



Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 8th November 2021

Title of report: Kirklees Councils Access Strategy 2021 - 2026

Purpose of report: To generate discussion and provide information which will help councillors decide whether to investigate issues, debate issues and hold the executive to account.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes Impact on two or more wards
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Key Decision – Yes Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	1 st October 2021 – Richard Parry Eamonn Croston 1 st October 2021 Julie Muscroft 1 st October 2021
Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u>	Cllr Paul Davies

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: No

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes – not applicable.

1. **Summary**

The current Access Strategy was agreed by cabinet and published in 2017. In early 2021 the Modern Organisation Board requested a complete refresh of the strategy. This work has been undertaken, although delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Political endorsement is sought on Kirklees Council's Access Strategy (2021-2026).

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

This report seeks political endorsement of the strategy, subject to any amendments.

Background

The current strategy has been in place since 2017. We have had successes in many of its aims, for example the digital by design programme has encouraged more of our contacts to be through online channels.

Although successful, the strategy needs a refresh and redesign as our citizens and communities' requirements have changed, as we come out of the pandemic and recover our services. This gives us a great opportunity to address those needs and place a refreshed focus on inequality, isolation, and vulnerabilities. Offering a whole council, systems approach, to provide place based and holistic services for communities.

Under the direction of the Modern Organisation board, we have been working closely with services across the council, our partners, volunteer groups and with communities to identify what they need and what is important to them in relation to Access.

This new proposed strategy (Appendix 1) acknowledges that feedback, and the work that has been undertaken over the last 10 months and is reflected in the aims and principles.

Central to the new proposed Access strategy is how it can support a number of our shared outcomes.

- Addressing inequalities, building inclusion
- Working across the life course and in the places that people live
- Local capacity building - Building on the strengths and local resources

The new strategy also aligns to key initiatives and strategies on Integration, Adult Social Care Vision, Children's Social Care improvement/SEND, Place Based Working and the Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Framework.

Key Issues

The pandemic has shone the light on inequalities, on isolation as well as health and care needs in our communities and the role Access plays in addressing these barriers. It is also clear from the co-production work we have done that many have

been unable to connect with us. Our services are not visible or accessible to some people for a range of reasons.

This updated strategy whilst continuing to promote online and digital platforms, as well as commitments to improve those platforms, also promotes the following:

- Bringing access more localised where it is needed (Links with place-based working and Asset strategies).
- Up-skilling and empowering staff to be able to support all customer needs presented and acting as advocates for them with specialised services. Moving away from siloed services that deal with initial presenting need only (aligning with the People Strategy and organisational development).
- Reviewing the journey of how people connect with us and our processes, the mechanisms and technology (links with Technology Strategy)
- Improving consistency in communication across all platforms (links with Communication Strategy)
- To work alongside our communities, our partners and others in developing our services and improving outcomes.

This strategy sets out the principles and conditions for the change required. The strategy aims and principles are for **all our** services where access is required by our people and businesses.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The strategy has been co-produced, building on feedback from people and communities identifying their needs and what works for them. A principle of the strategy is to involve people in the development and delivery of key projects and for future service delivery models. It puts people at the heart of what we do. The strategy includes commitments to obtain regular feedback from people on their experiences of receiving services.

3.2 Working with Partners

Our partners are key to us achieving the aims of the strategy. Partners are involved in the boards and steering groups we have created to develop the strategy and monitor our progress. We are working with health partners and the voluntary and community sector to better understand local needs to develop the best possible outcomes.

3.3 Place Based Working

Place based working is a key aim of the strategy. Our ambition is that people will be able to access the support and information they need at the right time in their life as well as in the place they live. The strategy builds on existing resources in our places and builds on our strength-based approaches across ours and partners delivery and supports Kirklees integration agenda.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

As we develop our future service delivery model's we will provide more localised support therefore potentially reducing the need for people to travel to Huddersfield or Dewsbury to get support. This may impact positively on Climate change and air quality.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

This is the council's strategy for Access and therefore speaks to every directorate; the strategy has been developed to further improve links with Children's and Families.

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Delivery of the strategy has the need to be cost effective and offer value for money. Although some initial development resources have been provided to initiate this work, there will be need for financial support on key projects identified to deliver the strategy. For example: Place based working and technology improvements. However, we are confident that the robust and longer-term implementation of this strategy, across all services, will realise the longer-term financial benefits of working upstream.

Effective communications and engagement to launch this strategy will be crucial in ensuring the strategy is recognised, understood and begins to inform our ways of working across the council and with partners.

3.7 Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?

We have taken account of our equality duties. A Stage 1 Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and is at Appendix 2

4. Next steps and timelines

Following political endorsement, roll-out of the Access Strategy will be supported by a comprehensive and insight-led communications programme. Cabinet and overview and scrutiny panel will be updated on progress on an annual basis.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Access Strategy 2021-26, attached at Appendix 1. To be implemented from October 2021 for the following reasons:

- This new strategy puts people at the heart of our approach
- It will support delivery of the corporate plan and ambition
- It has been developed through feedback from people and groups about what is required to meet both individual and collective access needs.

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not Applicable

7. Contact officer

Dave Thompson Head of Access Strategy and Delivery

8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=25520&PIanId=163&RPID=1658742>

9. Service Director responsible

Jill Greenfield Service Director Customers and Communities