Public Document Pack

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Friday 5 December 2025

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

The **Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.00 am** on **Monday 15 December 2025.**

This meeting will be live webcast. To access the webcast please go to the Council's website at the time of the meeting and follow the instructions on the page.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

Samantha Lawton

Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel members are:-

Member

Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair)
Councillor Timothy Bamford
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Chris Friend (Co-Optee)

Agenda
Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Membership of the Panel

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1 - 8

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 3rd November 2025.

3: Declaration of Interests

9 - 10

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

4: Admission of the Public

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Panel.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Panel 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.

6: 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.

7: Asset Disposals Update Report 2025

11 - 16

To provide an update on development and delivery of the Council's Asset Disposals programme and invite comment/questions from the Scrutiny panel.

Contact: Alistair Kimpton Strategic Partnership Lead, Stores and Logistics and David Martin Head of Capital Landlord & Delivery Tel: 01484 221000

8: Community Asset Transfer Update

17 - 28

The Panel will receive a presentation which provides an update on the Community Asset Transfer Programme and approach.

Contact: Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development Tel: 01484 221000.

9: Homes and Neighbourhoods Service Governance Review

29 - 44

This report sets out the outcome of a review of the governance arrangements for the Homes and Neighbourhoods service. The proposal in the document builds on the work previously undertaken previously.

The key areas of update address areas emerging from our Risk Register and changes to our regulatory environment.

Contact: Philip Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhood Tel: 01484 221000.

10: Tenant Voice Strategy Update

45 - 52

The purpose of this report is to provide the G&R Scrutiny Panel with an update on progress in delivering the Tenant Voice Strategy, including the implementation of the refreshed engagement framework introduced in September 2025, and to outline how these developments are strengthening compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023.

Contact: Erran Taylor, Head of Housing Governance and Improvement Tel: 01484 221000.

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Contact Officer: Jenny Bryce-Chan

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

GROWTH AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 3rd November 2025

Present:	Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair) Councillor Timothy Bamford Councillor Donna Bellamy Councillor Harry McCarthy Councillor Alison Munro
In attendance:	Cllr Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing Joanne Barthlomew, Director Development David Wildman, Service Director, Service Director, Skills and Regeneration John Donaldson, Strategic Housing Services Manager Sarah Holmes, Head of Housing Services Illyas Ramjan, Head of Major Projects
Observers:	Cllr Imran Safdar, ward Councillor for Crosland Moor and Netherton Cllr Martyn Bolt, ward Councillor for Mirfield
Apologies:	Councillor Yusra Hussain

17 Membership of the Panel

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Yusra Hussain.

18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 September 2025 be approved.

19 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

20 Admission of the Public

All agenda items were considered in public session.

21 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

22 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

23 Update on Temporary Accommodation / Bed & Breakfast

Cllr Moses Crook, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the information being presented, provides an update on temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast use in Kirklees. The report outlines the work being undertaken to address homelessness and temporary accommodation provision in Kirklees. This work is carried out by the Housing Solution Service and funded through the general fund. By way of clarification this is completely distinct from the landlord service, which is funded through rents and service charges, and has independent and ringfenced finances.

The Panel was informed that presentation of homelessness, usually results in the council having a duty to provide accommodation, and there has been a significant increase in these presentations nationally over recent years due to a range of factors. For example, the cost-of-living crisis and a reduction in the availability of social housing stock.

This has resulted in an acute homelessness and temporary accommodation crisis nationally, with 130,000 households now in temporary accommodation, including 170,000 children, at a total cost to councils of £2.8 billion in 2024/2025. In Kirklees the cost was approximately £7.6 million, however more importantly, the impact of this housing insecurity on families is profound. Without secure and appropriate housing, people cannot benefit fully from opportunities in education or training, access jobs or support networks, eat healthy meals and other factors.

Experiencing homelessness, particularly when placed in unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation, can prevent individuals from rebuilding their lives. In Kirklees, there has been a consistent focus on reducing this demand in order to invest in residents and ensure that everyone, especially vulnerable groups and children, has the best opportunity to thrive. The report provides an update on these efforts and the progress achieved to date.

Cllr Crook, summarised some of the achievements advising the Panel that: -

- There has been a 20% reduction in the presentation of homelessness due to interventions upstream

- There has been a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast in the same time frame due to additional provision of more appropriate accommodation of 20%

- By prioritising the most vulnerable, there has been a larger reduction in the number of families with children in bed and breakfast, a reduction of 58%.

Sarah Holmes, Head of Housing Services, reminded the Panel that the Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households. This duty applies when a household is assessed as being at the point of homelessness and is also deemed a priority need.

The Panel was informed that the duty to provide temporary accommodation does not apply to every homeless household. For those who are not owed this duty, the Council has a range of other duties to support them, including assisting them to secure alternative accommodation and working to prevent homelessness by helping them remain in their current home where possible.

The Panel was informed that a number of interventions have been put in place to try and tackle the increasingly high demand for temporary accommodation. Over the last year in particular, there has been real progress in terms of reducing temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast usage in Kirklees. Some of the interventions implemented include:

- Significant investment in additional staffing capacity, to have greater management oversight of temporary accommodation placement to make sure greater prevention alternatives are sourced for people that might otherwise need to be put in temporary accommodation.

- There has been a full review of Housing Solutions Services, which was informed by expert advisers. This has led to much better outcomes in terms of face-to-face assessments, delivering a more person-centred service when people approach for assistance, when they find themselves threatened with homelessness.

- There has been an enhanced approach to helping people find alternative housing in the private rented sector. This is important because social housing has been reducing in terms of availability over the last few years. This is not just exclusive to Kirklees it is also happening nationally where there is less social and affordable housing available. There is therefore a need to look to the private rented sector and help people find suitable quality and affordable alternatives in the private rented sector. Some good strides have been made in Kirklees in enhancing those private rented options, which has meant that people have not spent as long in temporary accommodation, or they have not needed to go into temporary accommodation in the first place.

It is also important to recognise that the council has been proactive in trying to secure more suitable forms of temporary accommodation, to ensure that people don’t have to spend as long in bed and breakfast type accommodation which is the least suitable form of temporary accommodation. The council has been successful in expanding a lease programme using some former surplus student accommodation which has been re purposed to use as family temporary accommodation particularly over the summer.

Looking ahead, a number of challenges remain. There are still more households in bed and breakfast accommodation than desired. The aim is to reach a position where no families with children are placed in such accommodation except in exceptional circumstances. Progress is being made towards this target, and this will remain a key focus over the coming months and years.

There are challenges arising from the need to source more social housing, alongside trying to source more private rental accommodation. There are also

some important changes coming in with the Renters Rights Act that recently received royal assent. Over the next year the main provision of the Act will come into force which will make significant changes to the private rented market. It is hoped that this will have long-term positive impacts giving greater security for people who might otherwise have faced homelessness from the private rented sector. The council recognises the need to do more in terms of expanding the option to lease more accommodation to use as self-contained temporary accommodation. There is a need to improve the delivery of new affordable and social housing for long-term accommodation.

The Panel was informed that it has been a difficult year or two in terms of homelessness demand in Kirklees, however Housing Solutions Service and all its partners have made positive inroads into turning the trend of temporary accommodation and in particular reducing the use of bed and breakfast.

In response to the report and the information presented, the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

- It is encouraging that the number of families in bed and breakfast has more than halved and the ambition of zero families being in that position is very positive. Is there a realistic timescale for achieving that and what are the potential barriers?

- It is good to see a reduction in homeless families being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation and would like to thank the team for achieving that. Having considered some of the main causes of homelessness, for example, lack of affordable housing, welfare reform, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health substance misuse, and generally people with a range of complex needs. Some councils have formed an alliance where they work together to with partners to provide clothing, housing, and medical needs. What is the council doing to address all the whole issues which is often about more than just affordable housing?

- Do people who are at risk of, or on the verge of becoming homeless, know who to contact? Is there a central contact point and is it publicised?

- Has any dedicated work been done at understanding the root causes in the increase of people presenting in crisis to Housing Solutions?

- Does the council provide help with bond money to support people who presenting as homeless to move into private rental accommodation?

- In terms of housing, how does the service balance the need of a refugee with someone who is a permanent resident. Is there a priority order in which they are considered?

- A local resident lives in a large council house and wanted to move into a one bed bungalow and the request was refused. What is the council doing to make best use of the available housing and utilising homes that are under occupied?

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on Temporary and Accommodation/Bed and Breakfast in Kirklees.

24 Kirklees Major Transport Capital Schemes; Annual Report 2025

Cllr Moses Crook, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the information being presented is an update on the various schemes within the transport capital programme, which are at various stages of development or delivery with some schemes paused at various stages awaiting funding opportunities. These capital schemes are often complex to design, and can be several years in development, however, it is essential that there is this pipeline of work underway in order to benefit from all funding opportunities as they arise.

The Panel was informed that the complexity of the programme increased significantly due to the impact of Covid, and the substantial rise in national construction costs. As a result, the programme was reprofiled to maximise delivery of the highest number of schemes without compromising quality or resorting to value engineering.

There remains a strong focus on active travel and modal shift, prioritising health, environmentally sustainable transport, inclusivity, and improvements to the public realm. Current projects in development reflect the priorities first set out in the Active Travel Interim Position Statement and now embedded within the recently adopted Kirklees Transport Strategy. Further opportunities to adjust paused or pipeline schemes in line with these evolving priorities may also deliver additional benefits in these areas.

David Wildman, Service Director for Skills and Regeneration, advised the Panel that the intention is to present an annual report through the democratic process. The report will review achievements, progress made, the current position, and outline future direction.

The Panel was reminded that a similar report has been presented over the past two years, outlining transport infrastructure projects funded primarily through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). While not covering the entire highways capital programme, the report details the projects, their current status, and progress. Some schemes have been completed and are now in evaluation, others are on site, and several are well developed and nearing commencement. The programme includes a range of complex schemes at varying stages of delivery.

The Panel was informed that pipelined projects remain a priority and there is an ambition to deliver them, however, at present, there is no funding associated for their delivery. When funding becomes available, the intention is to align these pipelined schemes and emerging priorities with the resources secured.

In response to the report and the information presented, panel members, Cllr Martyn Bolt, Mr Chas Ball, Mr Jeff Keenlyside and Cllr Imran Safdar asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

Cllr Martyn Bolt outlined a few matters he wanted to highlight in the appended report. He stated that there appeared to be a lack of strategic overview for developing projects particularly with regards to the delivery of active travel. There has been a general awareness for approximately four years of the development of the Transpennine route upgrade rail programme and the implications that would have for active travel, including the closure of a bridge over a live railway line at Deighton called Collier Bridge. An alternative was identified which would have used the Huddersfield Broad Canal. This is only now being considered, after the bridge has closed and will not be completed until the railway bridge for the greenway is opened. Why was no strategic thought given to linking the canal resurfacing works with maintaining the active travel corridor? Cllr Bolt highlighted further concerns with a number of other schemes referenced in the report.

Mr Chas Ball - Huddersfield: active travel networks. Why has the A629 Halifax Road Phase 4 which linked communities, schools, colleges, health facilities, shops and PROW pathways to town centre now been shelved? Given 100,000 people live within 3km of Huddersfield centre why are cycling and walking routes linking key locations in Lindley, Edgerton, Birkby etc into the town centre not being offered improved active travel plans? The proposed route from Huddersfield railway station using reallocated road space on the A629 Wakefield Road to the Penistone Road is showing as pipelined. Since the OBC was prepared involving detailed planning and consultations, there are indications.

Leeds Road Smart Corridor: What is the state of Leeds Road Smart corridor ‘monitoring and evaluation’ referred to in the annual report? Cycle Kirklees analysed the design and implementation of the dedicated cycle paths in 2024 on a group site visit with a member of the project team and we suggested in writing some changes (to make it LTN 1/20 compliant). We also argued that some design elements should not be repeated. We were disturbed that the same consultants that advised on it and designed it, evaluated the scheme.

Mr Jeff Keenlyside When will we see a start to network planning for cycling and walking in and across Huddersfield town centre and for ensuring cycle routes to link the Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpath ‘greenway’, the nearly complete Huddersfield Broad Canal towpath ‘greenway’ and the Birkby Bradley Greenway to key town centre destinations? What plans are there to make travel to Accu Stadium on foot by bike or by wheelchair are signed, safer to use and accessible?

Lockwood Bar Southern Gateway project: why was there was no dialogue between the Lockwood Southern Gateway project team and Cycle Kirklees or other cycling groups between public consultation and TRO stage? At the TRO we questioned aspects of the design and were informed that it met all the requirements of the Active Travel England Route Check Tool. In our recent review of the Lockwood designs, it failed the very first principle of the route check tool as well as having other Policy Conflicts and a Critical Issue. Club cyclists previously used Albert Street as a quiet alternative to Lockwood Road but access to this route when arriving from Woodhead Road has been removed since the last consultation.

Dewsbury Batley Chidswell scheme ends at Batley railway station. Access from the town centre improvements to Batley railway station for pedestrians, cyclists and

wheelchairs is not part of DBC or the Batley Blueprint. Are there plans to make Batley a more accessible station by 2029 when the first part of the TRU improvements from Leeds to Huddersfield are forecast to start?

Cllr Safdar, raised concerns in respect of the Lockwood Southern Gateway Project, suggesting that teams be sent to improve the synchronisation of the traffic lights because on some days, what should be a 10-minute journey can become a journey that takes over an hour. He explained that there are anxieties and concerns being raised by parents, carers and drivers whose service users with disabilities are being delayed in these vehicles on that corridor. Could the project be expedited to reduce the delays?

- While good progress has been made, it is noted that at least 50% of the projects are still to be determined and some of those are down to costs. Referring to the projects listed in the table, the cost are forecasts are they coming in on budget as forecast and how does the funding process work and when is the next tranche of funding expected?

- There is work that needs to be undertaken in terms of making sure residents are continuously updated about what work is going on.

In response to the questions and issues raised, the Cabinet Member and officers advised that, regarding specific schemes, members should make direct contact.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on Kirklees Major Transport Capital Scheme; Annual Report 2025.

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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC
DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

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.

Kirklees COUNCIL

Report title: Asset Disposals Update Report 2025

Meeting	**G&R Panel**
Date	**15th December 2025**
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	**Cllr Graham Turner**
Key Decision **Eligible for Call In**	**No** **No**
Purpose of Report To provide an update on development and delivery of the Council's Asset Disposals programme and invite comment/questions from the Scrutiny panel.	
Recommendations To note and comment on the asset disposals programme progress	
Resource Implication:	
Date signed off by Executive Director & name	**Joanne Bartholomew– 4.12.25**

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Ward Councillors are consulted on the disposals in their ward prior to Cabinet making decisions on whether to declare each asset surplus to Council requirements. A summary of their comments is included in the Cabinet reports.

Public or private: Public.

Has GDPR been considered? Yes.

1. Introduction to the Asset Disposals Programme

1.1 The Council had a capital receipts target of £6M in Financial Year 2024/25, is targeting £6M in the current year 2025/26 and a further £4M in 2026/27 & 2027/28.

1.2 A series of five Cabinet reports between June 2023 and December 2025 has developed a pipeline of assets which have been scheduled for disposal either at auction, by private treaty or through freehold reversion whereby leaseholders purchase the freehold interests.

1.3 Selling Council assets which no longer have an operational nor a strategic purpose enables us to support the Capital Plan through generating capital receipts. Before we make final recommendations to Cabinet we work across the Council and partners to understand whether a need for each asset still exists.

1.4 Cabinet is made aware of any comments received from ward members during the consultation period of no less than 10 working days.

1.5 Once they are approved as surplus, the Portfolio-holder is regularly consulted about the progress of assets towards disposal to ensure the programme remains aligned with Council priorities.

2. Progress to Date

2.1 Since the last Surplus Property reports in June & November 2023 and in January & July 2025, progress has been made to dispose of the assets declared surplus through a series of auctions, private treaty, and Freehold Reversion sales.

2.2 Table 1 illustrates the progress we have made in disposing of assets declared surplus in the four Surplus Assets reports prior to the most recent on 2nd December 2025:

Table 1

Date of Cabinet Report	Number Declared Surplus	Number of assets disposed	Due for disposal 2025-26	Identified for disposal 2026-27	Capital Receipt (£M)
June 2023	45	26	3	4	9.065
Nov 2023	14	9	2		2.685
Jan 2025	29	10	5	4	1.505
July 2025	16	0	9	2	0.0

2.3 In financial year 2024-25, Capital receipts totalled £5.9M. We are on target to exceed £6M this year with £5.32M having been received in the year to the end of November 2025.

2.4 Table 2 illustrates that several assets which have previously declared surplus remain unsold.

Table 2

Date of Cabinet Report	Number of undisposed assets	Number due for disposal	Incomplete freehold reversions	Misc./Pipeline
June 2023	19	7	5	7
Nov 2023	5	2		3
Jan 2025	19	9	5	5
July 2025	16	11		5

The main reason that assets do not progress to sale is due to freehold reversions not completing – we can fail to agree terms with a leaseholder for commercial reasons for example. In the case of buildings and land, once the assets are declared as surplus, each requires further evaluation to determine the appropriate legal process, market value, mode of disposal, and possible timings, to allow a forward delivery programme to be developed and accelerated to achieve the in-year target. Further investigation and consideration of these assets during their passage to market may also result in them no longer being considered surplus or sellable and therefore not being disposed of.

2.5 Two active Community Asset Transfers are still underway with Cabinet decisions to approve the transfers made in September 2025 for Hudawi and DRAM. We are currently negotiating the Heads of Terms, and these are expected to conclude this financial year.

2.6 Resources are in place, and a process has been developed over the last two years which brings a focussed approach in collaboration with other services, particularly legal colleagues, that has proven successful in delivering the capital receipts we are targeting. Early identification of surplus assets enables the service to start work on their disposal well in advance of proposed sale dates meaning we can work through the barriers to sale or consider how we can enhance the values by seeking planning permission for example.

2.7 Assurance and progress is monitored, with risks and issues managed by exception by an established Assets Disposal Board. This forum reports progress into leadership and strategic groups. The Portfolio-holder is regularly updated during briefings.

2.8 To ensure efficient delivery of the programme, interdependencies and key stakeholders are identified and engaged at the earliest opportunity, with resource and capacity requirements actively monitored and planned for. Project Management discipline including clear deadlines aids this accelerated approach, as does a continual review of the required capacity and gearing up needs across key services such as Corporate Landlord and Legal Services.

2.9 The pipeline for 2026/7 and beyond is under development. The assets that have been recommended to be declared surplus in December and the remaining yet to be sold from previous reports will form the backbone of our auction activity.

2.10 A key lesson is to plan for disposals well in advance. The investigation and evaluation of each asset invariably uncover issues which can delay their progress to market. Taking a forward view creates the space and time to carefully consider each one as well as helping to smooth the peaks and troughs from a resourcing perspective.

2.11 The developing pipeline of assets for disposal is reported to the Portfolio- holder at regular briefings as are the results of sales and our progress towards meeting the annual targets. Political oversight ensures that we remain aligned with Council priorities.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

Selling assets to release land and buildings can support the Council vision for Kirklees to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life. Changes to property ownership can often highlight wider opportunities and be a catalyst for development, which in turn can make our places more attractive and vibrant. Furthermore, rationalising and optimising property assets will deliver a smaller, more efficient, and effective estate, contributing to the reduction of the Council's carbon footprint and commitment towards net zero.

3.2 Financial Implications

The generation of capital receipts supports the Council's Capital Strategy and more specifically the delivery of the Capital Programme safeguarding service delivery into the future. Releasing assets for disposal will, equally, contribute to the savings required in the Council's Revenue Budget by reducing the cost of holding assets.

3.3 **Legal Implications**

The disposal of property assets is carried out in accordance with the relevant statutory framework which applies to the particular asset. The Council has the legal power to dispose of assets generally under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 usually for the best consideration that can be obtained. Where it is proposed that an asset is disposed of at an undervalue, the General Disposal Consent 2003 (contained within circular 06/93) and the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (and associated regulations) must be assessed, and, where applicable, complied with. Housing assets may only be disposed of in accordance with The General Housing Consents 2013 issued pursuant to section 32 of the Housing Act 1985.

The Asset disposals team works closely with Kirklees Legal Services. This helps the service to plan resources and ensure the conveyancing process works smoothly.

4. Next steps and timelines

Officers to continue to review the strategic and operational value of council owned assets, recommending a schedule be declared surplus via six-monthly reports to Cabinet. Officers to continue to target the Capital receipts required to support the capital plan by moving surplus assets towards disposal and sale in a timely manner.

5. Contact officers

Alistair Kimpton
Strategic Partnership Lead – Stores and Logistics
01484 22 1000
Alistair.kimpton@Kirklees.gov.uk

David Martin
Head of Capital Landlord & Delivery
01484 221000
David.martin@kirklees.gov.uk

6. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Cabinet Report – Surplus Property Disposals 2023/24. 27th June 2023
Cabinet Report – Asset Review November 2023. 14th November 2023
Cabinet Report – Surplus Property Disposals 2025/26. 21st January 2025
Cabinet Report – Surplus Property Disposals 2025/26. 8th July 2025
Cabinet Report - Surplus Property Disposals – December 2025. 2nd December 2025

7. Service Director responsible

Joanne Bartholomew – Service Director, Development

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Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny – December 2025

Community Asset Transfer in Kirklees

Kirklees COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

Community Asset Transfer

Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

- the transfer of ownership and management of public land and buildings from the Council to a community organisation.
- assets are transferred at less than market value for local social, economic or environmental benefit.

The primary purpose of CATs in Kirklees:

- invest in our communities
- help our communities achieve their aspirations
- ensure assets and services remain available for the community

CATs in Kirklees

- The current CAT policy was reviewed and updated in September 2020 to reflect Council priorities and best practice
- Total of 27 CATs have been completed to date
- Civic Halls, Community Centres, Playing Fields, Parks and Open Spaces, Libraries, Village & Mechanics Halls

Community Asset Transfer Policy 2020

- Developed to support the Councils Corporate Vision, shared outcomes and current best practice.
- In consultation with elected Members, Community Organisations, Third Sector Teams, Third Sector Leaders, Legal Services, Corporate Landlord and Locality.
- Policy sets out a clear and transparent framework for the asset transfer process:
  - Why we transfer assets
  - What assets will be considered for transfer
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Conditions of the transfer
  - How transfers will be processed

Conditions of transfer

- Transfers are by long leasehold - default presumption will be to transfer all assets by the grant of a long leasehold of up to 125 years
- Freehold transfers will be considered, but only in exceptional circumstances e.g. Parish and Town Councils
- Long leaseholds gives applicants the security needed to satisfy grant funders whilst providing the Council with remedies in the event that circumstances change
- Establishes and ensures an ongoing relationship between groups and the Council

Conditions of transfer cont.

- Covenants included within the lease to ensure that the asset is predominantly restricted to community use
- A percentage of commercial use is permitted to support the business model
- Council reserve the right to use all or part of an asset where it is required to deliver a statutory function e.g. library/polling station
- Upon completion of the transfer, the organisation will be fully responsible for:

  - upkeep, repair and maintenance of the asset
  - all running costs and insurance
  - compliance with statutory inspections, health and safety and other relevant legislation.

Process and Indicative Timescales

Stage	Who is responsible	Indicative Timescale
1. Initiating a CAT application with an Expression of Interest (EOI)	Applicant	N/A (initiates CAT application)
2. Assessment of an Expression of Interest	Council Officers	4 weeks
3a. Full Application & Business Case (Composition)	Applicant	6-12 weeks (a longer period may be agreed dependent on the size and complexity of the asset)
3b. Full Application & Business Case (Assessment)	Council Officers	4 weeks
4. Cabinet Approval	Council Officers Cabinet	6 – 10 weeks
5. Finalising the terms of the Asset Transfer	Council Officers Applicant	6 – 8 weeks
6. Completion	Council Officers Applicant	12 weeks

Financial support for applicants

- Grant of up to £10,000 to cover professional fees, surveys etc, legal advice associated with the application – previously £5,000 maximum
- Applicants able to apply to the Council for a grant in order to fund urgent condition works or physical adaptations to the asset that will improve accessibility
- Match funding loan of up to £100,000, can be applied for retrospectively
- Revenue funding for building running costs (1st and 2nd year)

Additional support available to groups

- Internal support through Third Sector and Active Citizen teams
- External support commissioned through Locality, a national charity network with broad experience of asset transfers
- a critical friend for Kirklees and advice on current best practice
- support with the review of business models, capital project development, funding bids and procurement
- CAT Network meetings, workshops/bespoke training sessions for groups to develop knowledge and skills (as required)
- The overall aim is to support the delivery of successful and sustainable Community Asset Transfers within Kirklees

Live cases

Cases with cabinet approval and currently at legal completion stage:

- Honley Village Hall, Roundway, Honley
- Hudawi Centre, Great Northern Street, Huddersfield
- DRAM Centre, Ridgeway, Dalton Huddersfield

Cases currently on a flightpath to cabinet:

- Land to rear of Denby Dale Library, Wakefield Road, Denby Dale
- Longfield Avenue Recreation Ground, Longfield Avenue, Golcar

Thoughts and Learning

- A community led approach to CATs - transfers driven by community need rather than being asset led
- Recognition of the vital role that assets play in supporting our communities and opportunities
- Recognition that capacity and ability to take up CATs varies across the district
- The value of pre and post transfer support to ensure long term success and sustainability
- Ensuring the Councils policy and processes allows a flexible approach to CATs
- Prioritising transfers and investment through robust decision making

Challenges

- Council's economic circumstances
- Competing priorities for assets
- Managing expectations of community organisations/Council
- Capacity within the community
- Access to and availability of external funding
- Timescales – 18/24 months process

Kirklees COUNCIL

REPORT TITLE: HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVICE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Meeting:	Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
Date:	15 December 2025
Cabinet Member	Cllr Moses Crook Deputy Leader and Transport and Housing
Key Decision **Eligible for Call In**	Yes Yes

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the outcome of a review of the governance arrangements for the Homes and Neighbourhoods service. The proposal in the document builds on the work previously undertaken previously. The key areas of update address areas emerging from our Risk Register and changes to our regulatory environment.

Recommendations

The recommendations are;

1. Note the service risks identified as requiring additional governance in section 2.12.

2. To approve the proposed structure in section 2.14.2, noting;

   i. The change of title for Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board to Homes and Neighbourhood Assurance Board.

   ii. Delegation of the decision for timing of the name change to Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing and Executive Director of Place.

   iii. The broadening scope of Homes and Neighbourhood Assurance Board to cover all areas of regulation.

   iv. The continued importance of the Tenant Led Panel as a bridge between the service and our tenant base.

   v. The addition of two new officer operational boards (Housing Capital and Revenue Investment Board and Service Quality Assurance Board) to cover risks identified in section 4.3.

   vi. The broadening of scope of the Transformation Board to include data, and service culture workstreams.

Reasons for Recommendations The recommendations support the Council in its obligations to tenants to provide well managed and high-quality services. The recommendations support the Council in seeking appropriate assurance that we are meeting the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Building Safety Regulator.	
Resource Implications The review and the proposed changes subject to approval of the recommendations do not impact on the staffing resources required for delivery. The administration of these arrangements will remain with the Governance team within Homes and Neighbourhoods who will provide organisational and administrative support to the level required in the previous structure. The introduction of the two additional panels will be absorbed within existing resources.	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	15 October 2025 - David Shepherd
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not Applicable for Scrutiny
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Not Applicable for Scrutiny

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The report outlines a revised approach to the governance of the Homes and Neighbourhoods service. The paper outlines a process of review that has assessed the current format of governance considering strengths and gaps; considered the requirements of the regulator reflecting on the changing environment and implications for the service; and a review of our current service risk register. The proposals seek to evolve the model of governance.

1.2 Key service risks are identified in section 2.12 of the report reflecting the complex environment in which the service operates. The review of the existing structure highlights gaps in 2.13.4 relating to reporting for regulatory compliance, financial planning and capital programme management/oversight, data integrity, management and security, and community safety issues.

1.3 The review acknowledges the role of key Council's bodies as laid out in the constitution. The review reflects the importance of the executive functions of Cabinet and, via delegation, the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing's in strategic direction, policy implementation, and decision-making for the Homes and Neighbourhoods service. The review also recognises the role of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel as a critical friend.

1.4 A proposed structure is identified in section 2.14 that addressed the identified gaps. This includes a developing role of the Homes and Neighbourhood Improvement Board to cover all regulatory requirements, relating to Homes and Neighbourhoods, for both the Regulator of Social Housing and the Building Safety Regulator. Other significant changes include the introduction officer led operational boards, Housing Capital and Revenue Investment Board and the Service Quality Assurance Board.

2.0 Information required for a decision to be taken

2.1 Governance within the Homes and Neighbourhood service supports our response to managing a complex and highly regulated area of Council's business relating to both property and tenants.

2.2 The current structure has stood up well, and in the main remains successful in the delivery of good governance. Within our existing governance structure, we have identified gaps relating to wider regulatory compliance, financial planning (including capital investment), data integrity (management and security), and community safety including antisocial behaviour. The proposed structure seeks to address these gaps by introducing two new operational boards and broadening the scope of focus of the Homes and Neighbourhood Improvement Board.

2.3 The Homes and Neighbourhood Improvement Board is proposed to have a change in title to Homes and Neighbourhood Assurance Board reflecting the focus on the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer and Rent Standards and our requirements under the Building Safety Regulator's compliance frameworks.

2.4 Within the structure we have maintained a critical focus on tenant scrutiny maintaining the central role of Tenant Led Panel.

2.5 Section 2.15.2 of the report describes the decision-making process for the Homes and Neighbourhoods service. The proposed structure specifies that strategic and key decisions will be handled by Cabinet. New policies or those with significant change will go to Cabinet with appropriate recommendations. Policy changes that are minor will be approved in line with the scheme of delegation for housing decisions.

2.6 Governance within Homes and Neighbourhoods was last substantially reviewed in September 2022. The current structure has responded well to the challenges of the Regulatory Notice. The review undertaken has ultimately been positioned as amending the structure rather that a requirement for a root and branch change process. The work done has considered and reflected on the resilience of current systems, seeking to amend in response to risk profile, and expected regulatory requirements.

2.7 This document builds on the proposals made at that point, reviewing the current structure against prevailing risks and developments in the governance environment. The report also considers good practice in the sector.

2.8 Strong governance in our service is essential for the delivery of positive outcomes and progression of the service.

2.9 The review has sought to amend and develop Homes and Neighbourhoods structure ensuring that we have control over our areas of significant risk and that we can provide assurance to Members and tenants.

2.10 The proposals also reflect the external environment in which the service operates drawing connection to our key regulatory bodies – Regulator of Social Housing, Building Safety Regulator, and Health and Safety Executive.

2.11 Approach to review

2.11.1 To assess our governance, approach an internal review has considered the key risks to our service, the approach that we have taken including success in mitigating risks, an analysis of perceived gaps, and an external review of good practice and sector analysis.

2.11.2 This work has been considered and reflection given to the resilience of current systems, and the requirements to cease, extend, or introduce new measures. The findings of this work are outlined in coming sections of the report. The outcome detailed in the proposed structure focuses on evolution of the model.

2.12 Service risks

2.12.1 Good governance responds to the current and emerging risks prevailing within the service model of operation. A review of our service risk assessment identifies the following key areas of consideration.

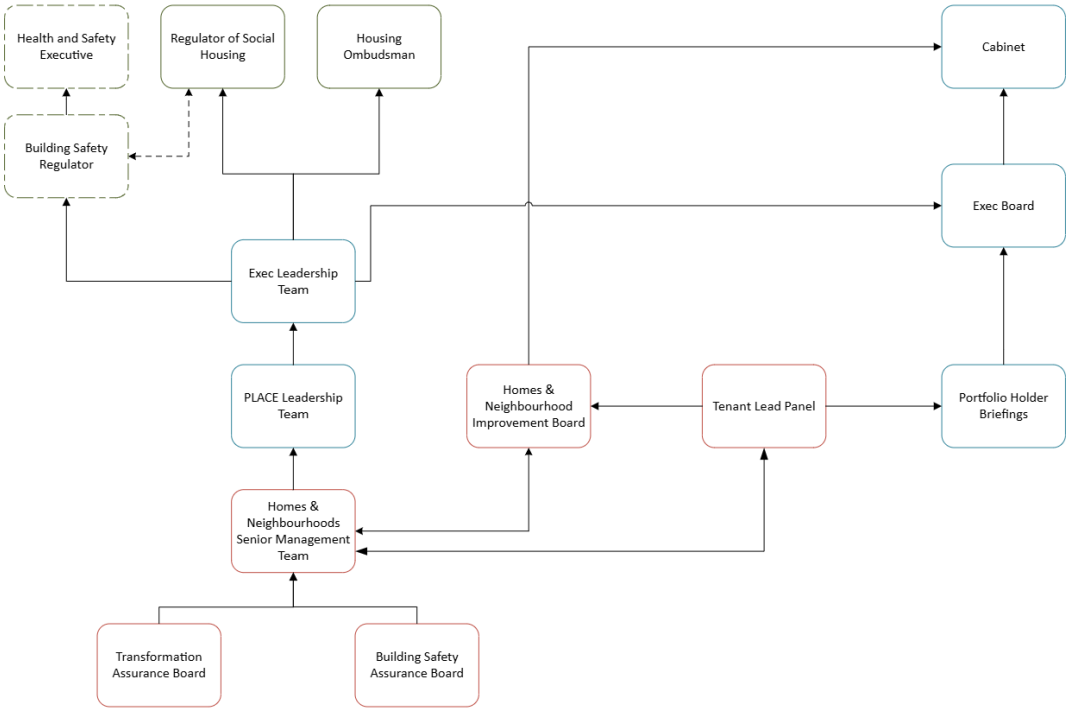
- Tenant engagement and communication
- Property use including void management and tenancy fraud
- Regulatory compliance

- Management of outcomes linked to capital and revenue investment proposals
- Data integrity, management, and security
- Building safety and stock quality (including response to Awaab's law and Big 6)
- Governance approach and decision making
- Staff management – safety and welfare, conduct and competency
- Service leadership – skills/knowledge of Service Director and Heads of Service
- Community safety, antisocial behaviour, and safeguarding.

2.13 Existing Structure

2.13.1 Below is a schematic of the current governance operating structure for Homes and Neighbourhoods covering our internal, and external governance arrangements.

2.13.2



2.13.3 The structure recognises the internal and external governance factors to which the service must respond. Internally, the Council's mechanisms for oversight and scrutiny and externally, the requirement to respond to the Housing Ombudsman, and the Regulator of Social Housing. Hatched in green are also the new responsibilities to the Building Safety Regulator which is ultimately responsible to the Health and Safety Executive.

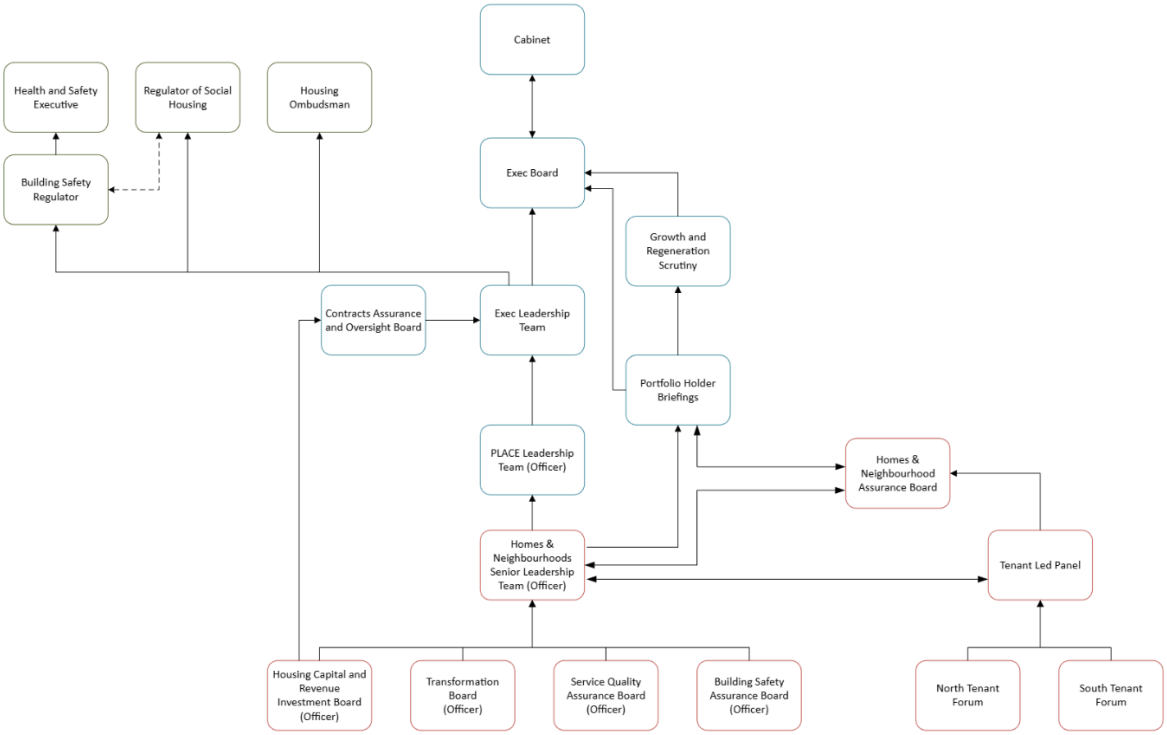
2.13.4 Assessing our current structure against our key risks has identified the following gaps;

- Lack of visibility of operational response to regulatory compliance.
- Financial planning and programme management including capital investment should be more proactively monitored by officers.
- Data integrity, management and security should have a higher priority and visibility.
- Community safety, antisocial behaviour and safeguarding require additional monitoring and scrutiny.

2.14 Proposed structure

2.14.1 The diagram, below, represents how the service is proposed to be governed with both our internal and external reference points. The red boxed areas are specific to the H&N service, the areas in blue show the connection to the Council governance structure, and the areas in green represent external agencies.

2.14.2



2.15 Corporate governance

2.15.1 The approach fully recognises the role the Council plays in our governance, maintaining **Cabinet's** Executive functions relating to oversight of strategic direction, policy implementation, and decision-making functions with delegations in place to **Portfolio Holder**. The structure chart also recognises the role the **Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel** play in scrutiny, as a critical friend. The important roles of these key organisational instruments do not change in this review.

2.15.2 Within the proposed structure, strategic decisions and significant policy aspiration/development occur within the structure at Cabinet, or via delegations to Portfolio Holder. Recommendations on decisions will flow from the HNSLT via PLACE SLT, Council Executive Leadership Team, Portfolio Holder, Executive Board and Cabinet.

2.15.3 Given the nature and complexity of our work it is important that the decision-making process and policy development are informed and supported by our tenants and supported with industry expertise via our Homes and Neighbourhood Assurance Board.

2.15.4 The proposed **Homes and Neighbourhoods Assurance Board (HNAB)** has a specific, focused, governance oversight directly linked to our regulatory responsibilities.
HNAB's core function is to support Cabinet in the delivery of positive regulatory outcomes, and to provide early warning for challenges or issues arising. HNAB receives reports from both Homes and Neighbourhoods SLT and Tenant Led Panel to help assessment of compliance with regulatory codes.

2.15.5 HNAB is a progression from the previous Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board reflecting the broadening of scope beyond regulatory notice issues. The proposed future purpose of the HNAB is to support, guidance, and assurance to the Council Cabinet in matters relating to the full spectrum of regulation applied by the Regulator of Social Housing (currently Consumer and Rent Standards) and the Building Safety Regulator. HNAB will continue to have cross party membership

2.15.6 **Tenant Led Panel (TLP)** continues with the same brief as previous creating a two-way communication channel with our tenant base. Their role is twofold; to enable and support the effective engagement of our wider tenant base in key areas of policy and/or service delivery. TLP gives a voice to our tenants ensuring emerging tenant issues have a route to senior leadership and service governance within the Council providing scrutiny where appropriate. This is reflected by their ability to connect directly into HNAB and Portfolio Holder. TLP will generate feedback from our two tenant forums, and our network of Tenant and Resident Association's.

2.15.7 Whilst the role within the structure remains the same, there is a recognition that the diversity of representation and model of engagement to TLP will require support to be developed. It is important that the Panels' ability to hear and consider as many voices as possible from stakeholders across the Kirklees area.

2.16 Operational governance

2.16.1 Operational governance refers to the systems we have in place to manage the day-to-day activities, and deployment of approved strategies with the service.

2.16.2 The centre point of arrangements is the **Homes and Neighbourhoods Senior Leadership Team (HNSLT)**. This meeting receives monthly strategic and monitoring reports from the operational boards, as well as detailed reports from finance, and human resources. The team will receive feedback from the Tenant Led Panel enabling the commissioning, or recommendation to commission new pieces of work as required. The team also receives support and feedback from the Contracts Assurance and Oversight Board improving overall contract management performance.

2.16.3 The HNSLT reports into Place SLT and via this route into Executive Leadership Team and connecting into the broader Council governance structure. Reporting into HN SLT it is proposed that there will be four operational boards.

2.16.4 **Building Safety Assurance Board's** focus remains on the key property compliance areas. The Terms of Reference have been updated to include emerging responsibilities required by the Building Safety Regulator.

2.16.5 The **Transformation Board** is retained and will continue to have focus on IT systems, and service cultural development. In addition, this group will pick up our renewed focus on data. The terms of reference and membership of this group will require a review subject to approval.

2.16.6 It is proposed to introduce two additional operational boards reporting into the H&N Senior Leadership Team. These are

- Housing Capital and Revenue Investment Board (HCRIB)
- Service Quality Assurance Board (SQAB)

2.16.7 The **Housing Capital and Revenue Investment Board** will have strategic oversight for significant investment programmes including the Strategic Asset Management Investment Programme, the Fire Safety Works Investment Programme, Regeneration Programmes (existing stock) and the Housing Growth and Development Programme. This group will require a term of reference.

2.16.8 The **Service Quality Assurance Board** will have strategic oversight for the positioning and management of our tenant facing services providing scrutiny to significant areas of our service quality assurance process, tenants contact (complaints and compliments), and tenant satisfaction measures. This group will require a term of reference.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Strong governance within the Homes and Neighbourhood service supports the Council to delivery responsibilities. Reviewing and revising our structure means that the Council has robust systems and controls in place to ensure our tenants are safe, and our housing services are well managed.

3.2 Council Plan

3.2.1 The approach supports the Council to deliver its vision, particularly improving quality of life leading to thriving communities. It also connects to the ambition for lowering inequality.

3.2.2 With regards to priorities;

- **Getting the basics right:** providing support for Cabinet to carry out their roles effectively.
- **Thriving people and communities:** Ensure people are living in homes that are modern, safe, and warm, addressing all outstanding issues in compliance relating to fire safety, water quality, and damp, mould, and condensation.

3.3 Financial Implications

3.3.1 There is no direct financial implication for the delivery of this review of governance.

3.3.2 Indirectly, the approach supports the delivery of improved revenue and capital delivery programmes leading to more efficient and effective procurement outcomes.

3.4 Legal implications

3.4.1 The review of governance supports Kirklees Council to deliver its responsibilities and accountabilities under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, and the Building Safety Act 2022 ensuring compliance and driving forward a high-quality service in an area of significant complexity.

3.5 Climate Change and Air Quality

3.5.1 The service will contribute specifically to climate change through the work we deliver via our investment programme. The focus will be specifically in relation to minimum energy efficiency standards and the move to decarbonisation.

3.5.2 The oversight of these elements will be delivered via the Housing Capital and Revuenue Investment Board (HCRIB), an operational board comprised of relevant staff from within the service and other key experiences from across the Council.

3.6 Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) or Human Resources

3.6.1 Risks are highlighted and explored within section 2.12.1 of the report. The review of governance is, in part, as a response to changing risks within the housing sector and the Councils approach to effectively managing these risks.

3.6.2 An impact assessment has been completed.

3.6.3 Human resources have been considered. The administration of these arrangements will remain with the Governance team within Homes and Neighbourhoods who will provide organisational and administrative support to the level required in the previous structure. The introduction of the two additional panels will be absorbed within existing resources.

4. Consultation

4.1 The proposals were discussed with Cllr Crook – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing at the briefing session on 11th November 2025.

4.2 The Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board were consulted on the Terms of Reference for their Board on 5th August 2025, and 25th September 2025.

4.3 Relevant staff from within Homes and Neighbourhoods, and staff who participate in the current structure have been engaged throughout the review period.

5. Engagement

5.1 In the preparation of this report key stakeholders have been engaged to seek their views. This has contributed to the development of the proposed option when considered alongside strategic requirements and key points raised on the review of risks.

5.2 Sector good practice has been engaged via the attendance at specific governance training sessions and networking events, including sessions hosted by the Regulator of Social Housing, and the Association of Housing Directors.

6. Options

Not applicable.

6.1 Options Considered

Not applicable.

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

Not applicable

7. Next steps and timeline

7.1 The key outcome of this work is the adoption of the revised terms of reference for the proposed Homes and Neighbourhood Assurance Board. Recommendations propose delegating the timing of this decision to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing and Executive Director of Place. It is anticipated that this decision would align with the removal of Regulatory Notice by the Regulator of Social Housing.

8. Contact officer

8.1 Philip Jones: Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods
Philip.jones@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background papers and History of Decisions

9.1 H&N Governance Review by DTP

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 - Proposed Terms of Reference Homes and Neighbourhoods Assurance Board

11. Service Director responsible

11.1 Philip Jones: Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods
Philip.jones@kirklees.gov.uk

Appendix 1

HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSURANCE BOARD

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board ('the Board') ensures Kirklees Council has appropriate governance arrangements for a housing function of the scale and complexity that is the Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods Service.

1.2 The Board sits within the Council's governance structures and supports the Cabinet with its overall responsibility as the Registered Provider. The Board does not constitute part of the Council's formal governance arrangements and does not have decision making powers.

1.3 The Boards primary purpose is to oversee the delivery of the housing management and maintenance services delivered by the Homes and Neighbourhood Service and to satisfy itself that:

- The service is being run in line with legal and regulatory requirements.
- That risks are being identified and are well managed and mitigated.
- Performance reporting is timely and appropriate to inform decision making.
- There are mechanisms in place to engage with tenants and act upon their feedback.
- That the landlord's services are being efficiently and effectively delivered.
- That improvement programmes are delivered on time, within budget and with the expected outcome.

1.4 The Board shall have a general duty to inform Cabinet decision making in relation to the H&N Service, and to bring to the Cabinets attention any legal, regulatory, or other concern it may have in relation to the running of the service.

1.5 The operation of the Board will be reviewed annually, whilst operational, through a model of self-review and assessment in line with NHF 2020 Code of Governance. All sections of this Terms of Reference should be read in conjuncture with this section.

2. ROLE

2.1 To provide Kirklees Council's Cabinet with oversight of the housing management and maintenance functions delivered to tenants and leaseholders by the Homes and Neighbourhoods Service.

2.2 To consider national policy changes and provide, as appropriate, consideration to Cabinet. To ensure that service delivery meets all legal and regulatory requirements with reference to;

- The Building Safety Regulator
- The Regulator of Social Housing's (and any amendments made to the Regulatory Standards from time to time):
- Rent Standard

- Consumer Standards
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard ensuring are treated with fairness and respect, have access information and complaints are dealt with.
- Neighbourhood and Community – ensuring Homes and Neighbourhoods works in partnership with the wider Council and partners in contribution to keeping the wider area clean, safe, promote wellbeing and tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Safety and Quality - ensure homes are safe, decent and in a good state of repair.
- Tenancy Standard - ensuring residents have fair access in allocations and lettings.

2.3 To support the identification of principal risks that are faced by the service and ensure that they are appropriately managed.

2.4 If any risk or combination of risks is likely to have a materially adverse impact on tenants or the operational delivery of the service to bring this risk directly to the attention of the Executive Board.

2.5 Maintain oversight of the H&N Service performance measures to ensure that continuous improvement is embedded; areas of underperformance are addressed, and Cabinet are kept appraised of any performance issues that are adversely impacting on the delivery of the services to tenants.

2.6 The Board will, inform and advise the Cabinet on the following key areas relating to Kirklees:

- The council's current and future housing strategies.
- The management and investment in the council housing.
- Property management and maintenance including safety and statutory compliance and the strategy and implementation of capital and revenue funds on investment, refurbishment, servicing and maintenance and repairs.
- Council strategies that impact on council housing, neighbourhoods and environmental services that have a link to the quality of life experienced by the council's tenants.
- National strategy and policy development.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Board has a maximum membership of up to 12 including the Chairperson. The Board shall be chaired by a co-opted independent member who has full voting rights.

Elected Members

3.1.1 There shall be up to 6 elected members who will be nominees from the political grouping within the Authority. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N. Each member will have full voting rights.

Co-opted Independent Members

3.1.2 The Board shall include up to 4 professional co-optees (one of whom shall be the Chair). Co-optees will be selected based on their skills, competency and abilities to meet the Council objectives for housing services, understand the regulatory obligations of H&N and will have full voting rights.

Tenant Led Panel Members (TLP)

3.1.3 The Chair of the Tenant Led Panel (TLP) plus one other TLP member shall have full voting rights as members of the Board.

Council Officers

3.1.4 Council officers may be invited to attend the Board by agreement with the Chair, in an advisory capacity. Council officers do not have voting rights on the Board.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 The quorum for the transaction of the business of the Board is 4 where there is at least one member from each constituency (elected member, co-opted independent member, and Tenant Led Panel member), plus the Chair. Council officers in attendance at the Board do not account towards a quorum.

4.2 The Board will meet monthly and has the flexibility to meet as required from time to time and in whatever format (online or in person) is agreed by members to deliver the business of the meeting.

4.3 Recommendations for consideration arising at a Board meeting (for Portfolio Holder, Cabinet, or Officers) are generally made by consensus. Where it is necessary to vote (when agreed by the Board) this will be decided by the majority vote. Each member present in person (including at virtual meetings) is entitled to one vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.

4.4 Any Board member who has an interest in any item tabled at the meeting, will disclose that interest to the Chair before the start of the meeting. Where necessary, the Board member will not remain present during the discussion or take part in any related decision of that item, unless agreed by the Chair. If the declaration of interest is by the Chair, the decision about how that agenda item will be addressed, will be taken collectively by the Board members present.

5. REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERS

5.1 Members will be expected to:

- Be committed to inclusively represent the best interests of the Council housing tenants in Kirklees.
- Be able to see the bigger Kirklees picture understanding that places and communities are diverse and that needs are different.
- Be committed to good governance and compliance standards.
- Adopt an approach that is professional, fair, honest, and respectful.
- Have good communication skills in terms of listening to others and the confidence to participate in discussions.

- An ability to make effective decisions based on the facts presented understanding risk and effective use of resources.
- A desire to improve and change housing services for the better.
- A commitment to be present and to support other Board members.

5.2 The following persons cannot join the Board:

- Council Officers.
- Contractors/Consultants of the council who are directly involved with housing activity.
- A person who lives in the same household as an existing member of the Board.
- A person who is bankrupt or has an outstanding County Court Judgement or, is forbidden from being a Company Director.

5.3 Any person who is considered to:

- Be in serious breach of their tenancy agreement e.g., rent arrears with no agreed payment plan, involved in Anti-Social Behaviour etc.
- Have brought about any action that has brought the Board or Kirklees Council into serious disrepute.

6. MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS

6.1 A Council Lead Officer will also be identified to oversee administration of Board meetings. The officer will:

- ensure that an agenda is produced for each meeting.
- agree the agenda with the Chair of the Board in advance of each meeting.
- oversee the follow up of actions from Board meetings.
- ensure papers are circulated at least 1 week in advance of the meeting.
- ensure that Minutes, Matters Arising, and agreed actions are formally recorded for each meeting.
- ensure the Chair receives a copy of the draft Minutes within 1 week (excluding public holidays) for review prior to approval by the Board.

7. RECRUITMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS

Elected Members

7.1 Elected members shall be nominees by the leader of their political group within the Authority. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency, and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N.

Co-Optees / Independent (Professional)

7.2 Independent Board members will be recruited to provide a range of skills and experience that will support the Board to discharge its remit. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency, and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N.

Tenant Led Panel

7.3 The Chair of the Tenant Led Panel (TLP) plus one other TLP member shall have a right to a place on the board.

8. SKILLS, COMPETANCY AND EXPERIENCE

8.1 The skills and experience required by the Board from all its members will be reviewed at least biannually to ensure the Board has the required competences available to it to inform its decision making.

8.2 Board members are expected to attend appropriate training in relation to their role.

8.3 Board members will have access to Council officer support e.g., responsible for circulation of report packs, responding to Board member enquiries relating to packs, attending meetings, dealing with expense claims etc.

8.4 Induction and relevant training will be made available to all Board members and will include (but is not limited to):

- personal development opportunities (internal and external) such as shadowing, mentoring, and undertaking relevant training or qualifications as resources allow.
- Board members will be able to access IT equipment as required to carry out their role e.g., PC's, tablets, chrome books etc and, if appropriate, can book council meeting space to support their work and enable full participation in meetings and board activities.

9. PAYMENT

9.1 Other than the Chair of the Board other Board members will not be remunerated for their services.

9.2 The reimbursement of reasonable travel and other expenses will apply to all Board members (e.g., childcare, travel out of pocket expenses etc.) in accordance with the Council's standard arrangements.

10. TERMS OF OFFICE AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

10.1 The term of office of appointment for a Board member is normally for 3 years. However, membership can be ended early or extended for an additional period of 1, 2, or 3 years formally by the Board to enable the business of the Council to continue to be delivered effectively but should not exceed 6 years continuously or cumulatively for any member.

10.2 Board members may have their membership terminated if they are absent for more than 3 consecutive meetings without the permission of the Board or, attend less than 60% of the meetings of the Board during a 12-month period.

10.3 Any co-optee will cease to be a member of the Board if they (i) cease to be a member of a professional body whose membership was conditional on their appointment (ii) are subject to personal censure by a professional body or (iii) cease to be an employee of an organisation when employment by that organisation was conditional on their appointment.

11. REVIEW PROCESS

The Chair, Deputy, membership and terms of reference will be reviewed on a regular basis or considering any national/local policy changes.

Reviewed: OCTOBER 2025

Next review date: OCTOBER 2028

Kirklees COUNCIL

REPORT TITLE: TENANT VOICE STRATEGY UPDATE

Meeting	Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
Date	15 December 2025
Cabinet Member	Cllr Moses Crook Deputy Leader and Transport and Housing
Key Decision **Eligible for Call In**	No N/A

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the G&R Scrutiny Panel with an update on progress in delivering the Tenant Voice Strategy, including the implementation of the refreshed engagement framework introduced in September 2025, and to outline how these developments are strengthening compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023.

The report also aims to provide assurance that the self-assessment process undertaken across all consumer standards continues to drive continuous improvement and transparency in housing services, whilst embedding a consistent approach to tenant engagement across all service areas.

In addition, the report seeks to highlight the wider organisational and cultural changes achieved since the transfer of the Tenant Voice Team to the Governance and Improvement Service in June 2025, which has established stronger oversight, clearer accountability, and a more joined-up approach to delivering engagement and assurance activities.

Recommendations

It is recommended to:

- Note the progress made in delivering the Tenant Voice Strategy since its introduction in October 2024.
- Recognise the significant structural and cultural changes achieved following the transfer of the Tenant Voice Team to the Governance and Improvement Service in June 2025.
- Support the ongoing implementation of the strategy to ensure compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (TIAS) and delivery of the Council's commitments under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023.
- Endorse the continued integration of tenant engagement across all housing and related service areas to ensure engagement is recognised as an organisational, rather than a service-specific, responsibility.

Reasons for Recommendations	
These recommendations seek to provide assurance that tenant engagement within Kirklees Council is progressing in line with the approved strategy and regulatory expectations. The Tenant Voice Strategy (October 2024) established a framework to embed tenant influence across all aspects of housing service delivery. The subsequent transfer of the Tenant Voice Team into the Governance and Improvement Service provided an opportunity to strengthen oversight, align engagement with governance and assurance functions, and ensure a consistent, evidence-based approach across all consumer standards. The refreshed engagement framework introduced in September 2025 has created a critical path for engagement, starting with internal staff engagement to test feasibility and accuracy, followed by structured tenant engagement on key policy changes, service updates, and reviews of existing service effectiveness. This process ensures that engagement is purposeful, tenant-led, and aligned with the Council's principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. The recommendations also align with the Council's statutory responsibilities as a registered social housing provider under the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, ensuring continued compliance through quarterly self-assessment and targeted improvement actions.	
Resource Implications	
The transfer of the Tenant Voice Team into the Governance and Improvement Service has been delivered within existing staffing budgets. To support the strategic oversight and successful delivery of the Tenant Voice Strategy, a Service Manager role is being recruited to provide dedicated leadership and ensure coordination across operational and governance functions. In parallel, a service review is being undertaken to ensure that the team structure and roles are fully aligned with strategic objectives and operational priorities. This review is focused on optimising resources to strengthen tenant engagement and deliver on the Council's Transparency, Influence, and Accountability obligations, and is not intended to reduce staffing but to ensure that the right capacity and skills are in place to meet current and future needs effectively.	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> and name	5 November 2025 - David Shepherd, Executive Director of Place
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	NA for Scrutiny report
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	NA for Scrutiny report

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? N/A

1 Executive summary

1.1 Background & Context

1.1.1 Since the introduction of the Tenant Voice Strategy, Kirklees Council has made measurable progress in embedding tenant engagement across its housing services. The strategy aims to ensure that tenants' voices are clearly evident in decision-making, that services are shaped by tenant feedback, and that satisfaction and trust are strengthened through openness, transparency, and accountability.

1.1.2 In June 2025, responsibility for the Tenant Voice function and Customer Experience Service was transferred from Housing Management to the Governance and Improvement Service. This move has embedded tenant engagement and feedback as a collective responsibility across the whole of Homes and Neighbourhoods rather than a discrete housing management activity. By positioning the Tenant Voice Team within Governance and Improvement, the Council has created a new lens for assurance and accountability, ensuring that the voice of the tenant informs decision-making, performance monitoring, and service improvement at every level. This integration has also strengthened the relationship between tenant engagement, quality assurance, and compliance functions, providing greater transparency to Scrutiny and Cabinet through regular reporting, self-assessment, and the development of new performance indicators for monitoring engagement outcomes and regulatory compliance. The new governance-based approach supports a cultural shift across services, reinforcing that tenant voice is central to how the Council listens, learns, and delivers improved housing outcomes.

1.1.3 As part of the service's quarterly quality assurance self-assessment against the Consumer Standards, a robust baseline has been developed identifying both strengths (including strong governance, established relationships in local communities, and a growing culture of transparency and responsiveness) and areas for improvement (including inconsistent communication, fragmented tenant data, limited diversity of engagement, and underdeveloped evidence of tenant-led influence).

1.1.4 In response, a comprehensive high-level action plan (2025–2027) has been implemented. It focuses on improving diversity and inclusion, building trust and relationships, developing tenant leadership, and increasing visibility of outcomes through "You Said, We Did" reporting. This is underpinned by an operational engagement framework which seeks to ensure that that issues for discussion are tenant-identified, engagement activity is prioritised, and all services are accountable for upholding engagement principles.

1.1.5 Whilst there is still significant work to do to achieve compliance, this work collectively delivers the ambitions set out in the Tenant Voice Strategy, ensuring alignment with both regulatory requirements and the Council's wider objectives of focusing on customers; living within its means; being kind, inclusive and proud; collaborating and connecting; taking responsibility; listening and responding; and getting the basics right.

1.2 Operational Engagement Framework

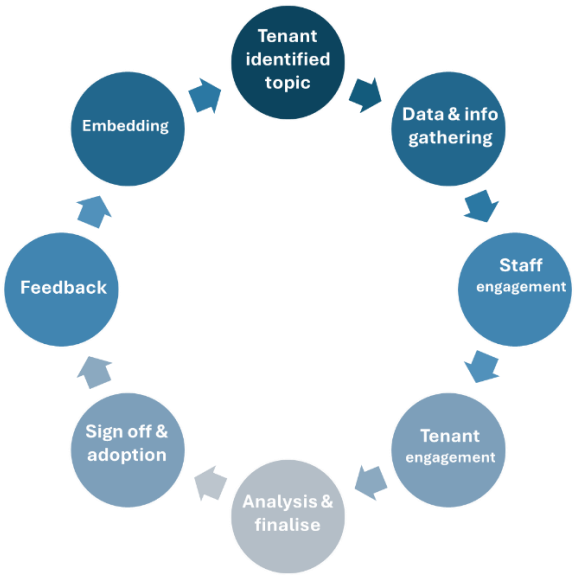
1.2.1 In September 2025, a new Engagement Framework was introduced to enable the operational delivery of the Tenant Voice Strategy and ensure full alignment with the Council's principles. The framework provides a structured, evidence-based model for engagement, embedding tenant voice as a shared responsibility across all service areas. It ensures that engagement activity is systematic, inclusive, and directly linked to service improvement and governance assurance.

1.2.2 The framework is built on core engagement principles — *clarity, variety, representation, inclusivity, communication, transparency, and commitment* — which ensure that services communicate openly, make every attempt to include all affected tenants, and demonstrate how feedback influences decisions. This has established a strong foundation for organisational buy-in and commitment, helping to shift engagement from being seen as a specialist function to being recognised as everyone's responsibility, supporting the service cultural shift.

1.3 Critical Path for Engagement

1.3.1 Within the engagement framework, a critical path has been developed, setting out a clear, repeatable process that begins with staff engagement before progressing to tenant engagement. This sequencing ensures that operational insights and practical constraints are fully understood before engaging tenants, resulting in more informed discussions and realistic proposals. This also ensures that staff, who will be responsible for embedding any change, are represented and have buy in.

1.3.2 Each quarter follows a structured engagement and development cycle from topic identification (led by tenants), followed by data gathering to staff engagement, tenant engagement, analysis, sign-off, feedback, and embedding. This cyclical model ensures that engagement is continuous, measured, and demonstrably impacts service improvement.



1.4 Neighbourhood Forums and Local Engagement

1.4.1 From September 2025, the Council also introduced a refreshed approach to Neighbourhood Forums to make local engagement more dynamic and inclusive. Each quarterly forum now features representation from a range of Council services and partner organisations, offering tenants direct access to information and advice whilst showcasing the activity of Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) to showcase their work. This model promotes collaboration, transparency, and community cohesion. The next Neighbourhood Forums will be held in December 2025, and into 2026 we are seeking to hold additional forums in less central areas.

1.4.2 Alongside the forums, a calendar of engagement events has been developed to ensure consistent, accessible opportunities for tenants to get involved. Recognising that there will be the requirement to build trust and relationships with our tenants before being able to embark on specific areas, phase one (October–January 2026) focuses on informal drop-in sessions across Kirklees before more formal engagement begins in February 2026.

1.4.3 From February 2026, the first phase of structured policy engagement will be delivered on repairs-related policies. *(This follows interim policies being developed to include legislative changes whilst recognising that final policies must include tenant feedback derived from engagement).* Engagement will be delivered through multiple channels, including surveys, focus groups, digital platforms, and in-person sessions, ensuring inclusivity and broad participation.

1.4.4 To strengthen awareness and engagement, all Ward Councillors have been provided with details of the programme of events and the aims of the new engagement framework. We are committed to ensuring that Councillors remain fully informed and actively involved, enabling them to effectively advise and signpost constituents. Moving forward, we will continue regular communications to keep Councillors up to date and engaged in the process. In areas where particular needs or issues are identified, we will work collaboratively with Councillors to organise engagement opportunities that raise awareness of services, share information with tenants, and create space for feedback and co-production wherever possible.

1.4.5 The Tenant Voice Team has experienced a degree of deskilling as a result of historically low levels of engagement activity, with much of the previous work being limited to survey-based approaches. To address this, we are developing a comprehensive workforce development plan to identify and implement relevant training opportunities that will rebuild and enhance the team's skills and confidence. This includes accessing training and best practice resources through our memberships with organisations such as HQN and TPAS. We are also actively seeking opportunities to visit and learn from similar teams within other housing providers to share experiences, observe effective practice, and strengthen our approach to tenant engagement. In addition, the corporate Consultation and Engagement Team within the Data and Insight Service is providing support and upskilling opportunities to further develop the team's capacity for meaningful, tenant-led engagement.

1.5 Strengthening Governance and Tenant Influence

1.5.1 The Tenant Led Panel (TLP) continues to contribute to decision-making through information sharing and regular engagement with officers. Members report feeling more informed and empowered with tenant members requesting and receiving more information enabling them to provide stronger scrutiny and challenge. Feedback and recommendations from the TLP are formally reported to the Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board (HNIB), ensuring a clear line of governance from tenant insight to strategic decision-making. A recruitment drive for more members to join the Tenant Led Panel and diversify membership is also underway.

1.5.2 The Tenant Voice Team is also working with Active Citizens and Place (within the Democracy Service) to maximise engagement opportunities, raise awareness amongst Elected Members, and build partnership capacity across the Council and community networks. All engagement opportunities are routinely sent to elected members for sharing with their constituents alongside social media campaigns, leafleting and sharing by partners and community organisations.

1.6 Performance, Communication, and Assurance

1.6.1 To ensure transparency and compliance, a new suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is being developed to monitor tenant engagement and alignment with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. These KPIs will be incorporated into the Homes and Neighbourhoods Performance Scorecard, reported monthly through governance and assurance channels.

1.6.2 Quarterly “You Said, We Did” reports are being captured to evidence the tangible impact of tenant feedback on service improvement and will be published on the Council’s Housing Performance webpage.

1.6.3 The first Tenant Newsletter was issued on 31 October 2025 digitally, distributed in print through community hubs and Council communication channels.

1.6.4 A dedicated Communications team for Homes and Neighbourhoods is also being established within the Council’s Corporate Communications Service, ensuring that all tenant communications are clear, accessible, and meet diverse needs. This will strengthen consistency and build tenant confidence in the Council’s transparency and responsiveness.

2 Information required to take a decision

2.1 N/A.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Delivery of the Tenant Voice Strategy directly supports the Council’s statutory responsibilities under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, ensuring compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and providing assurance to the Regulator of Social Housing.

3.2 Embedding tenant engagement across service areas strengthens organisational governance and risk management, ensuring that lived experience informs decision-making, complaints handling, and service improvement. This also reinforces the Council’s commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring that underrepresented groups are actively involved in shaping services that affect them.

3.3 Council Plan

Thriving People and Communities

3.3.1 Ensure people are living in homes that are modern, safe, and warm, addressing all outstanding issues in compliance relating to fire safety, water quality, and damp, mould, and condensation.

3.4 Financial implications

3.4.1 All activity to date has been delivered within existing budgets. A Service Manager for Resident and Engagement is being recruited to enable strategic oversight and delivery of the Tenant Voice Strategy.

3.5 Legal Implications

3.5.1 The Tenant Voice Strategy and associated action plan ensure that Kirklees Council meets its obligations as a registered provider under the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards. Ongoing quarterly self-assessments provide assurance that the Council tracks compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, mitigating the risk of regulatory breach.

3.5.2 Engagement processes are also designed to meet requirements under the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Public Sector Equality Duty, ensuring all engagement activities are inclusive, lawful, and respectful of tenant privacy.

3.6 Climate Change and Air Quality

3.6.1 Tenant engagement activities will increasingly support the Council's broader environmental and sustainability objectives. Engagement events are planned to align with council-wide priorities, including climate action, health, and digital inclusion. Where possible, tenant feedback will be used to identify opportunities for community-led sustainability initiatives, local environmental improvements, and awareness of energy efficiency measures.

3.7 Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) or Human Resources

Integrated Impact Assessments | Kirklees Council

4 Consultation

4.1 The Tenant Led Panel has been actively involved in the design and development of both the Engagement Framework and the Action Plan. The Panel continues to play a key role in monitoring the implementation and progress of the strategy and framework, receiving regular updates and providing constructive challenge and assurance which is reported into the Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board. This ongoing involvement ensures that tenant influence is embedded within governance and that the voice of tenants remains central to continuous improvement.

5 Engagement

5.1 In preparing this report, key stakeholders have been engaged to ensure accuracy, completeness, and alignment with both strategic and operational priorities.

5.2 The Tenant Led Panel has been consulted throughout the development of the Tenant Engagement Framework and the associated Action Plan and continues to monitor progress.

5.3 Senior Management Team and Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board have been engaged on the framework and associated activities.

6 Options

6.1 **Options considered**
N/A.

6.2 **Reasons for recommended option**
N/A.

7 Next steps and timelines

7.1 The delivery of the Tenant Voice Strategy will continue through the structured action plan, with the following key milestones:

Sep–March 2026: Implementation of the new critical path engagement approach with staff and tenants on repairs-related policies.

December 2025: Neighbourhood Forums

Quarterly: "You Said, We Did" reporting, self-assessment reviews, and updates to Scrutiny and Cabinet Members.

8 Contact officer

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9 Background Papers and History of Decisions

9.1 Tenant Voice Strategy

10 Appendices

10.1 None.

11 Service Director responsible

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