



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

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Decision Summary

Committee:
Date:
Committee Clerk:
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COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025
Andrea Woodside
01484 221000

Chair

Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

Councillors Attended

Councillor Beverley Addy
Councillor Munir Ahmed
Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Ammar Anwar
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Ali Arshad
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Tanisha Bramwell
Councillor Cahal Burke
Councillor Aafaq Butt
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Moses Crook
Councillor Hanifa Darwan
Councillor Paola Antonia Davies
Councillor Eric Firth
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 Vivien Lees-Hamilton
Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor Gwen Lowe
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Paul Moore
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Darren O'Donovan
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Amanda Pinnock
Councillor Andrew Pinnock
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 Sheikh Ullah
Councillor Alex Vickers
Councillor Adam Zaman
Councillor Habiban Zaman

Apologies

Councillor Masood Ahmed, Councillor Timothy Bamford, Councillor Damian Brook, Councillor Nosheen Dad, Councillor Aziz Daji, Councillor Charles Greaves, Councillor Lisa Holmes, Councillor Susan Lee-Richards, Councillor Harry McCarthy, Councillor Tony McGrath, Councillor Hannah McKerchar, Councillor Kath Pinnock, Councillor Ashleigh Robinson and Councillor Will Simpson

3: Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council Meeting held on 12 November 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

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

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J C Lawson, Davies, J D Lawson, Cooper, Scott and H Zaman;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The statement by the former 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 the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Alison McGovern 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."

RESOLVED – Motion not carried.
