

Kirklees Council

Our Council Plan

July 2023 - January 2024



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Introductions



Introduction from the Leader

I'm pleased to present the Council Plan for 2023. It builds on the work we began following the pandemic, with the same values and priorities at its heart, but takes account of changes in circumstances and new challenges that we must address.

We know life at the moment is very difficult for many people in our communities. With rising food, fuel and energy costs disproportionately affecting those on lower incomes, existing inequalities within our district have become starker. That is why this plan – which will guide our decision making and help us to prioritise our resources – is so important for the communities we serve.

It focuses on the things which we know we will need to do to address the challenges ahead. It is ambitious and offers appropriate support for local people and communities, to protect and grow business and jobs, to meet the needs of a changing population and to secure a sustainable future for our district. It's more important than ever that we continue to sow the seeds of future growth, alongside addressing the significant financial challenges facing our communities and the Council. This is what our plan does.

Cllr Shabir Pandor

Leader of the Council



Introduction from the Chief Executive

Our Council Plan sets out our key priorities for the rest of 2023, as well as re-affirming the longer-term outcomes we are continually striving to achieve for the people of Kirklees. We will continue to focus on the delivery of those outcomes, despite the challenges we clearly face.

I never cease to be amazed by the skill, determination, flexibility and dedication of our workforce. Our response to the pandemic showed exactly what we can do. When times are tough, we pull together and deliver. Over the past few years, we've faced some very challenging times, and more challenges lie ahead. The cost-of-living crisis and surrounding national political turbulence creates uncertainty for us as a Council. Just as in our own households, we will be faced with tough decisions about how we spend our money.

The Council cannot meet these challenges working on its own. Working with our partners and communities must be a key part of how we respond to this newest wave of challenge. Everyone has a role to play in handling the challenges over the next year and achieving our ambitions for the future.

Jacqui Gedman

Chief Executive

An Inclusive Economic and Financial Recovery



Artists' impression: the future of Dewsbury bus station

As countries around the world started to recover from the global pandemic, a new set of challenges began to emerge. As with many other countries, pressures on global supply chains and the war in Ukraine brought significant economic challenges. Unfortunately, these pressures will remain throughout the coming year and beyond, so we know challenging times are ahead for the borough and our communities.

We know that the situation is worst for those who were already facing difficulties, whether that's lower-income households or marginalised communities. Much like the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis is making existing inequalities worse. This is why we continue to focus on achieving inclusion and tackling inequalities, across everything that we do as a Council. In the context of economic and financial recovery, our recovery will only be successful if it benefits those who have been hit hardest.

The Council is also facing significant pressures on its budgets due to rising costs for energy, fuel and food. We will need to continue to try and understand what is most important for the people and communities of Kirklees, as we prioritise our resources on what matters the most to them. We also need to focus on what will have the greatest impact on the longer-term outcomes we want to achieve. But we know actions now will support our future recovery.

As a Council, our focus in 2023 will be to work together with people, with partners, and in our places, to address not only the impacts of the rising cost-of-living, but to achieve a more inclusive economic and financial recovery.

Cost of Living SUPPORT



www.kirklees.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Our Vision

Our vision for Kirklees is to be a district which combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life – leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives.

Our four key strategies

Inclusive
Economy
Strategy

Kirklees Health
and Wellbeing
Strategy

Environment
Strategy

Inclusive
Communities
Framework

Our shared outcomes



Shaped by People

We make our places what they are



Aspire and Achieve

People in Kirklees have aspiration to achieve their ambitions through education, training employment and lifelong learning



Best Start

Children have the best start in life



Sustainable Economy

Kirklees has sustainable economic growth and provides good employment for and with communities and businesses



Well

People in Kirklees are as well as possible for as long as possible



Safe and Cohesive

People in Kirklees live in cohesive communities, feel safe and are protected from harm



Independent

People in Kirklees live independently and have control over their lives



Clean and Green

People in Kirklees experience a high quality, clean, sustainable and green environment



Efficient and effective: Kirklees Council works smart and delivers efficiently and effectively

People — Partners — Place

We will work with people and partners using a place-based approach.

How we'll achieve our vision

Our Approach

Our vision and outcomes

Our vision and outcomes remain the same. Alongside our partners, we will continue to work towards achieving the vision we have set for the borough and our shared outcomes. We will continue to track and monitor progress towards our outcomes so we know the scale of the challenge we are facing and can design services and delivery accordingly. The Council will continue to work towards achieving its own outcome 'Efficient and Effective' – ensuring that the Council delivers and manages its own business as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Delivering our four key partnership-led strategies

This plan sets out our current cross-service priorities for the Council. It does not provide details about everything that we do to achieve the vision and outcomes we have set, or the day-to-day delivery of essential services we continue to provide. Our outcomes can also only be achieved by working together with our partners. The economic and financial pressures make it even more important that we have a shared understanding across partners of the challenges and opportunities this brings to different organisations. We are committed to playing a strong role in delivering the ambitions of our four key partnership-led strategies, which set out how we will work together to achieve our outcomes for Kirklees.



Working with people, partners and in our places

We will continue to work with people, with and alongside our partners, and in our places to achieve our ambitions. This is the approach we take to everything that we do, and all that we deliver.

Our values and behaviours

Our core values guide the way we think and act, and we continue to work by these: we are kind, we are inclusive, and we work with pride. Our supporting behaviours also remain unchanged: we are honest, positive, flexible, respectful, communicative, and supportive.

Our People Strategy

Our staff are essential for delivering the priorities and changes that will be required going forward, and we acknowledge the impact that changes will have on them. We will continue to develop our organisation and ensure our staff are valued, supported by the delivery of our People Strategy. Our People Strategy sets out how we will achieve our outcomes by having people with the right skills, values and behaviours, and working in partnership in our places.

Councillors as local place leaders – at the heart of what we do

We will continue to make sure that councillors are at the heart of everything that we do. Councillors work in partnership with local communities and organisations, to improve services and the quality of life for citizens, and to represent local views and priorities. With difficult decisions ahead, it will be critically important that we continue to work closely with councillors as local place leaders, to make sure we can make the best use of resources and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. Only by working closely with councillors, will we be able to prioritise resources on what matters the most to people.

Council Priorities

The Council priorities are our current areas of focus for delivering our vision, four key partnership-led strategies and our outcomes. In the context of the challenges facing the Council and our communities, our key cross-council priorities are:

1. Addressing the financial challenges facing the Council

All councils must achieve a balanced budget, and because of the impact of rising costs, the Council is having to make some difficult decisions to achieve this. The Council is focusing on developing plans to deliver services within available budgets, without impacting on the longer-term outcomes we are still aiming to achieve. We are working to some important principles while we do this, and will make sure that we:

- learn lessons from the past – for example from our approach to responding to the pandemic
- identify opportunities for working in a place-based way
- continue to support communities with the cost-of-living crisis
- continue to focus on services that deliver prevention and intervention early on before issues become worse for people
- safeguard key regeneration activity to support longer-term inclusive economic growth
- make sure we maintain appropriate risk and governance practices
- prioritise transformation of services and consider collective, Council-wide approaches
- consider commercial opportunities and identify alternative sources of funding where possible
- understand the total impact of any changes.

2. Transforming services to become more efficient and effective

It is not just about doing less, but about doing things differently, for now and for the longer-term. We will deliver significant changes to the way we do things, and not just within specific services, but collaboratively across a broader range of services and functions within the Council. We will also need to respond to any potential upcoming national policy changes and review services accordingly. We will make processes and systems more effective, harness new technology, and work differently with partners to reduce costs, and improve outcomes at the same time.

We will look to re-design ways of working so that services are as efficient and effective as they can be and are reflective of changing circumstances and the current environment.

3. Working with people, partners, and places on the cost-of-living

The Council has a Cost-of-Living Plan that sets out three priorities:

- 1. emergency response:** our focus now for people already in crisis
- 2. resilience:** our focus now to build places where people look after each other
- 3. prevention:** acting now to address the medium- and long-term challenges and minimise the impact of future economic crisis.

Council services, partners and local place-leaders are working together across all of these priorities for the benefit of local people and places.

4. Continuing to invest in our future

We will continue to invest and attract partner investment into the regeneration of our towns and villages, so that our economic recovery is as quick and secure as possible. Plans for the Huddersfield Cultural Heart, the Dewsbury Blueprint and investments in Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton, Batley, Marsden and Holmfirth will remain a key priority, as will delivering major transport improvements, improving and maintaining our roads, supporting housing growth, investing in employment and skills support, and supporting the growth of new and existing businesses.

ACHIEVING INCLUSION