Science

Alliance—has modelled the financial impact of these cuts at a constituency level.

- (iii) That the research shows areas in the North East and North West would be among the hardest hit, with 92 of the 100 worst-affected constituencies facing the steepest losses.
- (iv) That the same study estimates that the Huddersfield constituency alone stands to lose £17 million per year, which will have devastating human consequences for local residents, as well as a seriously negative impact on the local economy and public services, including the NHS.
- (v) That one of the report's authors, Professor Clare Bambra, warned:

“Those areas that will lose most from this proposal were already decimated by austerity, COVID and the cost of living crisis. They have worse health than other regions and their local services and economies are already struggling. Losses of this magnitude risk worsening the situation for everyone living in these deprived constituencies. Parliament cannot risk rushing proposals like these through without fully considering how they affect local areas that are already struggling.”

- (vi) That the Resolution Foundation has also warned that freezing PIP payments would result in a real-terms income loss for approximately four million people, with 70% living in low-to-middle income households.
- (vii) That these changes would place significant new pressures on already-stretched local authorities, including Kirklees, in areas such as social care, housing, crisis support, public health, and mental health services.

This Council believes:

- (i) That any reduction, restriction, or revaluation of PIP or long-term sickness benefits is wrong in principle, unjustified in evidence, and unacceptable in a just society.
- (ii) That this Council has a responsibility to stand up for disabled and chronically ill residents and to oppose policies that risk increasing hardship, dependency, and poverty in our communities.
- (iii) That the wellbeing, independence, and dignity of all residents, regardless of health or disability status, must be defended and upheld.

This Council therefore resolves:

1. To formally oppose any Government proposals to reduce, freeze, restrict, or downgrade entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or long-term sickness benefits.

2. To write immediately to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing this Council's strong opposition and calling for all planned cuts or regressive reforms to be withdrawn.
  3. To write to all Kirklees MPs urging them to oppose any such measures in Parliament and to publicly support the rights of disabled constituents.
  4. To publish this position through the Council's communication channels and work in collaboration with local disability groups, charities, and advocacy organisations to raise awareness of the potential impact of the Government's proposals.
  5. To request that the Council's scrutiny function assesses the likely implications of the proposed changes on Kirklees services and residents once detailed Government proposals are published, ensuring that contingency planning is in place."
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**16: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy**

To consider the following Motion submitted in the names of Councillors Scott, H Zaman, Ahmed, Hussain, Moore, A Zaman and Anwar;

"This Council notes that;

(i) The UK Government and the United Nations have both recognised that human rights due diligence is a core part of responsible business and public sector conduct.

(ii) The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) provide a framework for ethical sourcing and investment.

(iii) Sections 26 and 27, Schedule 7 of the Procurement Act 2023 set out discretionary exclusion grounds that allow contracting authorities to exclude suppliers involved in serious misconduct, including human rights abuses.

(iv) Oxford, North Somerset, and other local authorities have agreed to consider strengthening their procurement and investment policies to ensure public money is not used to support companies implicated in serious human rights violations.

This Council believes that;

(i) Kirklees Council has a responsibility to ensure its financial

decisions align with its stated values on equality, justice, and human rights.

(ii) Taxpayers' money should not be used to support companies that are complicit in or benefit from breaches of international law — including the occupation of Palestinian territories, apartheid, or other recognised violations.

(iii) Ethical procurement and investment is not only a moral imperative, but also a legal and reputational risk management tool.

This Council therefore resolves to;

- 1) Request that, in relation to Procurement, Cabinet review and strengthen the Council's Procurement Strategy to ensure it:
    - (i) aligns, where lawful and practical, with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
    - (ii) includes reference to the discretionary exclusion grounds under Sections 26 and 27, Schedule 7 of the Procurement Act 2023, allowing the Council to exclude suppliers involved in serious human rights or humanitarian law violations
    - (iii) complies fully with UK procurement legislation
  - 2) Request that Cabinet bring forward an updated Ethical Procurement Policy, with clear criteria and governance arrangements for implementation and monitoring, and that, if an updated Procurement Strategy is adopted in line with the above, request that all relevant existing and upcoming Council contracts be reviewed for compliance with the updated policy, and that a report be brought to Cabinet within six months outlining the review's findings and any recommended actions.
  - 3) Request that (i) Cabinet consider developing an Ethical Investment Strategy as part of the Council's Treasury Management Framework, incorporating the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, where lawful and appropriate (ii) the Leader of the Council write to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and to the Council's appointed representatives, urging them to explore the adoption of an Ethical Investment Policy aligned with international standards on responsible investment and human rights
  - 4) Request that Cabinet, affirm the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical stewardship of public resources in both procurement and investment decision-making.
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## **17: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Growing Epidemic of Violence against Women and Girls**

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

“This Council notes that:

- 1) Violence against women and girls (VAWG) includes female homicide, rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and controlling and coercive behaviour. Some of these are complex crimes which have a devastating and often life-changing impact on victims, their families and friends;
- 2) Between 2018/19 to 2022/23, police records of VAWG in England and Wales rose by 37%. In West Yorkshire, domestic abuse related crimes make up 21% of all recorded crimes in region. However, this is the tip of the iceberg, as often abuse is never reported;
- 3) It has been reported recently that approximately 2 million women a year in England and Wales are victims of male violence. It's also estimated that at least 1 in 12 women are victims of violence perpetrated by men, which includes harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence;
- 4) According to the Home Office, the national average cost to the UK of violence against women and girls is estimated to be in the region of £37 billion annually (including cost of health, legal and social services). In Kirklees, the Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment (KJSA) has indicated that the estimated cost of domestic violence/abuse to agencies locally is in the region of £43 million each year;
- 5) While victims of domestic abuse are not confined to a particular gender, the evidence shows that the majority of victims are women. Between November 2022 and November 2023, there were 59,681 total reported cases of domestic abuse across West Yorkshire, with 43,691 (73%) of the victims being female.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Violence against women and girls is a significant issue on a local, regional and national level. It is a national emergency, and the scale of violence is akin to a public health crisis;
- 2) There is a lot of good work being done at a local and regional level to tackle the issue of violence against women and girls and this Council commends the work already being done. For instance, Kirklees Council is a supporter of the White Ribbon campaign, which encourages men to challenge misogynistic behaviour. The Council also has a strategic focus on tackling

VAWG through its *Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan* and focus on multi-agency collaboration and public safety initiatives. At a regional level, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is also taking a strategic approach through its *Safety of Women and Girls Strategy*, which includes a commitment to embed healthy relationships education in schools and communities, behavioural change through intervention programmes, improving safety in public spaces and strengthening services for victims and survivors;

- 3) While Kirklees Council is actively working to tackle VAWG, there is room to do more, especially in terms of leadership, visibility and long-term investment. The Council should publicly appoint an elected member VAWG Champion – to provide visible leadership, ensure accountability and champion the voices of survivors in policy-making. The Council should also improve public engagement, as there is limited public-facing communication about VAWG initiatives. Furthermore, public reporting on outcomes and progress is limited, while the Council should also take a whole council approach, embedding VAWG awareness and prevention across all council services (including housing, education and licensing).

This Council, therefore, resolves:

- 1) To conduct a review into Kirklees Council's procurement practices for commissioning VAWG services to ensure they align with statutory guidance and meet the needs of all survivors, including the most marginalised survivors;
- 2) To appoint a Kirklees councillor as a VAWG Champion, to hold the council to account on these pledges and amplify the voice of survivors. The VAWG Champion will be a designated individual within the council who will be responsible for leading efforts to address and reduce violence against women and girls, including advocating for survivors, implementing strategies to prevent VAWG and ensuring that appropriate support services are available;
- 3) To improve public engagement and transparency by publishing regular updates on VAWG-related initiatives, outcomes and community impact;
- 4) For the Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary demanding an urgent Royal Commission into male violence against women. A Royal Commission is the highest form of public inquiry in the UK, and it would be set up to gather evidence and make binding recommendations. The Royal Commission could examine the root causes of male violence, investigate the failures of the criminal justice system, recommend long-term cross-government reforms (e.g. to

education, health, policing and social care) and help to drive systemic change by focusing on the voices of survivors and marginalised communities.”

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**18: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Abolition of the Council Committee System**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors JC Lawson, Davies, JD Lawson, Cooper, Scott and H Zaman;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The statement by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, on the 24th June 2025 which outlined the Government’s plan to introduce legislation which will ‘simplify governance arrangements’ for local authorities in England and abolish the committee system, requiring all councils to adopt the leader and cabinet system;
- 2) Councils in the UK typically operate under one of three governance structures: leader and cabinet, committee or mayoral systems;
- 3) Most councils currently operate under a leader and cabinet model. The committee system was the way that councils were governed up until 2000. The Local Government Act 2000 changed the models of governance, introducing the leader and executive (cabinet) and elected mayor and executive models. The Local Government Act 2000 also resulted in the abolition of the committee system in England everywhere (except shire authorities with a population under 85,000). However, as part of the Localism Act 2011, the committee system was re-introduced as an option for all local authorities to adopt;
- 4) Typically, under the leader and cabinet model, the full council elects a leader, who then appoints a cabinet (executive), with cabinet members responsible for specific areas of service and the cabinet being the primary decision-making body. Under the committee system model, power is exercised, alongside full council, by a number of politically balanced committees, each with a specific area of responsibility. Under the executive mayor and cabinet model, a directly-elected mayor leads the executive and is accountable to the electorate;
- 5) Currently, councils in England can change their governance arrangements and local residents can have a say on the governance model adopted by their local authority via a referendum;
- 6) As part of the Government’s plans, councils currently using

the committee model, including councils which have recently transitioned to the committee model following a referendum, will be required to transition to the leader and cabinet model;

7) The Government has argued that the changes are needed in order to improve clarity and accountability in decision-making, enhance efficiency by streamlining governance structures and preventing unnecessary expenditure on governance transitions.

This Council believes that:

1) Councils across the country use various governance systems, with some favouring the committee system and others preferring executive systems. Councils should have the choice to choose which model of governance best suits the needs of its residents. The details of councils' internal arrangement should be a matter for local discretion. Although Kirklees Council currently operates a leader and cabinet model, it should be given the opportunity to transition to the committee system if Kirklees residents support this. Local people should be given the power to make the best choice for themselves;

2) The Government's plans are at odds with the devolved powers that the Labour party advocates. It should not be a one-size fits all approach. Fundamentally, the Government's plans to change the way that councils operate is top-down and heavy handed, ignores local choice and undermines local democracy. It is centralisation by stealth;

3) The committee system offers a number of benefits and abolishing it is a huge opportunity lost. As part of a committee system, councils are not run by a small group of councillors; instead, the committee system supports cross-party collaboration, and councils are often run in a more inclusive manner. Council committee systems can also increase accountability, reduce top-down decision making, provide a platform for diverse perspectives and provide greater opportunities for participation;

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to Jim McMahon MP, to express concern about the Government's plans to standardise local government structures and express concern that local authorities have not been consulted. The Government should abandon its plans for reform, since the measures will undermine local empowerment and local decision-making."

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## **19: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Need for SEND Profit Caps on Private Providers**

“To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Burke and JC Lawson;

“This Council notes:

- 1) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) refers to young people who require extra help and support with their learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support;
- 2) Private providers play a key role in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sector, including early years, alternative provision and specialised independent schools and are often commissioned by councils to provide support and education for children with SEND. In Kirklees, there are 10,098 pupils aged 4 to 16 years with SEND. Of these 9,407 pupils are educated in mainstream schools and settings and 691 in special schools (2022). SEND provision is a key issue for many parents in Kirklees.  
Across England, approximately 1.7 million pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, representing around 19.6% of pupils;
- 3) There has been a huge surge in the need for SEND provision and, as a result, demand for school places supporting SEND students across the UK. Many state schools are not adequately equipped to meet the increased demand or to support pupils with more complex and challenging needs. This has led to expert providers across the private and charitable school sectors stepping in;
- 4) According to House of Commons Library research, commissioned by the Liberal Democrat national party, the top private equity companies providing SEND schooling have seen their annual profits increase as the SEND crisis has worsened, with some making margins of over 20%. Some of the private providers of special needs education are backed by private equity companies based in tax havens or foreign sovereign wealth funds;
- 5) The SEND crisis has led to many councils facing exorbitant costs for private provision. This is at a time when local authority budgets are being pushed to the brink, with many facing effective bankruptcy or end service provision for vulnerable groups;
- 6) The Liberal Democrat national party has demanded that private providers of special education are subject to an operating profit cap of 8% in order to curb exorbitant profits. The party has called for the Government to cap the profits of these companies to ensure that money is channelled back

into the SEND system and not into the pockets of shareholders.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson MP, to express concern that the profiteering from private equity firms is a major driver of the crisis in our SEND system and to cap the profits of these firms at 8%, ensuring that the priority is provision and not profits and helping to cut the excessive profiteering off the backs of disabled children. While the Government's commitment to reform the SEND system is welcome, profit-limiting controls are needed as a matter of urgency."

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## **20: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Labour's Welfare Cuts**

To consider the following Motion submitted in the names of Councillors JC Lawson and Marchington;

"This Council notes:

- 1) The Government has published a Green Paper, which includes proposals to change disability and long-term sickness benefits. This includes Personal Independence Payment (PIP);
- 2) PIP is claimed by nearly 3.7 million people in England and Wales, which includes residents in Kirklees. PIP is a benefit not linked to being in work or out of work but instead designed to help people with the additional unavoidable costs of having a disability. It is used by people who need daily help because of a long-term illness or disability or mental health condition. Many disabled people rely on PIP to cover the cost of getting to and from work, paying for essential equipment and for meeting their social care charges;
- 3) PIP is a non-means tested benefit, meaning that claims are not affected by an individual's income, capital or savings. It consists of 2 parts: a daily living component and a mobility component. Depending on their assessment, individuals may receive one or both components;
- 4) The Government's Green Paper proposes that PIP will be focused more on those with higher needs and reports suggest that eligibility criteria will be tightened. This may mean that individuals judged to have lower needs will no longer be eligible for the daily living component of PIP. In effect, it may mean that some individuals could lose entitlement to the daily living element of PIP and potentially

other entitlements linked to this award. If an individual loses the daily living component, it will directly affect their caregiver, as the carer may become ineligible for Carer's Allowance or the carer element within Universal Credit. Furthermore, the Government's Spring Statement indicated that they wish to freeze the health element of Universal Credit for existing claimants until 2030 – meaning it will no longer increase with inflation, resulting in a real terms loss of income for over two million households;

- 5) Responding to the Chancellor's Spring Statement and the publication of the Government's impact assessment for their planned cuts to disability benefits, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation state that the cuts to health-related benefits risk pushing 250,000 people into poverty, including 50,000 children;
- 6) People who struggle to even wash their hair may have their payments reduced by an average of £1,720 per year. It is estimated that 370,000 people with disabilities will no longer qualify for PIP under the Government's new assessment rules.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Some of these changes will have a negative impact on the lives of Kirklees residents;
- 2) These changes amount to nothing less than an attack on those living with disabilities and health conditions – who need PIP payments and health-related Universal Credit, to live independent, dignified lives;
- 3) Freezing, reducing and removing these payments will have a catastrophic impact on million of households who, due to disability and ill-health, face some of the highest rates of material deprivation in the UK.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing the Council's grave concerns about the impact of these changes and urging them to reverse their decision to target those with disabilities and health conditions with cuts to their support payments;
- 2) Follow the example set by Stockport Council in developing a strategy to maximise the number of people claiming benefits they are entitled to in Kirklees, by using existing resources, including the Council website, the Council's newsletters, notices in local newspapers and council social media feeds;
- 3) Ask the Council's scrutiny function to convene a Task & Finish

Group, to identify likely impacts on the local population and to assess the likely demand for support from the Council and its local partners.”

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By Order of the Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Mawson', written in a cursive style.

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 16 July 2025**

## PRESENT

**The Mayor (Councillor Elizabeth Smaje) in the Chair**

## COUNCILLORS

Councillor Beverley Addy	Councillor Masood Ahmed
Councillor Munir Ahmed	Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Karen Allison	Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Bill Armer	Councillor Ali Arshad
Councillor Timothy Bamford	Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Tanisha Bramwell	Councillor Cahal Burke
Councillor Aafaq Butt	Councillor Moses Crook
Councillor Nosheen Dad	Councillor Aziz Daji
Councillor Hanifa Darwan	Councillor Paola Antonia Davies
Councillor Eric Firth	Councillor Charles Greaves
Councillor David Hall	Councillor Tyler Hawkins
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 Ashleigh Robinson	Councillor Jane Rylah
Councillor Imran Safdar	Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor Angela Sewell	Councillor Joshua Sheard
Councillor Anthony Smith	Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Mohan Sokhal	Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Mark Thompson	Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Alex Vickers	Councillor Adam Zaman
Councillor Habiban Zaman	

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

The Mayor presented Councillor Dad with a commemorative yearbook in recognition of her 2024/2025 Mayoral year.

**21 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Anwar, Bolt, Brook, Cooper, Lees-Hamilton, Holmes, K Pinnock, Simpson and Ullah.

**22 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Meeting of Annual Council held on 21 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**23 Declaration of Interests**

No interest were declared.

**24 Petitions (From Members of the Council)**

Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 9, Council received a petition from Councillor Bamford which requested the provision of a pedestrian crossing on the A636, adjacent to the war memorial car park.

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

**25 Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)**

Council received deputations from (i) Dr Dylan Murphy regarding cuts to disability benefits and (ii) Dr Mike Mitchell regarding greenbelt land between Fenay Lane and Dark Lane, Almondbury (a petition was also submitted).

Responses were provided by (i) the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock) and (ii) the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner), respectively.

**26 Public Question Time**

Council received the following written questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11;

**Question from Avalon Rawling**

“What challenges does the Council anticipate would arise in the setting up of a CIC to support the operations of critical public services, and what support or safeguards would the Council need to see to ensure such a model could succeed?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**Question from Avalon Rawling**

“The Inclusive Economy Strategy endorsed by the Councillors at Agenda Item 10 of this meeting, commits to (among other things) local wealth building, supporting social enterprises and cooperatives, and ensuring that public spending delivers social value and inclusive outcomes. How do the Councillors envisage that social enterprises and cooperative models can not only be supported, but encouraged, among the citizens of Kirklees who are ready and able to get involved in solving

## Council - 16 July 2025

many of the problems that the Council faces, not least in respect of budgetary constraints?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**27 West Yorkshire Combined Authority Minutes**

The Minutes of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 12 December 2024 were received and noted.

**28 Review of the Council's Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles (Reference from Licensing and Safety Committee)**

It was moved by Councillor Firth, seconded by Councillor Bellamy and

**RESOLVED** – That Council approve and adopt the revised Gambling Act Statement of Principles 2025-2028, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

**29 Kirklees Inclusive Economic Strategy (Reference from Cabinet)**

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

**RESOLVED** – That the Kirklees Inclusive Economic Strategy be approved.

**30 Council Financial Outturn and Rollover Report 2024/2025, incorporating General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Account, Capital and Treasury Management (Reference from Cabinet)**

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

**RESOLVED** –

- 1) That Council notes the 2024/25 financial outturn position for General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Plan, including proposals for capital rollover from 2024/25 to 2025/26.
- 2) That Council approves the creation of the Strategic Budget Contingency reserve with a balance of £3.5m at 31/3/25; funded from the Voluntary Revenue Provision Reserve.
- 3) That Council approves £13.7m capital slippage from 2024/25 to 2025/26 and the removal of £0.4m uncommitted rollover from the Capital Plan.
- 4) That Council notes the annual review of Council Treasury Management activity.

**31 Community Governance Review**

It was moved by Councillor Dad, seconded by Councillor Taylor and

**RESOLVED** –

- 1) That approval be given to undertaking a Community Governance Review in accordance with the relevant legal framework and Government guidance.
- 2) That authority be delegated to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to agree the Terms of Reference of the review and oversee delivery.

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

Council received the following written questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12;

**Question from Councillor Taylor**

“In January 2024 at a public meeting in Flockton the Service Director for Highways and Streetscene, when responding to public concerns about a range of issues, agreed to undertake a road safety audit of the entire length of Barnsley Rd in Flockton. Why am I still waiting for this audit to be undertaken and what would the Cabinet Member like to say to the residents of Flockton who are still waiting for the outcome of that audit?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Safdar**

“How much money did the Council save by ceasing operation of the rubble skips at the household waste and recycling centres in Kirklees?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Munro**

“When is the Council going to implement flood alleviation measures in Fenay Beck?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**Question from Councillor Munro**

“Why can't the Council do more to support litter picking groups instead of expecting volunteer members to not only dedicate their free time in removing other people's litter from our public spaces but also now placing the burden on volunteers of such groups to dispose of some of the litter themselves and also adhere to an ever increasing set of onerous rules?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock).

**Question from Councillor Munro**

“Analysis by the National Police Chief’s Council recently has revealed that 2 million women a year are estimated to be victims of male violence, with crimes, including stalking, harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence affecting one in 12 women in England and Wales. I believe that we are experiencing an epidemic of violence against women and girls. What is the Council doing locally to tackle this issue in Kirklees?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock).

**Question from Councillor Taylor**

“As you know parking has long been a problem in Kirkburton village and enforcement is clearly part of the solution. The presence of an enforcement officer on a regular basis will not only catch those breaking regulations but also act as a deterrent. Please can you tell me how often parking enforcement have attended Kirkburton in the last six months and what the outcome of those visits were?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Vickers**

“Do you share my concern, and the concern of the local residents, that the infrastructure around Crosland Moor is not robust enough for the addition of 700 houses on the old Blackcat Fireworks site?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**Question from Councillor Longstaff**

“What is the current view of Kirklees on the search for a new stadium for Huddersfield Giants?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**Question from Councillor Bellamy**

“The new Kirklees Council tenancy agreements, which are due to come into effect in August, include a requirement for pets to be neutered unless there is a reasonable exemption. However, tenants have raised concerns that there is currently a lack of clarity about how to request such an exemption. Please could the Cabinet Member explain how tenants can go about requesting an exemption?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

**Question from Councillor Bellamy**

“Given the persistent issues with fly-tipping in our area – particularly of bulky household waste – why is it so difficult for residents to dispose of their waste responsibly if they don’t own the “right” type of vehicle?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Bellamy**

“Recent works have been carried out at the bottom of Gynn Lane in Honley . However, I have received several enquiries from local residents asking why similar consideration has not been given to Station Road, which is widely regarded as a more dangerous junction. Will the Council assess the junction at Station Road with a view to identifying any improvements that could be made to enhance safety at this location?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Sheard**

“On 29 May 2025 , I sent a detailed email to you and others, including Tracy Brabin and Kim Leadbeater, outlining the serious environmental, logistical, and community impacts of the closure of the Nab Lane Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Birstall. This letter included data from DEFRA showing a 21.7% rise in fly-tipping incidents, highlighted equity concerns for residents with limited transport, and proposed a cost-sharing reopening model involving Kirklees, Leeds City Council, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. To date, I have received no acknowledgement or response. Can the Leader explain why this correspondence was ignored, and whether the Council will now formally consider the proposal to explore regional cooperation to reopen the Nab Lane site?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

**Question from Councillor Darwan**

“Following the government’s recent pledge of a £900 million investment into major sporting events and grassroots facilities across the UK the government announced plans for a new School Sport Partnerships and Enrichment Framework for schools to ensure all young people have equal access to high-quality sport and extracurricular activity.

Does the Council plan to pursue this funding and if so, what plans are in place to ensure Dewsbury will be included and prioritised?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

**Question from Councillor Hall**

“How many cameras are deployed to catch fly-tippers, and how can a ward member get one sited?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock).

**Question from Councillor Hall**

“How can a ward member get a speed limit changed?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Hall**

“What is the service backlog in clearing paths of vegetation?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Armer**

“I have serious concerns about road safety in my ward and around the Borough. Road markings, including on zebra crossings, are wearing away everywhere I look. I have been told that environmental regulations dictate that the type of paint traditionally used is no longer suitable, and that the currently approved paint is not as long-lasting as before. Will the Cabinet member please explain the current situation regarding the paint used for road markings and the frequency with which these markings are renewed?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Armer**

“I am aware that this council faces financial pressures, and that some services which my residents have been accustomed to receiving are now regarded as non-essential. In particular, it seems to me that roadside and pathside vegetation is being left untreated, or is being left for much longer before being treated. I can accept, however reluctantly, that this may be necessary to some extent in some cases to reduce costs. What I cannot accept is that in many parts of my ward, from Grange Moor to Farnley Tyas and all points in between, road safety is being compromised as important traffic signs are being left obscured by rampant foliage. Will the Cabinet Member please explain why this council is content to see Triffid-like vegetation take over the Borough, even at the expense of the safety of residents?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Armer**

“I have ten villages within my ward. Many, indeed most, of these, ranging from Flockton and Grange Moor, through Kirkburton, Shelley and Shepley to Farnley Tyas and Thurstonland experience severe issues with traffic. Excessive traffic volumes are a familiar complaint everywhere, but many complainants cite speeding vehicles as a serious road safety problem. Will the Cabinet Member please explain the criteria which should be satisfied before traffic calming measures can be introduced?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Burke**

“It was reported in the local media on 20th June that Huddersfield Giants’ plans for a new stadium at the former gasworks site off St Andrew’s Road have been set back, as the council stated the land lies ‘right at the centre’ of an enterprise zone expected to be used by health and wellbeing research companies. Could I ask for clarification on the intended use of this site, specifically, what type of health and wellbeing research activity is envisioned, how long has this land been earmarked for that purpose and what steps has the Council taken to secure or attract such development to the site?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

**Question from Councillor A Smith**

“What is being done to address the ongoing issues with missed bin collections in the Lindley Ward and can the Council explain the reasons behind the repeated disruptions and outline the steps being taken to ensure a more reliable and consistent service for residents?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

**Question from Councillor Burke**

“We in the Lindley Ward are consistently reporting incidents of fly tipping, often at the same locations, with some hotspots having been an ongoing issue for the last couple of years. It’s incredibly frustrating for residents and continues to be a blight on our communities. What long-term solutions are being considered or implemented to tackle persistent fly tipping at these repeat locations, where it’s occurring several times each month?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock).

**Question from Councillor Burke**

“As a Council, we often speak about openness, transparency, and working better for all our residents and communities. However, the Councillor Enquiries system currently in place is not fit for purpose – it lacks accountability and cannot be the only mechanism for raising and resolving local issues. There was a time when we had regular ward-based meetings, which allowed councillors to engage directly with officers and address concerns more effectively. Will you and the administration

## **Council - 16 July 2025**

consider reinstating regular, focused ward meetings – every 4 to 6 weeks – for those wards that would benefit, with clear agendas and attendance from relevant officers in areas such as planning, waste, and housing? These would not be meetings for the sake of it, but focused, purposeful forums designed to tackle local issues directly, improve outcomes for residents, reduce pressure on the Councillor Enquiries system, and provide greater accountability at a local level.”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate Services (Councillor Dad).

### **Question from Councillor Robinson**

"What steps is the council taking to support residents living in council-owned properties who are experiencing anti-social behaviour, and how is it ensuring that issues are addressed promptly and effectively?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

### **Question from Councillor McLaughlin**

“Does the Leader join me in welcoming the announcement made by Minister Jim McMahon, that the new Devolution Bill will ensure in future all councils will be consistently governed by a Leader and Cabinet Model, in line with the majority of councils nationally, and which is transparent, modern and efficient. Would this not have been a costly exercise to move from a Cabinet model to a committee model?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

### **Question from Councillor Taylor**

"How long do you think it is acceptable to wait for fly tipping to be collected?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock).

### **Question from Councillor Scott**

“In relation to the ethical procurement motion passed by Full Council last year, can the Leader explain why no Cabinet member was formally assigned responsibility for implementing the motion, and why the matter was referred instead to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. Given that procurement is an executive function under the Local Government Act 2000, and that only the Executive has the legal authority to adopt and implement procurement strategy, will the Leader now (i) confirm that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee has no legal authority to 'send back' or block a motion passed by Full Council; contrary to what you stated in the Cabinet meeting on 8th July that Corporate Governance & Audit Committee could send back the motion to Council (ii) publicly accept that it is the Cabinet's responsibility to act upon the previously passed motion; and (iii) commit to bringing forward a formal Cabinet response and implementation plan within 30 days, in line with the decision already taken by Full Council?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

### **Question from Councillor Moore**

## Council - 16 July 2025

“Following Labours recent spanking at the ballot box by Reform in May 2025 we have seen Keir Starmer and the Labour party perform a monumental u turn on winter fuel payments to pensioners in desperation for votes. A number of motions were submitted to council last year with cross party support against this ill thought-out Labour policy.

Cllr Pattison, you supported the initial policy and spoke out in full council supporting the cuts to 7.5 million pensioners benefits, claiming pensioners were using the winter fuel payment to buy Christmas presents instead of paying for utility bills. Do you stand by these comments?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

### **Question from Councillor Moore**

“Recently, we organised a trip from Chickenley Community Centre to the Piece Hall in Halifax. People were truly inspired by what they saw—an incredible space that brings people together and draws visitors into the town. Many were asking, 'Why can't we have something like this in Dewsbury?'

While I'm not suggesting we recreate the Piece Hall, my question is this: Where is the bold, ambitious vision for Dewsbury, something on the scale of Huddersfield's £250 million Cultural Heart project that will genuinely attract people into the town and put Dewsbury back on the map?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

### **Question from Councillor H Zaman**

“Given the scale of the housing crisis in Kirklees with rising temporary accommodation placements and visible street homelessness will the Cabinet commit to an urgent review of current provision and invest in an expanded prevention and rehousing strategy?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

### **Question from Councillor H Zaman**

“Can you provide ward-level data on the number of long-term empty homes, the number brought back into use last year, and how many are currently subject to enforcement action?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

- 33 **Minutes of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee - Local Issues**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 34 **Holding the Executive to Account**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 35 **Minutes of Other Committees**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 36 **Oral Questions to Committee/Sub Committee/Panel Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 37 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Cuts to Disability and Long-Term Sickness Benefits**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 38 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 39 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Labour's Welfare Cuts**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 40 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Abolition of the Council Committee System**  
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

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<b>KIRKLEES COUNCIL</b>				
<b>COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC</b>				
<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>				
Council				
Name of Councillor				
Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")	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]	Brief description of your interest	

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, 19 JUNE 2025 AT MEETING ROOM 1 -  
WELLINGTON HOUSE, 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 Carole Pattison	Kirklees Council
Councillor James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Councillor Denise Jeffery	Wakefield Council
Councillor Claire Douglas	City of York Council
Councillor Martin Love	Bradford Council
Councillor Alan Lamb	Leeds City Council
Asma Iqbal (Substitute)	West Yorkshire Business Board

**In Attendance:**

Sarah Eaton (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Liz Hunter (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Felix Kumi-Ampofo (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
James Edward Mowbray	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Pope (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Satinder Sahota (Interim Asst. Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Ben Still (Chief Executive)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Kate Taylor (Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Simon Warburton (Executive Director)	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

**Mayor's Opening Remarks**

Before proceeding with the formal agenda the Mayor took the opportunity to express her condolences to the family of Dirdh Patel, a student at the University of Huddersfield, who had lost his life, along with 259 others, when Air India Flight 171 had crashed shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad on 12/06/2025.

The Mayor was also deeply saddened to share news of the passing of Neill Fishman, Inclusive Economy Manager. Neill was described as a longstanding and cherished member of the organisation who made a lasting impact over the course of his ten years with the Combined Authority. The Mayor added that Neill had brought dedication, professionalism and pride to his role while also being a source of kindness, support and good humour to his colleagues. He would be sorely missed by those who knew him. Neill was left by his wife Michaela and son Ben. A book of condolence was available to those wishing to pay their respects.

## **51. Membership of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report and recommendations.

### **RESOLVED:-**

- (a) That the following actions, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted 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 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 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 is appointed) on any decision, subject to the following exceptions:
  - decision-making in relation to budget and levy setting; and
  - the adoption of any implementation plans appended to the Local Transport Plan which relate specifically 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.

## **52. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sue Holdsworth (as well as her substitute, Councillor Stewart Golton) and Mandy Ridyard.

**53. Declarations of Disclosable Interests**

Councillor Jane Scullion declared an interest in agenda item 21(b) Project Approvals – Investment Priority 4 – Tackling the Climate Emergency & Environmental Sustainability, as the schemes outlined were in close proximity to her home.

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

There were no agenda items that required the exclusion of either the public or the press.

**55. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Authority held on 8 May 2025**

The Mayor confirmed that following discussions that had taken place since the last meeting of the Combined Authority, regarding cross-party representation on the shadow Bus Franchising Board, officers had approached Members for nominations. These would be in addition to those cross-party representations of the Mass Transit Board.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Combined Authority held on 8 May 2025 were approved as a correct record.

**Comment from the Mayor on the National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse**

Prior to giving her regular update to the Combined Authority the Mayor gave a comment specifically relating to the National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse. The Mayor reiterated her commitment, and that of West Yorkshire Police, to eliminating violence against women and girls in the region and emphasised the need to bring the perpetrators of child sexual abuse and exploitation to justice. Expanding on her remarks, the Mayor promised to continue to take such abuse allegations extremely seriously and recommitted to a victim and survivor led approach to tackle the issue. The Combined Authority learnt that, over the previous decade, 210 individuals in West Yorkshire had been sentenced to a combined total of over 2,300 years in prison for their involvement in such crimes. Similarly, Members learnt that an additional 62 individuals were either charged or currently on trial and that another 48 investigations into historic child sexual abuse were ongoing. Given these successful prosecutions the Mayor explained that she had not previously been convinced a second national inquiry into this subject was the best approach, given many of the recommendations from the previous Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse had yet to be implemented. Additionally, the Mayor has sought to avoid resourced being diverted from live policing operations. However, the Mayor acknowledged the work done by Baroness Casey and welcomed her new recommendations. The Mayor went on to confirm that she had asked local partners to examine how these recommendations could be speedily implemented. Furthermore, the Mayor explained that she had reached out to organisations representing the victims of child sexual abuse to seek their views on where the focus of the inquiry should be. The Mayor also committed to ensuring this would be shared with the Home Secretary and inform the inquiry's terms of reference. Concluding her remarks on this subject, the Mayor recommitted to taking all possible steps to protect children within the region from such crimes while continuing the mission to eradicate

misogyny and violence against women and girls. Conscious of the potentially unsettling impact of this subject being so prominent in the media on survivors, the Mayor spoke directly to victims by seeking to reassure them that in West Yorkshire they would be believed and that every effort would be taken to bring them the justice they deserved.

## **56. Mayor's Update**

The Mayor began her update making reference to the Spending Review, which had taken place in the time since the last meeting of the Combined Authority (CA). Additionally, the Mayor had welcomed the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Huddersfield at the start of June to announce £2.1 billion of investment into transport across West Yorkshire, which included money for the new tram network between Bradford and Leeds. This funding would enable work to start on the project by 2028.

The Mayor went on to describe UKREiiF as the other big event to have taken place in West Yorkshire since the CA had last met. Members were informed that over 16,000 people had descended upon the region for the event, providing an unparalleled opportunity to promote West Yorkshire as an investment opportunity. The Mayor went on to confirm that work was already underway for UKREiiF 2026.

## **57. Committee Arrangements and Appointments**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report, followed by a summarisation of the accompanying appendices. It was highlighted that in each committee's terms of reference a provision had been made to refer matters to Scrutiny Committee. It was also noted that the report appointed the Governance & Audit Committee, with a membership to be comprised of local authority co-optees, as opposed to members of the Combined Authority. Additionally, officers provided an update to the report regarding committee appointments as follows:

- Cllr. Jane Dowson (Leeds) was nominated as a substitute on the Culture, Heritage & Sport Committee.
- Cllr. Jane Dowson's (Leeds) nomination to the Scrutiny Committee was withdrawn.
- Cllr. Abigail Marshall-Katung's (Leeds) nomination as a substitute on the Climate, Energy & Environment Committee was withdrawn.
- Cllr. Susan Lee-Richards (Kirklees) was nominated as a Green member on the Audit Committee.
- Cllr. Neil Whitaker (Bradford) was nominated as a Green substitute on the Audit Committee.
- Cllr. Stewart Golton (Leeds) was nominated as a Liberal Democrat member on the Audit Committee.

Officers went on to provide an update of the remaining vacancies on the CA's committees:

- a Liberal Democrat substitute on Audit Committee.
- a Leeds substitute on the Climate, Energy & Environment Committee.
- a Leeds Labour substitute on Scrutiny Committee.
- a York substitute on the Climate, Energy & Environment, Culture, Heritage & Sport, Economy and Place, Regeneration & Housing committees.
- a Deputy Chair of Place Committee (which should be a member of the West Yorkshire Business Board).

Officers requested that the CA's local authority partners move to fill these positions as soon as possible.

Given there was no representative from the Liberal Democrats present at the meeting the Mayor asked that officers approach the party regarding their vacancies.

**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 submitted 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:
    - Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee (Appendix 3),
    - Culture, Heritage, and Sport Committee (Appendix 4),
    - Economy Committee (Appendix 5),
    - Finance, Resources, and Corporate Committee (Appendix 6)
    - Place, Regeneration, and Housing Committee (Appendix 7),
    - Transport Committee (Appendix 8).
  - (ii) That the Combined Authority appointed the Employment Panel with the terms of reference, as set out in Appendix 9.
  - (iii) 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 and Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee for this municipal year.
  - (ii) The Combined Authority appoints Jocelyn Manners-Armstrong as Independent Member of the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee for this municipal year.
  - (iii) The Combined Authority appoints Combined Authority Members as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report, to each of the decision-making committees.
  - (iv) That the Combined Authority appoints members as set out in Appendix 10 to the submitted report to the Scrutiny Committee.
  - (v) 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 2026.

#### **58. Representation on Outside Bodies**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report and recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** The Combined Authority approved the appointments to the outside bodies for the municipal year 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

#### **59. Officer Arrangements**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report, highlighting an amendment to the function of the Assistant Director of Legal, Governance & Compliance. The words "appear in" had been inserted into paragraph 5.4 of the appendices, which related to legal proceedings and settlements.

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

#### **60. Constitutional Arrangements**

Officers provided an overview of the report, drawing particular attention to the minor and significant updates contained in the appendices. Changes to the Code of Conduct for Officers had been made in consultation with colleagues from Legal and HR, as well as, importantly, input from the union and colleague networks. Further highlights made by officers included the fact that the quoracy for Governance & Audit Committee had increased from five to seven, taking into account its new composition. Concluding their remarks, officers pointed to the West Yorkshire Business Board and the fact that notes of its private meetings will not be made publicly available, as had been practice.

The Mayor welcomed the ability for the West Yorkshire Business Board to operate flexibly, enabling its members to share their knowledge and expertise, for the benefit of the region, in a way that did not compromise their business interests.

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

- (i) The minor amendments to Constitution documents, as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
- (ii) Part 5.3 Code of Conduct for Officers, as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.
- (iii) Part 5.9 Non-Executive Directors Code of Conduct, as set out in Appendix 3 to the submitted report.

- (iv) Article 8 Overview and Scrutiny, as set out in Appendix 4 to the submitted report.
- (v) Part 4.6 Scrutiny Standing Orders, as set out in Appendix 5 to the submitted report.
- (vi) Article 7 Ordinary (Non-Statutory) Committees, as set out in Appendix 6 to the submitted report.
- (vii) Article 9 Audit and Ethical Arrangements, as set out in Appendix 7 to the submitted report.
- (viii) Part 4.1 Procedure Standing Orders, as set out in Appendix 8 to the submitted report.
- (ix) Article 10 The West Yorkshire Business Board, as set out in Appendix 9 to the submitted report.
- (x) The remaining, unamended Constitution documents, for the next municipal year to the submitted report.

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

Officers provided an overview of the seven principles of the Corporate Governance Code. Officers went on to give updates on the most notable changes to the internal governance of the Combined Authority, this included:

- i. the introduction of a new Chief Executive delegation scheme.
- ii. a new structure of internal officer boards, to compliment the scheme of delegation.
- iii. the addition of non-executive directors to the officer boards.

**RESOLVED** – That the Corporate Governance Code and Framework, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

#### **62. Annual Governance Statement**

Officers provided an overview of the draft Annual Governance Statement. Members were informed that further work would be done on the document by the Interim Assistant Director for Legal Governance & Compliance, ahead of the next meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee, scheduled for 25/07/2025.

**RESOLVED** – That the draft Annual Governance Statement, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved for publication as part of the annual accounts.

#### **63. Members' Allowance Scheme**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report and recommendations.

The Mayor thanked elected Members and acknowledged the importance of fairly remunerating all the work they do to support the CA's committees.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Combined Authority approves the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on remuneration for members of the Governance and Audit Committee, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
- (ii) 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 2025/2026.

**64. Calendar of Meetings 2025-26**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report and recommendations.

**RESOLVED** - That the calendar of meetings of the Combined Authority and its committees for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

**65. Appointment of Assistant Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance / Monitoring Officer**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report and recommendations.

The Chief Executive thanked the Interim Assistant Director of Legal, Governance & Compliance for maintaining the service in the period following the departure of the previous post holder.

**RESOLVED** - That the Combined Authority approved the appointment of Manpreet (Nikki) Deol as the Assistant Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance / Monitoring Officer, with the start date to be confirmed.

**66. Government Spending Review 2026-2029**

The 2025 Government Spending Review had occurred following the publication of the agenda and reports pack. As such, a summary briefing of the implications for West Yorkshire had been circulated to Members.

Officers provided an overview of the report, before selecting highlights from the summary briefing and outlining these to Members. The highlights were as follows:

- A policy document, published with the Spending Review, which included details on the Integrated Settlement. It outlined themes, which covered different areas of focus for combined authorities.
- Local Growth Plans would become a statutory requirement, which must

include an investment pipeline with a focus on enabling growth.

- Local Growth Funding would become targeted and the Shared Prosperity Fund would be replaced.
- As part of the Local Growth Funding there would also be investment in regeneration in over three hundred localities across the UK.
- Middleton Park Avenue, in Leeds, would be one of 25 trailblazer areas, set to receive up to £20 million in community-led regeneration funding over the next ten years.
- Local Government Finance, while still expected to be tight, would benefit from the injection of a further £3.4 billion, nationally.
- In terms of Transport there had been a pre-announcement to the Spending Review, which had allocated £2.1 billion to West Yorkshire, included in which was funding for mass transit.
- £750 million had been announced for the nationwide funding of bus services, with the £3 fare cap extended to March 2027. The implications on West Yorkshire for this were yet to be fully examined.
- A further £3.5 billion had been recommitted to the TransPennine Route Upgrade.
- In terms of Housing £39 billion had been allocated to the Affordable Homes Programme and £13.2 billion had been committed to the Warm Homes Plan.
- Business would benefit from a nationwide spend of £22.6 billion, to be directed at research and development.

Officers committed to undertaking further work to understand the details of the funding outlined in the Spending Review.

The Mayor thanked all those involved in making the case for funding for West Yorkshire in advance of the Spending Review, particularly with regards to funds for mass transit. The Mayor also thanked officers for the rapid production of the summary briefing in the days following the Spending Review.

Members queried whether funding would be made available to local authorities to cover the increase in employer national insurance contributions, but officers confirmed that exact details remained unknown.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Combined Authority noted the submission and other work undertaken to inform the Government's thinking in advance of the Spending Review.

- (ii) That the Combined Authority provided comment on the Spending Review 2025 announcements to feed into the response and ongoing conversations with Government.

## **67. Mayoral Partnership Update**

The Mayor provided an update on the recent work done in partnership with mayoralities and combined authorities across the country. The highlights of this included:

- The launch of the 'Great North'. This had taken place in Leeds at UKREiiF.
- White Rose Rail – the White Rose Mayors had commissioned Lord Blunkett to conduct a review of rail connectivity across Yorkshire. Additionally, the newly elected Mayor of Hull & East Yorkshire had signalled his desire to join the White Rose Agreement, to further strengthen the unified voice of the county.
- The UK Mayors Network (chaired by the Mayor) and the Council of Regions & Nations – the Mayor had undertaken work with both.
- One Creative North – work was continuing in this partnership, with a mission to boost creative industries in the North of England.

Adding to the update provided by the Mayor, officers noted that two mayoral elections had been held in May 2025, with another six combined authority areas expected to hold mayoral elections in 2026. Officers felt partnerships with these combined authorities would be becoming increasingly important moving forward.

Members welcomed the proposed expansion of the White Rose Agreement, to include Hull & East Yorkshire and spoke positively about the potential for working across boundaries with other combined authorities.

**RESOLVED** - That the Combined Authority noted the range of activity underway through UK Mayors, the Great North and White Rose partnerships.

## **68. The Mayor's West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) - Statutory Consultation 2025**

Officers provided an overview of the report and outlined the policies of the Local Transport Plan in its draft, pre-consultation, state. Officers acknowledged that the details they were able to provide to Members at this point were limited, as such they were seeking to arrange a series of briefings with Members, at which further details would be provided. However, officers were able to outline the six network principles from which LTP policies would be structured. These were:

- i. Integration
- ii. Affordability & Inclusivity
- iii. Reliability & Resilience

- iv. Safety
- v. Activity (providing opportunities for healthier lifestyles)
- vi. Zero Emissions

Members were keen to be briefed on the LTP in greater detail, at the earliest opportunity. However, the Committee welcomed the transport investment that had been earmarked for West Yorkshire.

Councillor Alan Lamb requested that his abstention on this item be recorded in the minutes.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Combined Authority endorsed the pre-consultation draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) policies.
- (ii) That the Combined Authority noted that this would form part of the forthcoming consultation on the Local Transport Plan.

**69. Enabling Business Access to Finance & Investment**

Officers provided an overview of the report, which they described as advancing on the Local Growth Plan. Officers went on to identify three barriers to growth in the region, which were as follows:

- i. Transport & Connectivity
- ii. Inadequate Skills
- iii. Underinvestment, over a prolonged period

In terms of the latter, officers reported that this was evident in the region's skills base, infrastructure and also in its businesses. Officers indicated that a productivity gap of £11 billion existed, which equated to twenty thousand fewer businesses and fifteen thousand fewer jobs in the region than there should be. Alongside this point, officers referenced the 'Wheels of Enterprise' presented within the Local Growth Plan and the ways this underinvestment may begin to be addressed by increasing financial awareness and economic literacy across the regions businesses.

Members welcomed the new approach to business support and were particularly supportive of the attempts to assist underrepresented groups within the business community. The Committee were mindful that even succeeding businesses might not have the know-how around scaling up and expanding, so appreciated the attempts to address this.

**RESOLVED** - That the Combined Authority approved the proposed draft model and approach to supporting the region's businesses to access finance and investment to thrive in the region.

**70. Work & Health**

The Mayor provided a preamble to this item, in which she detailed the visit in May by Alison McGovern, Minister for Employment, to Wakefield to announce

the Pathfinder programme, a new approach to supporting jobseekers, which would be piloted in the district. Councillor James Lewis, in his capacity as Chair of the Economy Committee, also welcomed the new approach.

Officers provided an overview of the report, and highlighted the following for consideration by Members:

- i. The establishment of the Healthy Working Life Joint Strategic Board.
- ii. The development of a local version of the Get Britain Working plan, which West Yorkshire had already largely accomplished.
- iii. An update on the programme.

Members were keen to assist the 100,000 residents of West Yorkshire that were out of work due to ill health. Additionally, the Committee spoke positively about Pathfinder, seeing it as an opportunity to refresh the perception of Jobcentres, in the minds of the public. It was hoped that what might have been seen as a place associated with sanctions could instead be seen as a place to offer real help to those in need of work. Recognising the importance of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) to the West Yorkshire economy, the Committee were eager to ensure support for SMEs with regards to what they could offer jobseekers. However, Members were cautious of a uniform approach to this, noting the variety of SMEs in West Yorkshire. Members were also keen to secure the dates of future meetings of the strategic board.

Responding to the points raised officers spoke about the necessity to engage with both big businesses and SMEs, the former responsible for employing 40% of the workforce and the latter making up 98% of regional businesses. Officers were also adamant that employers needed to have agency over the opportunities they were best suited to. Officers also confirmed that the first meeting of the board was due to take place on 28/07/2025 and that further dates would be added at the earliest opportunity.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Combined Authority approved the establishment of the Healthy Working Life Joint Strategic Board, as set out in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.9 of the submitted report.
- (ii) That the Combined Authority endorsed the proposed approach to the local Get Britain Working Plan for West Yorkshire.

**71. Project Approvals**

**(a) IP1**

**Investment Priority 1 – Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses  
(including entrepreneurialism)**

**Additional Approval – Rural England Prosperity Fund (“The Rural Fund”) - UKSPF**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority approved a delegation to

the Chief Executive to:-

- (i) Approve a change request for the Rural England Prosperity Fund (“The Rural Fund”) – UKSPF, for the additional £770,379 from DEFRA for 2025/26.

### **Academic Brokerage Service – Investment Zone**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority, subject to conditions:-

- (i) Approved that the Academic Brokerage Service Scheme proceed through decision point 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority’s funding of £1,700,000. The total scheme cost was £2,864,359.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with Leeds Beckett University for funding of up to £1,682,435.
- (iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.
- (v) Noted that £40,000 of the total scheme cost was for risk and contingency allowances.

### **The Health Innovation Leeds Incubator (Investment Zone Place Based Incubators)**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority, subject to conditions:-

- (i) Approved that the Health Innovation Leeds Incubator Scheme proceed through decision point 2 to 4 (business justification case) and work commenced on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority’s funding of £1,619,288. The total scheme cost was £2,000,000.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with The University of Leeds for funding of up to £1,619,288.
- (iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

**(b) IP4**

**Investment Priority 4 (IP4) - Tackling the Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability**

**Erringden Hillside Flood Alleviation Scheme**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority, subject to conditions:

- (i) Approved that the Erringden Hillside Flood Alleviation Scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority funding of up to £500,000 be given. The total scheme value was £7,874,800.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with the Environment Agency for expenditure of up to £500,000.
- (iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway, as set out in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.
- (v) Noted that £1,018,200 was allocated for risk and contingency.

**Hebble Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved that the Hebble Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme proceed through decision point 4 (full business case) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority funding of up to £500,000 be given. The total scheme value was £7,097,000.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into a funding agreement with the Environment Agency for expenditure of up to £500,000.
- (iv) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway set out in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.
- (v) Noted that £1,007,000 was allocated for risk and contingency.

**West Yorkshire Mayoral Renewables Fund**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority, subject to confirmation of

the funding award and amount from the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero:

- (i) Approved that the West Yorkshire Mayoral Renewables Fund Scheme proceed through decision point 2 to 4 (business justification) and work commence on activity 5 (delivery).
- (ii) Approved the Combined Authority's funding of up to £790,000. The total scheme cost was £1,244,838.
- (iii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into Funding Agreements with consortium members for funding up to the amounts shown below:
  - Bradford Council up to £240,000
  - Kirklees Council up to £109,768
  - Leeds City Council up to £290,070
  - Wakefield Council up to £45,000
  - West Yorkshire Police up to £270,000
- (iv) Grant delegated authority to the Combined Authority's Chief Executive to amend allocated funding amounts released as part of this decision, as required, dependent on government funding decision.
- (v) Future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route and tolerances outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

**(c) IP5**

**Investment Priority 5 (IP5) - Delivering Sustainable, Integrated, Inclusive and Affordable Transport**

**Better Places - Leeds City Centre Cycle Links**

**RESOLVED** - The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the change request to the Leeds City Centre Cycle Links scheme to increase the Combined Authority's funding by £3,544,077 from £7,784,705 to £11,328,782. The total scheme cost was £12,176,069.
- (ii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into an addendum to the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council for funding up to £11,328,782.
- (iii) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the

tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

- (iv) Noted that £1,435,850 of the total scheme cost was for risk, contingency and inflation allowances.

### **Delegated Decisions**

- (i) That, since the Combined Authority's meeting on 8 May 2025, the decision points and change requests have been assessed in line with the Combined Authority's assurance process and approved through the agreed delegation to the Combined Authority's Transport Capital Programme Director.
- (ii) That the A62/A644 Bus Enhancements scheme was paused. The funding approved £88,336, with total Combined Authority funding approved totalling £238,336.

### **(d) IP6**

#### **Investment Priority 6 – Creative Industries, Culture, Heritage and Sport**

##### **You Can Make it Here**

**RESOLVED** - The Combined Authority:

- (i) Approved the change request for the You Can Make It Here programme to increase the Combined Authority's funding from £2,760,769 to £4,230,242, which was an increase of £1,469,473 (the total programme value was £4,230,242), to increase the scheme outputs as set out in the submitted report and to an extension to delivery time frames from June 2026 to March 2027.
- (ii) Approved that the Combined Authority enter into new agreements or variations to existing contracts as applicable with delivery approved partners for the costs and timeframes, as set out in the submitted report.
- (iii) Approved that future approvals be made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the submitted report. This would be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the submitted report.

### **72. Portfolio Summary**

**RESOLVED** – That the Combined Authority noted the portfolio summary information outlined in the submitted report.

### **73. Minutes for Information**

**RESOLVED:** That the Combined Authority noted the minutes, notes and agendas of the committee meetings published on its website, along with the

matters deliberated within the committees, as summarised in the report since the last Combined Authority meeting.

**74. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Combined Authority was scheduled to take place on Thursday 24/07/2025.



**Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee)**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	<b>Cllr Nosheen Dad</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 2024/25. It also provides assurance that the Committee complies with the CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation:</b> That Council notes 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 Recommendation</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</b></p> <p><b>N/A</b></p> <p><b>Samantha Lawton</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 2024/25 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 A Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Activity – 2024-25

**11. Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton – Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning.

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**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTIVITY – 2024-25**

**APPENDIX A**

<b>Reports</b>		<b>June 24</b>	<b>July 24</b>	<b>Sep 24</b>	<b>Dec 24</b>
Annual Report on Treasury Management 2023/24					
Corporate Customer Standards Interim Report 2023/24					
Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24					
Second Independent Member of the Committee					
Corporate Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Report					
External Auditors Recommendations					
Quarterly report of Internal Audit Q1 – June 2024					
Annual Report of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee					
Emergency Duty Services (Adults) Follow up					
Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report 2023/24					
Information Governance Annual Report 2023/24					
Report of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel					
Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 (Quarters 3 & 4)					
District Heating – Request for Officer attendance					
Notice of appointment of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Independent Person					
Annual report on Bad Debt Write Offs 2023/24					
Half yearly monitoring report on Treasury Management					
Quarterly Report of Internal Audit Q2 2024/25 (July 2024 to September 2024)					

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTIVITY – 2024-25

## APPENDIX A

Reports	Jan 25	Feb 25	March 25	Apr 25	
Report of the Members Allowances Independent Panel					
Annual Governance Statement 2023/24					
Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy 2025/26					
Dates of Council Meetings 2025/26					
Approval of Council's Final Accounts for 2023/24					
Audit Finding Report 2023/24					
Auditor's Annual Report 2023/24					
Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2023/24					
Date of Council Meetings – Proposal for Additional Council Meeting					
Risk Management Annual Report 2024/25					
Update to Corporate Governance					
Update on Representations on Outside Bodies					
Cyber Security Assurance					
Internal Audit Quarterly Report 3 (Oct 2024 to Dec 2024)					
District Heating Update					
Proposed Revisions to Finance Procedure Rules					
Proposed Revisions to Contract Procedure Rules					
Constitution Updates					
Councillor and Officer Protocol Update					
Proposal for the Review of Procurement Practices in accordance with the Council Motion resolved on 13 November 2024					
Council Meetings – 2025/26 Municipal Year					
Housing Tenancy Allocation Audit					
Informing the Audit Risk Assessment for Kirklees Council					
Minimum Revenue Provision Explanatory Note					
Audit Progress and Sector Update					
Internal Audit Charter, Strategy & Plan for 2025/6					

## Appendix B

### CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022

#### How do your arrangements meet the statement?

Topic & Question	YES/NO	Comments
<b>Independent &amp; Effective Model</b>		
Is the committee		
Directly accountable to the authority's governing body?	Yes	The Committee submits an annual report to Council where there is an opportunity for Members to ask the Chair questions.
Independent of both the executive and the scrutiny functions?	Yes	
Does the committee		
Have rights of access /constructive engagement with other committees/functions, for example scrutiny and service committees, corporate risk management boards and other strategic groups?	Yes	Ex-Officio's are invited and encouraged to attend meetings which the Committee finds beneficial. To help with regular attendance, Ex-Officio's are to be provided with the Committees work programme and dates of reports to be considered in their area at the beginning of the municipal year.
Have rights to request reports and seek assurances from relevant officers?	Yes	
An appropriate size to operate as a cadre of experienced, trained committee members. (Large committees should be avoided).?	Yes	The size of the Committee is in line with recommendations from CIPFA, as well as recommendations from reports submitted to the Annual Meeting of Council. There was a vacancy on the Committee throughout the year.
Include co-opted independent member (s) (CIPFA recommends that each authority audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise).	Yes	There is currently one Co-opted Independent Member. A recruitment process is underway to appoint two independent members.

<b>Core functions</b>		
<b>Maintenance of governance, risk and control arrangements</b>		
Does the committee		
Support a comprehensive understanding of governance across the organisation and among all those charged with governance?	Yes	The Committee reviews governance matters as requested by Council, and as identified by the external and internal auditors. Training is offered to Members of the Committee on Governance. The Committee would like further training to be provided in the new municipal year.
Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, understand the risk profile of the organisation and seek assurances that active arrangements are in place?	Yes	The Committee will continue to follow the process of selecting services to provide assurances to the Committee.
Does the committee monitor the effectiveness of the arrangements for		
internal control,	Yes	The Committee had raised concerns regarding resourcing in internal control.
financial management	Yes	The Committee requested a report on financial culture across the organisation to be assured on financial management. Internal Audit include in their plans a review of budgetary management.
ensuring value for money	Yes	The committee would like to see a reflection in the Internal Audit report on value for money.
standards and ethics	Yes	
risks of fraud and corruption	Yes	
<b>Financial and governance reporting</b>		
Does the Audit Committee;		
Ensure the authority's accounting supports the maintenance of effective arrangements for financial reporting?	Yes	The Committee requested a report on financial culture across the organisation to be assured on financial management. Internal Audit include in their plans a review of budgetary management.
Review the statutory statements of account and any reports that accompany them.	Yes	
Does the Audit Committee ensure the authority's accountability statements, including the annual governance statement		
Properly reflect the risk environment, and any actions required to improve it?	Yes	

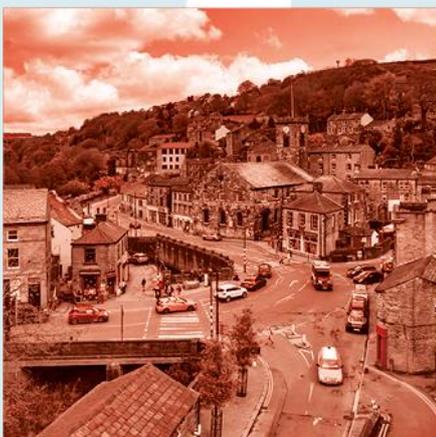
Demonstrate how governance supports the achievement of the authority's objectives?	Yes	
<b>Establishing appropriate and effective arrangements for audit and assurance</b>		
Does the committee		
Consider the arrangements in place to secure adequate assurance across the body's full range of operations and collaborations with other entities.	Partial	The committee would like more oversight of the operations on WYCA and other similar bodies.
In relation to the authority's internal audit functions:		
Oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and conformance to professional standards	Yes	
Support effective arrangements for internal audit	Yes	
Promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework	Yes	
Consider the opinion, reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.	Yes	The Committee is improving at monitoring management actions by requesting service attendance at meetings.
Contribute to the operation of efficient and effective external audit arrangements, supporting the independence of auditors and promoting audit quality.	Yes	
Support effective relationships between all providers of assurance, audits and inspections, and the organisation, encouraging openness to challenge, review and accountability.	Yes	
<b>Audit committee membership</b>		
Is high calibre, and aptitude considered alongside relevant knowledge, skills and experience		
When selecting elected representatives to be on the committee?	Unknown	The Committee does have long standing members.
When co-opting independent members?	Yes	
Does the appointment of co-opted independent members on the committee consider the overall knowledge and expertise of the existing members?	Yes	
Are members of the audit committee		

Adequately trained to fulfil their role?	No	Further training will be provided to Members of the Committee in various areas in the new municipal year. The Committee would like training to be more engaging.
Objective, have an inquiring and independent approach?	Yes	
Sufficiently knowledgeable?	Yes	The level of knowledge and experience varies across the Committee.
Knowledgeable of good governance principles that can help achieve the organisation's objectives?	Yes	Independent Members can help
Willing to operate in an apolitical manner?	Yes	
Unbiased – treating auditors, the executive and management fairly?	Yes	
Willing and able to challenge the executive and senior managers when required?	Yes	
Interest in the work of the committee?	Yes	
<b>Is the Audit Committee Chair</b>		
Strong, independently minded	Yes	
Able to promote apolitical open discussion	Yes	
Skilled at managing meetings to cover all business	Yes	
Able to encourage a candid approach from all participants	Yes	
Able to maintain the focus of the committee on matters of greatest priority	Yes	
<b>Engagement, Outputs &amp; Impact</b>		
<b>Does the Audit Committee</b>		
Meet regularly, at least four times a year?	Yes	
Have a clear policy on those items to be considered in private and those to be considered in public?	Yes	
Able to meet privately and separately with the external auditor and with the head of internal audit	Yes	
Have, as regular attendees, the chief finance officer, the chief executive, the head of internal audit and the appointed external auditor? other attendees may include the (monitoring officer and the head of resources)	Yes	
Have the right to call on any other officers or agencies of the authority as required?	Yes	

For transparency, report regularly on its work to those charged with governance?	Yes	The Committee submits an Annual Report to Council
Does the Committee report annually on		
Effectively engage with the leadership team and those charged with governance?	Yes	
Its performance?	Yes	
Its impact?	Yes	
Any Identified areas for improvement?	Yes	The Committee does this through the Annual Report. An action tracker has been developed and implemented to follow up outstanding actions identified at Committee meetings.
Compliance with the CIPFA position statement, and discharged its responsibilities?	Yes	
Issue its report to the public?	Yes	
Are the statutory officers able to access the committee members, or the chair, as required?	Yes	

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# Corporate Governance & Audit Committee



# Annual Report of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee 2024/25

## Foreword by Councillor John Taylor – Chair

I am delighted to introduce the annual report of Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, summarising the contribution we have made during the 2024/25 Municipal Year to achieve good governance and internal control within the Council.

This report seeks to chart our progress 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 2023/24.
- Approved the Council's accounts for 2023/24.
- 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
- 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 with them their expertise in relation to governance, internal audit and finance. Without the support of Officers, the Audit Committee would not be as highly effective as it is. Therefore, I would like to thank everyone who took the 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.
- The recruitment of a non-voting co-opted independent member for the Committee.

## 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 reducing the risk of failing to achieve our objectives, as well as providing a good service to our community.

This Annual Report to Council captures the importance Kirklees Council places on the authority's governance arrangements, and 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, the Annual Governance Statement, 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 reviews 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 doing so, 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.
- Contributing to strengthen 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 2024/25:

- Councillor John Taylor (Chair)
- Councillor James Homewood
- Councillor Kath Pinnock
- Councillor Angela Sewell
- Councillor Caroline Holt
- Councillor Imran Safdar
- Councillor Jane Rylah
  
- Chris Jones (Independent Person)

Most committee meetings throughout the 2024/25 municipal year took place with six elected Members and one Independent Member due to a vacancy.

Substitutes can attend and contribute to meetings and training.

The Chair of the Standards Committee, The Chair of Overview and Management Committee and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Governance (Ex-Officio's) were invited to attend and contribute to all meetings and training. The Committee would welcome and encourage their attendance at all meetings scheduled in the 2025/26 municipal year, as the Committee feels that their attendance and input greatly benefits debates and decision making.

### Training

The Committee continues to undertake relevant training, and have so far this year received training in relation to:

- Treasury Management, provided by Arlingclose (independent treasury advisers)
- Governance, provided by the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning
- External Audit, provided by Grant Thornton
- Audit Committee updates for 2025, provided by Grant Thornton.

## 3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee met on eight 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 in relation to 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, or via webcast, the challenge the Committee brings.

The 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 are summarised below:

## 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 relating to Treasury Management prior to recommending these to Council, who then formally determine the Treasury Management Policy.

The Committee has:

### Account Authorisation

Received and considered the Council's Final Accounts 2023/2024, which incorporated the Annual Governance Statement. There is delegated authority for the Chair of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and the Service Director for Finance to sign the final accounts once the external auditor had issued the audit opinion. A success was noted in concluding the 2023/24 accounts and the Value for Money work in January 2025.

### Treasury Management

- Received the Annual report on Treasury Management 2023/24, incorporating Treasury Management activities for the previous financial year, which reviewed borrowing and investment performance.
- Received the mid-year report on Treasury Management 2024/25, which provided 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 2025/26, which provided 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
  - (v) a recommended annual investment strategy (Non-Treasury Investment) for the Council in 2025/26. Concerns were raised regarding the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy calculation and the financial implication.
- Received an explanatory note on Minimum Revenue Provision advising that where the Council funds Capital expenditure with debt, it must put aside resources to pay that debt

in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt was known as the Minimum Revenue Provision.

### Other Financial Management

- Considered the Annual report on bad debt write-offs which detailed the debts written off in the financial year 2023-24. It was noted that the debt process had been challenging with staff shortages due to unexpected absences and difficulties recruiting. The Committee requested further information be provided in future reports regarding the outstanding debts at the end of the year along with the age profile.

## External Audit

Grant Thornton were Kirklees Councils external auditors who were appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) (a subsidiary of the Local Government Association) who manage the appointment of external auditors for the vast majority of English Local Authorities.

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 findings of the value for money review.

The Committee has:

- Received the External Auditors Recommendation Report which advised on progress against the recommendation made by the External Auditors, Grant Thornton, following their work in 2021/22 and 2022/23. It was noted that many recommendations had made progress with some completed. The Committee felt they needed to be assured that the process was working, and requested further details on how the process was working in practice for items one, two and three in the report around savings.
- Received the External Audit Findings Report 2023/24. Grant Thornton's work was complete. It was noted that the Auditors had not identified any adjustments impacting on the Council's usable reserves. Misstatements and audit adjustments were presented in the report.
- Received the Auditors Annual Report 2023/24. 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 value for money commentary on arrangements, reported that a significant weakness had been identified in the 2022-23 report in financial sustainability, and although the council had taken action, in the auditor's view, the weakness still remained.
- Assurances were sought from the External Auditors in relation to 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 that the audit cycle for 2024/25 was underway with good dialogue taking place with Finance Officers. A draft Audit Plan was to be submitted to the first meeting of the 2025/26 municipal year.
- Received a report on Informing the Audit Risk Assessment for Kirklees Council, which asked Council Officers to complete a schedule of questions from Grant Thornton. The Committee suggested that future reports included planning in the 'Fraud and Corruption' section as a high-risk post, along with adding comments around Senior Officers in the 'Related party's section'.

## Internal Control

The Council has delegated to the Committee authority to approve the Annual Governance Statement. 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 draft and completed Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, 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', and the actions and controls the Council were taking to address these were contained within a recommended action plan. Discussions took place around the governance of the Council regarding the number of Portfolio Holders at that time, in particular the Portfolio Holder post for Finance being vacant, along with the control environment of the Council not being as robust as in previous years due to the recruitment of Senior Management.
- Noted information relating to the internal audit work which took place in Quarter 1 to 3 of 2024/25, which included the number of audits completed and the assurance relating to these audits. The Committee discussed topics such as district heating and culture across the council in response to the financial challenges that the Council faced and maximising income, along with seeking further assurances from Officers on Housing Tenancy Allocations.
- The Committee received the Internal Audit Plan for Quarter's 3 and 4 of 2024/25 having previously approved the Plan for Q1 and Q2. Each year it was necessary to identify how internal audit resources were to be deployed. It was considered good practice to determine an audit place for half a year, based on risk assessment. The plan proposed, reflected comments made at the meeting of the Committee in April 2024. The committee requested a private update from the IT Service providing assurance on what was being done around Cyber Security.
- Received and noted the Risk Management Annual Report 2024/25. The report explained that Service Directors and Heads of Service were responsible for assessing and monitoring risks and implementing effective and proportionate mitigations to control identified risks, where required. The Corporate Risk Report had been reformatted, to coincide with the beginning of the 2024/25 report cycle. A new Service Risk Register

template had been introduced and was in the process of being rolled out across the Council. The Committee noted that their role in relation to risk, was to consider if the system and approach towards internal control and risk was correct. It was noted that risks were considered at Cabinet and Scrutiny.

- Received and noted amendments to the Risk Management arrangements. The Risk Management Policy replaced the existing Risk Management Statement dated 2018 and detailed the principles that the Council adhered to. The Risk Management Strategy and Guidance provided additional guidance of support to individuals involved in the application of the Risk Management Policy, with the Risk Appetite Statement being a separate document under development.
- Received the Internal Audit Charter, Strategy & Plan for 2025/26. The Institute of Internal Auditors had published standards for internal audit which were adopted into the United Kingdom Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and were further interpreted by CIPFA for the use by Local Authorities. New Global Internal Audit Standards were published in April 2024. These arrangements took effect for UK public bodies from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The new standards applied to governance of the internal audit function, to the Audit Committee specifically, and the internal audit's relationship with management of the Organisation. Concerns were raised from the Committee around planning and resourcing in the Internal Audit team, specifically around recruitment of roles.
- The Committee acknowledged that there had been no Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act activity during the period of 2023/24.

## 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 gave assurance to the Committee that the Council was compliant with the core duties in the Civil Contingencies Act. The Committee discussed the proportionate approach to the risks and threats faced by the Council, as well as areas of weakness within Emergency Planning. During discussion of this item, it was noted that there was a dynamic risk assessment process in place that monitored national best practice and made changes through dynamic risk assessments in preparation for the unknown, along with a positive outcome for educational visits undertaken by the team.
- Received a report providing an update on the Information Governance service and offer, which outlined key events and activities across the year. Members acknowledged the increased number of Freedom of Information requests and felt this was due to decision making information not being readily available.
- Received the Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report 2023/24 which provided an overview of the review and performance monitoring activity of the Council's Health and Safety Risk Management System and Policies undertaken by the Corporate Safety Team

over the past 12 months. The purpose of the report was to ensure that the organisation had clearly set out its commitments to manage health and safety matters. The Committee discussed concerns relating to the risk matrix for Homes and Neighbourhoods being red. It was noted that work was being carried out with the service to improve health and safety performance, but it did not mean that health and safety for employees or residents was poor.

- Considered the interim and annual reports on Corporate Customer Standards 2023/24, which provided examples of complaints. Discussions took place regarding the Local Government Ombudsman's proposed new complaints code that was expected to be introduced in April 2026. Members suggested that a pyramid of first level complaints be provided at service level, along with the recording of percentages of those complaints that had transpired into second or third level complaints. Members also felt that a Committee of the Council should have oversight of all complaints and procedures.

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 a report to seek approval from Council to appoint a second independent member of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee along with the term of engagement. A second independent member would bring greater resilience to the arrangements and enable the committee to benefit from a wider skill and experience base. The Committee agreed that both the second independent member and the current member should be appointed on a four-year basis, with the business sector/non-governmental organisations to be engaged with in recruitment.
- Received the Councillor and Officer Protocol following a project to look at the Protocol which involved both Members and Officers. It was noted that the wording of Councillors being friends or a relation to Officers was to be updated.
- Received reports which set out a provisional and final schedule of Council meeting dates for the 2025/26 municipal year. The provisional report highlighted that there were no planned Council meetings between February 2025 and July 2025 apart from the meetings to solely consider the Budget and Annual Council. Two further reports were considered, one to add a Council meeting date for April 2025 and a revised schedule, which saw the budget meeting reverted to February and an ordinary Council meeting to be held in March 26, in advance of the pre-election period.
- 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 updated report of Corporate Code of Governance which provided clarification around how Kirklees measured its performance and demonstrated compliance in line with the code. The Committee suggested that the Corporate Code of Governance be included in Councillors induction.

- Received proposed amendments to Contract Procedure Rules advising that the proposed changes were due to new procurement legislation which would be effective from 24 February 2025 and would address some inconsistencies in terminology and definitions. The Committee requested an example of a life cycle and process of a contract.
- Received proposed amendments to Financial Procedure Rules advising that the proposed changes related to titles and definitions. The Committee fed back to Officers that ward Councillors were not always consulted on Cabinet decisions and project changes as they should be.
- Received proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution which proposed changes in relation to different parts of the Constitution. A constitution working group had been set up to review the Constitution and proposed amendments which included Officers and Members. The Committee commented and made recommendations to updates relating to attendance of the West Yorkshire Mayor at Council, the wording of motions, gifts to Officers, answers to questions at meetings of Council and the Corporate Governance and Audit Terms of Reference.
- Received the Proposal for the Review of Procurement Practices in accordance with the Council Motion resolved on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024, which requested a review of procurement practices where the motion requested that the Council ensured that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the Gaza conflict were not used. Confirmation was sought that procurement practice referred to Israeli companies in occupied Palestinian territories.
- Considered exempt information from the Emergency Duty Services (Adults) Follow Up, which provided an update on the recommendations made by internal audit at their meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024, where the Committee were not content with the progress made in relation to one area of operation.
- Received a report on District Heating. At its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July 24, the Committee considered the first Quarterly report of Internal Audit 2024/25 and decided that they were not content with the matters identified within the audit report that related to District Heating. The Committee requested that management from the service attended a future meeting to discuss progress. The 2024/25 Audit followed a previous Internal Audit Review of District Heating Schemes which were undertaken in October 2019 and highlighted significant weaknesses. During discussion, the Committee raised concerns around residents underpaying for energy which had resulted in the Housing Revenue Account supporting the failure to recover sufficient income. The Committee subsequently received an update on District Heating which reflected the findings of the internal audit in June 2024. An internal project group had been formed to create an action plan to address each area of concern and maintain oversight at a senior level. The Committee requested further information on pricing structures, the legal position of the Housing Revenue Account, full details of actions against each area identified in the internal audit, and an update on arrangements for the management of the operational and financial aspects of the District Heating.
- Received a report on Housing Tenancy Allocation Audit which noted four areas of Limited Assurance opinion. The Committee noted that several of these areas would be addressed when the new computer system 'CX' was implemented which was planned for

Autumn 2025. The Committee was invited to view the new CX system when implemented. The Committee also requested a follow up report on the improvements made due to the Audit.

- Received a report on Cyber Security assurance, which provided information about the Council's existing cyber controls and processes in line with UK Government Standards. The Committee requested a second report which addressed practical information to be considered at an informal meeting

#### **Matters identified during consideration of items at the meetings were:**

- Follow up and receive additional information on the Emergency Duty Services (Adults)
- Follow up and receive additional information on District Heating
- Follow up and receive additional information on how the process was working in practice for items 1, 2 & 3 in the External Auditors Recommendations Report
- Follow up and receive additional information on Cyber Security
- Follow up and receive additional information on Housing Tenant Allocation
- Lead Members to be asked to consider a meeting of Council between February and July 2025.
- 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 which supports 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.

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.

#### **CIPFA's Position Statement**

CIPFA expects all local government bodies to make their best efforts to adopt the principles in their position statement, aiming for effective Audit Committee arrangements to meet their statutory responsibilities for governance and internal control arrangements, as well as financial management, financial reporting and internal audit.

In ensuring all principles were adopted, the Committee carried out a self-evaluation which assessed how closely the Committee met the position statement expectations which is good practice. This can be found at Appendix B.

## **Looking Forward**

I am pleased to Chair the Committee for the second year running.

The Committee will continue to receive regular reports and provide a high level of robust challenge to the corporate governance and audit practice and procedures across the authority. We will ensure that the Council's arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, communicated, embedded and routinely complied with.

Reflecting on our performance we will seek to be more involved in the setting of the agenda and continue to delve more deeply into areas of concern. With the support of members including our independent members, the committee will ensure we challenge where needed and add value to the work undertaken by Officers and our internal and external auditors strengthening our governance and ensuring issues identified are addressed promptly.

**Councillor John Taylor**



**Report title:** Council Budget Strategy Update: 2026/27 and future years

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet / Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</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 budgets.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b>                  Cabinet are asked to recommend the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the key risks to the delivery of the budget in 2025/26 outlined in the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring report 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 uncertainty as to the precise level of future funding for the Council &amp; the assumptions around the potential impact of Fair Funding Review 2.0;</li> <li>• note the update and the revised budget gap to the MTFS for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31 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£18m in 2026/27 which requires either reduction in budget pressures and/or new savings proposals to be brought forward.</li> <li>• note the scenario analysis shown at <b>Appendix C</b> which models ‘worst’/‘best’ case scenarios around the baseline MTFS as part of the assessment of potential risks facing the Council;</li> <li>• note the current Capital Plan shown at <b>Appendix D</b>, reflecting updated General Fund funding assumptions prior to the completion of the Capital plan review and a revised HRA Capital Plan with updated funding;</li> <li>• agree the MTFS as set out in the report; and that this report will be presented at Council on Sept 17<sup>th</sup> for noting and debate. There are no budget decisions associated with this report at this time.</li> <li>• in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members, request Officers to identify and bring forward budget savings proposals as part of the provisional budget report</li> </ul>	

which will be initially considered by Cabinet in December 2025 and then a final budget report will be presented for approval by Cabinet (and then Council) as part of the development of the final budget for 2026/27 in February 2026; (subject to consultation as set out below)

- note that funding assumptions made in this report may be subject to change when the provisional local government finance settlement is published by Government (expected late November)
- note the timetable set out in **Appendix E** of the report for the development of the Council's Budget for 2026/27;
- note that it is proposed to undertake consultation on the budget proposals in late 2025 with a view to informing decisions on the Council's budget for 2026/27.
- 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 2026/27.

**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 2026/27 budget and beyond. All relevant financial implications are contained in the report and appendices.

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

**Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 1st September 2025**

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

**Kevin Mulvaney – 29<sup>TH</sup> August 2025**

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

**Sam Lawton – 29<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

**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 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 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the Council approved its Budget for 2025/26. 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 is 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 2026/27 and subsequent years.
- 1.3 In common with local authorities across the country, the council has faced challenging financial circumstances in recent years. Increasing demand for services and a cost-of-living crisis, alongside limited government funding, have necessitated difficult decisions to be made on services and investment in Kirklees. The updated MTFS illustrates the extent to which the council has now stabilised its financial position to support the Council's priorities
- 1.4 The period of the commencement of this financial strategy coincides with significant changes expected to Government funding to all Councils through Fair Funding 2.0 and the planned implementation of multi-year settlements. Fair Funding 2.0 was released as a consultation document in June 2025 and the Government response is expected in October 2025. Councils are expected to receive the provisional local government finance settlements in late November. This report makes a number of prudent assumptions with regard to the impact of Fair Funding 2.0 for Kirklees.
- 1.5 The update to the MTFS is also necessary in the context of the Council's outturn for 2024/25, and the Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring position for 2025/26 reported to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and a reassessment of likely pressures over the next five years from services. The 2024/25 outturn position on the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget was an overspend of £5.6m and the latest monitoring position at Quarter 1, indicates the Council is forecast to overspend by £5.9m in 2025/26.
- 1.6 The General Fund projection for 2025/26 is the lowest Q1 forecast overspend since COVID. The projected overspends in each of the last few years at the equivalent period and outturn are shown below

	Q1 Projection (£m)	Outturn (£m)
2022/23	24.6	27.0
2023/24	20.3	7.3
2024/25	12.9	5.6
2025/26	5.9	-

- 1.7 Despite the Council's improved position, local authorities will continue to face challenges to maintain financial sustainability and stability in the coming years. These challenges are driven by increasing demand for services in social care services for adults and children as well as increasing costs for temporary accommodation for residents who need that support.
- 1.8 It is evident that the additional resources that were included in Directorate base budgets as part of the 2025/26 budget are having the desired effect. The size of the projected overspend is lower and the number of variations fewer.
- 1.9 There is an cumulative estimated budget gap over the five year of the MTFS to 2030/31 of £56.3m with the most immediate issue being a forecast gap in 2026/27 of £17.9m. This is partly caused by the ongoing nature of demand and cost pressures, particularly in social care, which need to be provided for in the financial strategy. Table 4 outlines the range of the total in year pressures from c£18m to c£4m in the later years of the plan.
- 1.10 A series of additional mitigating measures will be considered to reduce the Council's net expenditure and assure a continuing balanced budget position. At the same time, a review of the Council's Capital Programme is underway. These actions will both support the overall budget position and build the Council's reserves so that they remain above the minimum requirement. They also align with the Council's principle to live within its means.
- 1.11 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. This strategy does that by providing for increases in the General Reserve and the Voluntary Revenue Provision Reserve.
- 1.12 The MTFS is prudent and realistic about the financial challenges Kirklees Council will in the coming years. Nevertheless, the Council's position is favourable in relative terms to similar local authorities in England and the Council can also reasonably expect central government funding to improve. This will allow the MTFS to support the Council to deliver the aims set out in the Council Plan and gives it choices in the way it is able to distribute funding for services and investment in Kirklees.
- 1.13 The four key Council priorities are:-
- 1.14 **Getting the basics right - a balanced budget and a modern organisation.** The Council must live within its means and not spend more money than it has available. It is essential that services fully understand their budgets and can deliver outcomes within their budget envelope by spending money wisely, being as efficient as possible and to deliver value for money for residents. The MTFS commits to providing resources each year to fund transformational activity to help support the journey to being a modern organisation.
- 1.15 **Protecting the vulnerable and achieving inclusion.** The MTFS recognises significant demand pressures in those Directorates that help support its most vulnerable residents. In social care functions alone, there is an estimated £90m worth of rising demand and cost pressures meaning more of the Council's budget will be redirected to support those in receipt of these services.

1.16 **Thriving people and communities - now and over the longer-term.** The MTFs gives the Council the financial platform it needs to build safer, greener and healthier communities whether that is through its own services or in partnership with community organisations.

1.17 **Local economic growth, working with regional and national partners.** The financial strategy, particularly in relation to the capital plan evidences the ongoing nature of the Council's work with regional and national partners to help grow the local economy across Kirklees. Over £400m of the General Fund capital plan is funded by grants awarded by Government and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

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

### **Budget Strategy for 2025/26**

2.1 In setting the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025/26, the Council agreed the following key matters are part of the budget strategy:-

- net budget growth of £50.7m to reflect increases in demand for services, structural deficiencies in some income budgets and inflationary pressures;
- savings totalling £26.8m to be implemented so that the full effect of the saving impacted in 2025/26;
- net transfer of £8.3m into Earmarked Reserves to support specific spend requirements and the replenishment of service transformation reserves and general reserves.

### **Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring**

2.2 The Council's Quarter 1 General Fund Revenue Budget monitoring position, reported to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> September estimated that the Council is forecast to overspend by £5.9m in the current financial year as summarised in the Table below:-

**Table 1: Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring 2025/26**

## 2025/26 Forecast – Quarter 1

	Revised Budget £000	Forecast Q1 £000	Variance Q1 £000
Children and Families	86,594	90,521	3,927
Adults and Health	110,586	112,271	1,685
Place	54,741	57,693	2,952
Public Health & Corporate Resources	61,468	61,191	(277)
Central Budgets	73,901	73,551	(350)
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>387,290</b>	<b>395,227</b>	<b>7,937</b>
Use of Budget Contingency Reserve	-	(1,993)	(1,993)
<b>Adjusted General Fund Total</b>	<b>387,290</b>	<b>393,234</b>	<b>5,944</b>

- 2.3 Whilst the position of a projected overspend of £5.9m needs to be addressed, Cabinet are reminded that the equivalent Q1 report in 2024/25 indicated an overspend of £12.9m and at outturn the overspend had reduced to £5.6m. It is evident that the additional resources that were included in Directorate base budgets as part of the 2025/26 budget are having the desired effect. The size of the projected overspend is lower and whilst there are still some variations, as described below, these are fewer in number.
- 2.4 One of the key tenets of the refreshed Council plan is that the Council lives within its means. Where Directorates are projecting an overspend, it is expected that proposals will be brought forward to bring their budgets into balance. It is recognised that some areas of the budget can be subject to extreme volatility and the budget contingency reserve will be used to help in certain circumstances. The remaining balance on this reserve is £1.5m.
- 2.5 On a day to day level, it is expected that budget holders take all appropriate actions to manage budgets and to live within their means.
- Budget holders ensuring that they spend what is required for the delivery of the outcomes for their services by prioritising expenditure accordingly.
  - Continuing to explore all external funding opportunities to bring additional income into the Council.
  - Recruitment to vacant budgets remains subject to approval by Executive Directors and the Head of People Services and the S151 officer.
  - Until the review of the capital plan is complete, no additional schemes requiring Corporate borrowing will be added; although invest to save cases will be considered subject to the submission of evidence based business cases.

- Continuation of the asset disposals programme to be bring in funding to support the capital plan and to reduce the need for borrowing.

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

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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 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 and seeks to reach a desirable level over the medium term. This strategy provides the removal of use of reserves supporting base expenditure by 2028.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 The strategy also recognises the need to provide the Council's agreed contribution to the SEND Safety Valve plan at c£10.6m, the first contribution is being made as budgeted in 2025/26.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 In general, fees and charges to the public are assumed to be increased annually by 3%; however, where costs rise beyond this, 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.
- 2.12 The Capital plan 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.
- 2.13 In this review new capital schemes will be considered for inclusion in the Capital plan as part of the Council's investment and modernisation programme 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.
- 2.14 Collectively, these principles are designed to continue the work from last year to ensure the base revenue budget is robust and affordable and one 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 2026/27 budget to be considered at Cabinet in December 2025 and subsequently to be approved at Budget Council in early 2026.

2.15 By recognising the ongoing pressures within the base budget the S151 Officer is content that this continues to ensure the Council has a robust budget going forward, but recognising the need for savings across services to be able to set a balanced budget for 2026/27.

**Risk and Uncertainty within the Financial Strategy**

**Fair Funding Review**

2.16 As part of the 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement consultation, Government sought views on the approach to determine new funding allocations for local authorities. This encompassed numerous aspects, including the overall guiding objectives and principles, measuring differences in deprivations demand and costs, along with differences in locally available resources.

2.17 In June 2025 Government published the Fair Funding Review 2.0 (FF 2.0) and consultation, which ran until 15 August 2025. This seeks views on the approach proposed to determine new funding allocations for local authorities. The overall intention is to target money where it is most needed, with an updated evidence-based approach to take into account different needs and costs faced by local authorities, as well as their ability to raise council tax (the taxbase).

2.18 Fair Funding Review 2.0 represents a comprehensive reform of the local government finance system, aiming to better allocate funding based on councils’ relative needs and resources. The review introduces various new relative needs formulae, a resource adjustment, and a business rates reset and with a three-year transition, so as to dampen any financial impacts across individual authorities.

**Relative Needs**

2.19 The Government propose to reduce the number of formulae used in the assessment of Councils’ relative needs from 15 down to 9. Two new formulae are in the 9, being Temporary Accommodation and Home to School Transport, although their relative weightings are small. The table below shows the proposed relative weightings within the overall Relative Needs Formulae (RNF).

	Selected RNF Weightings
Adults' Social Care RNF	37.54%
Foundation Formula	27.12%
Children and Young People's Services RNF	23.18%
Fire & Rescue RNF	4.30%
Highway Maintenance RNF	3.20%
Home to school transport	3.24%
Temporary Accommodation RNF	1.42%

- 2.20 The Foundation Formula element essentially provides an assessment of need for all Council services that aren't covered specifically in the other formulae. One of the key elements of that formulae is population change and in relative terms Kirklees low population increase over the past decade in comparison to other Councils is part of the reason why the Council is likely to see a reduction in its total relative needs assessment.
- 2.21 Cabinet is reminded that the FF 2.0 remains a consultation and the Government 's response is awaited. The consultation included questions on the proposed formulae supporting each element. It is evident that there will be differing views on the underlying formulae and weightings of those formulae across the sector.
- 2.22 In the models Kirklees has used for this MTFs, the working assumption is that there will be a reduction in its Relative Needs Assessment of around 2.5% (from a national share of 0.78 to 0.70 of the total local government needs assessment). This is not confirmed as changes to RNF may be made following consultation and also from an update of 2024/25 data when this is available.
- 2.23 Any changes to relative weightings of the RNF, the formulae and data used behind each individual needs areas will change the relative needs assessments of each Council. Clearly changes to Adults, Children's and Foundation formula assumptions will have the biggest impact as they are by far the most significant weightings when assessing relative needs.

### **Council Tax Equalisation**

- 2.24 A key element of FF 2.0 is the proposal to redistribute resources through 100% Council Tax equalisation. Kirklees has a relatively low tax base with around 80% of its Council tax base in Bands A-C and therefore the ability to raise resources locally is limited in comparison to many Councils across England, but particularly in comparison to those in London and the South East.
- 2.25 Full Council tax equalisation is essential to delivering FF2.0 and this is a point the Council has stressed in its response to the consultation. As with relative needs assessments, there will undoubtedly be differing views from Councils on this, with some likely to push strongly for a reduced level of equalisation. Whilst Kirklees RNF is expected to fall, it will gain more through additional funding from equalisation.

- 2.26 Government within FF 2.0 consultation documents has assumed that all Council's with social care responsibilities will increase Council Tax by 4.99% in each year.
- 2.27 It should be noted however, that as part of the Fair Funding Review, there will also be a full business rates reset, reflecting an updated assessment of local needs and resources. The impact of this is not yet known and could have either a detrimental or positive impact on the level of income we receive from the business rates system, again this will not be understood until late 2025. However, this along with RNF and resource equalisation needs to be considered in the round.
- 2.28 There is still some uncertainty on what impact this updated approach will have on the Council's total funding levels. However, with the new approach recognising need, deprivation and low taxbases collectively, it is anticipated that there will be a potential increase in the total funding made available to Kirklees compared to previous funding assumptions. The precise extent of which will not be known until late 2025 when the provisional local government finance settlement is announced. Any gains (or losses for Councils) are expected to be spread over 3 years as part of transitional arrangements. However, it is expected those who 'lose out' will push for a longer transition period. Kirklees has responded to the consultation, agreeing in principle for a transitional period, but this needs to be kept in line with the multi-year settlement.
- 2.29 In briefings with MHCLG, Civil Servants have advised Councils that the figures used in the consultation and models that Councils use are not confirmed and may be subject to change, either as a result of changes arising out of consultation responses, updates of relative needs by using the most up to date data in formulae and also the fact the final policy decisions have not yet been made by Government. The expectation is that the models will be refined over the next few months as more information is made available.
- 2.30 Until recently, these models had not been seen by MHCLG and so projected changes for individual authorities are uncertain. There have been many different iterations in the past 8 weeks as the models as more information is available and MHCLG provide clarifications to specific questions from Councils / representative bodies. This has made it difficult to analyse the proposals with certainty. The models have also highlighted various disparities both between different types of authority (e.g. Metropolitan or District Councils) and also within each type of authority. Whilst these inconsistencies persist, there remains uncertainty around the absolute accuracy of the models on an individual authority basis (any adjustments to resolve individual inconsistencies, will likely affect all authorities).
- 2.31 However, MHCLG have made available significant amounts of data to enable the models to be updated earlier than in previous years and has allowed Councils to make assumptions around the future funding position. Whilst Kirklees can reasonably expect funding gains in each of the next 3 years, until these are confirmed a prudent approach to modelling these gains in the MTFS is required.
- 2.32 Having considered the pressures the Council will continue to face, particularly in the social care sector, the MTFS assumes that Council Tax will rise annually by 4.99% (in line with Government assumptions) and a prudent assumption of 60% of the current modelled funding gain is assumed. In 2026/27 this is worth c£6.7m, but around £1m p.a.

lower in future years as Government has front loaded funding to some extent.

2.33 Government has committed to announcing a multi-year local government finance settlement in late 2025, which is expected to cover a period of three financial years from 2026-2027 to 2028-2029.

## Risk

2.34 Pay and inflationary pressures remain a risk over the longer term. Whilst inflation at 3.8% (July 2025) is now currently above the Bank of England target level of 2%, the longer term forecasts suggest inflation reducing towards the target. However, whilst ever inflation remains above targets, there remains a risk that pay awards and the cost element of demand budgets may be higher than currently provided for which would increase the gap.

2.35 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 under or overstated.

2.36 There is a risk that interest rates remain at the current level which could add additional pressures to the revenue budgets. The MTFS currently assumes all new borrowing, including refinancing of existing loans is at 4.69%. Presently longer term rates remain above this level, although it is now possible to borrow short term at around or below this level. All borrowing undertaken will be made within the approved limits of the Treasury Management strategy. There is capacity within the existing Treasury Management strategy to take relatively more short term borrowing at this time.

## Update of Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue) 2026-2031

2.37 Since the meeting of Council on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 work has continued to update the Council's MTFS for the period to 2030/31. 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 2026/31**

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m
<b>Opening Balance</b>	-	17.9	35.5	45.0	52.5
<b>Funding &amp; Reserves Changes</b>	(18.2)	(19.9)	(24.7)	(22.8)	(26.1)
Add back savings fall out	0.1	-	0.3	0.3	-
Demand pressure	13.7	11.3	11.4	10.1	10.1
Inflation/pay pressure	18.2	15.8	15.3	16.8	17.0
Treasury management pressure	4.5	6.4	2.5	0.5	0.2
Other pressure - expenditure	1.4	4.5	12.0	2.8	2.8
Other pressure - income	1.7	1.1	0.9	-	-
Funding Fall-Out	0.8	0.4	2.1	-	-
Funding increase	-	(1.4)	(10.0)	-	-

Existing Approved Savings	(4.3)	(0.5)	(0.3)	(0.2)	(0.2)
<b>Total Spend Changes</b>	<b>36.1</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>29.9</b>
<b>Funding 'Gap'</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>56.3</b>
<b>In Year Funding Gap</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>

See Appendix A

2.38 As the table indicates, the forecast funding gap for the period to 2030/31 is now estimated to be £56.3m with the most immediate issue being a funding shortfall in 2026/27 of £17.9m. From a spend perspective, it is demand and inflation pressures that dominate, especially in the social care services. **Appendix A** provides a summary by Directorate.

2.39 To put these variations into context, for 2026/27 specifically, total available budget is forecast at £461.8m with an initial assessment of spending need identified by Directorates at £479.7m which creates 'the gap' of £17.9m. Further details of the assumptions and main pressures are outlined below.

### **Specific Funding Assumptions (£18.2m)**

2.40 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.

2.41 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%. These assumptions are consistent with Government assumptions with regard to Core Spending Power increases in the FF2.0 consultation. A reduction of 1% would result in a reduction in council tax funding of c£2.5m per annum and would have a compounding effect if this was applied in the early years of the plan.

2.42 From 2027/28 onwards there is an assumed increase in the Council tax base of 0.7%, equivalent to circa 800 Band D homes per annum. This will be reviewed in discussion with Planning/Housing growth teams with regard to the expected growth over the MTFS. No growth is assumed in budget terms for 2026/27 as any growth realised in that year is assumed to be required to help fund the Collection Fund deficit rather than be used to provide for additional budget for services.

2.43 Business Rates income is inflated by approximately 1% per annum over the duration of the plan.

2.44 Updated plans for 2026/27 also include repayments to the collection fund of £3.2m and the contribution of £10.9m into earmarked reserves. (see para 2.69)

2.45 Increases in Government Funding are estimated to be in the region of £6.7m in 2026/27, and £5m per annum in 2027/28 and 2028/29. These uplifts include prudent estimates of additional funding due to Kirklees as a result of the funding reforms noted earlier in this

report. Increases after this point are linked solely to inflation, with updated plans reflecting uplifts of c.2% (£4m) per annum.

2.46 Given that the outcomes of Fair Funding 2.0 Review and Business Rates Reset are not fully known, there is an element of risk surrounding any government funding assumptions made at this time. The specific funding increases noted above in para 2.31 recognise this and reflect what is considered to be a reasonable estimate of the impact of the funding reforms on Kirklees - based on the information and modelling available to date. It should be noted that the figures illustrate just one of many possible outcomes, and more certainty will only be provided when the Local Government Provisional Finance settlement is published (expected to be late November 2025). The sensitivity analysis included later in this report (and at Appendix C) includes an indication of the range of likely outcomes in relation to any gains from the funding reforms.

2.47 The funding reforms also include the proposed realignment of various grants into SFA for 2026/27. This means that some grants previously recognised within services, will be rolled in and paid through RSG going forwards. The result of these changes means that approximately £56m of grant budgets currently held in services will be removed for 2026/27, with this income being recognised within government funding figures instead. The impact of this is cost neutral to the council, however the adjustments will artificially inflate the changes from 2025/26 to 2026/27 of both net directorate budgets and funding levels. It is important to understand these are technical adjustments and do not provide for additional spending power.

2.48 The table below summarises the total and assumed variations in funding available to support the budget next year.

<b>2026/27 Funding Build Up</b>	<b>Council Tax Income</b>	<b>Business Rates Retained Income</b>	<b>Government Funding</b>	<b>Collection Fund Re- payment</b>	<b>Use of Reserves</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2025-26 Funding	(252.9)	(64.1)	(82.4)	3.8	8.3	(387.3)
Grant Realignment - Directorates to SFA	-	-	(56.3)	-	-	(56.3)
<b>Updated Baseline</b>	<b>(252.9)</b>	<b>(64.1)</b>	<b>(138.7)</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>(443.6)</b>
Funding Increase	(12.6)	(0.8)	(6.7)	-	-	(20.2)
Other Changes	-	-	-	(0.6)	2.6	2.0
<b>2026-27 Funding</b>	<b>(265.5)</b>	<b>(64.9)</b>	<b>(145.4)</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>(461.8)</b>

### **Executive Director Portfolio Assumptions:**

#### **Children & Families**

2.49 This Council has invested in early intervention in Children's Social Care which has meant the numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) are low in relative terms when compared to other 'like' Councils. However, recently Kirklees has seen an increase in numbers of LAC. This combined with the mix of placements and associated costs are creating pressures on the budget, as reported in the Q1 Financial monitoring report.

- 2.50 As part of the MTFs approximately £5m of additional funding is proposed to be invested into Children's Services for 2026/27 (prior to savings targets). A large part of this (£3.5m) is to support demand led sufficiency pressures relating to increasing numbers of LAC. In the first 4 months of 2025/26 there has been an increase in LAC from 635 to 645 and a subsequent increase in External Residential Placements numbers from 34 to 44 and based on these trends, the additional investment has been proposed. There is also an assumed uplift in fees of around 4% which adds £1.6m of costs to the LAC budget.
- 2.51 In future years, 2027/28 – 2030/31, investment of £2.4m p.a. is proposed. This is to reflect an assumed, but smaller, increase in demand and cost in relation to demand led Children's budgets.

### **Adults & Health**

- 2.52 As part of the MTFs approximately £16m is added in relation to Adults demand led pressures for 2026/27. Of this, £8.4m is related to demand (volume increases) and c£7.6m is inflationary for uplifts in care fees (using CPI assumptions and the estimated impact of the National Living Wage (NLW)). For 2026/27, the MTFs assumes a median point of the Low Pay Commission estimate of NLW at £12.71/hr, currently £12.21 p/hr).
- 2.53 A further £1.8m (£600k per annum) over the next 3 years of the MTFs is recognised as a pressure relating to client contributions. A target of £2.5m had been proposed in previous budgets, but having reviewed this is, it is now considered unlikely to be achievable as client contributions are based on an assessed ability to pay. This figure will be kept under detailed review as part of the Adult Social Care transformation project and later years will be reduced if income levels achieved are beyond these figures.
- 2.54 As part of last year's agreed budget, the Directorate had savings targets of c£2.4m to deliver in 2026/27, as well as c£14.4m to deliver in 2025/26, with the latter being tracked and reviewed to ensure they will be achieved, or whether alternative proposals are required. The MTFs makes no changes to this £2.4m assumption.

### **Place**

- 2.55 Significant pressures have been identified in the Place Directorate which require additional budget provision to reflect ongoing demand pressures.
- 2.56 A total of £2m is proposed to be added to the Home to School Transport budget. £1.5m to correct the base budget and a further £0.5m for projected increases in demand for provision and cost increases in 2026/27. Future estimates of demand are difficult to predict and may be affected by forthcoming proposals from Government on SEND provision. Beyond 2026/7 a sum of £600k per annum is provisionally included in the financial strategy. The current year projected overspend is being funded by the use of the Budget Contingency reserve, but this is a one off source of funding and adjustments to the base budget are required.

- 2.57 The adverse weather base budget is currently c£1.5m. There have been a number of agreed budget savings including the Council acquiring its own fleet and a review of primary gritting routes. Despite these savings, the cost of responding to adverse weather events (ice, snow, storms etc) has typically outturned nearer than £2m mark. The financial strategy therefore recognises this and provides for a further £250k per annum for the next 2 years to reach a budget of £2m. It is also proposed, subject to the wider budget position of the Council at outturn, to transfer any adverse weather budget savings into an earmarked reserve. This ought to provide budget stability for the service to deal with a bad winter in any given year.
- 2.58 Parking services income has historically not achieved the base budget levels. Additional provision was made in the 2025/26 budget to reduce the income budget to recognise this and the financial strategy provides for a further £557k to bring the budget into line with actual income levels. Parking charges, as with other fees and charges, will remain subject to an annual review.
- 2.59 Within Parks and Greenspaces the budget for sometime now has been partially funded by the use of S106 receipts and other short term funding. These balances are reducing and therefore a sum of £250k is added over 2 years to the base budget to remove the reliance on this funding.
- 2.60 Similarly, within the Climate Change team, some posts have been funded via WYCA grant. This funding was always short term in nature and the financial makes provision within the Council base budget of £167k for this team.
- 2.61 In Waste Management, the financial strategy reflects the estimated requirements of Simpler Recycling. The strategy assumes that Food Waste collections and associated capital costs will be funded by New Burdens and capital grants. DEFRA have previously announced capital funding grants, but no announcement has been forthcoming on revenue funding regarding food waste. Due to the current Waste contract, the Council has an extension to 2028 to implement Food Waste collections.
- 2.62 Any legislative changes that are enacted with regard to Emissions Trading beyond 2028 are expected to be net neutral to the Council.

### **Public Health and Corporate Resources**

- 2.63 A total of around £700k over 3 years is proposed to be added to the Council's central software licensing budget to reflect increased costs and the movement for a Microsoft Enterprise (E3) license to an E5 license. The council has delayed this move in recent years in order to keep costs down, but the move is now required in order to ensure technology supports improvements in services to the public, productivity and efficiency in back office services. The E5 license will enable significant improvements in digital service provision, the storage and sharing of files across teams, the management and presentation of data, and further benefits to the management of cyber security measures, complementing the council's existing strengths. The final cost of the license upgrade, which will ensure Kirklees remains in line with the rest of the local government sector, will be finalised during negotiations with Microsoft at our annual contract renewal point in December.

2.64 Demand pressures within Legal Services are estimated at £300k mainly due to the need to provide additional support to Children's services.

### **Other Cost Pressures**

#### *Pay Awards*

2.65 As the Cabinet may be aware, the pay award for 2025/26 was settled in July 2025 at a rate of 3.2%. This was slightly above the amount 3% provided for in the base budget and the additional ongoing impact of the 0.2% has been provided for in future budgets. Looking ahead, the MTFS assumes pay awards of 3.5% for each year of the plan. Each 1% costs broadly £2.5m per annum on the Council's existing payroll costs.

2.66 Budgets for pay awards and inflation continue to be held centrally until they are agreed nationally or are contractually committed within service. Where there are no known contractual commitments, all other budgets are assumed to be cash limited to the current level of provision with no inflationary uplifts.

2.67 The financial strategy also provides for a 3% uplift in the 2026/27 levy payable to West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to help support bus franchising across the region. Future increases are expected to be 2% p.a.

#### *Treasury Management*

2.68 Updated Treasury management budgets assume that the Bank of England base rate of 4.00% (as at 1st September 2025) is estimated to fall to 3.75% by the end of 2025 and remain at that level through to mid 2028. The updated MTFS reflects an assumed an average consolidated borrowing rate of 4.69% in the plan. 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 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy report so as not to expose the Council to significant changes in interest rates in any given year. Long term borrowing remains relatively expensive at 6.01% (August 28<sup>th</sup>) for a 25 year loan and therefore the Council will seek to use relatively more short term borrowing within the allowable limits of the approved Treasury Management strategy. Up to 20% of total borrowing can be short term, and at the end of 2024/25 around 14% of borrowing was classed as short term.

2.69 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. Within the MTFS, an additional £4.5m in 2026/7 and £14m over 5 years is currently added. These assumptions can change from changes to interest rates, reprofiling and reductions in the elements of the plan that is funded from Council borrowing.

### **Balances and Reserves**

2.70 Any consideration of the Council’s MTFs 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.

2.71 **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 £10.9m into Earmarked Reserves in 2026/27, including a £10.7m contribution to Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP) reserves. This reflects the policy for provision of repayment of debt (MRP) approved as part of the 2024/25 Annual Budget report to Council in March 2024. By the end of the updated plan, the balance on the VRP reserve is in the region of £50m. This balance will be required in future years to pay for increased MRP costs and remains a key element of the strategy to provide financial sustainability over the medium to long term.

2.72 **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.

2.73 Appendix F provides the risk assessment of the Council's level of general reserves, which estimates the value of the risks at £22.0m. Therefore, a current **Minimum Working Balance** of at least £22.0m needs to be maintained throughout the life of the current MTFP. The **Desirable Balance** calculation is £31m. As part of the budget setting process the risk assessment on the level of reserves will be refreshed.

2.74 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 £1.0m to the reserve. These figures include the Minimum Working Balance as outlined above.

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	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2031 £m
(25.0)	(26.0)	(27.0)	(28.0)	(29.0)	(30.0)	(31.0)

2.75 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.

2.76 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. Whilst there is no prescribed £m / % of budget to be held as a General reserve, however it must be of a sufficient size for the S151 officer to be able to issue a S25 report as part of the final budget report for 2026/27.

2.77 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)**

2.78 As mentioned above, the MTFs 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 budget gap and the level of savings the Council will be required to make.

2.79 The Cabinet will appreciate that it is good practice to model scenarios based on changes to some of the key assumptions in the MTFs. 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.

2.80 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 at are provided at **Appendix C** and summarised in Table 3 below:-

**Table 3: Scenario Analysis**

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m
Best Case	12.6	26.0	31.5	38.5	41.8
<b>Base Position (Table 2 above)</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>56.3</b>
Worst Case	23.3	45.4	65.0	74.2	79.7

See Appendix C

2.81 As the table indicates, the range of potential positions is a five year deficit of c£41.8m to a deficit of £79.7m. 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 2025/33 (General Fund)**

2.82 At Cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Members considered an update position on the Council’s Capital Plan as part of the Q1 monitoring report. On the General Fund around £7.2m of spend had been slipped from 2025/26 into future years, alongside a net increase in the plan of £0.4m due to increased grants/S106 contributions, leading

to a budget of £246.1m.

2.83 Since then, £8m has been re-profiled from 2025/26 into 2030/31 for the Investment and Modernisation Fund, leaving £2m for drawdown in this financial year as part of the implementation of this new Fund. A further £2.2m (£1.1m 2025/26, £1.1m 2026/27) has been received from Network Rail for the Transpennine Route Upgrade Programme. This supports activities undertaken by Kirklees Council in discharging the requirements of the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) via the appointment of suitably qualified persons to specialist roles.

2.84 The current budget of £239.2m for 2025/26 remains under review and a revised Capital Plan will be included as part of the Proposed Budget report to Cabinet in December. The latest Medium-Term Capital Plan for 2026/27 onwards is summarised in the table below and the funding breakdown is provided in more detail at **Appendix D**. This is the 'as is' position and the plan has not had any additional items added yet as the review is not completed.

**Table 4: Medium-Term Capital Plan 2025/26 (General Fund)**

	2025/ 26 £m	2026/ 27 £m	2027/ 28 £m	2028/ 29 £m	2029/ 30 £m	2030/ 31+ £m	Total £m
<i>Expenditure</i>							
Children and Families	25.7	29.6	21.6	3.8	2.8	0.0	<b>83.5</b>
Adults & Health	4.2	8.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>15.7</b>
Place	198.6	223.5	121.8	77.9	97.9	46.3	<b>766.0</b>
Public Health & Corporate Resources	10.7	11.6	11.9	11.6	10.9	8.2	<b>64.9</b>
<b>Expenditure Total</b>	<b>239.2</b>	<b>273.2</b>	<b>158.3</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>111.6</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>930.1</b>
<i>Funding</i>							
Capital Grants / Contributions	122.9	113.5	66.7	45.2	49.4	4.0	<b>401.7</b>
Earmarked Capital Receipts	8.9	11.0	0.3	3.4	3.4	0.0	<b>27.0</b>
Service Funded Prudential Borrowing	16.4	30.6	17.2	10.0	12.1	8.0	<b>94.3</b>
Non-Earmarked Capital Receipts	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.7	0.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
Corporate Prudential Borrowing	89.7	117.0	72.9	34.0	46.0	42.5	<b>402.1</b>
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>239.2</b>	<b>273.2</b>	<b>158.3</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>111.6</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>930.1</b>

2.85 Notwithstanding the regeneration aspirations of the Council and the commitment under the Safety Valve agreement to fund the rebuild of 2 special schools with Council borrowing supporting that in excess of £27.8m, there is need for the Council's Capital Plan 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. The MTFs currently provides for an increase in treasury management charges of over £14m in the MTFs arising from a combination the Corporate borrowing shown in the table above and refinancing of existing loans. In

2025/26 around 38% (£c90m) of the capital plan is funded by Corporate borrowing, and over the life of the plan c£402m this is c43%.

- 2.86 Although the General Fund Capital Plan remains broadly the same as reported previously to Cabinet and Council in July 2025, some of the funding assumptions have changed. The capital receipts assumptions have been reduced from a current figure of £6m in 2025/26 to £2m by p.a by the end of the plan. The Capital Receipts reserve c£12m remains to be used as planned over the period, primarily as the agreed match funding for the Dewsbury Town deal. The assumptions around the future realistic value of capital receipts will be reviewed as part of the Capital plan and taking into account the findings of the review of Council wide assets being undertaken as part of the Transformation programme. Should additional receipts be deliverable over the period, then these should be primarily used to reduce the reliance on borrowing.
- 2.87 Given the extent of general fund borrowing that underpins the plan (£402m), the current and forecast cost of that debt, together with the required refinancing of existing debt as part of day-to-day Treasury activities, all uncommitted lines that require corporate borrowing within the plan are currently subject to review. This is being balanced against the future investment needs of the Council, both in maintaining the delivery of essential services through baseline funding, providing match funding where it is necessary to leverage external funding and to deliver ambitions around growth and regeneration.
- 2.88 Without pre-empting the outcome of the review, it is inevitable that some projects within the Capital Plan will need to be reduced, deferred or even stopped. As part of the review, the Capital Assurance Board will consider all investment needs via a 'scoring matrix' (see **Appendix E**) to help evaluate competing projects and inform the Councils priority schemes. The scoring from the matrix is subjective in nature but is a useful guide to help inform funding decisions especially in relation to borrowing. It is recognised other factors will influence the decision and it is ultimately the decision for the Council to make.
- 2.89 The key stages in the Council's prioritisation and approval process are as follows:
- a) All uncommitted schemes funded by corporate borrowing within the existing approved Capital plan will be scored against the Matrix and ranked. Schemes will be slipped or removed from the Capital Plan based on the evaluation.
  - b) All new bids for borrowing require a detailed Business Case to be submitted to the Chief Finance Officer (Service Director – Finance) for consideration and evaluation by the Capital Assurance Board. The bids will also be subject to scoring against the Matrix and ranked.
  - c) Proposals for invest to save schemes which deliver ongoing revenue savings against the base revenue budget require a detailed Business Case submission, with funds recommended to be drawn down from the existing Investment and Modernisation Fund. As with all capital schemes, these will be scored and ranked using the Scoring Matrix.

- d) The Capital Plan will be updated to reflect Council Priorities within an affordable funding envelope, recognising that some schemes will need to be removed to facilitate the addition of any new schemes deemed a higher priority. All new schemes to be supported will be recommended to Cabinet and Council for approval, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.
- e) There will be a reset of baseline capital expenditure required to ensure Council services remain able to operate effectively. Typically baseline expenditure will cover investment in assets to address backlog maintenance and vehicle and equipment replacement programmes.
- f) Schemes recognised as being 'pipeline' in nature due to their limited maturity and need for further development, will be placed on the 'Pipeline'/'Reserve' list. These will be kept under review, and should the need arise, an updated more detailed Business Case submitted as and when capital resources become available.

2.90 Further details of the review incorporating both existing and new schemes for the proposed Medium Term Capital Programme for 2026-2033 will be brought forward for consideration as part of the proposed budget report in December 2025. This will also include the new year 5 Baselines for the General.

### **Collection Fund**

#### *Collection Fund – Council Tax*

2.91 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.

2.92 In relation to Council Tax, it is assumed that the Council Taxbase will grow by 0.7% (c800 Band D Properties) annually from 2027/28 through to 2030/31. 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*

2.93 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.

2.94 The Council's share of locally retained Business Rates is Business Rates income is inflated by approximately 1% per annum over the duration of the plan.

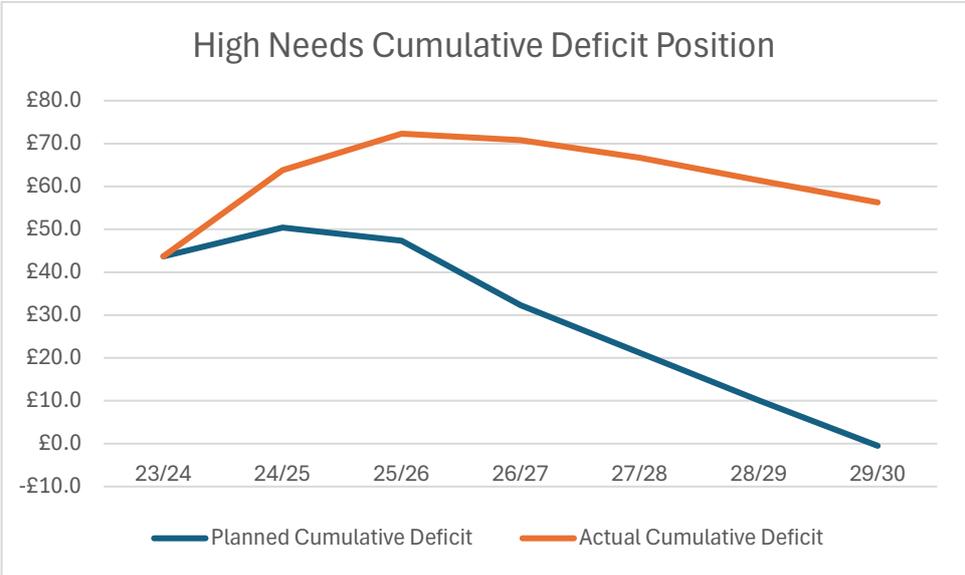
- 2.95 As at 31<sup>st</sup> March the total Collection Fund deficit was £10.2m. The 2025/26 budget repays a sum of £3.8m and a further sum of £3.2m is required in each of 2026/27 and 2027/28 to clear the deficit.
- 2.96 As Cabinet will be aware, the Council is currently part of the Leeds City Business Rates Pool in 2025/26. 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 £0.5m for 2025/26).
- 2.97 Whilst no such request for applications to renew the Pooling arrangement for 2026/27 has yet been published, and subject to other Councils in West Yorkshire agreeing, it is assumed for the purposes of the MTFs 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 2026/27.

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

- 2.98 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.
- 2.99 A more detailed report on Schools Funding arrangements will be presented to the Cabinet once details of the DSG Settlement are known for 2026/27.
- 2.100 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 - £22m of safety valve funding has been received by 31/03/25. The DfE has recently confirmed that the Council will receive its next instalment for 2025/26.
- 2.101 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 to be funded through a mix

of prudential borrowing (£27.8m) and grant funding (£23.3m) totalling approximately £51m. Alongside this, further Government capital funding of £7m will be used to support the creation of more Specialist Provision across the District’s maintained schools. The Improvement Plan also includes a Council-contribution of £10.6m and annual Council savings against High Needs spend. It was originally anticipated, as part of the Safety Valve Agreement, that by 2029/30 the budget would be in balance. As at Q1 2025/26, the projected deficit position at 2029/30 will be approximately £56.3m. The Improvement Plan resourcing assumptions described here are incorporated into the updated baseline MTFP and funding assumptions in this report as appropriate.

2.102 In 2024/25 the High Needs in-year deficit was £20.1m. This increased the cumulative deficit position to £63.8m. The graph below, indicates the trajectory of the cumulative deficit mapped against the planned deficit as detailed in the Safety Valve Agreement.



2.103 High Needs deficit positions remain a national issue and a significant number of Local Authorities are in a similar position with the cumulative deficit relating to High Needs expenditure now estimated at £5bn. This has doubled over the past 12 months (2023/24 – 2024/25) and it is clear that, based on trend information on demand and cost, the deficit figure will continue to grow in future years without Government action.

2.104 It is anticipated that the Government will publish a White Paper in Autumn 2025 and this will help to set out potential paths forward in relation to funding and reform for the SEND system. However, there will be a consultation phase and period of time to implement any changes and so it is unlikely there will be an immediate impact on the in year deficit position on the High Needs block. The Kirklees in year deficit is expected to reduce significantly from the capital investment and opening of 2 new special schools.

2.105 The DSG statutory override is a temporary accounting rule in the UK that allows local authorities to exclude Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits from their main revenue budgets. The override had been due to end in March 2026 but has recently been extended until March 2028.

- 2.106 It should be noted by Cabinet that DSG deficits at this scale have significant impacts on cash flows. Where cash is used to fund deficits, it has an impact on balances that could ordinarily have been used to fund capital in lieu of borrowing from the PWLB or other authorities. A deficit of £63m costs around £3.5m to £4m to service. Kirklees and other Councils have raised this issue directly with the DfE.
- 2.107 It is still unclear what will happen to historic deficits if the override is removed but it is considered unlikely that in year deficits will have been fully addressed immediately even if there is reform within the system. At that point, deficits could become a further pressure on the General Fund for Councils and will need addressing in the same way existing pressures are managed. It is therefore imperative that the in-year deficits are significantly reduced with a clear aim of being removed in the next few years to ensure the risk to the general fund position is mitigated and the management of budgets and savings targets should be treated in the same way as other Council services.
- 2.108 Presently there is no additional provision beyond the commitments on the Safety valve (£10.6m) for additional general fund contributions to the High Needs Block. To do so would require the Council to find significant additional savings beyond those reported in this plan.

## Kirklees Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

### Background

- 2.83 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.
- 2.84 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 revenue surplus of £9.9m which is to be used to fund capital expenditure.

### Medium Term Financial plan 2026-2031

Service Activity	25-26 BUDGET AMENDED	26-27 BUDGET	27-28 BUDGET PROPOSAL	28-29 BUDGET PROPOSAL	29-30 BUDGET PROPOSAL	30-31 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total Expenditure	109.5	115.6	119.5	123.7	128.0	132.2
Total Income	(109.5)	(115.6)	(119.5)	(123.7)	(128.0)	(132.2)
Net Operating Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Key Income Assumptions

- 2.85 Rental Income – The Government sets rent policy for social housing and since April 2020, providers have been permitted to increase rents by up to CPI + 1% per annum (with the CPI rate taken at the previous September). This policy was suspended in 2023-24 and replaced by a 7% limit on annual rent increases and in its most recent policy update the Government committed to a 10-year settlement of CPI+1% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.
- 2.86 The government received clear feedback in response to the previous consultation that the level of investment in new and existing social housing that is needed to deliver the government's ambitions will not be unlocked unless social rent convergence is implemented. A convergence mechanism was originally introduced in 2002, but was scrapped in 2015. The aim was to charge comparable rents for similar sized properties in similar areas, taking into account the value of properties and local earning levels and so a 'formula rent' was introduced. Formula rent refers to the formula that is used to calculate the rent that may be charged for a given property when it is let to a new tenant. Convergence would allow rents for social rent properties that are currently below 'formula rent' to increase by an additional amount, each year, over and above the CPI+1% limit, until they 'converge' with formula rent. The HRA MTFs assumes an average increase of £5.21 per week for 2026-27 taking into account CPI +1% and an assumption of £1/week relating to convergence..
- 2.87 Right to Buy (RtB) Sales – The Government introduced changes to the discount rates applied to right to buy sales, for applications received after 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and for 2024-25 Kirklees received 1,027 applications (2024-25, 332 applications). To reflect this increase in applications additional RtB sales have been assumed in 2026/27 at 180 sales, and then gradually declining to reflect the new less generous scheme with 140 sales for 2027/28, reducing to 90 sales per annum from 2028/29 to 2030/31 have been assumed. Right to Buy discounts remain an incentive for many people when considering whether to purchase their Council home, however due to recent discount rate changes it is anticipated that there will be diminishing Right to Buy sales in the future.
- 2.88 Other Income - The financial plan assumes service charges will rise by CPI+1% each year or where there is a plan to move to full cost recovery. 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, as previously approved in the budget.
- 2.89 PFI Grant - This grant remains fixed at £7.9m per annum over the life of the PFI contract.

#### **Key Expenditure Assumptions:**

- 2.90 Pay Award and Price Inflation - A pay award of 3.5% for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31 has been assumed. Price inflation is generally assumed at CPI levels in the plan.
- 2.91 Management Costs – Costs will be increased by 3.5% in 2026/27 and then will be linked to an increase of CPI each year. Energy Costs for gas and electricity are forecast based on the latest assumptions from the energy team as part of the Council contract for energy.
- 2.92 Repairs – An additional £3.8m has been added to the repairs budget to carry out stock condition surveys and retrofit assessments over a three-year period. The repairs

budget is to be inflated by CPI+1% each year and adjusted to reflect the forecast changes in stock numbers.

2.93 Disrepair Provision - Resolving disrepair remains a priority for the service. The financial plan assumes an annual budget of £1.5m for all legal costs including disrepair. Any repair costs following disrepair claims will be charged to the repairs budget. A provision has been set aside on the balance sheet, which will provide for the settlement of existing cases.

2.94 Provision for Bad Debt - A bad debt provision is provided for, based on 90% of former tenant arrears which at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 were £1.7m and 20% of current tenant arrears which at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 were £3m. Any write offs are made against this provision. A revenue budget of £1m is provided to maintain the provision at this level. This level of provision will be kept under review due to the number of tenants migrating from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.

2.95 Capital Programme – The table below outlines the draft capital plan, however, this is subject to change following a review of works required to existing properties to achieve the decency standard. Any amendments will be reassessed and reprofiled based on affordability. The proposed capital investment requirement in the HRA over the next six years (including 2025/26) is £389m. This is broken down into Strategic Priorities and New Housing Supply of £118m and works to existing properties of £271m. There will be the requirement to borrow £125m over 5 years and to utilise £33m of RTB receipts, supported by transfer from HRA reserves.

CAPITAL PLAN - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	REVISED 2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total £m
Strategic Priorities/increased housing supply.	7.9	14.8	26.9	32.2	17.6	18.5	117.9
Works to existing properties	36.8	46.8	46.3	47.1	46.2	48.2	271.4
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>389.3</b>
<b>FUNDING SUMMARY</b>							
Borrowing	-	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	<b>125.0</b>
Grants	2.0	3.3	6.2	8.5	3.9	5.2	<b>29.1</b>
Capital Receipts	2.1	1.7	9.6	14.1	2.2	3.0	<b>32.7</b>
Receipts from RTB allowable debt	3.9	3.3	3.6	2.4	2.3	2.3	<b>17.8</b>
HRA Revenue contribution to capital	12.7	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	<b>25.3</b>
HRA MRR (Depreciation)	24.0	25.5	26.3	27.0	27.9	28.7	<b>159.4</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>389.3</b>

2.96 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 £125m over the next 5 years. Maximum use of Right to Buy receipts will be made to minimise the impact of borrowing and where possible grant funding will be used instead of HRA borrowing. The HRA can benefit from discounted PWLB borrowing (0.4% reduction from standard rates). Whilst long term borrowing remains high, preference will be to use other funding sources funding first, however all new builds / buy backs remain subject to a business case to demonstrate they are viable over the life of the asset. Prolonged higher interest rates provide a risk that payback could be beyond the normal life but this is considered relatively low.

2.97 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.

2.98 HRA General Reserve -The level of the HRA general reserve is forecast to be £10.9m on 31st March 2026, which is approximately 9.5% of total expenditure and averages circa £500 per property (Based on 21,599 properties on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025). Discussion with a HRA Finance peer group indicates 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 more detailed budget proposals in December 2025. A separate repairs reserve of £1m has been set aside to address the ongoing pressures with demand.

HRA RESERVES	Balance at 31 March 2025	Contribution to reserves	Contribution from reserves	Balance at 31 March 2026
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Set aside for business risks	(10.9)	-	-	(10.9)
Repairs reserve	(1.0)	-	-	(1.0)
Set aside to meet investment needs	(18.8)	-	13.8	(5.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(30.6)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>(16.9)</b>

2.98. Major Repairs Reserve – Capital works and component replacements to existing properties are forecast to increase over the next five years, as following the review of the capital plan, which aims to improve the decency of properties managed and owned by the Council a backlog of works has been identified, which will be completed on a worst first basis. To maintain this level of annual investment will require borrowing and budgets have been provided for increased financing costs.

2.99 Any surplus revenue income will be used to support the investment into capital expenditure. The strategy to mitigate any identified deficits on the Housing Revenue Account is to identify savings that can be generated from business-as-usual proposals in line with the rest of the Council. Those savings that require more specific service reviews to deliver savings will be considered through appropriate governance processes. All areas of HRA expenditure and income will be considered when finalising the detail of the 2026/27 budget with appropriate consultation:

- Proposed rent increases will be adjusted to reflect any changes in CPI and following the outcome of government consultation for rent convergence and following consultation with Elected Members.
- Service charges will be reviewed with an option to increase these above the CPI+1% to get closer to full cost recovery. This relates to tenants that benefit from communal services.
- The annual investment programme as part of the overall capital plan has been reviewed and is being finalised with options to be presented to invest further in stock condition and realign the programme. Should additional funding become available, following the outcome of the rent convergence consultation, then this could be used to reduce the HRA revenue contributions or reduce the borrowing requirement.
- A review of staffing levels and approved structures will be considered.
- All expenditure lines, including repairs, will be reviewed to ensure resources are directed into priority areas of the budget, especially considering the requirements of Awaab's Law and the regulators consumer standards.

- A review of HRA earmarked reserves will be completed as a mechanism to help smooth out specific one-off pressures to be managed later.

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

#### **3.1 Council Plan** N/A.

#### **3.2 Financial Implications** The financial implications for the Council are as set out in the report.

The report identifies a significant funding gap in 2026/27 (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

#### **3.3 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 2026/27 as part of the Budget/Council Tax setting for 2026/27.

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.

#### **3.4 Climate Change & Air Quality** N/A

#### **3.5 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 and staffing 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.

**4. Consultation**

This report has been prepared by the Service Director - Finance, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

**5. 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 2025 with a view to informing decisions on the Council’s budget for 2026/27. The form and content of such a consultation will be determined in due course.

**6. Options**

**6.1 Options Considered**  
N/A

**6.2 Reasons for Recommended Option**  
N/A

**7. Next Steps and timelines**

- 7.1 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 will be developed to facilitate this work.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The culmination of this work on the development of proposals will be that Cabinet will bring forward its initial budget proposals in December 2025 for consideration. The final budget report for 2026/27 will be presented at Budget Council in February 2026.

## **8. Contact Officer and Relevant Papers**

Kevin Mulvaney	Service Director – Finance
James Anderson	Head of Accountancy
Sarah Hill	Finance Manager

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

[Annual Financial Outturn Report and Rollover Report 2024/25 \(Item 8\)](#)  
[Annual Budget Report 2025/26 and future years \(Item 7\)](#)  
[Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26](#)

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix A – Updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/31  
Appendix B – Balances and Reserves 2026/31  
Appendix C – Best/West Case Scenario Analysis  
Appendix D – Capital Programme to 2032/33  
Appendix E – Capital Scoring Matrix  
Appendix F – Minimum Working Balance

## **11. Service Director Responsible**

Kevin Mulvaney	Service Director – Finance
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5 YEAR INDICATIVE BUDGETS	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
CHILDREN	87,513	95,714	97,993	100,272	102,551	104,830
ADULTS	111,211	177,326	193,577	210,220	225,264	240,308
PLACE	56,841	59,827	60,556	61,723	62,323	62,923
CORPORATE	60,115	60,850	61,336	61,932	62,082	61,982
CENTRAL	71,610	85,972	103,757	117,282	129,513	141,661
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>387,290</b>	<b>479,689</b>	<b>517,219</b>	<b>551,429</b>	<b>581,733</b>	<b>611,704</b>

ASSUMED FUNDING	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
COUNCIL TAX	(252,901)	(265,521)	(280,722)	(296,793)	(313,783)	(331,747)
RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	(64,115)	(64,958)	(65,666)	(66,433)	(67,193)	(67,945)
GOVERNMENT FUNDING	(82,382)	(145,462)	(150,574)	(155,807)	(160,199)	(164,682)
COLLECTION FUND	3,789	3,184	3,183	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(395,609)</b>	<b>(472,757)</b>	<b>(493,779)</b>	<b>(519,033)</b>	<b>(541,175)</b>	<b>(564,374)</b>

RESERVES AND GAP	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
NET CONTRIBUTION TO VRP RESERVE	4,819	7,426	8,545	9,064	8,376	5,449
CONTRIBUTION TO GENERAL RESERVE	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSF'M RESERVE	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,858</b>	<b>35,485</b>	<b>44,960</b>	<b>52,434</b>	<b>56,279</b>

	2025-26 NET CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	FUNDING REFORM GRANT REALIGN- MENT	ADD BACK SAVINGS FALL OUT	RE-BASED 2025-26 CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	DEMAND PRESSURE	INFLATION / PAY PRESSURE	OTHER PRESSURE - EXPEND- ITURE	OTHER PRESSURE - INCOME	FUNDING FALL-OUT	FUNDING INCREASE	SAVINGS	2026-27 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:</i></b>												
Children	87,513	3,000	109	90,622	3,494	1,550	-	-	500	(3)	(449)	95,714
Adults	111,211	52,411	-	163,622	7,892	7,640	-	600	-	-	(2,428)	177,326
Place	56,841	925	-	57,766	2,000	-	*(221)	795	167	-	(680)	59,827
Corporate	60,115	-	-	60,115	300	300	440	300	145	-	(750)	60,850
Central	71,610	-	-	71,610	-	8,690	5,672	-	-	-	-	85,972
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>387,290</b>	<b>56,336</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>443,735</b>	<b>13,686</b>	<b>18,180</b>	<b>5,891</b>	<b>1,695</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4,307)</b>	<b>479,689</b>
<b><i>FUNDED BY:</i></b>												
Council Tax	(252,901)											(265,521)
Retained Business Rates	(64,115)											(64,958)
Government Funding	(82,382)											(145,462)
Collection Fund Transfer	3,789											3,184
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(395,609)</b>											<b>(472,757)</b>
<b><i>TRANSFERS TO/(FROM) RESERVES:</i></b>												
VRP** - Contribution	10,804											10,668
VRP** - Drawdown	(5,985)											(3,242)
Transformation Reserve	2,500											2,500
General Reserves	1,000											1,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>8,319</b>											<b>10,926</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICIT</b>	<b>0</b>											<b>17,858</b>

\* Negative figure due to net fall-out of prior year pressures \*\*VRP = Voluntary Revenue Provision

	2026-27 NET CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	ADD BACK SAVINGS FALL OUT	RE-BASED 2026-27 CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	DEMAND PRESSURE	INFLATION / PAY PRESSURE	OTHER PRESSURE – EXPEND- ITURE	OTHER PRESSURE - INCOME	FUNDING FALL-OUT	FUNDING INCREASE	SAVINGS	2027-28 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:</i></b>											
Children	95,714	-	95,714	1,044	1,235	-	-	-	-	-	97,993
Adults	177,326	-	177,326	9,643	6,008	-	600	-	-	-	193,577
Place	59,827	-	59,827	600	-	1,100	70	400	(1,400)	(41)	60,556
Corporate	60,850	-	60,850	-	100	401	450	-	-	(465)	61,336
Central	85,972	19	85,991	-	8,410	9,356	-	-	-	-	103,757
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>479,689</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>479,708</b>	<b>11,287</b>	<b>15,753</b>	<b>10,857</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>(1,400)</b>	<b>(506)</b>	<b>517,219</b>
<b><i>FUNDED BY:</i></b>											
Council Tax	(265,521)										(280,722)
Retained Business Rates	(64,958)										(65,666)
Government Funding	(145,462)										(150,574)
Collection Fund Transfer	3,184										3,183
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(472,757)</b>										<b>(493,779)</b>
<b><i>TRANSFERS TO/(FROM) RESERVES:</i></b>											
VRP** - Contribution	10,668										10,166
VRP** - Drawdown	(3,242)										(1,621)
Transformation Reserve	2,500										2,500
General Reserves	1,000										1,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>10,926</b>										<b>12,045</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICIT</b>	<b>17,858</b>										<b>35,485</b>

	2027-28 NET CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	ADD BACK SAVINGS FALL OUT	RE-BASED 2027-28 CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	DEMAND PRESSURE	INFLATION / PAY PRESSURE	OTHER PRESSURE – EXPEND- ITURE	OTHER PRESSURE - INCOME	FUNDING FALL-OUT	FUNDING INCREASE	SAVINGS	2028-29 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:</i></b>											
Children	97,993	-	97,993	1,044	1,235	-	-	-	-	-	100,272
Adults	193,577	-	193,577	9,778	6,265	-	600	-	-	-	210,220
Place	60,556	-	60,556	600	-	10,247	-	300	(9,980)	-	61,723
Corporate	61,336	250	61,586	-	100	241	300	-	-	(295)	61,932
Central	103,757	-	103,757	-	7,760	3,965	-	1,800	-	-	117,282
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>517,219</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>517,469</b>	<b>11,422</b>	<b>15,360</b>	<b>14,453</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>(9,980)</b>	<b>(295)</b>	<b>551,429</b>
<b><i>FUNDED BY:</i></b>											
Council Tax	(280,722)										(296,793)
Retained Business Rates	(65,666)										(66,433)
Government Funding	(150,574)										(155,807)
Collection Fund Transfer	3,183										-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(493,779)</b>										<b>(519,033)</b>
<b><i>TRANSFERS TO/(FROM) RESERVES:</i></b>											
VRP** - Contribution	10,166										9,064
VRP** - Drawdown	(1,621)										-
Transformation Reserve	2,500										2,500
General Reserves	1,000										1,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>12,045</b>										<b>12,564</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICIT</b>	<b>35,485</b>										<b>44,960</b>

	2028-29 NET CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	ADD BACK SAVINGS FALL OUT	RE-BASED 2028-29 CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	DEMAND PRESSURE	INFLATION / PAY PRESSURE	OTHER PRESSURE – EXPEND- ITURE	OTHER PRESSURE - INCOME	FUNDING FALL-OUT	FUNDING INCREASE	SAVINGS	2029-30 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:</i></b>											
Children	100,272	-	100,272	1,044	1,235	-	-	-	-	-	102,551
Adults	210,220	-	210,220	8,473	6,571	-	-	-	-	-	225,264
Place	61,723	-	61,723	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	62,323
Corporate	61,932	250	62,182	-	100	-	-	-	-	(200)	62,082
Central	117,282	-	117,282	-	8,930	3,301	-	-	-	-	129,513
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>551,429</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>551,679</b>	<b>10,117</b>	<b>16,836</b>	<b>3,301</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(200)</b>	<b>581,733</b>
<b><i>FUNDED BY:</i></b>											
Council Tax	(296,793)										(313,783)
Retained Business Rates	(66,433)										(67,193)
Government Funding	(155,807)										(160,199)
Collection Fund Transfer	-										-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(519,033)</b>										<b>(541,175)</b>
<b><i>TRANSFERS TO/(FROM) RESERVES:</i></b>											
VRP** - Contribution	9,064										8,376
VRP** - Drawdown	-										-
Transformation Reserve	2,500										2,500
General Reserves	1,000										1,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>12,564</b>										<b>11,876</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICIT</b>	<b>44,960</b>										<b>52,434</b>

	2029-30 NET CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	ADD BACK SAVINGS FALL OUT	RE-BASED 2029-30 CONTROLL- ABLE BUDGET	DEMAND PRESSURE	INFLATION / PAY PRESSURE	OTHER PRESSURE – EXPEND- ITURE	OTHER PRESSURE - INCOME	FUNDING FALL-OUT	FUNDING INCREASE	SAVINGS	2030-31 BUDGET PROPOSAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:</i></b>											
Children	102,551	-	102,551	1,044	1,235	-	-	-	-	-	104,830
Adults	225,264	-	225,264	8,473	6,571	-	-	-	-	-	240,308
Place	62,323	-	62,323	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	62,923
Corporate	62,082	-	62,082	-	100	-	-	-	-	(200)	61,982
Central	129,513	-	129,513	-	9,130	3,018	-	-	-	-	141,661
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>	<b>581,733</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>581,733</b>	<b>10,117</b>	<b>17,036</b>	<b>3,018</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(200)</b>	<b>611,704</b>
<b><i>FUNDED BY:</i></b>											
Council Tax	(313,783)										(331,747)
Retained Business Rates	(67,193)										(67,945)
Government Funding	(160,199)										(164,682)
Collection Fund Transfer	-										-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(541,175)</b>										<b>(564,374)</b>
<b><i>TRANSFERS TO/(FROM) RESERVES:</i></b>											
VRP** - Contribution	8,376										5,449
VRP** - Drawdown	-										-
Transformation Reserve	2,500										2,500
General Reserves	1,000										1,000
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>11,876</b>										<b>8,949</b>
<b>BUDGET DEFICIT</b>	<b>52,434</b>										<b>56,279</b>

**GENERAL FUND RESERVES**

**APPENDIX B**

	Reserves position 31st March 2025	Budget report Approved Movements	Revised reserves position 1st April 2025	Estimated Movements In-Year	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2026	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2027	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2028	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2029	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2030	Estimated Reserves position 31st March 2031
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Statutory (School Reserves)</b>										
Schools Balances	(11,119)	-	(11,119)	-	(11,119)	(11,119)	(11,119)	(11,119)	(11,119)	(11,119)
Public Health	(896)	-	(896)	448	(448)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Statutory (School Reserves)</b>	<b>(12,015)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(12,015)</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>(11,567)</b>	<b>(11,119)</b>	<b>(11,119)</b>	<b>(11,119)</b>	<b>(11,119)</b>	<b>(11,119)</b>
<b>Earmarked</b>										
Ward Based Activity	(577)	-	(577)	289	(288)	-	-	-	-	-
Place Standard	(402)	-	(402)	201	(201)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub Total (member led)</b>	<b>(979)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(979)</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>(489)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Transformation	(1,480)	(2,500)	(3,980)	2,500	(1,480)	(1,480)	(1,480)	(1,480)	(1,480)	(1,480)
Development Funding	(914)	-	(914)	457	(457)	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Grants	(17,998)	-	(17,998)	3,000	(14,998)	(11,998)	(8,998)	(5,998)	(2,998)	-
Stronger Families	(688)	-	(688)	500	(188)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	(3,942)	-	(3,942)	1,139	(2,804)	(1,665)	(1,365)	(1,065)	(765)	(465)
Voluntary Revenue Provision	(6,504)	(4,819)	(11,323)		(11,323)	(18,749)	(27,294)	(36,358)	(44,734)	(50,183)
Strategic Budget Contingency	(3,500)	-	(3,500)	3,500	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Earmarked reserves sub-total</b>	<b>(36,005)</b>	<b>(7,319)</b>	<b>(43,324)</b>	<b>11,586</b>	<b>(31,739)</b>	<b>(33,892)</b>	<b>(39,137)</b>	<b>(44,901)</b>	<b>(49,977)</b>	<b>(52,128)</b>
<b>General Balances</b>	<b>(25,046)</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>(26,046)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(26,046)</b>	<b>(27,046)</b>	<b>(28,046)</b>	<b>(29,046)</b>	<b>(30,046)</b>	<b>(31,046)</b>
<b>Total usable reserves</b>	<b>(61,051)</b>	<b>(8,319)</b>	<b>(69,370)</b>	<b>11,586</b>	<b>(57,785)</b>	<b>(60,938)</b>	<b>(67,183)</b>	<b>(73,947)</b>	<b>(80,023)</b>	<b>(83,174)</b>
<b>Grand Total All Reserves</b>	<b>(73,066)</b>	<b>(8,319)</b>	<b>(81,385)</b>	<b>12,034</b>	<b>(69,352)</b>	<b>(72,057)</b>	<b>(78,302)</b>	<b>(85,066)</b>	<b>(91,142)</b>	<b>(94,293)</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>Transformation</b>	Set aside for strategic transformation developments over the next 12 to 24 months.
<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>Voluntary Revenue Provision</b>	To fund voluntary overpayments of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).
<b>Strategic Budget Contingency</b>	To fund budget pressures that may arise due to delays in implementing savings plans and/or issues that have arisen post the agreement of the budget.
<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	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>BASELINE BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>56.3</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>					
Government Funding Increase – maximum modelled uplift (no scaling down)	(4.5)	(8.0)	(11.5)	(11.5)	(11.5)
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>(4.5)</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	<b>(11.5)</b>	<b>(11.5)</b>	<b>(11.5)</b>
<b>SPEND</b>					
Adult Social Care demand pressures – 5% lower than baseline assumptions	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.5)	(2.0)	(2.5)
Looked after Children demand pressures – 5% lower than baseline assumptions	(0.3)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(0.5)
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>(0.8)</b>	<b>(1.5)</b>	<b>(2.0)</b>	<b>(2.5)</b>	<b>(3.0)</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGES FROM BASELINE</b>	<b>(5.3)</b>	<b>(9.5)</b>	<b>(13.5)</b>	<b>(14.0)</b>	<b>(14.5)</b>
<b>BEST CASE SCENARIO - BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>41.8</b>

WORST CASE SCENARIO	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>BASELINE BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>56.3</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>					
Government Funding Increase –baseline assumptions halved	3.4	6.0	8.6	8.6	8.6
Food Waste Collection Funding from Government not received	-	-	5.8	5.8	5.8
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>14.4</b>
<b>SPEND</b>					
Pay Uplift 2026/27 onwards: Increased to 4%; compared to 3.5% baseline level	1.2	2.4	3.6	4.8	6.0
Adult Social Care demand pressures – 5% higher than baseline assumptions	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
Looked after Children demand pressures – 5% higher than baseline assumptions	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>TOTAL SPEND</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGES FROM BASELINE</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>23.4</b>
<b>WORST CASE SCENARIO - BUDGET GAP</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>79.7</b>

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary	MTFS UPDATE						Total £'000
	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31- 2032/33 £'000	
<b>General Fund:</b>							
<b>Children &amp; Families</b>							
Learning & Early Support	25,177	28,911	20,989	3,827	2,750	0	<b>81,654</b>
Resources, Improvement & Partnership	550	662	621	0	0	0	<b>1,833</b>
	<b>25,727</b>	<b>29,573</b>	<b>21,610</b>	<b>3,827</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83,487</b>
<b>Adults &amp; Health</b>							
Communities & Access Services	413	3,047	283	0	0	0	<b>3,743</b>
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health	3,575	5,377	2,748	0	0	0	<b>11,700</b>
Adults Social Care Operation	235	0	0	0	0	0	<b>235</b>
	<b>4,223</b>	<b>8,424</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,678</b>
<b>Place</b>							
Skills & Regeneration	52,264	64,605	31,616	27,883	32,176	4,021	<b>212,565</b>
Development	108,220	111,243	66,031	30,494	37,470	32,554	<b>386,012</b>
Highways and Streetscene	36,608	36,155	20,316	19,530	26,243	9,681	<b>148,533</b>
Environment, Strategy & Climate Change	1,516	11,577	3,829	0	2,050	0	<b>18,972</b>
	<b>198,608</b>	<b>223,580</b>	<b>121,792</b>	<b>77,907</b>	<b>97,939</b>	<b>46,256</b>	<b>766,082</b>

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary

Capital Plan Expenditure Summary	MTFS UPDATE						Total £'000
	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31- 2032/33 £'000	
<b>General Fund:</b>							
<b>Public Health &amp; Corporate Resources</b>							
Strategy & innovation	9,736	11,306	11,246	11,116	10,676	8224	<b>62,304</b>
Culture & Visitor Economy	909	375	665	453	200	0	<b>2,602</b>
	<b>10,645</b>	<b>11,681</b>	<b>11,911</b>	<b>11,569</b>	<b>10,876</b>	<b>8,224</b>	<b>64,906</b>
<b>General Fund Capital Plan</b>	<b>239,203</b>	<b>273,258</b>	<b>158,344</b>	<b>93,303</b>	<b>111,565</b>	<b>54,480</b>	<b>930,153</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account:</b>							
Strategic Priorities	7,909	14,779	26,900	32,178	17,634	18,525	<b>117,925</b>
Baseline	36,775	46,780	46,344	47,119	46,180	48,227	<b>271,425</b>
<b>HRA Capital Plan</b>	<b>44,684</b>	<b>61,559</b>	<b>73,244</b>	<b>79,297</b>	<b>63,814</b>	<b>66,752</b>	<b>389,350</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>283,887</b>	<b>334,817</b>	<b>231,588</b>	<b>172,600</b>	<b>175,379</b>	<b>121,232</b>	<b>1,319,503</b>

## Capital Plan Funding Summary

## Appendix D

General Fund Funding Summary	MTFS UPDATE						Total £'000
	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31- 2032/33 £'000	
Capital Grants/Contributions	122,866	113,513	66,704	45,182	49,410	4,021	<b>401,696</b>
Earmarked Capital Receipts	8,899	10,969	390	3,390	3,390	0	<b>27,038</b>
Service Funded Prudential Borrowing	16,383	30,626	17,187	10,000	12,050	8,000	<b>94,246</b>
Non-Earmarked Capital Receipts	1,272	1,080	1,176	756	756	0	<b>5,040</b>
Corporate Prudential Borrowing	89,783	117,070	72,887	33,975	45,959	42,459	<b>402,133</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND FUNDING</b>	<b>239,203</b>	<b>273,258</b>	<b>158,344</b>	<b>93,303</b>	<b>111,565</b>	<b>54,480</b>	<b>930,153</b>

Housing Revenue Account Funding Summary	MTFS UPDATE						Total £'000
	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31- 2032/33 £'000	
Capital Grants/Contributions	1,998	3,169	6,226	8,507	3,981	5,193	<b>29,074</b>
Earmarked Capital Receipts	2,074	1,749	9,592	14,071	2,150	3,040	<b>32,676</b>
Flexible Capital Receipts	3,922	3,330	3,626	2,331	2,331	2,331	<b>17,871</b>
Reserves / Revenue Contributions	12,701	2,822	2,546	2,347	2,500	2,500	<b>25,416</b>
Reserves - MRR	23,989	25,489	26,254	27,041	27,852	28,688	<b>159,313</b>
Corporate Prudential Borrowing	0	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	<b>125,000</b>
<b>HRA FUNDING</b>	<b>44,684</b>	<b>61,559</b>	<b>73,244</b>	<b>79,297</b>	<b>63,814</b>	<b>66,752</b>	<b>389,350</b>

APPENDIX E

Prioritisation Matrix for Capital Schemes

CRITERIA	Scoring Method		Weighting
<b>Statutory / Legal / Health &amp; Safety Duties</b>		<b>Does the project contribute to fulfilling a genuine statutory function? Is there a legislative requirement which underlies the project? Is there a Health &amp; Safety need?</b>	
	10	Project has a specific immediate statutory or legal requirement and/or has immediate health and safety need	30%
	5	Services based on statutory/health and safety duties, but there is some degree of discretion about how the function is carried out	
	0	Services where the Council can exercise complete discretion, with no indication of status	
<b>Council Plan Priorities</b>		<b>How does this project fit within the priorities of the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan?</b>	
	10	Meets all Council Priorities	15%
	7	Meets 2 or 3 Council Priorities	
	3	Meets 1 Council Priority	
	0	Does not meet any Council Priorities	
<b>Funding</b>		<b>Is a substantial proportion of the cost covered by external funding, or does the Council need to fund the scheme from its own resources.</b>	
	10	Above 75% externally funded. Will generate a specifically identified capital receipt in excess of amount borrowed.	20%
	7	Above 25% and up to 75% external funded identified	
	3	0-25% external funding identified. Will generate a specifically identified capital receipt less than amount borrowed.	
	0	0-25% external funding identified. No identified capital receipts	
<b>Service Impact</b>		<b>Where failure to provide a project will have a significant adverse impact on service delivery or managing demand for services. If the scheme is not pursued or is delayed, is there likely to be a failure of a Council service? Reputational Risk</b>	
	10	Very High Risk – high level of impact. Essential to Council’s Core business – can’t function without it	15%
	5	Medium Risk. Loss of efficiencies/revenue or increased costs	
	0	No Risk. Doesn’t affect Council’s core business or infrastructure	
<b>Revenue Implications</b>		<b>What are the ongoing revenue costs associated with the development. Are the future costs sustainable? Does the scheme produce any long-term savings for the Council e.g. reduced repairs and maintenance/energy costs?</b>	
	10	Invest to Save scheme, delivering clear demonstrable income or revenue savings above capital charges and funding of future revenue costs identified	20%
	8	Capital charges equally offset by service savings	
	5	Some additional savings but capital charges are greater than operating costs	
	3	Capital costs are not covered but no additional operating costs identified	
	0	There are no revenue savings and no revenue funding identified, incurring both increased borrowing and operating costs	

### 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 2026/27, 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£22.0m**. The balance, as per the approved budget, as at March 2026 is forecast at £26.0m

## Appendix F

**Table 1: Risk Assessment for General Fund Working Balance – 2026/27**

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
1,200	2,500	<p><b>Pay</b> – the opening MTFS included annual provision for a 3% pay award for 25/26 (recently settled at 3.2%) and 3.5% thereafter. As future pay awards within the MTFS period are not yet agreed, there is a risk of the current assumptions on pay being at variance to the MTFS assumptions. An increase of 1% in the annual pay award would result in an increased cost of c£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 £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 and other known contractual uplifts). Inflation is currently expected to peak at 4% in late 2025 before falling back to the Bank of England target level of 2% in 2027. This 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 £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>
2,000	3,000	<p><b>Income from Fees and Charges</b> – With continuing impact of the cost of living pressures 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 / parking / attractions).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £1m    Medium £2.0m    High £3.0m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £2.0m</b></p>

## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
3,000	7,000	<p><b>Demand Led Pressures on Services</b> – the most significant is likely to be the ongoing impact of demand for Council services, particularly in the social care sector, but more recently seen in Home to School transport and the provision of temporary accommodation.</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 the continuing backlog of pressures in the Health Service.</p> <p>Home to School Transport is also subject to significant demand-led pressures, especially over recent years. The Council is awaiting a Government White Paper on SEND which may impact demand.</p> <p>Both Housing and Council Tax Support may also come under pressure given the prevailing 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, increases in, supported accommodation services (referred to below) or temporary accommodation 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 Provider. There has also been a very large increase over recent years in both the volume and cost for Temporary Accommodation. 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.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £1.0m Medium £3.0m High £7.0m</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>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.</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 2026/27 (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.</p> <p>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 MTFS does not contain any future years where the core funding level of the Council is known yet, 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 £0.5m    Medium £1.0m    High £2m</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: £0.5m</b></p>
500	1,000	<p><b>Unbudgeted borrowing costs</b> – there is a risk that unbudgeted in-year overspends are funded by a reduction in reserves. This may necessitate the Council having to undertake external borrowing to fund its Capital Plan at a time when interest rates are relatively high (as the Council cannot borrow internally). There is also the risk of unbudgeted overspends on large regeneration projects, which would increase in-year external borrowing. The interest cost of a £20m loan at 5% would be c £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: 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
1,500	1,500	<p><b>Delay in repayment or default on loans made by the Council or having to set aside additional sums for the provision for bad debts</b> – there is a risk on loans made by the Council to third party organisations potentially resulting in the need to write off the loans, or to agree to extend loan repayment period; and there is a risk that the amount provided for bad debt in services (in either the revenue budget or held on the balance sheet is insufficient).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £500k    Medium £1.5m    High £2m</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £1.5m</b></p>
1,000	1,000	<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. The Government has extended the statutory override to 29/30 when it will be removed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0    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>
5,000	5,000	<p><b>DSG Deficit / Safety Valve Programme</b> – there is a continued risk that the DSG deficit continues to increase beyond the assumed level in the Safety Valve agreement and that the Government ends the Statutory Override in March 2028 without an adequate solution to SEND in place. 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 and whether or not Government have provided funding for historic deficits, it could result in the need for an Exceptional Financial Support agreement with MHCLG (the expected year-end deficit balance at 31/3/26 is £76m – with an annual cost of carry c£4m. At £76m the deficit is beyond the Council's Usable Revenue Reserves.</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: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £5m</b></p>
0	0	<p><b>Affordability of Capital Plan / 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 (over £30m) of receipts required for the General Fund Capital Plan. 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>

## Appendix F

Minimum £000	Desirable £000	Area of expenditure / Explanation of risk / Justification for Reserves
		<p><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0k    Medium £1.0m    High £2.0m</b></p> <p><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0k</b></p>
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 £57m input tax in 2024/25 &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><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £0m    Medium £0m    High £3m</b></p> <p><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Low</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £0m</b></p>
2,500	2,500	<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 2026/27. 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 £2.5m.</p> <p><b>Assessment: Degree of risk / reserve needed:</b>  <b>Low £1.3m    Medium £2.5m    High £3.9m</b></p> <p><b>Likelihood of risk occurring: Medium</b>  <b>Minimum reserve needed: £2.5m</b></p>
22,000	31,000	<b>Total</b>

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**REPORT TITLE: Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework – Development Plan Document**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (if applicable)</b>	<b>Cllr Graham Turner/Cllr Moses Crook</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No No</b>

**Purpose of Report:**

To seek Council authority to produce a Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document (Joint WY Mass Transit SDF DPD) (“DPD”). The DPD would provide a co-ordinated strategic planning approach for the five West Yorkshire Councils supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority setting an agreed planning framework and to be used as a tool to support Mass Transit business cases.

It is a Council function to authorise the commencement a development plan document (in this case the Joint WY Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document (recommendation 1) by making an agreement with the other four West Yorkshire Councils to formulate and prepare the DPD. [and to delegate authority to a Joint Member Committee to undertake statutory required development plan consultation (recommendation 2).]

It is a Cabinet function to approve the establishment of the joint member committee to support the preparation of the document.

The approval of the establishment of the joint member committee was approved at Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025.This is subject to Council approval of this report in relation to Recommendation 1.

**Recommendations:**

**Cabinet recommends to Full Council that it approve :**

**Recommendation 1 – Authorise the making of an agreement with Leeds City Council , Bradford City Council , Wakefield Council and Calderdale Council to start of the preparation of a Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Part 1 Development Plan Document.(“DPD”)**

**Recommendation 2 – Council delegates the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 consultation and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document to the WYCA**

**Joint Member Committee in so far as it's a council planning function relating to the DPD**

Council to delegate authority to authorise initial early engagement and public consultation (Regulation 18) on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document and to prepare the submission draft and consultation for Regulation 19 to the Joint Member Committee

**Reasons for Recommendations:**

- Council is recommended to authorise the process of drafting the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document. The DPD will set out the commitment to the Mass Transit process across the West Yorkshire area, to ensure consistency and set high level policy parameters.
- Council approval is sought for the delegation to the Joint Member Committee to undertake early engagement and consultation on the initial draft Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document and delegate consultation on the submission version of the document (Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

**Resource Implications:**

The drafting of the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team where applicable and additional resourcing has been committed to by WYCA via Terms of Reference for the work moving forwards.

The formulation and preparation of a DPD as opposed to an individual Council approach is an efficient and economical way of enabling statutory planning policies for each of the 5 West Yorkshire Councils .

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

David Shepherd (Executive Director for Place) – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**Date signed off by the Service Director for Finance**

Kevin Mulvaney (Service Director – Finance) – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**Date signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)**

Samantha Lawton (Service Director – Legal/Governance) - 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:**

Cllr Graham Turner/Cllr Eric Firth/Cllr Moses Crook:  
Joint Transport/Regeneration PHB: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes

## **1. Executive Summary**

Kirklees Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), and the wider constituent authorities have collectively identified the need for a coordinated strategic planning approach to guide the integration of Mass Transit across West Yorkshire. A key coordination point was the WYCA meeting on 8 May 2025 where a paper was presented to recommend this approach [WYCA - Modern Gov](#) The approach was fully supported at the meeting.

WYCA is endorsing the preparation of a Mass Transit (MT) system aimed at enhancing connectivity, driving economic growth, and contributing to net zero targets. The Mass Transit programme is targeting Spring 2027 for submission of the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) with spades in the ground in 2028. Given the project timelines, varied status of Local Plans and likely timescales associated with Regional Planning (West Yorkshire Spatial Strategy), a standalone statutory planning document is the best way to secure a clear policy framework to be in place to support the Mass Transit TWAO programme.

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

The Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document would contain high level commitment and strategic policies relating to the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system.

Once adopted, this would carry the same weight as the Kirklees Local Plan and become part of this Council's Development Plan. As context, the Development Plan Document (DPD) preparation process broadly includes:

- Early engagement / public consultation on initial draft (Regulation 18 consultation) (Joint Committee)
- Public consultation on a Publication Draft (Regulation 19 consultation) (Joint Committee)
- Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State for independent examination (Full Council)
- An Examination in Public with potential formal consultation on Main Modifications during the Examination in Public
- Adoption - Council

The proposed Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will be structured into two strategic planning documents which will be led collectively by Local Planning Authorities and provide a spatial planning framework to align spatial plans with transport priorities and support the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) process. WYCA does not currently have statutory planning powers which is why a joined-up approach across the districts is required to facilitate the timelines for the Mass Transit project.

The Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will set out a long-term 25-year vision and policy framework for guiding sustainable growth, land use, and development decisions in areas influenced by mass transit investment. It will provide a consistent, evidence-based approach to integrating transport and spatial planning across the region.

It is intended the Joint WYCA Mass Transit SDF policy document once adopted will support Kirklees key overarching strategies and priorities identified in the Council Plan, Inclusive Economic Strategy, Environment Strategy, Joint Health and Well Being Strategy, Inclusive Communities Framework and the Kirklees Transport Strategy by:

- **Supporting economic growth through partnership working**

Driving local economic development by working with WYCA, government bodies, businesses, and communities. Focus on attracting investment, supporting innovation, and creating jobs.

- **Supporting transport network enhancement and strategic Infrastructure**

Improving internal and external connectivity—promoting better links within Kirklees and to surrounding cities. Investing in road, rail, and active travel infrastructure to support growth. Supporting the West Yorkshire Mass Transit programme and the integration of major infrastructure projects like the TransPennine and Penistone Line upgrades. The delivery of core highway transport schemes to keep the district moving.

- **Active travel and sustainable mobility**

Expanding and connecting active travel routes to offer safe alternatives to car use and promote healthier lifestyles. Promoting walking, cycling, and public transport as primary modes for short journeys. Ensuring transport is affordable, reliable, accessible and sustainable for all communities.

- **Housing, economic and transport integration**

- Aligning new housing, town centre regeneration and economic growth opportunities with sustainable transport infrastructure.

### **Inclusive access**

Ensuring equal access through improved transport for all residents in areas of deprivation experiencing high levels of transport related social exclusion - improving accessibility to jobs and education opportunities.

- **Environmental and climate change goals**

Supporting the Councils net zero commitment to carbon reduction and environmental sustainability through modal shift and green infrastructure opportunities.

The Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework will be structured via two Joint Development Plan Documents (JDPDs) as follows:

### **Part One – West Yorkshire-Wide Strategic Spatial Planning Policy Document (2026-2056):**

- Establishes a high-level strategic planning policy framework for Mass Transit, ensuring integration into emerging Local Plans and providing a basis for future planning applications that support sustainable development.
- Provides strategic policies supporting transit-oriented development, economic growth, regeneration, and environmental sustainability.
- Aligns with broader transport and spatial planning objectives to enable coordinated infrastructure investment.

## **Part Two – Corridor-Specific Policies and Land Use Proposals:**

- Focuses on the South Leeds Corridor (potentially extending to Dewsbury) and the Leeds-Bradford Corridor as part of Phase One business case proposals.
- Defines policies and land use proposals to support the delivery of Mass Transit infrastructure and associated economic growth.
- Serves as a template for future corridor-wide planning as subsequent phases of Mass Transit are developed.

It is proposed that the five Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) collectively agree to produce and adopt the SDF Part one as a Joint Development Plan Document (JDPD) which could sit within their wider Local Plans.

It should be noted Part One DPD will not identify specific route corridors or seek to allocate land for development. More detailed route corridor identification will form part of Part Two document production, and this first iteration will be focused on agreed Mass Transit Phase 1 routes Leeds to South Leeds and Leeds to Bradford.

Additional feasibility work will be undertaken as part of the Dewsbury Line Development Project which will run alongside the timescales anticipated for Part One DPD production. It was agreed at Combined Authority meeting in March 2024 to fund the Dewsbury Line Development Project to collaboratively work with Kirklees and Leeds districts to explore future world scenarios where a mass transit route extends from South Leeds to Dewsbury and reflect growth ambitions for both authorities. Should this be taken forward as an option in the future phases work for Mass Transit, a future Part Two DPD may be developed with Kirklees which would provide the planning framework for this route corridor and associated development.

In terms of the timescales to produce Mass Transit Part One DPD – work is anticipated to start on the document in October 2025 with the intention of all five districts adopting the document in March 2027.

## **Collaborative Process and Governance**

To oversee and input into this work, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is proposing a Joint Member Committee including a nominated Cabinet Member from each of the West Yorkshire authorities (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield) to work alongside an officer working group. It is proposed that the Joint Member Committee would also make the decision on initial consultation and on submission draft consultation (Regulations 18 and 19 consultations). A working group of specialist officers would have day to day involvement in the drafting of the document as well as the appointed consultants. WYCA are requesting that each Council approve the initial consultation stages (Regulation 18 and 19) on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document, subject to approval of the content by the Joint Member Committee.

Submission to the Secretary of State is to be independently examined and final adoption of the document would still be taken in accordance with the Council's constitution by Council as appropriate. The eventual adoption of the Development Plan Document would be a decision for Council.

WYCA has secured consultancy support to draft the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document with a Steering Group (WYCA + Local Authorities Representatives) set up to guide the document production in a collaborative way. This will be composed of officers from WYCA and the five local authorities and will:

- facilitate discussions, ensuring strategic alignment, and provides WYCA's technical input into the SDF.
- ensure policy consistency and integration with local plans.

Cabinet gave approval to the establishment of a Joint Committee (Decision-Making Body) legally constituted under the provisions of Sections (101)5, 102(1)(b) and 102(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 at the 8<sup>th</sup> July Cabinet meeting. This is subject to Council's agreement of the recommendation in this report.

This will be composed of Cabinet Members from all five local authorities. It is also proposed to co-opt the Mayor of West Yorkshire onto this committee as a non-voting member. The need for this joint committee is to expedite the decision-making process for the MT SDF Joint DPD, whilst still retaining political oversight and local authority autonomy of the process. The Joint Committee would be responsible for coordinating and preparing the MT SDF Joint DPD, including approval to consult on the draft and submission draft of the MT SDF Joint DPD.

Approval of submission of the Mass Transit SDF Joint DPD and final adoption will remain a Council responsibility for each authority, involving a formal resolution by each districts Council to incorporate the MT SDF Joint DPD into their Local Plan. This process will follow each LPA's statutory procedures for Development Plan Documents.

The Kirklees district is not affected by the earlier phases of the Mass Transit proposals which initially focus on the route between Leeds and Bradford. Although the Kirklees district is not affected by the earlier phases, it is important that the overarching policy approach is co-ordinated between each Council from the beginning to ensure the Mass Transit project co-ordinates effectively as a whole during the development of the project and syncs with anticipated growth ambitions reflected in associated local plans, regeneration frameworks and regional strategies. The inclusion of all districts at this early phase ensures that districts can shape and input into the spatial planning framework for their own areas at a regional level and ensure that growth ambitions over the longer-term period are effectively considered.

In addition, the intention of the first DPD document is not to identify or safeguard specific route options but to provide high level strategic policy support to the development of the scheme across the region. Such co-ordination through a Development Plan Document provides support for the associated Transport and Works Act Order required to implement mass transit through the first phase which will be submitted to the secretary of state in due course.

The Council has a legal duty to 'prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their local development scheme' ('LDS'). The LDS lists the existing adopted Planning Policy and Guidance documents as well as details, including the timetable for preparation, of emerging Neighbourhood Plans and planning guidance.

If Council authorises the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Development Plan Document, this will necessitate a revision of the Local Development Scheme, the statutory list of plan proposals that the Council is obliged to keep up to date and published. It is a Cabinet function

to approve a Local Development Scheme. Cabinet 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 approved a revised Local Development Scheme including (subject to Council approval to commence the DPD), proposed text and a timeline to produce the Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document.

It is proposed that Council authorise:

- Kirklees officers commencing work to draft the Spatial Development Framework as a Joint DPD (**Recommendation 1**)
- Delegated approval to consult on the early draft (Regulation 18) and submission draft (Regulation 19) to the Joint Member Committee when established (**Recommendation 2**)

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

#### **3.1 Council Plan**

The development of a planning framework to support opportunities for West Yorkshire Mass Transit supports Council Plan priorities including improved, quality places, encouraging thriving communities, securing economic growth for the district, encouraging inclusivity. It also advocates a positive approach to working with our regional partners to deliver these joint ambitions.

#### **3.2 Financial Implications**

The drafting of the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team where applicable. Additional support is available via WYCA where required.

#### **3.3 Legal Implications**

WYCA currently does not have planning powers and so cannot adopt the proposed Spatial Development Framework as a policy that carries the weight of a development plan document. That can only be done by the individual planning authorities or, as here, jointly between authorities.

The terms of reference for the Joint Member Committee formalises the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Member Committee which, legally constituted under the provisions of Sections (101)5, 102(1)(b) and 102(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 is legally recognised and will enable collaborative decision-making while ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. This was approved at Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

#### Setting up a Joint Member Committee for to prepare a joint DPD

Regulation 4(1)(c) and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirms the making of a development plan document (DPD) involves split functions. Reg 4(3) specifies those tasks that are not the responsibility of the executive and are the sole responsibility of each Council's full council as follows:

- i. Responsibility for giving of instructions to the executive to reconsider the draft joint development plan document submitted by the Executive for the authority's consideration.
- ii. The amendment of the draft joint development plan document submitted by the Executive for the full Council's consideration.

- iii. The approval of the joint development plan document for the purposes of submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- iv. The adoption of the joint development plan document.

Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 allows two or more authorities to agree to formulate and prepare a joint local development plan document. In order to streamline executive decision making across West Yorkshire Councils, the Cabinet have subject to full Council's decision to commence work on the DPD, agreed to establish a Joint Member Committee to exercise executive planning functions relating to the preparation of the DPD. Sections 101(5) and 102(1)(b) Local Government Act 1972 permit local authorities to discharge their functions jointly and do so via a joint committee to whom the functions are delegated. Further, section 9EA Local Government Act 2000 and Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 permits a local authority to delegate certain executive functions to a joint committee.

### Preparation and Consultation

The process for making the DPD is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012 Regulations)

The proposed Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Part 1 is a local development document as defined in Reg 5 of the 2012 Regulations. Regulations 18 and 19 as referred to in the text above place requirements on authorities proposing to make such a plan to consult and publish proposals before submitting them to the Secretary of State for approval and subsequently adopting them.

### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

The MT SDF will consider a planning framework and suite of policies that support the Regional Climate Plan and Council's Climate Action Plan as part of the Council's Climate Emergency. It will also consider how planning interventions can contribute towards reducing carbon emissions associated with the progression of the Mass Transit project.

### **3.5 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

**Human Resources** – For the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document, the drafting of the document would be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Support for this process will be accommodated within existing staff resources and revenue budget within the Planning Policy team and Major Projects Team where applicable.

**Inclusive Impact Assessment** – An IIA assessment has been completed. No equality implications of the recommendations have been identified as these relate to agreeing to prepare a Development Plan Document (rather than agreeing the content) and agreeing to publishing a timetable for the preparation of planning documents. Equality issues will be considered when planning policy or guidance documents are prepared including formal public consultation on emerging documents. [Integrated Impact Assessments | Kirklees Council](#)

## **4. Consultation**

WYCA will facilitate consultation and incorporate the requirements of all districts Statement of Community Involvement on their own website and update when needed, as will the Council as per the regulations set out in 10A(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Respondents will be notified of its consultation events and formal adoption as part of our feedback processes. There will be formal public consultation

on the joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document referred to in the Local Development Scheme.

## 5. Engagement

See above

## 6. Options

### 6.1 Options considered:

#### **Recommendation 1 – Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document preparation**

Option 1 – Council authorises the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Spatial Development Framework Mass Transit Development Plan Document (**recommended**)

Option 2 – Council do not authorise the preparation of a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit Spatial Development Framework Development Plan Document. This option is not recommended as it would mean Kirklees Council were not involved in the preparation of this document which will support the delivery of Mass Transit and ensure consistency across the West Yorkshire area. The exclusion of Kirklees at this early phase would potentially reduce how Kirklees could shape and input into the spatial planning framework at a regional level as it develops and influence longer term growth ambitions for Kirklees.

#### **Recommendation 2 – Delegate the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire-Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Member Committee in so far as it's a Council planning function relating to the DPD**

Option 1 – Council to delegate decision making powers to authorise early engagement and public consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document (Regulation 18 and 19 consultation) to the Joint Member Committee (**recommended**) – this would avoid delays seeking a formal decision from each of the five Councils in relation to the early consultation document and submission document. Submission to the Secretary of State to be independently examined and the eventual adoption would be made by each individual Council in accordance with their Constitution.

Option 2 – The alternative option of not delegating decision making powers would mean that the powers to authorise early engagement and public consultation on an initial draft and submission draft would incur delays to the co-ordination of the joint DPD process across the five districts.

### 6.2 Reasons for recommended options:

#### **Recommendation 1 – Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document preparation**

Council approval to begin the process of drafting a joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document is important to set out the commitment to the Mass Transit process across the West Yorkshire area, ensure consistency and set high level policy parameters and help shape the spatial planning framework at a regional level. This document would be prepared by consultants appointed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with proposed input from a Joint Members Committee (consisting of a nominated Cabinet Member from each Council) and an officer working group (see Recommendation 2).

**Recommendation 2 – Delegate the decision to undertake initial Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Members Committee in so far as it's a Council planning function relating to the DPD**

Approval is sought for the delegation of the decision to undertake early engagement and consult on the initial draft Joint West Yorkshire Mass Transit SDF Development Plan Document to the Joint Member Committee and delegation to consult on the submission version of the document (Regulation 18 and 19). This will avoid delays during the drafting of the document and progressing the earlier stages of public consultation. It will still be ensured that the formal decisions to submit the document to the Secretary of State to be independently examined, and the decision to adopt the final DPD would be taken by each Council in accordance with their Constitution.

**7. Next steps and timelines**

If recommendation in this report today are approved by Council, officers can begin preparatory work on the SDF with immediate effect.

The joint committee, officer working groups, project boards for the SDF are proposed to be set up and in place by October 2025.

**8. Contact officer**

Mathias Franklin – Head of Planning  
[Mathias.franklin@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Mathias.franklin@kirklees.gov.uk)

Elaine Orme – Senior Planner  
[Elaine.orme@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.orme@kirklees.gov.uk)

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

Kirklees Cabinet meeting 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025

WYCA CA meeting 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025- [WYCA - Modern Gov](#)

**10. Appendices - None**

**11. Service Director responsible**

David Wildman (Interim – Service Director Skills and Regeneration)

[David.wildman@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:David.wildman@kirklees.gov.uk)



**REPORT TITLE: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>
<b>Cabinet Member (if applicable)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	<b>No No</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b> In line with constitutional requirements, this report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the 2024/25 municipal year to Council.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That Council receive and note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be in line with constitutional requirements to submit an Annual Report to Council.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<p><b>Date signed off by <u>Executive 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 and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b></p>	<p>Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 19.8.25</p> <p>Not applicable</p> <p>Samantha Lawton – 4.9.25</p>

**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 2024/25.
- 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 2024/25. 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 2024/25
- 10. Service Director responsible**  
Samantha Lawton, Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

## **2024/25**

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# Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for 2024–25. This report outlines a year of constructive and wide-ranging scrutiny, during which the Committee and Panels have continued to play a key role in supporting open, accountable, and evidence-based decision-making across Kirklees Council.

This year, we have delivered a comprehensive programme of work, providing oversight on core corporate issues such as finance, performance, and risk. We scrutinised all three quarterly Corporate Financial Monitoring Reports and provided detailed feedback on the draft 2025/26 budget, with recommendations that emphasised clarity, local impact, and early engagement with scrutiny. We also considered the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and provided challenge on strategic alignment, resilience, and community enablement.

Our pre-decision scrutiny has helped shape major Council plans and policies, including the Council Plan 2025/26, the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, and the emerging Tourism Strategy. In each case, the Committee sought to ensure these strategies are forward-looking, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

We received progress updates on the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and were pleased to see the impact of the Safeguarding Champion initiative. Our work on social connectivity led to a detailed action plan being produced in response to our recommendations—an example of scrutiny influencing positive change on the ground.

Importantly, we undertook a visit to the Employee Health Care Service as part of our ongoing interest in workforce wellbeing and the People Strategy. This provided valuable insight into service delivery and staff support. A visit to the Huddersfield Customer Service Centre is also planned, to support our scrutiny of the integration of library and customer services. We anticipate arranging further visits throughout the year, where these can enhance our understanding and help inform our work.

We also maintained oversight of the Council's work on external funding and partnership development, encouraging a 'think funding' approach across scrutiny panels. In May 2025, we welcomed an update on the Council's work to support veterans and their families through the Armed Forces Covenant, reflecting our ongoing commitment to inclusive service delivery.

This work would not be possible without the constructive relationships we enjoy with Cabinet members, officers, and our scrutiny colleagues. I extend my thanks to all Committee members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the four Standing Scrutiny Panels for their dedication, and to the officers who support our work with professionalism and rigour.

Looking ahead, the Committee remains committed to strong, evidence-informed scrutiny that supports continuous improvement and ensures that the voices of Kirklees residents continue to shape the Council's priorities and services.



**Councillor Cahal Burke**

# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee 2024/25

## Committee Membership

### Committee Membership

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Councillor Cahal Burke

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Councillor Itrat Ali

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Councillor Zarina Amin

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Councillor Andrew Cooper

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Councillor Jo Lawson

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## Work Programme 2024/25

- Leader, Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holders' Priorities
- Financial Management of the Council including the Budget Proposals for 2025/26.
- Council Plan – Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Crime and Disorder:
  - Communities Partnership Plan
  - Annual Refresh of the Strategic Impact Assessment
- Council Plan and Corporate Performance – Quarterly Reports
- Corporate Risk – Quarterly Reports
- Procurement – Overview of Implementation of the Procurement Act 2023
- Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Progress Report
- People Strategy Update
- Corporate Safeguarding – Update on Implementation of Refreshed Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-27 Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Scrutiny Final Report – Social Connectivity in Kirklees.
- Partnership Working and External Funding Opportunities.
- Tourism Strategy – Pre-Decision Scrutiny

In addition to the formal meetings of the Committee, informal sessions took place to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the delivery model for the libraries and early engagement in relation to the action plan to respond to the recommendations made as a result of the LGA Peer Challenge in November 2024.

The Committee received briefing notes, on a regular basis, to assist Members in maintaining an overview of potential and forthcoming legislation and Government policy relevant to local government, with a view to consideration of any impact on the Council at an early stage.

The Chair of Scrutiny received briefings during 2024/25, from the Service Director – Finance and the Deputy Chief Executive and held regular meetings with the Leader and the Cabinet Members for the Finance and Corporate Portfolios.

## Committee Highlights

### Leader of Council, Corporate and Finance Portfolio Holders' Priorities

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In September 2024, Councillor Carole Pattison, the Leader of Council and the Portfolio Holders for Finance, Councillor Graham Turner, and Corporate, Councillor Tyler Hawkins, were welcomed to the meeting to talk about their priorities for 2024/25 and to provide an update in respect of recent outcomes.

It was explained that the long-term vision, eight shared outcomes, and four partnership strategies remained the same. The vision was for a district that combined 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. The priorities set out in the 2024/25 Council Plan would continue to be delivered:

- 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 new areas of focus across all portfolios for 2024/2025 were:

- Getting the basics right; a modern organisation that meets residents' expectations.
- Being a responsible organisation that protects the vulnerable and drives sustainability.
- Working with partners to empower people to thrive, including through good local health services, education opportunities and housing.
- Driving local economic growth, particularly through the cultural sector, and making the most of opportunities through the Council's relationship with the Government and West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- Working in a more collaborative and inclusive way.

They responded to questions and comments from the Committee in respect of the following aspects:

- How the Council measured if it was meeting residents' expectations.
- The employee networks and the support they provided to staff.
- Addressing issues for vulnerable residents in accessing the Council's online system.
- The cross-party working approach and the intention to extend this, including wider collaborative working with external organisations and the voluntary sector.
- Evaluation of the impact of capital investment throughout Kirklees.

## Financial Monitoring – Budget proposals

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In January 2025, the Committee held a meeting focused on the budget proposals for 2025/26 and the Council Plan, in advance of the consideration by the Cabinet and Council.

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive gave an introduction, which included:

- The approach to the development of the Council Plan alongside, and to align with, the Council's Budget for 2025/26.
- The extended consultation undertaken, with the aim of increasing engagement and transparency.
- The six budget principles:
  1. Set a balanced budget and maintain a prudent level of reserves.
  2. Maintain a focus on prevention and intervention to prevent longer term pressures.
  3. Safeguard regeneration to support longer term economic growth.
  4. Maximise income and seek new funding opportunities.
  5. Prioritise transformation to increase efficiency and effectiveness of service.
  6. Maintain appropriate risk and governance practices.
- An initial early analysis of the key themes arising from the public consultation on the budget proposals.

This was followed by a presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Service Director for Finance which highlighted:

- The Local Government Financial Settlement final figures were anticipated to be received in early February. The indication of a move towards a fairer funding scheme and a multi-year settlement in the future was welcomed and would assist with longer term planning.
- The impact of rising demand and demographic/inflationary pressures, particularly in Adults and Children's Services.
- Headlines relating to the development of the budget for 2025/26, including the national context.
- The overall updated budget position for 2025/26 to achieve a balanced budget, including additional savings proposals of £11.4 million.

The Portfolio Holders and Executive Directors for Adults and Health, Children and Families, Place, including the Housing Revenue Account, and Public Health and Corporate Resources then detailed the key issues and key pressures affecting their work for 2025/26, the draft savings proposals for the year and the key borrowing for capital schemes.

At each stage, questions and comments were invited from Committee Members.

## **Outcomes:**

The opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals was welcomed and the comments below were reported to Cabinet in February 2025 and Council in March 2025:

- The improvements made in terms of the approach to pre-decision scrutiny in the last few years be welcomed and that it be recommended that engagement with scrutiny be undertaken at the earliest possible stage of decision-making or policy formulation.
- The proposals to support and assist communities to undertake activities and minimise barriers be welcomed.
- The importance of ward budgets, and, whilst recognising the need for monitoring, a review of the complexity of the governance arrangements would be welcomed.
- The importance of the principle of developing resilience in the approach to budget development.
- Consideration should be given to how the budget is presented, with the recommendation that additional detail should be provided for context and to help understanding of the impacts and risks associated with the key pressures and savings, and how they would be addressed.
- The improvements in children's services over the last ten years and the recent 'Good' Ofsted outcome was welcomed and that all those involved be thanked for their dedication and hard work in contributing to this.
- The important investment into early years and support and the efforts being made to reduce the numbers of out of area placements for children looked after is welcomed.



Figure 1 - OSMC meeting

## Quarterly Monitoring and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

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The Committee considered each of the quarterly corporate financial monitoring reports at meetings in September and December 2024 and April 2025.

Issues discussed included;

- Capacity within the organisation to achieve savings and take opportunities to generate new income.
- The tight control on recruitment, with posts that were essential for service delivery and income generation being released.
- The position in respect of the 'safety valve agreement', associated with the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit, and the engagement with the DfE on this issue.
- The allocation of funding associated with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, to recognise the cost to the authority of the collection, management, recycling and disposal of packaging waste.
- The Council budgeted for a level of voids and turnover of housing stock and this was typically 1%, in line with other local authorities. Anything above the 1% target would result in a loss of income. There was regular communication with the relevant Portfolio Holder on how the number, and the length of time they were empty, could be reduced.
- For 2025/26, the decision had been taken to deal with the pressures by funding many of the overspends and it was therefore expected that the number of variations reported would be lower.
- In respect of the impact of the rise in Employer's National Insurance on health and social care budgets; the Executive Director for Adults and Health was currently in negotiation with care providers to agree fee uplift rates and these should reflect the money put in to help fund those cost increases. The impact would be clearer after the first quarter of 2025/26.

- Significant additional provision had been made for children's and adult social care in 2025/26, and the updated Medium Term Financial Plan would reflect the projections for the next 3 to 5 years when it was submitted to Cabinet in the Autumn. Each Directorate had its own specific savings plans, agreed as part of the budget, which would be tracked on quarterly basis, and tight controls would remain in place on spend and vacancy management in the first quarter.

In September 2024 the Committee received a presentation focussing on:

- The principles of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- The funding assumptions used in developing the strategy.
- Analysis of the anticipated budget gap for 2025-26 and the measures to be taken to address the gap.

It was explained that the Chancellor would present the budget on 30<sup>th</sup> October and this would provide an indication, at sector-wide level, which could impact on the figures. A provisional settlement would be provided by the Government in December 2024 and the final settlement in February 2025.

## Outcomes

Ongoing engagement provided the Committee with a robust oversight of the corporate financial monitoring, facilitating Members to be aware of the current position and challenges and giving them the opportunity to put questions and offer challenge to the relevant Cabinet Member and Section 151 Officer. It provided Lead Members with important background information to be taken into account, as appropriate, when considering issues within the remit of their Panel.

## Overview of risk and performance management

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At meetings in September and December 2024 and April 2025 the Committee considered reports in respect of the quarterly corporate risk reports and performance management; progress against the 2024/25 Council Plan priorities and performance against the 2024/25 Council Key Measures.

### Outcomes:

The ongoing engagement provided the Committee with an overview of these important areas and the actions and mitigations being taken in each case. Members were able to question and offer challenge to the relevant Cabinet Member and lead officers. Lead Members were able to use this knowledge to take forward any issues within the remit of their Panel that may require further scrutiny.

Examples of issues considered, with links to red and amber risks, and performance data are set out below:

#### Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:

- Financial Management Monitoring, including the Capital Plan, and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- People Strategy
- Procurement
- Community Cohesion, Wellbeing & Resilience

- Corporate Safeguarding

#### Children's Scrutiny Panel:

- SEND Provision
- Children's Safeguarding

#### Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel:

- Emergency Planning & Business Continuity
- Health & Safety
- Climate Change

#### Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel:

- Housing Safety & Quality
- Homelessness and Housing Stock Availability

#### Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel:

- Adults Safeguarding

## Inclusion and diversity strategy

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In August, an early draft of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-2027 was submitted for pre-decision consideration and comment.

The strategy set out the broad direction for inclusion and diversity and provided an overarching framework, with some of the specific actions and projects being picked up in other strategies such as the 'Peoples Strategy' and 'Access to Services Strategy'.

The Council Plan, set out three organisational values, kindness, inclusion and pride and the strategy set out three elements to respond to the commitment to inclusion:

- **Compliance:** with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, and beyond.
- **Ambition:** to achieve the ambitions for inclusion as an organisational value. set against four themes, as set out below, which stemmed from the Local Government Association's Equality Framework. An overview of the objectives under each theme was provided:
  1. Understanding and working with our communities
  2. Leadership, partnership, and organisational development
  3. Responsive services and customer care
  4. Diverse and engaged workforce
- **Partnership:** to enable inclusion more broadly in Kirklees, as an anchor organisation, as a co-ordinator and facilitator, leading through partnerships, and as a service deliverer through services and programmes.

## Outcomes

The strategy was approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the Committee's comments, and the response to its recommendations were reported as follows:

- More detail be provided on how performance and impact will be monitored and understood
- Reference should be made to the role of elected members and how they could contribute and add value in terms of delivery of the aims of the strategy
- That the data in the draft strategy be reviewed, to ensure we have considered and included the latest available data.

Following this feedback, further details on understanding performance and impact have been added to the 'delivery' section of the strategy. A review of the data and intelligence has also taken place, and all figures have been updated where newer data was found to be available. There are now clear references with the data, to provide assurance around this. This has not affected the priorities in the strategy. Finally, there is now an objective under 'understanding and working with communities' around working with ward councillors, referencing their roles as place leaders in enabling place-based responses to opportunities and challenges. How this is done in each place will differ and will be supported by the unique strengths and assets in each area.

## **Government policy/legislation horizon scanning**

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Members of the Committee were provided with a briefing note, at regular intervals, to give them an overview of potential legislative and national policy changes, with a focus on those affecting local government and of particular relevance to the Committee's Work Programme.

### **Outcomes**

This information facilitated the Chair and Lead Members to maintain an overview, to identify any areas that may be of interest and to consider the potential impact on the Council at an early stage, with specific focus on any changes in respect of financial settlements and the approach to funding.

## **Scrutiny of social connectivity in Kirklees – Final report and action plan**

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During 2023/24 The Committee had 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

In September 2024, the Committee considered its 'Final Report - Scrutiny of Social Connectivity in Kirklees' along with the accompanying Action Plan, which had been completed by the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, in response to the Committee's recommendations.

Councillor Amanda Pinnock, the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, welcomed the comprehensive report and its recommendations. She noted the risk factors that could impact on social connectivity and stressed the importance of community hubs, the need to ensure spaces were available for people to come together and that provision was in place, from the Council and its partners, to support residents. She accepted the recommendations and undertook to ensure that this work continued. She thanked all those involved in the compilation and production of the report.

Councillor Elizabeth Smaje, the former Chair of the Committee, was also present for the item and highlighted a number of points that had arisen through the Committee's work on this issue, resulting in the ten recommendations. She thanked all those who had contributed to this work and the Cabinet Member for her response.

Members discussed early intervention and prevention being key in respect of addressing these issues, with wider awareness being a good starting point. It was acknowledged that Ward

Councillors were well positioned to do this, as well as supporting local groups, signposting people to relevant support and identifying gaps in provision.

## Outcomes

The Committee expressed thanks to all those involved in compiling and contributing to the report and welcomed the positive response to the Committee's recommendations, as set out in the action plan.

It asked that that further consideration be given to the issue of specific budget provision to enhance the social connectivity work already taking place and encourage collaborative working.

A progress report in respect of the Action Plan is included within the Committee's Work Programme for 2025/26.

## Opportunities - Partnership and Funding

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In December 2024 a presentation was given in respect of activities associated with identifying and pursuing partnership and funding opportunities that supported the Council priorities.

It was explained that constant monitoring took place in respect of opportunities for funding, collaborative working or associated with wider social or economic changes such as new technologies. Services worked closely with a wide range of partners, nationally, regionally and locally, including local community groups and the Council had a close working relationship with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Members received the following information in response to their questions and comments:

- An External Funding Framework was in place, which set out the guiding principles to encourage a consistent and strategic approach including, the need for early consideration of funding when designing projects and services. The framework aimed to embed a 'think funding' mindset within the organisation and a communications initiative was planned in the near future to further promote this principle; services were encouraged to be creative in this area.
- There was a wide range of training and development and central support available to services and partner agencies, in terms of identifying and assessing funding opportunities and bid development, amongst other things. Tools and resources were now in place to minimise the possibility of missed opportunities, including a comprehensive search and alert tool, 'Grant Finder'.
- To date, engagement and collaborative working with other local authorities on projects had been undertaken with West Yorkshire Combined Authority led bids, however the benefits of doing so were recognised and it would be considered in the future where it was possible.
- A tracking spreadsheet captured opportunities which the Council had applied for, or were considering but also recorded why a particular funding opportunity had not been progressed. The 'Go/No Go' process was an in-depth assessment used to decide if an opportunity was right for Kirklees and if the necessary resources were available to deliver a strong application and to deliver the project.

## Outcomes

The Committee resolved that, in order to support the ‘think funding’ mindset, Lead Members should ensure that external funding possibilities were considered, where appropriate and relevant to the issues being considered by their respective Panels.

## Council Plan 2025/26 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny

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The Leader of the Council and the Head of Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning gave a presentation in respect of the 2025/26 Council Plan, highlighting the following:

- The 2025/26 document represented a revision of the previous council plan and the intention was to undertake a more in-depth review during 2025.
- The longer-term elements such as the vision, shared outcomes and key partnership strategies had been in place for a significant period of time and remained in place, at this point,
- The plan set out the priorities and the areas of focus for the Council and the budget outlined the resourcing to align with those.
- The 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’.
- The eight shared outcomes:
  1. Shaped by People
  2. Best Start
  3. Well
  4. Independent
  5. Aspire and Achieve
  6. Sustainable Economy
  7. Safe and Cohesive
  8. Clean and Greenand the Council’s additional outcome; Efficient and Effective
- The importance of working in partnership to deliver the vision and the four key partnership strategies:
  1. Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  2. Environment Strategy
  3. Inclusive Communities Framework
  4. Inclusive Economy Strategy
- The principles and approach including place-based working and the supporting behaviours and values set out in the People Strategy.
- The four Council Plan priorities:
  1. Getting the basics right – a balanced budget and a modern organisation
  2. Protecting the vulnerable and achieving inclusion
  3. Thriving people and communities – now and over the longer-term
  4. Local economic growth – working with regional and national partners
- The areas of focus under each priority.

## Outcomes

As a result of the feedback received from the Committee, the following amendments were made:

- Refined the area of focus on external funding, so it emphasises the importance of bringing external funding into our partnership working, especially with community organisations.
- Added a more explicit reference to the environment as an aspect of 'place' under 'people, partners, place'.
- Added an additional 'area of focus' – to raise awareness of the Environment Strategy, engaging with partners and communities on our shared role in delivering its ambitions.
- With reference to a recommendation about the plan being more explicit about covering a longer timeframe than one-year, key features of the plan which apply to a timeframe longer than the 25/26 financial year were included in section 2.7 of the report to Council and a commitment was given to consider timeframes whilst undertaking the more in-depth review ahead of the 2026 Council Plan.

The final Council Plan for 2025/26 was considered by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and referred to Council with a recommendation that it be adopted. Council approved the plan on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 for incorporation into the Council's Policy Framework.

## People Strategy

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A report was submitted in February 2025 which provided an update on the Council's People Strategy and invited feedback from Committee Members.

The refreshed People Strategy had been soft launched to Kirklees senior staff and managers in January 2021 and was underpinned by the Council's values and behaviours. The vision was to 'achieve our shared outcomes through people with the right skills values and behaviours working in partnerships in our places'.

Delivery of the strategy was currently within Phase 3 and this had included a review of the format, supported by the Policy and Partnerships Team, to take account of benchmarking of themes across the public and private sectors. It was recommended that the current approach continue into Phase 4. Priorities had, and would, change, as the delivery of the strategy progressed, to take account of both internal and external factors and employment trends.

The priorities and a summary of the key activities delivered during Phase 3 were given.

## Outcomes

Following discussion, the Committee requested that their comments be taken into account in future delivery and the shaping of the next phase and welcomed the approach in terms of the use of apprenticeships to address recruitment challenges in areas such as social work, and the positive impact of 'Project Search'.

The Committee visited the Employee Health Care Service in May 2025 to gain a greater insight into the different elements of the provision in respect of clinical, wellbeing and restorative practice and the positive outcomes achieved.



Figure 2 - The committee's visit to Employee Healthcare in May 2025

## Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan

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In May 2025 the Committee received its annual report in relation to the Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) and the priorities for the Communities Partnership Plan (CPP). This highlighted the intention to undertake a full review of the SIA and the CPP during 2025, with a view to implementation of the new plan in 2026/27 and included highlights of some of the work that had taken place in 2024-2025.

Councillor Amanda Pinnock, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Communities and Chair of the Communities Safety Partnership, was present at the meeting. and contributions were also welcomed from the District Commanders for West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Fire Service, the Service Director for Communities and Access Services, the Head of Communities, Kirklees Highways, Safer Kirklees and the Data and Insight Enablement Lead for Adults and Communities.

### Outcomes

The Committee supported the priorities for 2025/26, as set out in the report, noted the progress made by the partnership during 2024/25 and welcomed the proposed engagement with all Councillors and Scrutiny, at an early stage, in respect of the full review of the Strategic Impact Assessment and development of the Communities Partnership Plan for 2026 to 2029.

## Armed Forces Covenant Update

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In May 2025 a comprehensive update was given on the Armed Forces Covenant and the work of the Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Board.

Councillor Beverley Addy, the responsible Portfolio Holder and Councillor Masood Ahmed, the Council's Armed Forces Champion, and Chair of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Board attended the meeting.

It was explained that:

- Kirklees Council had signed the covenant in July 2017 with cross-party and partner support.
- The Board was formed of a number of partners who came together to work collaboratively to fulfil the legal duty and actively support the armed forces community. The Board had developed an action plan which included both Council and partner priorities. It had achieved a 'strong' silver in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and was working towards Gold.
- The Council was committed to supporting the armed forces community by working across the range of Council services, in partnership with external partners, local and national charities, other public sector organisations and businesses.
- The mandate was to remove disadvantage, not to give advantageous treatment, although special consideration was appropriate, in some cases, for those who had given the most.
- The progress made since the last visit to the Committee (in June 2023) and an outline of the priorities for the future. This included significant work undertaken to engage with GP practices across the district and encourage them to become veteran friendly accredited.

The Committee also welcomed Mick Riley, a veteran, member of the AFC Board, the co-founder of Tommy's Lounge and director of the charity 'Tommy's Voice'. Mick gave a presentation in relation to the concept and background behind the development of Tommy's Lounge; a coffee lounge created to be a safe space where veterans would feel comfortable and could meet to talk to each other on a one-to-one basis, providing a source of connection and conversation and thus helping to establish relationships and peer support with benefits for wellbeing and mental health. The hope was to develop this facility to become a 'one-stop shop' across the range of services; to assist and support veterans who had not previously had to deal with such matters in navigating the policies and processes associated with things such as paying rent, finding accommodation, claiming benefits, applying for a job, pensions etc.

The Committee was informed that work was being undertaken on a funding bid to support this progression.

## Outcomes

Members visited Tommy's Lounge in July 2025 to see the work being undertaken at first-hand.

In response to the Committee's recommendation that all Councillors should take every opportunity to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and to encourage local businesses and organisations in their area to sign, a briefing note is in development to assist them in this.

The Chair will receive a briefing in 2025/26 in respect of progress on the funding bid.



Figure 3 - The panels visit to Tommys Lounge on 23rd July 2025

## Looking forward to 2025/26

- Leader, Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holders' Priorities
- Financial Management of the Council including the Budget Proposals for 2025/26.
- Council Plan – Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Crime and Disorder:
  - a. Communities Partnership Plan
  - b. Annual Refresh of the Strategic Impact Assessment
- Council Plan and Corporate Performance – Quarterly Reports
- Corporate Risk – Quarterly Reports
- Corporate Safeguarding – Update
- Social Connectivity in Kirklees – Update on Action Plan Progress
- Devolution, Partnership Working and External Funding Opportunities
- Tourism Strategy – Pre-Decision Scrutiny
- Customer Services
- Comms Strategy
- Transformation Priorities – Delivery
- LGA Peer Challenge - Update

# Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel 2024/25

## Panel Membership

### Panel Membership

Councillor Jo Lawson [Lead Member]

Councillor Eric Firth

Councillor Alison Munro

Councillor Jane Rylah

Councillor Timothy Bamford

Councillor Habiban Zaman

Helen Clay [Co-Optee]

Kim Taylor [Co-Optee]

## Work Programme 2024/25

- Services provided from Hospital to Home in Kirklees.
- Capacity and Demand - Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care System.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Communities Accessing Care
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee updates.
- CQC-State of care of regulated services across Kirklees.
- Access to dentistry.
- Kirklees Safeguarding Adults Board (KSAB) 2021/22 Annual Report.
- Adults Social Care/CQC Inspection
- Healthy Child Programme.
- Joined up hospital services in Kirklees.
- NHS 10 Year Plan.
- Health System Financial Overview.
- Call In of Kirklees Care Homes.

## Panel Highlights

### Services from Hospital to Home, Capacity and Demand and Communities Accessing Care

The Panel included in its work programme a focus on services from hospital to home, capacity and demand and communities accessing care.

The Panel was advised that Kirklees had two hospital discharge teams which were based at Dewsbury District Hospital and Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. Hospital discharges were a multiagency approach which included Social Workers, Therapists and providers supporting the home first model of care.

Officers explained that acute trusts operated an Opel level. When trusts were at level 4, this was where trusts would describe there were pressures, and Kirklees Council would respond appropriately by working towards getting a speedy discharge where possible, working with additional support from other teams.

Representatives from Kirklees Health and Care Partnership and Kirklees Council provided information on accessing care in the community, which assessed progress of the integration of services and workforce in every neighbourhood to access GP services, hospital referrals, reablement support, community pharmacies and the uptake of vaccination programmes. There were nine Primary Care networks across Kirklees which were a group of general practices who aligned key services across the community including the local authority, voluntary and pharmacy sectors.

Representatives from Kirklees Health and Care Partnership along with Kirklees Council provided an update on demand and recovery of planned care across Kirklees which included

the focus of the work being done across Kirklees core providers to manage capacity and demand and catch up with delayed planned surgery, therapeutics and diagnostics. There were workforce gaps of consultants across Mid Yorkshire NHS Teaching Trust and Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust. New developments and initiatives were in place including introducing community diagnostic hubs.

There were concerns regarding the capacity of appointments in Ears Nose and Throat, a recruitment process had taken place to reduce backlogs. There were no concerns with staffing at the community diagnostic centres.

## Outcomes

As a result of the discussion, the Panel noted that 94% of discharges in 2024 up to 30<sup>th</sup> September had been on pathways 0 & 1 and requested the percentage of patients on pathway 1 who had been re-admitted to hospital. Severe pressures within hospitals were also noted with the Opel reaching level 4. The Lead Member requested that they be updated when Opel was at level 4 for a consistent length of time.

The Panel noted that a community diagnostic hub was to be opened at Huddersfield University Campus to help with backlogs and requested a visit prior to opening.

## Dentistry Services

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In the Panel's meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025, members of Children's scrutiny panel attended where dental services were considered.

Representatives from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) presented a report on dental services across Kirklees and provided an update since their last visit in 2024. It was recognised that access to dentistry nationally and locally was a challenge regarding workforce gaps and procurement restrictions. Improving access remained a priority for the ICB and work had been undertaken to improve dental services for those living in the area by building positive relationships with the profession and local dental practices to continue to improve services.

The Panel noted the interventions put in place to improve access, however there were no funds available for additional practices in areas where there was a deficit of places. There was one practice within Kirklees specifically dedicated to children's access and children waiting for extractions through surgery had improved as theatre space had increased, however, the average waiting time of referral from a dentist to an orthodontist was approximately 2 years.

## Outcomes

A number of concerns highlighted by the Panel were addressed and further data was requested for improvements of 5-year-olds experiencing tooth decay; The number of children on waiting lists requiring surgical extractions; The number of new patients taken on since the interventions had been put in place to improve service delivery; The number of NHS dentists across Kirklees.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

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In the Panel's meeting held in August 2024, Representatives from Kirklees Health and Care Partnership, Kirklees Council and Southwest Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust provided an update on the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing strategy.

The Panel received details of availability of mental health support across Kirklees which included how residents of Kirklees could access support; how partnership working supported delivery of services; the community offer; talking therapies, crisis services and gaps identified in services.

The Panel noted that life expectancy of people with mental health issues was reduced by 15 years in certain areas, the health inequality programme facilitated the right quality of care at the right time to improve this. Older people and loneliness were addressed by promoting the work being undertaken for loneliness across Kirklees. Anyone referred to talking therapies gained access within 6 weeks. For high intensity therapies, 70% of people referred at the point of assessment received treatment within 3 months. ADHD diagnosis for adults in Kirklees was currently an 18-week pathway from referral, for children it was 12 – 18 months to get assessments. The 24-hour helpline was available to anyone, and both adults and children could self-refer.

### Outcomes

The Panel requested that the Integrated Care Board provide Z cards to circulate to Members and proposed an action on how the service received wider communication with the voluntary sector through the Mental Health Alliance.

## Call in of Cabinet Decision in relation to the future of Council Operated Dementia Care Home Provision (Castle Grange and Claremont House)

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At the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Scrutiny Panel considered the grounds of a call-in request, in respect of the final decision taken by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 relating to the future of the Councils operated Dementia Care Home provision.

**The two decision making areas which were the focus of the call-in review meeting were;**

- A lack of transparency over the financial rationalisation for privatisation
- Financial Discrepancies and Opaqueness

At the review meeting, the Scrutiny Panel considered verbal submission from Councillors who were signatories to the call in and views from Ward Councillors and Members of the Public. The Panel also considered the response from the Cabinet Member and Senior Officers from Adults Social Care.

### Outcomes

That the decision taken in relation to the Future of Council Operated Dementia Care Home Provision (Castle Grange and Claremont House) be referred to the Cabinet with the following recommendation in relation to the areas of focus as follows: That the decision be put on hold

and that Cabinet be provided with the full, multi-year financial analysis in a further report and reconsider the decision on the basis of that information.

The Panel also highlighted the following learning points:

- In order to ensure openness and transparency, full and complete information should be provided to all Cabinet Members and published in Cabinet reports, such as the multi-year financial analysis, wherever possible, restricted if necessary due to being private information.
- That pre-decision scrutiny by the relevant Panel should be undertaken to inform significant Cabinet decisions.

## Knowl Park House visit

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As part of their continuing review into Dementia Care in Kirklees, Panel Members visited Knowl Park House on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to view the facilities offered to Day Care users, and the offer from the Centre for Excellence.



Figure 4 - Visit to Knowl Park House on 28th April 2025



Figure 5 - Visit to the Centre for Excellence on 28th April 2025

## Looking forward to 2025/26

- Access to GPs
- 0-19 Commissioning – Access to Care
- Patient transport from Home to Hospital
- Safeguarding Adults
- Prevention of Suicide
- Health System Financial overview
- Changes relating to NHS England, ICB's and Healthwatch
- Care Quality Commission update
- Quality of residential and domiciliary care
- Winter pressures
- CQC Kirklees Inspection update
- Adults Social Care Risk Register

## Comments

### Kim Taylor – Scrutiny Co-optee

I was pleased to serve as a voluntary co-optee on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny panel for another year.

I feel that this has been a challenging year given the financial position of the local health and social care system which has underpinned many of the discussions and reflects the national situation. It has been reassuring to hear from partners about the work that is being done to meet current year budgets and identify any risks.

Some of the discussions where there has been public representation have been very emotive e.g. the future of council operated dementia care home provision which resulted in a call-in, however, I am conscious that my role on the panel is to ensure that due process has been followed, and any decisions are based on robust evidence. One of the positive outcomes following the call in was a reflection on how the council could build on its existing processes to ensure even greater transparency.

The panel has heard many informative updates where progress has been encouraging e.g. the work being done across Kirklees core providers of planned care to manage capacity and demand, and the work of health services in the community. A lot of Information is provided between meetings which helps me to keep up to date with agenda items on the workplan and think about any questions I may have at panel.

One of the highlights of the year for me personally was the recent visit to Knowl Park House, in Mirfield it was wonderful to have the opportunity to look round the new state of the art facility and meet some of the staff to hear about how they support people living with dementia and their carers.

I am looking forward to continuing as a voluntary co-optee in the next municipal year.

### Councillor Jo Lawson – Lead Member

I would first of all like to thank Nicola Sylvester, the governance officer for Health and Adult Social Care scrutiny panel for all her help and support over the last year. Michelle Cross, Executive Director of Adult Social Care has also been extremely supportive of the scrutiny panel, attending our meetings, giving a number of informal briefings to the panel and answering any queries we have had.

We have had a very busy year looking at a wide range of provision and I would like to thank those who came to speak with us and answer the numerous questions that reports throw up. It was pleasing to see the Bronte Birth Centre at Dewsbury District Hospital reopened and with-it women being able to give birth again within Kirklees. Our last meeting of the municipal year saw another deep dive into dentistry provision within Kirklees. Even though the service faces challenges, the commissioners are striving to rectify as much as they possibly can with the limited resources they have, and we look forward to another update in the next municipal year.

Areas such as mental health provision and the patients journey from hospital to home showed some of the innovative work happening within Kirklees for our residents and I look forward to

hearing further examples of such work in the next municipal year from our wide range of service providers.

In closing we have had a very busy but productive year. I would like to thank all the panel members who have attended scrutiny meetings armed with questions and their thoughts on the topics to be discussed.

# Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel 2024/25

## Panel Membership

### Panel Membership

Councillor Zarina Amin [Chair]

Councillor Bill Armer

Councillor Alison Munro

Councillor Aziz Daji

Councillor Harry McCarthy

Chris Friend [Co-Optee]

Jonathan Milner [Co-Optee]

## Work Programme 2024/25

- Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029 & Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024
- Approval of Damp Mould and Condensation Policy
- Town Centre visit
- Kirklees Major Transport Capital Schemes; Annual Report 2024
- Our Cultural Heart
- Proposed National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reforms consultation and other changes to the planning system
- Inclusive Economic Strategy
- Draft Kirklees Transport Strategy, Policy Themes & Consultation Plan
- Community Asset Transfer
- Housing Growth Update

## Panel Highlights

### Town Centre visits

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On the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024, David Shepherd, Executive Director for Place, escorted panel members on a tour of the various regeneration/construction projects being undertaken in Huddersfield town centre. The visit included sites such as Buxton House, George Hotel, Estates Building, the Cultural Heart, New Street improvements, and Huddersfield Railway Station.

At a Panel meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, the portfolio holder advised that looking around Huddersfield town centre there is a great deal of work on demolition being undertaken. Initially the work was inside therefore it was not visible; however, it is now possible to physically see the work being undertaken to deliver the vision for Huddersfield. The Panel received a summary update of the 'Our Cultural Heart' development in terms of the masterplan, the phasing, and progress in relation to phases one and two and beyond. The Panel was reminded that the Huddersfield Blueprint, was launched in June 2019, with the aim of transforming the town centre and Our Cultural Heart was one of the six target areas and is not the entirety of the blueprint, but delivery of the Cultural Heart is the big standout flagship initiative within the blueprint.



Figure 6 - Panel Members visit to the Cultural Heart site on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024, panel members were taken on a guided tour around the sites that would be the location for a new library, food hall, museum and gallery, queen street plot, events square, public realm and multi-storey car park.



Figure 7 - Panel's visit to the Queensgate development site on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## Outcome

The Panel welcomed the update and the opportunity to visit key regeneration/construction sites that aimed to realise the priority within the Corporate Plan, to continue to invest in the towns and villages as a recognition of the economic future of Kirklees and the importance of the town centres. The Panel requested further details on the social value strategy for Our Cultural Heart development.

## Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029 and the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024

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At the Panel meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the Panel received an update on the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 and the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024. The portfolio holder advised that the strategy would run until 2029 and is a statutory requirement every five years; and is of critical strategic importance to Kirklees.

The Panel was informed that housing, and having a safe, secure and decent home is a pre-requisite for a healthy and productive life, health, education and training opportunities, economic inclusion, is all supported through this basic necessity. The direct cost of insecure housing to individuals needing support and the national housing crisis, imposes significant direct and indirect pressure on the council's finances.

By way of a brief illustration, the Panel was given information on the pressure currently on housing. For example, there are 22,000 council homes, plus approximately 6000 available through other registered providers, including housing associations, against a current waiting list of 18,500. Each year 1,800 homes are allocated, which is the total turnover of housing in council housing stock and other registered providers. Last year 1,926, homelessness assessments were conducted, even without the 18,500 already waiting for housing. The presentations of homeless households significantly exceed the total number of housing that becomes available each year.

The Panel was informed that given the context, it is clear that the new housing solutions Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy for 2024, needs to navigate a difficult task to manage demand, and ensure that those in need are supported as well as possible within the national constraints.

The policy rightly places emphasis on provision of warm, safe and decent accommodation and also on helping people to remain within Kirklees as close to their support networks as possible. It places emphasis on the impact of housing insecurity on children and also on early interventions to reduce the number of households ultimately presenting as homeless. This is a very difficult area of service delivery, and officers should be thanked for the hard work that has gone into developing this strategy and the diligence with which they support vulnerable residents in need, against a significant resource deficit.

## Outcome

The Panel welcomed the update and recognised the significant challenge and pressure faced in trying to provide housing for those in need. The Panel noted that there are many vulnerable groups and asked for further information and a breakdown of the number of young single people on the housing register and also asked that future information include people who are ex-service personnel.

The Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029 and Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024 was approved by Cabinet on the 10 September 2024.

## Community Asset Transfers

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On the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Panel received an update on Community Asset Transfers and was provided with information which outlined the breadth of the assets that had been transferred in the past. The Panel was advised that Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is the transfer of ownership and management of public land and buildings from the council to a community organisation.

The information gave details which explained that all communities are different, and all community groups are different. The buildings and assets are all quite different from each other and therefore, the approach is tailored, and the policy is tailored to deliver flexibility, and it enables officers and community groups to come together to cooperate and make sure that the model is good for both sides. Assets are transferred at less than market value for local, social, economic or environmental benefit. This is to try and ensure that they have a good chance of success.

The purpose of CATs in Kirklees is to bring to life the councils longstanding commitment as an enabling council to invest in communities, help communities achieve their aspirations, and ensure assets and services remain available for the community.

## Outcome

The Panel recognised the challenges with regards to CATs, including, the Council's economic challenges, managing expectations of community organisations/council, capacity within the community and the timescales for the process which can be between 18 to 24 months. The Panel however, welcomed all the work undertaken to try and ensure that CAT's have a good chance of success.

## Looking forward to 2025/26

- Kirklees Transport Strategy
- Our Cultural Heart Update on Progress
- Transport Programme Annual Update
- Homes and Partnership Service Update
- Regulatory Compliance Update
- Temp accommodation/ B&B progress
- Response to Awaab's Law
- Tenant voice Strategy Update
- District Heating Update
- Building Safety Compliance
- Site visits to regeneration projects
- IT Systems (resilience and transformation)
- Local Plan/planning update

## Comments

### Co-optee comment - Jonathan Milner

As a member of the Growth and Regeneration Panel, we had the opportunity to discuss many varied, interesting and challenging topics in the Panel meetings. This year, the Panel focused on the development growth of the district, the progress of the Cultural Heart development, and the integrated Transport Programme. The meetings have been well attended, and the council officers have proven to be very knowledgeable and provided supporting evidence for their decisions. The Scrutiny support team have always been on hand to provide supporting material and advice when asked for. The Scrutiny Panel members have always challenged and queried decisions in a collegiate and friendly manner and my time on the panel has been enlightening and rewarding.

### Lead member comment - Cllr Zarina Amin

As Chair of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all members and officers for their ongoing engagement, commitment, and contributions throughout this period. Over the past months, the panel has reviewed and scrutinised several key areas, including the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy, the Our Cultural Heart regeneration programme, and Community Asset Transfers, among other important topics. These discussions have been both productive and insightful, and I commend the quality of information shared and the openness of dialogue between members and officers.

Members particularly welcomed the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, recognising it as a vital step forward in supporting officers to ensure that vulnerable individuals and families are placed in appropriate housing. The strategy reflects a clear commitment to

early intervention and coordinated support, which we hope will have a tangible impact on reducing homelessness across Kirklees.

In addition, we undertook a number of site visits, including to the Our Cultural Heart development and other key regeneration areas. It was encouraging to witness the progress made to date and to see first-hand the potential for unlocking a thriving, vibrant town centre. The regeneration work underway demonstrates ambition and provides real opportunity for transformative change.

I would also like to acknowledge the responsive and transparent approach of officers in following up on member concerns and queries. This collaborative working relationship is fundamental to effective scrutiny, and it is heartening to see such commitment to keeping members well-informed and involved.

Once again, thank you to my fellow panel members for their valuable contributions and to officers for their time, clarity, and professionalism in supporting the work of this panel.

# Children's Scrutiny Panel 2024/25

## Panel Membership

### Panel Membership

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Councillor Itrat Ali [Chair]

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Councillor Richard Smith

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Councillor Hannah McKerchar

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Councillor Jane Rylah

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Councillor Tanisha Bramwell

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Councillor Ashleigh Robinson

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## Work Programme 2024/25

- Review of the Improvement Journey and Ofsted Inspections
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Plan and sufficiency of SEND and mainstream capacity
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)
- Quality Assurance – impact of auditing the Children’s Service
- Educational Outcomes
- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) – Annual Report
- Health Provision for Children and Young People in Kirklees
- Emotional wellbeing provision for children in Kirklees and Mental Health in schools – ‘keep in mind’
- Review of Children’s Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements
- Feedback on issues considered by Kirklees Parenting Board
- Partnership Arrangements
- Voice of the Young Person
- Performance Information (Children’s Service)

In addition to the formal meetings of the Panel, informal meetings took place to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny such as Educational Outcomes and consideration of performance data, the highlights of which were presented in the public meetings. The Panel also undertook a number of visits to internal teams, external partners and voluntary groups and a summary of some of these is outlined later in this report.

The Chair of the Panel also held Lead Member Briefings during 2024/25 with the Director of Children and Families, the Service Director for Learning and Early Support, Service Director for Children and Families and the Cabinet Members for Children’s and Education.

## Committee Highlights

### Quality Assurance Annual Report

In October 2024, the Panel considered the Children’s Services Annual Quality Assurance report which provided an overview of audit and learning processes for the last 12 months for consideration and discussion. Quality assurance in Children’s Social Care was conducted through a number of strands and took the form of –

- Learning Conversations – between Managers and Practitioners and involved looking at a single child’s file to understand the quality of the work within that file.
- Practice Learning Days (PLDs) – a team or area would meet to conduct a deep dive into one area of practice, for example, the quality of work addressing domestic abuse.
- Deep Dive Audits – issues or themes arising from Learning Conversations would be discussed and considered by Senior Management and a plan for improvement put in place.

## Outcomes

The Panel agreed to attend some of the forthcoming Practice Learning Days (PLDs) with Teams across the Children's Service and report back with updates to future Panel Meetings. The Panel visited the following PLDs to observe the work taking place with teams - Care Leavers on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and the Youth Engagement Team on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and provided updates to the Panel on the outcomes of the visits.

## Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services – outcome and recommendations

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In October 2024, the Panel considered the overview of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services which confirmed that the inspection had taken place over a three-week period and was the first full inspection since 2019 when Children's Services had been judged as 'Requires Improvement'. The outcome of the inspection was that Children's Services were now judged to be 'Good'. The most important areas raised by Ofsted in their report were on the following areas –

- Areas for development
- Leadership and staff
- Areas judged to be good
- Areas of strength
- Areas for improvement
- Kirklees Parenting Strategy

## Outcomes

The Panel agreed that the Ofsted report was very positive and that it was encouraging to see the significant improvements that had been made since the last Ofsted report in 2019. They asked that their thanks and congratulations be passed onto the Teams within Children's Services for their hard work and commitment to improving the delivery of services and support to children and young people in Kirklees.

As part of their scrutiny focus in this area, the Panel also met with the Children in Care and Care Leavers Team on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and met with Managers and noted that partnership working was key to helping to manage the risk to vulnerable children. The voice of the child was a basic rule of thumb in everything that they did and they were in tune with the children in their care, seeking the voice of the child always as the starting point.

## Feedback from Kirklees Parenting Board

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The Panel discussed the Kirklees Parenting Board meeting, held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024, which had been a take-over event organised and led by Care Leavers, as part of Care Leavers' Month. The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel, and Cabinet Member for Children's Services had attended and described the event as interactive, inspirational and enjoyable. The meeting was attended by providers of children's services and representatives from the healthcare, education and housing, as well as Cabinet Members. Care Leavers presented at the event and showed videos that they had produced about their experiences. The young people also

facilitated small group discussions, inviting delegates to provide solutions to challenges faced by Care Leavers. It was hoped that two of the young people would join the Kirklees Parenting Board as members in future meetings of the Board to represent the voice of the Care Leaver.

In January 2025, the Panel noted that the Board had focused on health priorities for looked after children and care leavers, including dental health checks and increasing access to counselling services. The Chair of the Panel remarked on the efforts she had observed at previous meetings of the Board to engage with young people, using their language and putting young people at the heart of the conversation.

In March 2025, the Panel were advised on the improvements to the overall offer for care leavers, which included free prescriptions agreed with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and a better housing offer to ensure accommodation was suitable.

## **Review of Children's Residential Homes and Fostering Provision**

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In February 2025, the Panel considered a report, which provided assurance and information on Residential Children's Homes and Fostering Services in Kirklees. The majority of children in care in Kirklees were in family settings, with Foster Carers or Kinship/Connected Carers. A small number of children lived in residential, small group homes. Placements were also commissioned from independent fostering agencies and independent care homes where necessary. There was a national deficit in placements available for children; local and national campaigns had been launched to recruit foster carers. The report set out the position for recruiting Foster Carers.

The Panel asked how confident the Service was that the residential homes would improve their Ofsted judgements on the next cycle of inspection, and whether good practice was shared across the homes. Joel Hanna, Head of Corporate Parenting and Looked After Children, advised that several activities had led to improvements which included moving residential staff around homes to share good practice and creating a progression route and enhanced leadership capacity for residential practitioners.

### **Outcomes**

As part of the scrutiny focus in this area, the Panel reviewed Children's Residential Homes and Foster Care Placements in Kirklees to ensure that children were living in the right home and environment and a visit had taken place to the Mockingbird Support Group on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 which had been attended by foster carers and special guardianship order carers. Carers fed back on their experiences and challenges of being a foster carer.

In addition, the Chair of the Panel had visited the Kirklees Fostering Network in September 2024, where she had met with Foster Carers to hear their first-hand experiences and challenges and had also met a number of foster babies.

## Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Overview

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In February 2025, the Panel considered a report which provided an insight into the national and local challenges relating to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The Panel asked how the voice of the parent was included within the EHCPs, and was advised that in wider terms, PCAN had been involved in the quality compliance group and had been involved with recruitment to the team.

The Panel recognised that there were local and national challenges due to the rise in EHCP numbers but noted that it was evident from the report that the service was working in partnership, using a systems-based approach, and focusing on quality.

Communication with parents was an area for improvement, and changes had been made to the communication system, with calls being put through more effectively. Jo-Anne Sanders advised that EHCPs should be co-produced with parents, and the Service was committed to providing a better experience. Where parents and carers were not satisfied, they could ask to meet with Senior Officers or Cabinet Portfolio Holders, or contact Kirklees Information and Advice Service, who could advocate for parents. PCAN offered challenge as well as support and brought experiences of parents and carers to the attention of the service. Investment had been made in a new IT system with a parent and partner portal, where parents would be able to see progress made by logging in, also allowing the team to concentrate on casework.

### Outcomes

The Panel agreed to meet with the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCPs) Team on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to observe the work being undertaken to support the work of the SEND Transformation Plan. The Panel were also scheduled to observe the decision-making process for EHCPs and the visits would take place in the 2025/26 municipal year. The decision-making process was in 3 stages, Decision to assess Panel, Decision to issue Panel and Specialist Placement Panel.

## New initiatives of schools working in clusters

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In March 2025, the Panel considered a report providing an insight into the new initiative of schools working in clusters. Cluster working involved bringing together geographical groups of mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools (and those in the three-tier system), so that school SENDCOs could meet to discuss the emerging needs of young people and receive help and support from the team around the cluster. Funding was provided to clusters to support individual children or groups of children, or to fund staff training.

The Panel asked how feedback from families would be used to inform the cluster model, and how the families of children with SEND were communicated with about the process. The Panel were informed that schools would contact parents of children who were discussed at the meetings, that the children were anonymous within the meeting, and that after the meeting the schools would provide the parents with the outcomes of the cluster's conversation. The Parent and Carer Forum were working on parent engagement on a range of matters related to SEND and would be reporting their feedback.

## Outcomes

The Panel agreed to visit some cluster meetings to observe the process in action and these visits had been scheduled to take place at a number of schools in Kirklees during the 2025/26 municipal year.

## Special Schools – update on the rebuild of Joseph Norton Academy and Woodley School and College

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In April 2025, the Panel considered a report giving an update on the rebuild of Joseph Norton Academy and Woodley School and College as part of the Council's overall strategy to enable Kirklees Children to be educated in their local area and to secure sufficient places for Learners in Kirklees. The design phases were nearing completion and artists impressions of each new school building were available. Work was expected to start on both new sites by June 2025 and be completed in a year, however many factors could affect the timescales. Woodley School and College's rebuild would take longer due to the necessity for demolition on the site.

The Panel asked about engagement with parents, staff and children and were informed that a dedicated team had run play sessions and more formal facilitated feedback to gather the children's voice. This had included videos, drawings and comments, resulting in elements being included in the design such as gardens outside classrooms and a farm provision at Joseph Norton, and a Forest School provision and outside playground including slides, swings and trampolines at Woodley. Proposed designs had been taken back to the schools to ensure the designs reflected the feedback given and reactions from the children had been positive.

The Panel asked for detail of the consultation process and were advised that there was a genuine commitment to ongoing engagement with all parties, and that results of the consultation undertaken by Woodley School and College and Joseph Norton Academy as part of their "significant change" process had been published. Residents, parents, pupils, staff and relevant ward councillors had all been engaged with at the time when sites for both builds were chosen.

## Outcomes

The Panel agreed to visit the 2 new schools in the future once the new builds had been completed.

## Decline of the cohort of children in primary schools in Kirklees

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In April 2025, the Panel considered a report giving an update on the decline of the cohort of children in primary schools in Kirklees. The number of children in the cohort entering Reception had been in decline since a peak in 2015/16, and the cohort across Kirklees had reduced by over 1,000 since then. Over the last five years opportunities for reducing places had been considered, to enable schools to have a more efficient financial model. The mechanism for this had been a reduction in Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN). Progress had been made, with a reduction of 7.7% Reception places, over 400 places less than 5 years ago. There were no plans for school closures, but this was the ultimate destination for schools if they could not remain sustainable. There was a heightened risk of school closures in cases where high surplus places could not be resolved.

The Panel suggested that where schools were run by Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) the governors of the MATs were often spread across a large geographical area but there were often individual school sub committees/governors whose members held local knowledge and could be valuable contacts for such future discussions. Martin Wilby, thanked the Panel for their suggestion.

The Panel asked who would make the decision on any school closures and were informed that where schools were under council control, the council made the decision, and it would follow the significant change procedure outlined at the meeting. A non-statutory consultation was always carried out by Kirklees where a controversial change was proposed, followed by statutory consultation as outlined in the admissions code. Academies would follow a similar process, also following the admissions code, and the decision would ultimately be made by the regional director at the DfE.

## Outcomes

It was agreed that the suggestions made by the Panel would be taken into account by officers in taking this work forward.

# Health provision for children and young people in Kirklees

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## Vaccinations

The Panel agreed to scrutinise the health provision for children and young people in Kirklees with a particular focus on dental care, babies and immunisations.

In January 2025, the Panel attended a Joint Informal meeting with the Health and Adult Social Care Panel and received an update giving the latest children's and young people's and adults vaccinations uptake data for Kirklees and an overview of the collaborative working with partners to maximise uptake of all vaccinations; including communications and engagement work. A number of areas were focussed on by the Panel Members and questions were asked, for example –

- The number of healthy children admitted to hospital with influenza before the vaccine programme was introduced
- How Locala funded the school vaccination programme
- Could any child advocate for themselves as to whether or not to have a vaccine
- Resources for Members on vaccinations to share with communities and help to spread the message

## Outcomes

The Panel requested further information on awareness raising, how any primary and secondary children were hospitalised with flu before the vaccine was rolled out, how many pregnant women were being admitted to hospital with flu before the vaccine was introduced, and what would happen if a young person wanted the vaccine, but their parent would not give consent. Leaflets were circulated to the Panel so that they could promote vaccinations within their constituencies as a Ward Councillor. Responses to all the questions asked by the Panel Members were provided by officers and shared with the Panels for information.

## Healthy Child Programme

In February 2025, the Panel attended the Health and Adult Social Care Panel for a joint discussion on the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) 0 – 19 as part of pre-decision scrutiny in advance of the report being considered by Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The report gave an overview of the HCP and the background to the HCP contract effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, along with key milestones for the competitive tender process and to outline the governance flightpath. The HCP was a vital commissioned service for Kirklees Council which provided a strategic alignment, health improvement and reduction in inequalities and statutory compliance, which aimed to improve health and wellbeing of children and young people (antenatal to age 19, up to 25 for Special Educational Health Needs and Disabilities).

### Outcomes

The Panels agreed that the following information should be provided –

- showing the number of school nurses along with the schools they were attached to;
- the percentage of children that received the mandatory child measurement programme and vision and hearing screening;
- feedback from the consultation and engagement process;
- information on how children with SEND post 18 would be supported.

Responses to all the questions asked by the Panel Members were provided by officers and shared with the Panels for information.

## Dental Services across Kirklees

In April 2025, the Panel attended the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and took part in a joint discussion on Dental Services across Kirklees. Representatives from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) presented a report giving details of the current local and national position for dental services and oral health improvements.

### Outcomes

The Panels requested that further information be provided by the Integrated Care Board on:

- Data around improvements of 5-year-olds experiencing tooth decay due to the interventions that the ICB had put in place
- The number of children on waiting lists requiring surgical extractions
- The number of new patients taken on since the interventions had been put in place to improve service delivery
- The number of NHS dentists across Kirklees

Responses to all the questions asked by the Panel Members were provided by officers and shared with the Panel for information.

## Partnership arrangements and visits by the Panel

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The Panel visited both internal teams and external partners and voluntary groups during the 2024/25 municipal year. The following visits were undertaken –

- Home-Start AGM on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024
- Kirklees Fostering Network Support Group on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024
- SEND Transformation and Commissioning Group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024
- Care Leavers Month in October 2024 which included visits to the No 11 and No 12 hubs for Care Leavers and a Drop-in session to celebrate the National Kinship Week on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024
- Care Leavers Achievement Awards on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024
- Takeover Event – Care Leavers Forum on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024
- Practice Learning Day for Care Leavers on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Youth Engagement Team on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- Children in Care Team on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- Front Door Team on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- Weekly Review and Referral Meeting (Emergency Duty Service) on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- Mocking Bird Carers Support Group on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- Children with Disabilities (CWD and Access and Intervention Teams on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- EHCP Team on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- Starting Well Board on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Partnership arrangements)

## Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) Support Group

The Panel attended the KFN Support Group on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and a number of issues were discussed which included –

- Shortage of Foster Carers
- Challenges for carers when they had to attend meetings that children were not allowed to attend with them
- The rewarding nature of foster care and the value of the essential support between foster carers and their families
- Problems obtaining passports for children being cared for. Mockingbird Support Group fed back to the Panel in May 2025 that this matter had now been resolved, and foster carers were receiving children's passports automatically.



Figure 8 - Visit to Kirklees Fostering Network Support Group on 26th September 2024.

## Care Leavers Month – October 2024

The Panel were invited to events that took place during Care Leavers Month (October 2024) and Panel Members also visited No 11 and No 12 hubs and observed the services on offer and being accessed by young people.



Figure 9 - Visit to the No 12 Care Leavers hub on the 12th December 2024

## Care Leavers Achievement Awards

Members of the Panel attended the Care Leavers Achievement Awards Event at Huddersfield Town Hall on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024, it was a celebratory event held for Care Leavers. The evening was inspirational, with speeches from the Mayor, Councillor Viv Kendrick (Cabinet Member for Children) and very bravely from some of the young people. The atmosphere in the room was supportive throughout, particularly as the students came on stage to receive their awards. The awards ceremony was followed by a buffet, a magician and an unplanned performance of Kurdish dancing.

## Takeover Event – Care Leavers Forum

The Panel attended the Takeover event on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 which was facilitated by the Care Leavers Forum, supported by the Our Voice Team and Children's Rights Team. There was attendance across the board from all different providers of children's services and representatives from the Integrated Care System (ICS) healthcare, housing as well as Cabinet Members. The meeting was very interactive and following the introductions there was an ice breaker, the presentations and group exercises facilitated by the care leavers. A great amount of work had gone into preparing the event. Three videos of the care leavers were shared outlining their journey, the challenges they faced and the support they had received.

## Children with Disabilities (CWD) and Access and Intervention

The Panel met with the CWD and Access and Intervention Teams on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and discussed support that was provided by the team to children with disabilities who had complex health and physical needs, children with autism and some children with behavioural needs. The caseloads in the CWD Team were manageable and weekly supervision took place with Social Workers and the team worked closely with Assessment and Intervention. The CWD Team worked closely with the EHCP Team in Education, Adults Social Care, Youth Engagement Service and other services within Children's and the police.



Figure 10 - Visit to the Children with Disabilities (CWD) and Access and Intervention Teams on 25th February 2025

The Team often struggled to find placements for some children with disabilities as their needs could be very complex and not all foster carers were skilled enough in this area to care for them. There were waiting lists for home adaptation referrals which could cause frustration to families.

## Children in Care Team

Members of the Panel met with the Children in Care and Care Leavers Team on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and were informed that the team dealt with children with very complex needs. Managers were supportive and approachable and provided the right level of support. Partnership working was key to helping to manage the risk to vulnerable children and the team worked closely with the virtual school, health colleagues, housing and the police. The voice of the child was a basic rule of thumb in everything that they did and that they were in tune with the children in their care, seeking the voice of the child as always, the starting point. Sufficiency of placements within Kirklees was an issue and often looked after children had links within the area and Social Workers did not want to move them away from what they knew and their networks which could cause significant disruption to the child's schooling, family time and mental health and wellbeing.



Figure 11 - Visit to Children in Care and Care Leavers Team on 12th December 2024

## Mocking Bird Carers Support Group

The Panel met with Carers from the Mockingbird Support Group on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 which was attended by foster carers, Special Guardianship Order carers and Connectors. Carers fed back on their personal experiences of caring for children and foster caring. The Carers asked for information regarding venues which were free of charge to use for group functions and events. The Panel provided information detailing venues within Kirklees which could be booked by the Mockingbird Carers that were either free of charge or available at a discount to community groups. The carers advised that the child's passport was now given to the carer automatically when previously it could take years and this was due to the fact that consent was required from the biological parent.

Some quotes from Foster Carers –

“My own son is nearly 18 years old, and we've been fostering since he was 6-years-old. All the children love him and look up to him.”

“I love being a foster carer, it is my life.”

“When my children came to me, they hadn't had food and weren't used to having treats, they would open the fridge and couldn't believe how much food there was.”

“I had no support for the first year until I joined Mockingbird and nearly gave it up. Without that support I would not have been able to carry on.”

“It can be as simple as someone just asking that young person, 'how did your exams go' that can make all the difference.”

## EHCP Team

The Panel met with the Educational Health and Care Plan team (EHCPs) to observe the work being undertaken to support the SEND Transformation Plan. The key issues discussed with the team were around Tribunals, pressures on staff and challenges, the process for EHCP decision making, dealing with complaints, data, caseload, Post 16 Provision and recruitment of staff.



Figure 12 - Visit to the EHCP Team

Some quotes from officers in the team were –

“Complaints are such an emotive issue for us, people in the team are feeling stretched in their roles and it is very challenging.”

“Some people do not have a really clear understanding of the process, the work that goes into it, the time constraints and waiting for information from other teams.”

“This is not just a case, it’s a young person”.

“We do try and go above and beyond where we can as we want the best outcome for the child.”

## Looking forward to 2025/26

The Panel agreed to focus on the following areas of scrutiny during the 2025/26 municipal year:

- Oversight of the Ofsted Improvement Plan and planned redesign of the Leaving Care Service
- Multi-agency developments around the Children’s Social Care Reforms, the Leaving Care Service and Front Door

- Visits to meet with the Leaving Care Service, Front Door and North Service Area Children's Social Care teams within the Children's Service
- SEND Sufficiency Strategy for 2025-28
- A visit to the satellite provision for the two new special schools and alternative resource provisions
- An overview of SEND Tribunals, EHCP Compliance and the Complaints Process
- Observation of the EHCP decision making process for EHCPs
- SEND Ofsted and CQC Inspection of the Kirklees Local Area Partnership's provision and the DfE White Paper proposals on SEND changes
- Educational Attainment Outcomes and Elective Home Education
- Health provision for children and young people – emotional wellbeing provisions and mental health in schools

## Comments

### **Joanne Sanders - Service Director for Learning and Early Support**

Over the last year, I have found the approach of Children's Scrutiny to be a positive one. I have felt that the panel have been intuitive in their questioning, respectful of officers and the work they undertake, and have particularly appreciated the professionalism shown by attending meetings, taking the opportunity to observe our work and reviewing data. We welcome that supportive challenge and feel that children and their families have been at the heart of their work.

### **Councillor Itrat Ali – Lead Member**

It has been a pleasure to chair the panel this year, and I would like to extend a thank you to all panel members, Cabinet Members, Officers and Governance officers for all your hard work.

It has been a busy work program with several visits that have given a deeper insight and understanding of the services affecting children's services.

I appreciate the commitment and hard work of all partners working hard to deliver the highest standards of care for all children and young people in Kirklees.

I look forward to continuing as chair of the panel for the next municipal year.

# Environment and Climate Change Panel 2024/25

## Panel Membership

### Panel Membership

Councillor Andrew Cooper [Chair]

Councillor David Longstaff

Councillor John Taylor

Councillor Matthew McLoughlin

Councillor Will Simpson

Councillor Susan Lee-Richards

Jane Emery [Co-Optee]

Garry Kitchen [Co-Optee]

## Work Programme 2024/25

During the 2024/25 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:

- Cleansing Performance Update
- Statutory Food Hygiene Plan 2024 – 2025
- Statutory Health & Safety Plan 2024 – 2025
- Public Space Protection Orders
- Lane Rental Scheme
- Kirklees Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003
- Highway Safety Strategy
- Annual Review of Flood Risk Management
- Severe Weather Debrief Report January 2025
- 2-year Highway Capital Plan 2024-25 and 2025-26

The Panel also met in informal session to consider the following issues and give early input into policy development:

- Future of Bereavement Services
- Air Quality Update (Action Plan, Strategy and Annual Status Report)
- Fleet Replacement Programme and O Licence compliance (to include link to particulate matter impact on air quality)
- Kirklees Enforcement Policy
- Waste Procurement Update

## Committee Highlights

### Cleansing Performance

At the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the Panel considered an update on Cleansing Performance, focusing on improving waste collection efficiency, addressing access challenges, and enhancing communication strategies.

The update had been requested by the Panel in response to reported missed bin collections and set out the measures implemented within the waste collection service to improve performance.

Key Findings:

- Improved Collection Performance: The implementation of area-based working in North Kirklees alongside strong governance and performance monitoring had led to the achievement of target collection rates.

- **Challenges of Restricted Access:** Issues arising from narrow roads, increased home-based parking, and overhanging vegetation were noted, with the need for new approaches to mitigate these barriers.
- **Future Planning for Waste Collection:** The need for a trigger point to assess housing growth impacts on waste collection within existing budget constraints was recognised.
- **Market Review for Narrow Track Vehicles:** Due to the discontinuation of key vehicle models, the possibility of investigating a joint tender with neighbouring local authorities to improve accessibility was recommended.
- **Behavioural Change and Education:** The importance of educating communities, especially students, was emphasised, including engagement through freshers fairs and collaboration with student housing agencies.
- **Combatting Waste Contamination:** Future updates were requested regarding contamination reduction efforts and were to include information on modern technology's role in further improvements.
- **Recognition of Elected Members' Support:** Thanks should be extended to ward councillors for facilitating communication between residents and the Council on waste collection issues, and it was recommended that Councillors should be informed in advance of re-routing in the South to improve engagement with residents.
- **Learning from Best Performers:** The Council should learn from the best practices of high-performing waste collection authorities nationwide, and the feasibility of implementing food waste collection should be further explored through engagement with the LGA.
- **Use of Data-Driven Monitoring:** A heat map should be used to monitor performance and track missed collections by area.
- **Community Engagement and Communications:** Aspiring to a delivery-style real-time communication approach, like those used by logistics companies, was recommended alongside the use of a wider campaign addressing blocked access issues. It was also recommended that a communications initiative should illustrate the journey of a recycled item, demonstrating the tangible impact of responsible waste disposal.

## Outcomes

The Environment Service extended thanks to all councillors for their support on waste collection issues, and in June 2025 the approach to inform councillors of round changes was implemented. Additionally, ward specific information was circulated to specific ward councillors to support with any enquiries.

Since the meeting, the team had been asked to engage with the university to explore participation in this year's freshers fair, but over the past 12 months, no specific joint initiatives with the university had been identified.

The team's primary focus during this period had been on addressing contamination issues in the northern part of the district and an update on Combatting Waste Contamination will be presented to the Panel alongside the 2026 Waste Strategy in Autumn 2025.

Engagement around the introduction of food waste collection was underway, including ongoing discussions with the Local Government Association and the council's engagement and consultation team.

As recommended, a heat map was in development by the IT team as part of the Customer and Access Programme, aimed at tracking missed collections geographically. There was a plan to launch this alongside other digital and web developments in October. Benchmarking activities were currently being carried out through the Customer and Access Programme and findings will be available for sharing in summer 2025.

A communications and education campaign will be launched to illustrate the lifecycle of a recycled item—from collection to recycling or reuse—demonstrating the individual’s impact through correct recycling. This will be integrated into the communications plan accompanying Simpler Recycling later this year.

## Call-in of Executive Director Decision – Household Waste Recycling Centre Efficiency Savings

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At the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the Panel reviewed the call-in request regarding the decision taken by the Executive Director for Place, Growth and Regeneration on 16th August 2024 concerning the Waste Disposal Contract and efficiency savings at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

### Outcomes

- **Concerns Around Consultation:** The Panel noted the absence of consultation with ward councillors and residents before the decision to close the Nab Lane HWRC site.
- **Issues of Openness:** Clarity regarding the potential closure of HWRC sites was lacking in earlier reports to Cabinet, creating concerns about transparency in the decision-making process.
- **Limited Consideration of Alternatives:** No details were provided on alternative options to HWRC closure or the rationale for dismissing them.

### Recommendations:

- **Referral to Cabinet for Determination:** Due to the lack of clarity during the delegation process, the Panel recommended that the Decision Maker refer the matter back to Cabinet for review.
- **Improved Stakeholder Consultation:** Future decisions on waste disposal contracts must involve early engagement with ward councillors and service users.
- **Transparency in Decision-Making:** All potential alternative options, including why they were discounted, should be made available in future decision-making processes.

### Learning Points:

- The Panel further noted as learning points that (i) consultation with ward members should occur earlier in the process and, if necessary, in confidence and (ii) if information is shared outside the control of the Decision Maker, the decision should be paused to allow adequate consultation.

## Public Space Protection Orders

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At the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Panel reviewed an update on the revision of the existing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and the introduction of new measures to address emerging issues.

The Panel were advised that the proposed orders included the introduction of restrictions on bird feeding, loitering, unauthorised temporary structures, and town centre nuisance. A total of 371 responses were received to the public consultation, with predominantly positive feedback supporting the changes.

## Key Findings:

- **Concerns About Clarity:** There were concerns that one of the new PSPOs appeared to be targeting homeless individuals though this was not the intention. It was recommended that it be made clearer in the report that the 'Use of Temporary Structures Without the Landowner's Permission' Public Space Protection Order wasn't aimed at targeting homelessness in Kirklees.
- **Enforcement Challenges:** The Panel explored whether the existing number of enforcement officers was sufficient, and were reassured that support would come from police and community partners. The Panel further requested that data on issued penalties and their recovery rates be shared with the Panel.
- **Balancing Support and Enforcement:** It was also highlighted that greater emphasis should be placed on how PSPOs work alongside support to vulnerable individuals as well as enforcement.
- **Monitoring and Review Process:** Plans were outlined to assess displacement effects following PSPO implementation, and the Panel recommended that a formal process to assess displacement effects after implementation should be included in the report.

## Outcomes

The data showing the number of Fixed Penalty Notices Issued and the rate of recovery or the reason for the cancellation was shared with the Panel in December 2024 by email. It was also noted that the reasons for the cancellation were due to either, persons not providing a statement or the wrong information being given to the officer at the time. A discussion around the enforcement of fixed penalty notices and the statistics provided was included as part of an informal update to the Panel 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

## Proposed Lane Rental Scheme

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At the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Panel reviewed the Kirklees Lane Rental Scheme.

The Panel were informed that the scheme aimed to give the Council greater control over roadworks to improve traffic flow, air quality, safety, and will regulate the timing of roadworks to minimize disruption and enhance efficiency.

### *Key Findings:*

- **Panel Support for the Scheme:** The Panel welcomed the flexibility offered within the sensitive streets network but recommended that there be clear communication on Street Selection and that the selection criteria for roads included in the Lane Rental Scheme should be shared with all Council members.
- **Revenue Use Restrictions:** The Panel were informed that surplus funds could only be reinvested into highways transport initiatives rather than general budget use. In response the Panel recommended that there be strong governance around revenue allocation and to ensure any surplus funds were invested in relevant transport and road safety projects.

- **Balanced Stakeholder Engagement:** The Panel highlighted that work promoters must consider business needs when scheduling projects to minimise disruption.

## Outcomes

Since the meeting officers advised that the process of identifying a street for inclusion in the proposed Lane Rental network was determined in two stages. Inclusion factors included:

- Traffic volume and classification of vehicles using that route (HGVs/Bus)
- Availability of suitable alternative routes (including highway safety concerns)
- Likelihood of works being carried out on those routes in the near future
- Optimisation of the network length (10% of the total highway network length) to maximise the spread and benefit of the controls.

Further details on the selection process were shared with the Panel in July 2025 and with the whole council thereafter.

It has also been advised that Highways officers will be commencing the statutory consultation on the lane rental scheme and list of streets in July 2025 with the intention of making an application to Department of Transport for these powers in September 2025. If approved, the Lane Rental Scheme should be operational from summer 2026. Highways officers will review the lane rental network regularly in the future.

## Annual Review of Flood Risk Management Activities

At the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 the Panel considered the Annual Review of Flood Risk Management Activities. This followed significant flooding on New Year's Day 2025 which affected businesses and homes and highlighted the need for proactive flood management.

Key Findings:

- **Natural Flood Management (NFM):** The Panel welcomed funding for new projects aimed at improving biodiversity and climate resilience and it was recommended that Effectiveness Monitoring of NFM Measures be implemented going forwards including ongoing assessments to track flood mitigation improvements.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Support:** In recognising the psychological impact of flooding, initiatives had been developed to enhance community resilience and recovery. The initiative was welcomed, and an offer was made by a Panel member to take up mental health first aid training.
- **Flood Spotter Programme:** It was noted that network of trained community-based responders had been expanded to provide timely flood support.
- **Enhanced Resident Engagement:** Further efforts should be made to encourage households in flood-prone areas to adopt Property Level Protection measures.
- **Improved Trash Screen Maintenance:** Identified screens requiring upgrades should be addressed with Environment Agency funding.
- **Section 106 Funding Utilization:** Early engagement with developers should continue to secure contributions for local flood resilience.
- **Climate Adaptation Strategies:** The Panel emphasised the increasing importance of preparing for extreme weather events in future planning.

## Outcomes

In response to concerns raised by the Panel, Flockton First School was visited by officers and the trash screens were found to be offering no concern at the time. Officers also met with Councillor Martyn Bolt to follow up on concerns and questions raised and Panel Member, Councillor David Longstaff, received mental health first aid training.

## Severe Weather Debrief Report

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At the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025 the Panel reviewed the response to the severe weather events in early 2025, recognising the efforts of multiple services in handling flooding and prolonged snow and ice conditions. The Panel then made several recommendations to strengthen the severe weather response ensuring preparedness and support for affected communities.

### Outcomes

- Resident Engagement and Support Improvements: Engagement with residents during severe weather events was highlighted as important in carrying out an effective response and enhancements to the Council's non-emergency online flooding form were proposed to encourage timely reporting. Increased welfare checks and engagement strategies were also noted as a key part of the approach to support those affected by severe weather, especially vulnerable residents.
- Challenges in Gritting Services and New Housing Estates: Issues around gritting coverage, particularly near key health and respite centres, were highlighted. There were also concerns around the building of new housing estates and the capacity for gritting and it was recommended that discussions be held with the Planning Department to assess whether new housing estates will be treated differently under gritting policies.
- Snow Warden Survey Feedback: Questions were asked around the decision not to involve the snow wardens in the response and were advised that this was above what was expected of snow wardens in their voluntary capacity. The Panel noted the response but requested findings from the next Snow Warden survey be shared with the Panel.
- Panel Appreciation: The Panel praised all services involved in the emergency response for their dedication during very challenging conditions and further requested that the Winter Policy should be added to the 2025/26 work programme.
- Following the meeting colleagues in the Planning Department (Highways Development Management) were consulted with about gritting new housing estates and the full response was shared with the Panel by email in July 2025.

## Highways Safety Update

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At the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 the Panel considered an update on Highways Safety setting out the latest progress in highways safety, reaffirming the Council's commitment to Vision Zero by 2040.

Officers were commended for their efforts in meeting interim targets, and the importance of educating young people on road safety was highlighted. The Panel also made recommendations with the aim of ensuring continuous monitoring, accountability, and data-driven improvements in highways safety across Kirklees.

### Key Findings:

- **Commitment to Vision Zero:** The Panel noted that the ambition remained to eliminate all road deaths and serious injuries through a Safe System approach, and that the formation of the Kirklees Strategic Vision Zero Group would provide intelligence-led guidance to support Vision Zero objectives across various departments and agencies. The Panel further requested that future progress reports on strategy implementation should continue to be shared with the Panel to enable ongoing oversight from scrutiny.
- **Strategic Framework:** The Panel noted that the West Yorkshire Vision Zero initiative, launched in August 2024 and integrated community involvement, education, and data-led strategies.
- **Casualties Data and Impact Assessment of Capital Schemes:** The Panel requested that (i) the data showing the link between capital scheme implementations and reductions in incidents and that (ii) a full report detailing casualties by age be presented the Panel.
- **Panel Representation:** An invitation was made for one Panel member to sit on the Kirklees Vision Zero Board. The Panel welcomed the invitation, and it was agreed that the process for appointing a Panel member be confirmed.

## Outcomes

The data requested was shared with the Panel in July 2025 along with further information with regards to data analysis. It was also reported that in all (except for one) location, capital schemes prevented further collisions at each location in the preceding 12 months post construction. Furthermore, whilst the one location did have one slight collision the data showed the area outperformed the predicted 50% prevention figure agreed for all schemes.

In regard to Panel representation on the Kirklees Vision Zero Board, the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel will also appoint a member of the Panel to sit on the Board at a future meeting of the Panel.

## Highways 2-Year Capital Plan Allocation 2025/26 and 2026/27

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At the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the Panel considered the Highways Capital Plan Allocation for 2025/26 and 2026/27, which outlined a detailed programme of improvements aimed at maintaining road infrastructure, supporting safety, and advancing Kirklees' climate ambitions. The Panel were informed that the plan was supported by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and additional grants, ensuring a strong financial foundation for highways projects.

The Panel made a number of recommendations to ensure the Highways Capital Plan supported safe, sustainable, and future-ready infrastructure for Kirklees.

### Key Findings:

- **Innovation in Highways Management:** The Panel welcomed news that AI-driven solutions were being explored to assess road conditions, enhance network management, and improve infrastructure maintenance.
- **Improved Roadworks Coordination:** The Panel praised the One Network platform, which was free for the public to use and provided real-time updates on roadworks, reducing

congestion and helping residents stay informed. It was recommended that consideration be given to linking the platform to My Kirklees Accounts to improve accessibility for residents.

- Commitment to Climate and Safety Goals: The Panel acknowledged the importance of aligning infrastructure projects with the Kirklees' Vision Zero strategy and recommended that the report should clearly reflect the Vision Zero objectives. The Panel also requested that Kirklees' progress toward net zero targets be shared with the Panel and this data was circulated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

## Outcomes:

Since the meeting, Officers had advised that;

- Recent expansion of AI, and its ability to deliver near real-time insights, had significantly reduced the need for journeys to assess service requests and enquiries, further enhancing operational efficiency and contributing to carbon reduction efforts.
- A request had been made to the council's Digital Services Team to ask if the link to One. Network can be added to the standard 'My Kirklees Account' page. The quick link was made operational as of July 2025 on the My Kirklees account as requested by Scrutiny.
- Vision Zero was an integral part of the Highways Safety priorities and the Safety Team were comfortable that the current programme had been developed with this approach in mind but recognised that there was more to be done across Highways and the wider Council. Officers agreed to ensure that for next year's Capital plan report that the Vision Zero target and performance indicators were embedded within the Highways Safety section of the report.
- The Kirklees Vision Zero Board (operational as of July 2025) was tasked with embedding the Vision Zero ethos in all Council Services and encouraging discussion on individual, as well as corporate responsibilities, towards road safety across the highway network.
- The Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel will be represented on the Kirklees Vision Zero Board.

## Comments

### Councillor Andrew Cooper

It has been a useful and productive year for Environment and Climate Change Panel. I have been pleased with the contributions from Members and co-optees throughout the year.

We have had a busy work programme, and I am grateful to officers who have put time into producing reports and answering our questions.

The new Lane Rental scheme could provide a useful source of funding for innovative highways and transport measures. What was particularly pleasing was to have an item that we could scrutinise at the policy formulation stage. This provided an opportunity to make suggestions and influence the scheme going forward.

We had a call in to scrutinise the closure of a Household Waste and Recycling Centre. Members got to grips with the rationale for the closure but importantly had the opportunity to question the process by which the decision was made. An important part of Scrutiny is to hold the Executive to account for the decisions it takes.

Another highlight was our work looking at Public Space Protection Orders. We were clear that PSPOs cannot operate in isolation from the support we offer to the troubled and vulnerable people who are sometimes subject to them. The wider context that such policies operate in should be shown to have been considered.

My thanks to Jodie Harris for her support to myself and to the Panel this year. Thanks also to all the Kirklees officers who have helped us gain insight into their valuable work and hopefully we have provided some useful insight for them also.

## **Councillor David Longstaff – Committee Member**

As a member of the Panel, I want to highlight the Panel's work across a vast range of environmental issues, and I felt that the check and challenge given on issues including waste flooding and highways was particularly effective

## **Paul Farndale – Strategic Partnership Lead for Flood Management & Drainage (LLFA)**

This year, scrutiny of Flood Risk moved to the Environment & Climate Change Panel Members of the Panel were engaged with our projects and there was a specific request by Councillor Cooper to discuss property level protection. I really do welcome this interaction, and the fair and constructive challenge given by the Panel and look at it as an opportunity to better engage with Members

# Calderdale and Kirklees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

## Committee Membership

### Kirklees Committee Membership

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Councillor Elizabeth Smaje [Joint Chair]

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Councillor Jane Rylah

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Councillor Ashleigh Robinson

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Councillor Jo Lawson

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## Committee Highlights

During the 2024/54 Municipal Year, the Committee continued its focus on the reconfiguration of services at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT) and alongside this, Maternity Services provided by the Trust. The Committee held three formal meetings in June and October 2024, and March 2025.

At its meeting in June 2024, the Committee received an update on the opening of the new Accident and Emergency (A&E) department at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (HRI) which included the journey through the construction and the impact that the opening of the new A&E has had on staff and patients.

CHFT's vision for the future include continued investment in existing buildings at HRI and additional wards, two new operating theatres, a new A&E and a Children's A&E at Calderdale Royal Hospital (CRH).

The Committee also considered data and information from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service which included transfer times from each post code in Kirklees and Calderdale to HRI and CRH, transfer times between the two hospitals and the capacity to transfer urgently between a birthing unit at HRI and CRH.

The Committee meeting in October 2024 considered a further reconfiguration update and noted that draft full business case for the reconfiguration would be completed by Autumn 2025.

At its meeting in March 2025 the Committee discussed Maternity Services with Members being updated on the current and future maternity services offer across Calderdale, Kirklees, and Wakefield. The Committee will continue to receive updates about any re-opening of a stand-alone birthing unit at HRI throughout the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

A further update regarding the reconfiguration at CRH was received at the March 2025 meeting, with the Committee being advised that the construction of the multi-storey car park, maternity floor, catheterisation laboratory and plant room had begun, with the new clinical building, main entrance and new clinical building at CRH progressing through 2026 to 2029.

# Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees 2024/25

## Committee Membership

### Kirklees Committee Membership

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Councillor Elizabeth Smaje [Chair]

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Councillor Jane Rylah

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## Committee Highlights

The JHOSC met four times during 2024/25 and covered a variety of issues that had implications for the West Yorkshire region.

The JHOSC received updates and proposals about strategic issues being considered by the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). Issues covered included: a change to eligibility criteria for Non-emergency Patient Transport Services, the 2024/25 Financial Plan, Maternity and Neonatal System, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Suicide Prevention, Life Expectancy, YAS Delivery of Services, Specialist Commissioning, Cancer Early Diagnosis and Work and Health Plan and Programmes.

The JHOSC and ICB approved a Memorandum of Understanding which promoted the continued close working relationship between the two, and to ensure that the JHOSC received all the relevant information required to scrutinise strategic proposals of the ICB.

# Older People's Mental Health Services Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

## Committee Membership

### Kirklees Committee Membership

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Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

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Councillor John Lawson

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Councillor Gwen Lowe

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Councillor Andrew Cooper

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## Committee Highlights

During the 2024/25 Municipal Year, the Committee continued to focus on the transformation of Older People's Mental Health Services across Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. Two formal Committee meetings took place in August and November 2024.

At its meeting in August 2024, the Committee received a summary of the consultation report and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) from South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) and NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Committee were asked to provide comment, assurance and feedback on the process and findings which would be included as part of a five-week deliberation period to identify the most appropriate option choice, before returning to the Committee to seek support of their final decision.

At its meeting on the 6th November 2024, the Committee was asked to consider the decision-making business case and to provide assurance that the proposed recommendation (option 1a) had been made, fully considering the consultation findings, and that the Committee was in support of the recommended option being implemented. Following some discussion and questioning, the Committee agreed it was in support of option 1a being implemented.

A further meeting will take place to update the Committee in relation to Workforce Planning, the Update Business Case and Implementation Plans.

# West Yorkshire Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

## Committee Membership

Council	Member	Deputy
<b>Bradford</b>	Cllr Ralph Berry	<i>Cllr Safina Kauser</i>
	Cllr Paul Godwin	<i>Cllr Carol Thirkill</i>
	Cllr Bob Felstead	<i>Cllr David Nunns</i>
	Cllr Matt Edwards	<i>Cllr Anna Watson</i>
<b>Calderdale</b>	Cllr Mike Barnes (until April 2025)	<i>Cllr Helen Brundell</i>
	Cllr Jonathan Timbers (from April 2025)	
	Cllr Geraldine Carter	<i>Cllr Peter Hunt</i>
<b>Kirklees</b>	Cllr Harry McCarthy	<i>Cllr Jane Rylah</i>
	Cllr Richard Smith	<i>Cllr Mark Thompson</i>
	Cllr Andrew Marchington	<i>Cllr John Lawson</i>
<b>Leeds</b>	Cllr Kate Haigh	<i>Cllr Jane Dowson</i>
	Cllr David Jenkins	<i>Cllr Jordan Bowden</i>
	Cllr Barry Anderson	<i>Cllr Matthew Robinson</i>
	Cllr Andy Rontree	<i>Cllr Mahalia France-Mir</i>
<b>Wakefield</b>	Cllr Richard Forster	<i>Cllr Julie Craig</i>
	Cllr Betty Rhodes	<i>Cllr Deb Nicholls</i>
<b>York</b>	Cllr Dave Merrett	<i>Cllr Conrad Whitcroft</i>

This year was the first year of a new single overarching scrutiny system which consolidated the previous three scrutiny committees covering economy, transport and corporate issues into one.

The Scrutiny Committee in 2024-25 inherited the work programmes of its three predecessors and took on board the key decisions in the corporate plan and the Mayor's Pledges in selecting an ambitious and comprehensive work programme, consisting of numerous sub-topics under the below themes:

- Corporate readiness
- Monitoring performance and delivery
- Financial planning
- Devolution and governance
- Bus reform
- Mass Transit
- Asset management

- Climate Plan
- Building and retrofitting homes
- Economic strategy
- Skills system
- Access to culture
- Rural issues

Throughout the year several new approaches to scrutiny were introduced including inputting earlier in the decision-making process, greater emphasis on reporting scrutiny's work in public and focusing strongly on demonstrating impact – which the full report outlined <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-transparency/scrutiny/>

A greater use of officer briefings was also used to maintain overview and 'triage' initial scrutiny enquiries. These initial enquiries led to working groups on the Climate Plan, Rural Issues, Devolution and Bus Reform being established, and workshops on the reopening of Bradford Interchange and the new budget and financial strategy, which enabled smaller groups of members to work together to investigate issues in more detail, seek strong assurances on areas of concern and make recommendations on improvements.

In addition, Scrutiny also ramped up its direct engagement with external experts and stakeholders to hear from them directly on areas it scrutinised. This included the chair of the West Yorkshire Business Board, representatives from business organisations, experts from think tanks, the Local Government Association and the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and more 'junior' but technically expert officers.

Overall, the implementation of the new scrutiny system has been a strong step in the right direction, enabling scrutiny members to monitor and keep an overview of complex crosscutting topics, follow up on enquiries into specific areas of concern and make an impact on improving transparency and decision-making processes.

The Scrutiny Committee also directly questioned the Mayor of West Yorkshire multiple times during the year on her impact as Mayor and delivery of her electoral pledges and the Combined Authority's priorities.

## Contact the Governance Team at:

**In Writing:** Governance and Commissioning, PO Box 1720, Huddersfield, HD1 9EL

**By email:** [Scrutiny.governance@Kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny.governance@Kirklees.gov.uk)

**By telephone:** 01484 221000 [Ask for The Governance Team]

**X:** [Kirklees Council \(@KirkleesCouncil\) / X](#)

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