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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Friday 13th February 2026

Present: Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Jo Lawson

In attendance: Councillor Nosheen Dad – Portfolio Holder, Adult Social Care and Corporate
Councillor Amanda Pinnock – Portfolio Holder, Communities and Environment
Jill Greenfield, Service Director for Communities and Access Services
Samantha Lawton, Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning
Deborah Nicholson, Councillor Support and Liaison Manager
Mags Rogerson, Head of Local Integrated Partnerships
Leigh Webb – Head of Governance

Apologies: Councillor Itrat Ali

66 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Itrat Ali.

67 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

68 Admission of the Public

All agenda items were considered in public session.

69 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

70 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

71 Integrated Library Hubs: Early Learning, Community Engagement, and Place-Based Support for the Future

The Committee considered a report in relation to early learning from the ten integrated Library Hubs across Kirklees and how this was informing the future development of the service model.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 13 February 2026

Councillor Amanda Pinnock, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Environment introduced the item and explained that the report set out how the traditional libraries had developed into community integrated Library Hubs and their purpose in providing place-based access to support, and outlined future development priorities. It was noted that each hub was tailored to meet the specific needs of its locality. Thanks were expressed to the volunteers, with particular emphasis on their integral role in the success of the model.

Jill Greenfield Service Director for Communities and Access Services and Mags Rogerson, Head of Local Integrated Partnerships were in attendance to present the report, and a presentation was given which highlighted that:

- The model had consolidated customer service and library functions. It had been piloted in Dewsbury and Huddersfield before expanding to ten locations, and had been designed to be adaptive, inclusive, and community-focused.
- The hubs offered a range of support levels, from unassisted self-serve to full staff-led assistance for more complex enquiries. Services and partners played a wider, integrated role within the Library Hubs.
- Early learning from the ten hubs included typical enquiry durations and common complex customer issues, such as Blue Badge applications, council tax and benefits, housing solutions, local welfare provision, and disabled travel support.
- Future developments included increased joint working with wider services, the creation of a new webpage and support clinics, exploration of opportunities to extend the model and building on lessons learned.
- Volunteer support remained a key component, with more than 400 volunteers across 24 sites and there were plans to expand roles and diversify the volunteer base.
- Volunteers received consistent, high-quality induction and training opportunities, and volunteer retention remained consistently strong.
- As the programme moved into its operational delivery phase, the recommendations asked members of the Panel to note the progress of the Integrated Hubs and Early Learning Programme and to support its transition into an operational delivery phase, with appropriate governance and performance monitoring.

At the close of the presentation, questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In response to questions in relation to safety and support for volunteers, it was explained that volunteers were supported by a paid member of staff and were guided by established policies and training.
- In relation to the opening hours of the ten hubs, it was noted that opening hours had been informed by public consultation, resulting in a range of operating hours across the hubs based on the needs of that locality.
- In relation to raising awareness of the activities and services offered by libraries, it was advised that work was ongoing to raise awareness, including through an expanded social media campaign.
- In relation to how effectiveness was measured, particularly for vulnerable people, it was highlighted that previously support had not always been specialised and

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 13 February 2026

often relied on signposting, and there was no baseline demand data. The current model had been built to work with the strengths and capacity within communities by widening access to support and helping residents navigate systems. Libraries provided approachable community spaces that enabled follow-up. It was also explained that data development work continued, with enquiry patterns showing the hubs were able to absorb current demand. A holistic approach had been taken to provide wrap-around support, whilst also enabling people to become more self-sufficient over time.

- In relation to signposting and upskilling staff to enhance the quality of support and advice, it was explained that a development pathway had been co-produced with staff and partner services to ensure consistent support across all ten hubs. Staff development across all roles aimed to ensure strong knowledge of wrap-around services. It was also noted that though the library staff were positioned to enable access to information, rather than providers of specialist advice, social prescribing link-workers and other services were also based in some libraries, delivering regular clinics to offer specialist support where required. This approach enabled each hub to be increasingly tailored to the needs of its specific local community. It was important that, as part of this work, any unmet demand was recognised and part of the data development agenda, was around flagging and sharing emerging issues with services and partners to inform support provision.
- In relation to the position of other libraries, it was explained that as the programme transitioned into business-as-usual, community needs would continue to be assessed through needs assessments and conversations with partners. Consideration of the staffing resources and the physical environment would be considered as part of this process, each library aimed to provide a vibrant, safe community space offering a wide range of activity.
- No formal feedback process had been undertaken with staff and volunteers at this point, but informal sessions had been undertaken during the development process.
- It was confirmed that the model included the use of the libraries as a base for clinics on particular issues such as benefits advice informed by the needs of the local community.
- In relation to promotion within schools, it was confirmed that engagement work was taking place with younger children. The services was also a strong advocate for work experience opportunities to engage high-school age children.
- The Portfolio Holder and the officers were thanked for the report and the engagement with scrutiny welcomed.
- Appreciation was expressed for the staff and volunteers and the added value they contributed.

It was noted that, following the meeting, the Committee was to undertake a visit to the Huddersfield Library Hub.

RESOLVED –That progress made on the Integrated Hubs and Early Learning Programme be noted and the planned roll-out be supported, recognising that the programme is now moving into its operational delivery phase, where ongoing monitoring will be managed through established performance and governance frameworks, as well as continuing to inform the customer and access programme of work.

72 Member Development Framework

The Committee considered a report, which set out the detail of the draft Member Development Framework, presented by Leigh Webb, Head of Governance. Samantha Lawson, Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning and Deborah Nicholson, Councillor Support and Liaison Manager were also in attendance.

Councillor Nosheen Dad, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Corporate was in attendance and expressed thanks to officers for producing the framework, highlighting the importance of engagement on the proposals, including with this Committee.

The framework sought to support the development of all Councillors, providing them with the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively and deliver the Council's strategic priorities. The Committee was invited to provide feedback in advance of it being submitted to Council for approval.

The presentation explained that:

- The framework built upon and enhanced the work already undertaken to support Councillors.
- The Corporate Peer Challenge had recommended continued work on strengthening governance, including clearer reports, Member development programmes and Councillor behaviours.
- Officers, Cabinet, OSMC, and Group Leaders had provided feedback, which supported an improved Councillor training and development offer and emphasised the need for Councillor involvement in shaping it.
- Feedback had highlighted the need to include mentoring, peer support, and consideration of making training mandatory for being on certain committees.
- The mandatory element was proposed to be expanded to the Appeals Panel and the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.
- The importance of promoting and communicating the Councillor–Officer protocol to ensure consistent adherence.
- Opportunities to create ways for Councillors and frontline staff to build stronger working relationships had also been identified for further exploration.
- Meetings had taken place with all political Groups in August 2025, with additional input gathered from the Standards Committee and Independent Persons.
- Groups had been asked what they wanted to see in the development programme, how engagement and attendance could be improved, and how monitoring and reporting should take place.
- The approach was intended to be fluid to ensure that the support was developed according to Members' needs and feedback was encouraged as the programme developed.
- All feedback would be incorporated into the final Councillor Development Framework.
- The framework was scheduled to be taken to Council on 11 March 2026 for approval with a planned launch at the 2026 Councillor Induction.
- It was emphasised that attendance was encouraged from experienced Councillors as well as those new to the role.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 13 February 2026

- Ongoing development of the training and development programme would then continue after the initial launch.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- All Group Leaders and their deputies had been invited to contribute, and contact had been made with independent Councillors, the framework had also been considered by the Standards Committee and a meeting of Group Business Managers. It was noted that the final decision would be taken by Council, giving all 69 Members the opportunity to be sighted on the framework and to provide input.
- The view was expressed that engagement via Group Business Managers and Leaders may not reflect a true picture of Members' development needs, and it was recommended that officers engage with all 69 Councillors prior to finalising the framework. This was taken on board. Suggestions for doing so included use of an anonymous form, sending an email to all Members, or offering drop-in opportunities.
- The proposed approach was welcomed as it was considered it would be helpful, particularly for new Members. The proposal to hold weekend sessions was also a good idea.
- In response to concern in relation to Member attendance at committee meetings, it was advised that attendance was monitored, with informal follow-up undertaken where patterns emerged. The role of Group Business Managers in supporting and encouraging attendance was highlighted and it was further noted that six months of non-attendance would result in a formal process which may result in the individual ceasing to be a Councillor.
- In response to a question in relation to the potential to include information on the purpose and remit of committees within the induction, it was advised that information on committees was provided, but that it was important to deliver the right level of information at the right time to avoid overwhelming new Members. Inductions would therefore start with the basics and essential information from day one, followed by structured sessions offering more detailed guidance where necessary. The role of Governance Officers in supporting committee-related knowledge was noted, and it was confirmed that more experienced Councillors would be involved in some of the training sessions.
- In relation to supporting Member development needs, it was reported that the introduction of a Member Development Champion was being considered, noting that while Group Business Managers may be best placed to undertake this role in some circumstances, that this would vary by group.
- In respect of engaging with Members who may be reluctant to participate in training, these concerns were acknowledged and the importance of supporting realistic expectations of the role and the services provided to Councillors was noted. The Member–Officer Protocol was important in terms of behaviour and the aim was to provide scenarios and examples to support improved understanding.
- It was noted that the Local Government Association (LGA) could provide peer support which could be helpful.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 13 February 2026

- In response to questions about monitoring and review of the framework, Councillor Dad advised that the framework would remain flexible, with updates made as recommendations and feedback were received.
- In relation to the allocation of committee places, it was noted that Group Business Managers were responsible for this. It was suggested that alignment with Members' interests or preference may support more engaged committee memberships.

The Committee noted the report and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity for engagement.

RESOLVED –

That the feedback from the Committee be used to inform the final document prior to submission to Council for approval.