

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Lead Member: Cllr Rob Walker

Panel: Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel

Period of Update: September 2018 – December 2018

Panel Highlights

Lead member briefings with:

- Strategic Director Economy and Infrastructure
- Strategy and Policy Service Manager / Theme Lead Place and Inward Investment regarding the refresh of the Kirklees Economic Strategy
- Strategic Partnership Lead – Business and Skills, regarding the Skills Strategy
- Cabinet Member for Environment and Greenspace Operational Manager regarding Greenspace
- Corporate Policy Officer and Corporate Scrutiny Panel Chair regarding Social Value and Inclusive Growth
- Cabinet Member for Economy, Head of Development Management, Head of Culture and Vibrancy regarding Towns and Communities
- Business Group Leader regarding Digital Strategy
- Cabinet Member for Environment, Head of Operational Services and Commercial and Technical Development Manager regarding Waste Management
- Operations Manager (Quality Homes) regarding rough sleeping.

Two members of the Panel joined the Council's working group undertaking a review of the Open Age Policy and Local Letting Framework and met with Housing officers on 1 October 2018.

Panel Meetings and follow-up:

- 5 September 2018 – Kirklees Economic Strategy
- 10 October 2018 - Social Value, Local Wealth Building, Links to Inclusive Growth (in line with the refresh of the Kirklees Economic Strategy) and Skills Strategy
- 31 October 2018 – an additional meeting was arranged to consider the Government's Green Paper - A New Deal for Social Housing Consultation and the Hackitt Review
- 7 November 2018 – The Future of Town Centres in Kirklees
- 12 December 2018 – Draft Greenspace Strategy and an update on Rough Sleeping and the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol.

Outcomes:

In considering the Future of Town Centres in Kirklees, the Panel highlighted the importance of strategic aims and measurable objectives and recommended that the desired outcomes in relation to town centres and how these related to the overall economic strategy for the district, be made clear within the refreshed Kirklees Economic Strategy.

The Panel also requested that a working group be established to examine:-

- a. partnership working in developing the town centre offer;
- b. work with the Town Centre Partnership in relation to the Huddersfield Business Improvement District (BID); and
- c. work on Dewsbury Town Centre development.

As part of this work, a visit to Barnsley Market, which recently re-opened after extensive refurbishment has been arranged, alongside a visit to Dewsbury Market in January 2019.

Monitoring Work

None this period

Looking Ahead

At the meeting scheduled for 17 January 2019, the Panel will:-

- return to the refresh of the Kirklees Economic Strategy and inclusive growth and social value to consider progress made.
- receive the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation - the consultation is a statutory process and the Strategy is scheduled for Cabinet in February and Council in March
- receive an initial presentation to understand the current position of waste minimisation in Kirklees which would help to provide a benchmark/starting point for the Panel.

It is planned that the waste management theme will continue at the meeting of the Panel in February 2019, with a more detailed look at the waste and recycling elements of this agenda and consideration of what is being done to change the behaviour of the local population to avoiding and reducing waste. The Panel will also consider the Digital Strategy as it is an important component of the overall economic strategy.

General Comments

The Panel has focused on a number of interlinked strategies, including the refresh of the Kirklees Economic Strategy and the work being undertaken on social value, local wealth building and inclusive growth, the Kirklees Employment and Skills Plan and an overview of the challenges facing the district's town centres and the programmes in place to address those challenges.

A full and challenging work programme has been agreed that covers some very important aspects of policy formulation and operations across the spectrum of the Panel's remit.