

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2022/23



## Chair's Foreword

The start of the 2022/23 municipal year saw the appointment of four Scrutiny Panel Chairs and I would like to thank them for their hard work throughout the year.

Over the last year, we have discussed topics covering a wide range of topics and policy areas and were given insight into some complex issues. Some of the highlights of the wider work of the Panels are outlined in this report, including pre-decision consideration of the Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan and the Inclusive Communities Framework; an update on the issue of Maternity services in Kirklees; monitoring of the Council's Plan; a review of the Council's Winter Maintenance policy; focus on education and learning outcomes across Kirklees; and continued examination how the Council has responded to the cost of living crisis.

2022/23 saw the Council accept the findings of the Democracy Commission, who had been tasked with reviewing the current and alternative models of governance. Having agreed to retain the current model, a number of recommendations were made which related to enhancing the Council's scrutiny function, including reviewing the scrutiny structures, providing specific scrutiny training and encouraging more pre-decision scrutiny.

I am pleased that the new structures give responsibility to the Management Committee to undertake high level scrutiny in respect of financial management, risk and performance. In these challenging times, oversight of these areas is critical as the Council makes difficult decisions to manage budgets and provide services to the public. I look forward to engaging with Cabinet as these challenges are faced and am keen to further encourage a constructive relationship which results in more engagement and pre-decision scrutiny.



I am continually grateful to members of the various scrutiny panels for their hard work and contributions throughout the year and would like to thank all the Scrutiny Councillors, Voluntary Co-optees and Governance Officers for their hard work and commitment during the year.

This year was the first year for a number of our new Voluntary Co-optee's, and I would like to pay tribute to them all for their valuable input to the scrutiny process in Kirklees. I am also grateful to all the local groups, organisations and individuals who have attended meetings, made presentations and provided evidence, and to council officers and Cabinet Members for their attendance and contributions.

Looking forwards, I am keen to build on the positive impacts outlined in this annual report and successfully embed the new scrutiny structures to deliver on the recommendations of the Democracy Commission.

Chair of Scrutiny

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Smaje". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Councillor Elizabeth Smaje**

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# Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee 2022/23

Committee Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Jackie Ramsay

## **Work Programme 2022/23**

- Leader's Priorities.
- Council Plan.
- Crime and Disorder.
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny of the Communities Partnership Plan 2022-27.
- Annual Refresh of the Strategic Impact Assessment.
- Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Local Flood Risk Management.
- Inclusion and Diversity.
- Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.
- Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report.
- Inclusive Communities Framework.
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny.
- Implementation.
- Community Anchor Network Update.
- Scrutiny of Loneliness in Kirklees.
- Regional Funding.
- Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement - Progress Report.

In addition to the formal meetings of the Committee, informal sessions also took place to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny and comment on the Council Plan, the Inclusion and Diversity Annual Report, and the revised Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, prior to submission to Cabinet and Council.

The Chair of Scrutiny also received briefings during 2022/23, including regular updates with the Authority's Head of Risk, with the Strategic Director – Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health in respect of budget engagement and, as necessary, to focus on areas of potential scrutiny interest that arose during the year.

## **Committee Highlights**

### **Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel – Health and Safety Compliance in Residential Housing Stock.**

The Ad Hoc Panel was formally established by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in 2021/22 to carry out a focused piece of work to consider the Council's policies, procedures and arrangements for managing the health and safety of its tenants and residential property portfolio, with a particular focus on high-rise and multiple occupancy blocks.

The cross-party panel included one of Kirklees' scrutiny co-optees and was assisted by an independent adviser with specialist knowledge of the area under consideration.

Following extensive evidence gathering, the Panel produced its final report containing its findings and seventeen recommendations. The report was submitted to Cabinet on 21 December 2022. Cabinet accepted all the recommendations, subject to the amendment of one to require monthly, rather than weekly, reporting. The related Action Plan was also approved.

A Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board was established in early 2023 and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will receive a progress report, in respect of the implementation of the recommendations, during 2023/24.

### **Leader of the Council Priorities 2022-23**

The Leader of the Council was invited to the meeting of the Committee in July 2022 to set out his portfolio priorities for the year. He returned in February 2023 to give an update on progress. On each occasion he responded to comments and questions from the Members of the Committee.

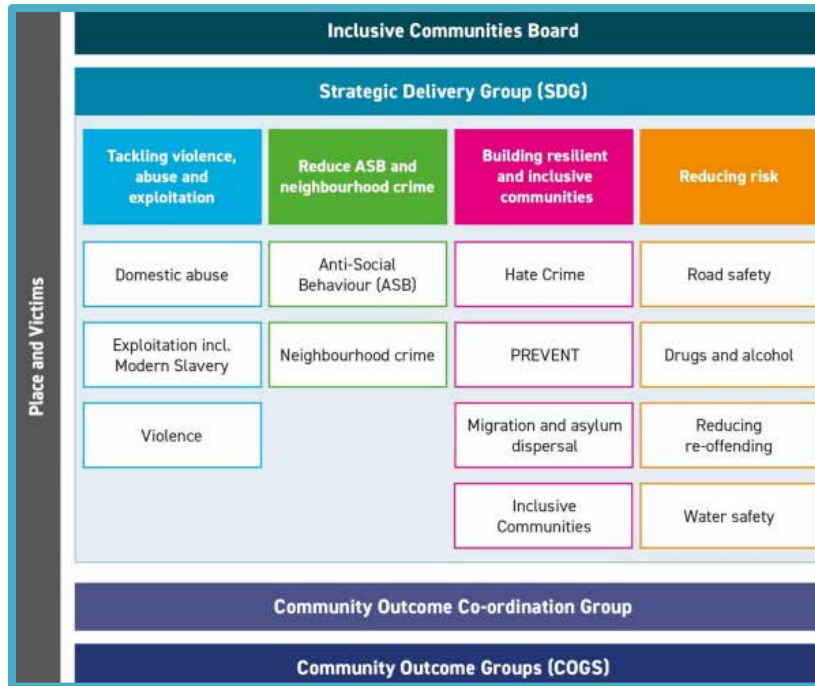
### **Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan 2022-2027**

In June 2022 the Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the latest version of the Communities Partnership Plan, which covered the period 2022-2027. They were joined by the Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities and Chief Superintendent Jim Griffiths from West Yorkshire Police.

The plan is designed to address multi-agency issues affecting quality of life for residents, as required by Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and is informed by a Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) developed using data, intelligence and insight from partnerships, which was reviewed on an annual basis.

The key strategic priorities for the next five years were:

- Tackling Violence, Abuse and Exploitation.
- Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Crime.
- Reducing Risk.
- Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities.



Members made a number of comments in respect of the involvement of Councillors, the need for a greater focus on speeding and road safety, to reflect the concerns of local people, and the inclusion of outcomes and good practice. These were taken on board in developing the final document, which was endorsed by Cabinet in September 2022 and adopted by Council at its meeting on 12 October 2022.

In February 2023, the Committee received a report which set out the findings emerging from the annual refresh of the Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) which aimed to ensure that the themes within the Partnership Plan remained valid and to highlight any exceptions, trends or potential areas for future focus. The report also included a specific focus on the issues of road safety and serious violence.

The Committee reiterated that the importance of working and engaging with Ward Councillors on issues in their areas should be embraced by all parties and requested the provision of further information in relation to the action taken in response to the data gathered from speed indication devices and how this is shared with partners, and how the data in respect of collisions not involving injury was collated and utilised.



## **Flood Risk Management Annual Update**

In March 2023, the Committee undertook its annual scrutiny of local flood risk management and considered a report which detailed progress against the Action Plan of the Kirklees Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The report also set out the process for the development of the new strategy, which was due to be adopted in late 2023.

The Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration was in attendance at the meeting along with representatives of partners; the White Rose Forest Project and the National Trust who explained projects being undertaken to provide natural flood management. Other partners included Yorkshire Water, the Woodlands Trust, Moors for the Future and the Environment Agency.

The Committee welcomed the interesting and informative presentations on the ongoing work in relation to natural flood management and the strong partnership working arrangements. It also requested that the new Flood Risk Management Strategy be submitted for pre-decision scrutiny in advance of it being presented to Cabinet.

## **Domestic Abuse in Kirklees – Update**

A report was submitted to the Committee in February 2023 which provided a detailed update on activity to tackle domestic abuse in Kirklees, in line with the strategic aims and priorities of the 2022-2027 Domestic Abuse Strategy, which had been subject to pre-decision scrutiny by the Committee in 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities and representatives of West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and Yorkshire Children's Centre (Perpetrators Programme) joined the discussion.

Members noted that the work being undertaken across the partnership was evident and was very positive. The work being undertaken with perpetrators and children was commended and the efforts to widen the provision of 'safezones', particularly in the Rural and Batley and Spen areas, was welcomed.

They also requested that further information be provided relation to benchmarking against other local authorities in respect of the incident/crime conversion rate for reports made to the Police; and the approach being taken in terms of the adjacent NHS Trusts.

### **Inclusive Communities Framework**

A report was submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 in respect of the Inclusive Communities Framework (ICF), prior to its submission to Council.



The ICF had been developed to provide a partner-produced strategic approach to building cohesive communities in Kirklees. It would sit alongside the Council's Health and Wellbeing, Sustainable Environment and Economic Strategies and set out how the Council and its partners would work with communities to try and ensure a safe and inclusive community.

Members asked a number of questions and requested that the implementation plan be brought back for consideration at an early stage and that its comments, as summarised below, be taken into account in the progression, and implementation, of the ICF:

- The importance of the role of Councillors as representatives of their communities.
- The need for realistic expectations, such as in respect of community input to decision-making.
- The use of accessible and clear language.
- The provision of a balance of stories.
- Reference to all of the engagement undertaken.
- The need for a focus on action as a key element.

The ICF was approved by Cabinet 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and Council on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and, a report was submitted to the November meeting of the Committee which provided an update in respect of the Inclusive Communities Framework, including an overview of the Council's plans for implementation and a response to the issues raised by the Committee at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Committee reiterated its view in respect of the integral role of ward councillors in this work, due to their position at the heart of the organisation and their unique position within local communities. It also recommended that consideration be given to broadening representation on the Communities Board and stressed the importance of the Place Standard approach; listening to the voices and experiences of communities and robust monitoring of action plans to allow any issues with progress to be addressed, to learn from good practice and to assess impact and outcomes.

## Regional Funding Update

At the meeting in December 2022 the Committee gave consideration to the Authority's approach to regional funding activity, with a focus on the funds administered by the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (WYMCA).

A number of the Kirklees Councillors who were members of one of the WYMCA scrutiny committees were also welcomed to the meeting.

A report was presented which provided details on the main strategic economic development funding streams at regional level, including Gainshare and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). It also gave an overview of the approach currently being taken including investment prioritisation, horizon scanning for future opportunities and overview/monitoring of all funding coming into Kirklees.

It was explained that the Council was taking a proactive approach in terms of the development of outline schemes, so that it was able to react quickly when funding opportunities came forward, and that the West Yorkshire Investment Strategy set out the following six investment priorities:

- Good Jobs and Resilient Businesses (including entrepreneurialism).
- Skills and training for people.
- Creating Great Places and Accelerated Infrastructure.
- Tackling the Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability.
- Future Transport Investment.
- Culture and Creative Industries.

The Committee recommended that consideration be given to:

- The need to facilitate a wider awareness of the work of the Combined Authority for Kirklees Councillors.
- The provision of greater support for those Councillors representing Kirklees on the Combined Authority.

- The need for a strategic approach to bus services across the district.
- The use of the Place Standard to build a strong evidence base for local priorities.
- Feedback to the wider Council from Kirklees Combined Authority representatives.

## **Loneliness and Social Isolation in Kirklees Post Pandemic**

During 2022/23 the Committee gathered evidence in respect of the issue of loneliness in Kirklees and the impact of the pandemic, with the aim of helping to inform and shape the partnership approach in responding to this issue, in light of the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of local people.

This included formal sessions in October and December 2022 in respect of the role of the Partnership Loneliness Steering Group and how best to identify, signpost and refer people who are lonely or isolated and how loneliness could be 'made everyone's business'.

Members engaged with the following teams and partner organisations:

- Kirklees Partners' Loneliness Steering Group.
- Local Integrated Partnerships.
- Local Area Co-ordination.
- Public Health.
- Community Plus.
- The Council's Wellness Service.
- Luv2MeetU – a charity which operates on a national basis and organises events for small groups of people with learning disabilities or autism to address issues associated with independence and/or loneliness.
- Yorkshire Children's Centre – a local charity which takes a lead on the befriending partnership work in Kirklees.
- Age UK (Kirklees and Calderdale).
- Yorkshire Children's Centre.
- The Carer's Trust Mid Yorkshire – a local charity working to support unpaid family carers.

- Carer's Count - a not for profit organisation that supports unpaid carers within Kirklees.

Visits were carried out to the following groups to discuss the issues with service users:

- Long Covid Support Group - one of two support groups run by the Council's Wellness Service based at Batley Town Hall.
- Young Onset Dementia Support Group – led by volunteers through Yorkshire Children's Centre.
- Carer's Count at two locations in North and South Kirklees
- Carer's Trust Listening Group.

Further to some additional work in 2023, to focus on the views of young people, a report will be produced containing the Committee's recommendations.



## **Lead Members' Updates from Standing Scrutiny Panels**

Each of the Lead Members provided the Committee with an update on the work of the standing scrutiny panel, listed below, on a regular basis.

# Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel 2022/23

Panel Membership
Councillor Jackie Ramsay (Chair)
Councillor Jo Lawson
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Lesley Warner
Helen Clay (Co-optee)
Kim Taylor (Co-optee)

## **Work Programme 2022/23**

- Resources of the Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care Economy.
- Impact of Covid-19.
- Capacity and Demand - Kirklees Health and Adult Social Care System.
- Joined up Care in Kirklees Neighbourhoods.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Unplanned Care.
- Maternity Services.
- Access to dentistry.
- Quality of Care in Kirklees.
- Kirklees Safeguarding Adults Board (KSAB) 2021/22 Annual Report.
- Inequalities in access to health care services.
- New Plan for Adult Social Care Reform.
- Palliative and end of life care.



## Panel highlights

### Maternity Services in Kirklees

In the Panel's meeting held in September 2022 representatives from Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT), Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust (MYHT) and the West Yorkshire Local Maternity System attended the meeting to present an update on the provision of maternity services in Kirklees.

Areas that were discussed included: recommendations and local improvement and action plans following publication of the Ockenden reports; the challenges of the local maternity workforce and the impact of these on childbirth choices for women in Kirklees; and details of the risk assessment of midwifery-led birth units against published European birth centre standards.

As part of their continuing review into maternity services in Kirklees panel members visited the Calderdale Royal Hospital (CRH) Birthing Unit and Labour Ward on 16 February 2023 to have a tour of the Birthing Unit and Labour Ward and to receive a presentation on CHFT maternity services that included an update on service developments.

### Outcomes

As a result of the initial discussion the Panel agreed to write to the Chief Executives of both hospital trusts to express its concerns that women who lived in Kirklees were currently unable to access a birth centre located in their local district and the potential for there to be an extensive period before the resumption of services could take place.

The letters included a request to receive as soon as possible a clear timeline for the reopening of the birthing centres in Kirklees and details of the maternity services model.

The Panel also agreed that it would commit to engage with CHFT and MYHT on any external work or communications that the Panel undertook regarding the situation on

maternity services in Kirklees and to arrange a further meeting in public at the earliest opportunity to review in detail the maternity services proposals and to consider if they constituted a substantial change or variation to service.

Following the visit to CRH panel members discussed their findings and agreed that a follow up letter should be sent to the hospital trusts to outline further concerns relating to the intermittent closure of the CRH Birthing Unit due to staff shortages and to reiterate that scrutiny still had concerns regarding the lack of access for women living in Kirklees to a birthing facility located in their local district.

The Panel also highlighted concerns regarding the equality of access for Kirklees parents who had to travel further than they would have if a service was still available at Huddersfield and the impact on those families who relied on public transport. The Panel concluded that unless it was made aware of work that was taking place to reintroduce the birthing centres that taking account of the length time that the Birthing Units in Huddersfield and Dewsbury had been closed it would have no alternative but to recognise that a substantial change to service had taken place that the public should, retrospectively, be consulted on.

### **Joined up Care in Kirklees Neighbourhoods**

The Panel included in its work programme a focus on how local primary care services via Primary Care Networks (PCNs) contributed to targeted integrated service delivery in the Kirklees neighbourhoods.

There were a number of areas that the Panel felt warranted review that included looking at the work that was being developed through the Council's primary care network & local health improvement leads and considering the progress, effectiveness and breadth of services being delivered in the community.

The Panel was also keen to assess the capacity of out of hospital care to include all aspects of community care including adult social care capacity, community services

capacity, and primary care support and to take account of the work that was being done by Community Pharmacy to help alleviate demand in hospitals.

At its meeting held in December 2022, the Panel heard from a range of representatives from the local health and adult social care system that included input from Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire and Local Care Direct, which is a community-owned healthcare provider delivering a wide range of NHS services to the people in Kirklees.

The discussions were detailed and constructive and covered a number of areas that included the role of community pharmacy in helping to alleviate pressures across the wider primary care system; the work being done to utilise the different skill mixes in the workforce and developing further the use of digital technology; the work that was taking place to align the agencies working in the neighbourhood model to general practice; and plans for the introduction of community diagnostic centres.

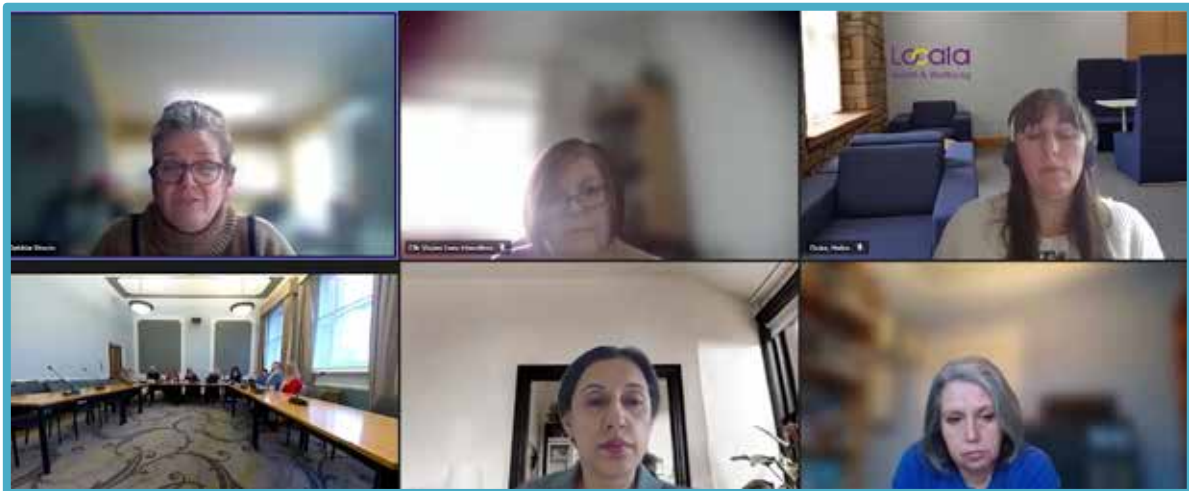
### **Outcomes**

A number of concerns highlighted by the Panel were addressed that included an agreement that more work was needed to align the role of elected members in the work of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and the neighbourhood model including developing the right forums to build that working relationship; an agreement that the development of the working relationships with the PCNs should be undertaken outside of the PCN formal business meetings; and an acknowledgment of the importance of communicating with the public and raising awareness of the local neighbourhood services.

The Panel acknowledged that the information and discussions had provided good evidence of the progress that was being made in integrated working despite the pressures in the local health and adult social care system.

## Dentistry in Kirklees

The Panel has acknowledged that access to dental services in Kirklees can be a challenge for some people and was keen to explore in more detail the current position in Kirklees and what options may be available to address and tackle any inequalities in access to dental services.



The Panel also identified a number of areas that it felt warranted further scrutiny that included the approach being taken to promote oral health and dental health improvement; the support being provided to vulnerable groups; the forthcoming changes to dental commissioning arrangements; and looking more closely at orthodontic services in Kirklees.

At its meeting held in March 2023 representatives from NHS England, Public Health, Locala and the Kirklees Local Dental Committee attended to discuss in more detail the issues highlighted by scrutiny.

The discussions were robust and constructive and covered a number of issues that included:

The position of Orthodontic services in Kirklees; an update on the Oral Health Needs Assessment for the Yorkshire region; the challenges in accessing an NHS Dentist; delays in accessing hospital dental extractions for children and young people; the work

undertaken by Locala in providing Community Dental Services; and the transfer of commissioning responsibilities from NHS England to West Yorkshire ICB.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel agreed that it should write to the two acute Trusts, Locala and the West Yorkshire ICB outlining its concerns in delays in accessing hospital dental extractions for children and young people. The Panel also agreed that following the transfer of the commissioning of dental services to the West Yorks Integrated Care Board (WYICB) that representatives of WYICB should be invited to attend a future Panel meeting to discuss its response to the delays in hospital dental extractions for children and young people.

### **Comments**

#### **Emily-Parry Harries - Head of Public Health**

*"The opportunities with scrutiny panels have been two fold this year and both very welcome – the Public Health team have been able to support the panel in furthering their understanding of inequalities and then use this understanding to support and challenge organisations to better support the population of Kirklees in the delivery of services."*

#### **Michelle Cross - Service Director- Mental Health & Learning Disability**

*"Involvement in Scrutiny Panel has been useful not only from an Adult Social Care perspective but from the whole Health and Social care system, we have done joint presentations with partners such as ICB, Independent Sector, SWYFT and LOCALA. It's good to show how joined up the system is in Kirklees and strength in partnerships that we have. The planning workshops are helpful in shaping the work plan and we get invited to be part of that which enables an understanding of what panel members want to understand further, I would say sometimes it's hard to understand how much detail is required as subjects are quite broad and there is a danger of providing too much detail but feedback we've had is its been well received and the conversation and discussion is always the best part of the sessions. "*

## **Kim Taylor – Scrutiny Co-optee**

*“Working as a voluntary co-optee on the Health and Adult Social Care scrutiny panel has given me the opportunity to be part of the panel’s decision-making process and to use my experience of working in the NHS to influence and constructively challenge the way that services in Kirklees are delivered. As a lay member of the scrutiny panel, I am always mindful to consider the effect of any proposed changes or concerns about the quality of services delivered by the council and its partner organisations, and what these would mean to me, my family and friends, and the wider community. I particularly enjoyed the panel discussions on unplanned care and I am pleased that these have been included in the work programme for 23/24 with a focus on the work being done in the community to reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital.”*

# Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees 2022/23

## Calderdale and Kirklees Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Kirklees Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Joint Chair)
Councillor Jackie Ramsay
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Aleks Lukic

During the 2022/23 municipal year the JHSC maintained its focus on reviewing the revised hospital services proposals at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT) and held two formal meetings in October 2022 and March 2023. In June 2022 the JHSC members also attended an informal workshop with representatives from CHFT to discuss the Trusts Outline Business Case (OBC) which included a number of sections that contained highly commercial sensitive information.

The meeting held in October 2022 included a formal report that covered the areas discussed at the OBC informal workshop; an update on progress of the new Huddersfield Royal Infirmary Accident and Emergency Department; and a presentation from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service on its 2021 modelling report that would be used to determine the impact of changes and the additional ambulance capacity required.



At the meeting in March 2023 the JHSC was presented with details of CHFT's communication plans for its new Accident and Emergency department; details of the planned arrangements for the transition of services from the old Huddersfield Royal Infirmary A&E Department to the new; an update on the actions from the latest Travel Plan and details of the plans for refreshing the Travel Plan and Survey; and an update on the hospital services reconfiguration project costs and contingency plans.

## West Yorkshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Kirklees Membership

Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Jackie Ramsay

The JHOSC met 3 times during 2022/23 and covered a variety of issues that had implications for the West Yorkshire region.

Issues covered included: an overview of the aim and objectives of the West Yorkshire Association of Acute Trusts; an update on West Yorkshire Community Diagnostic Centre Plans; contributing to the refresh of the West Yorkshire (WY) Partnership Board



Five Year Strategy; and an update and discuss on service demand pressures on the Yorkshire Ambulance Service; and considering access to NHS dentistry in West Yorkshire and looking at wider oral health issues.

## Corporate Scrutiny Panel 2022/23

Panel Membership
Councillor John Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Steve Hall
Councillor Tyler Hawkins
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Aleks Lukic
Garry Kitchin (Co-optee)
Kristina Parkes (Co-optee)
James Ryan (Co-optee)

### Work Programme 2022/23

- Financial Management/Capital Plan.
- Council Risk Register.
- Responding to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Procurement .
- Social Value Strategy.
- The People Strategy.
- Asset Management.
- Emerging Issue – Customer Service Capacity.
- Access to Services and Customer Services.
- Libraries.
- Technology Strategy.
- Comms Strategy.

## **Panel highlights**

### **Responding to the cost-of-living crisis**

At its meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022, the Panel received an update on the Council's response to the cost-of-living-crisis, specifically, the measures that were being put in place, to support local residents and communities in dealing with the difficult economic climate. Officers from the Welfare and Exchequer Team gave the Panel an overview of some of the support that was on offer to local residents which included: financial support and debt advice, advice on keeping your house warm and reducing energy bills, support with the cost of food, Kirklees jobs and careers and mental health support.

The 'Bread and Butter Thing', was hailed as a good example of the support available, which provided low cost, nutritious, affordable food across places in Kirklees, where residents could access three bags of food for £7.50, and anybody could access that provision. There were four such provisions across Kirklees, and the aim was to roll this out to more areas across the district.

The Panel was concerned that information regarding the support available may not be reaching the people who would most benefit from help and support, and asked how such information was being disseminated.

### **Outcomes**

The panel welcomed the support proposed by the Council and was supportive of promoting Libraries as welcoming warm spaces and suggested supporting other community buildings to offer warm spaces as well.

### **Social Value Strategy**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the Panel received an update on social value which had become an increasingly important focus for both the public and private sector, in

trying to optimise the social, economic, and environmental benefit of every pound invested.

The Panel learned that the current strategy had been in place since 2013, after the Social Value Act 2012 came into force. The legislation set a requirement for public sector bodies to consider social value in some procurement activity. The new strategy that was being developed, acknowledged some important developments that needed to be taken into account. Firstly, there was a need to consider, and embed social value much more widely in relation to the council's activities. Secondly, there was a need for commissioners to consider social value outcomes and how they might be achieved at a much earlier stage of the project development process. More importantly, the aim was to increase the visibility of social value commitments in the way contracts are commissioned and managed.

The Panel was presented with a set of proposals which outlined how the policy would be implemented. One part of that process would be to identify a lead within each service to develop social value knowledge and capacity, to ensure it was embedded throughout the commissioning of services. Another aspect would be developing a programme of training and action learning for the service leads.

In response to the information presented, the Panel raised concerns about what remedial action would be taken, for example, if faced with non-delivery against the social value stipulated, and not getting the value agreed with providers. The Panel questioned how successful have some of the measures like clawback and retention been?

### **Outcomes**

The Panel asked that an action to talk to the big building companies be undertaken before finalising the policy, as this would ensure that the consequence of implementing the policy is fully understood.

## **Access to Services and Customer Services**

At its meeting on the 28 November 2022, the Panel received information on some of the strategic objectives for libraries and access to services. The Panel was reminded that at its meeting on the 15 August 2022, information was presented on the work that was being undertaken to implement the new telephony system. Since the new system was introduced, the call answer rate had gone from between 73-75% on approximately 12,000 calls per week, to averaging over 85%, and this was consistently being achieved, and it is getting better.

The Panel also learned that there are 24 place-based libraries supporting access to services that reflect and are relevant to local communities by both the buildings and the outreach on offer. They are a valued and trusted local resource, providing a safe and welcoming space, and this is a key hinge point in terms of the council's commitment to delivering a warm spaces offer.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel recognised that there are financial pressures, and a cost of living crisis and there are demands being placed on services as a consequence, and was encouraged by the steps being taken by the service to ensure that local people were able to access key services.

### **Comments**

#### **Cllr John Taylor - Lead Member**

*"Last year much of the focus was on the financial impact on the Council and communities as a result of the energy price rises and inflationary impacts. We looked at the range of support being provided by the Council and the Government. We also reviewed the performance of our customer service teams which is undergoing transformation to multi skill more of the team to provide quicker & better outcomes for residents".*

**Dave Thompson - Head of Access Strategy and Delivery**

*“Through the implementation of the access strategy, we have had valuable conversations with the Corporate Scrutiny Panel. The Panel has helped us work better, by asking key questions and providing support particularly around co-production with communities and our localised digital inclusion plans”.*

# Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel 2022/23

Panel Membership
Councillor Yusra Hussain (Chair)
Councillor Tyler Hawkins
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Aafaq Butt
Chris Friend (Co-optee)
Jane Emery (Co-optee)
Jonathan Milner (Co-optee)

## **Work Programme 2022/2023**

- Waste Strategy Capital Update.
- Hot Food Takeaway SPD.
- Affordable Housing SPD.
- Kirklees District Heat Network.
- Winter Maintenance Policy Review.
- Climate Change Action Plan.
- Progress update on Bus Stations (part on TCF).
- Tourism, Heritage & Cultural Strategies.
- Road Safety – Speeding Enforcement (deferred).
- Housing Allocations Update.
- Tree Policy Framework.
- Grounds Maintenance.

- Post 16 Skills.
- Future of Housing Homes and Neighbourhoods.
- Affordable Housing SPD.
- Public Space Protection Orders.
- Statutory Food Hygiene Plan 2023 – 2024.
- Statutory Health & Safety Plan 2023 – 2024.

## **Panel Highlights**

### **Waste Strategy Capital Update**

At the meeting of the Panel held 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the Panel considered the Waste Strategy Capital Update. It was explained that a report was to be submitted to Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 to agree delegated authority to draw on funding (approximately £3 mil) to allow the implementation and delivery of 7 key initiatives associated with the recently adopted Resources and Waste Strategy. These were:

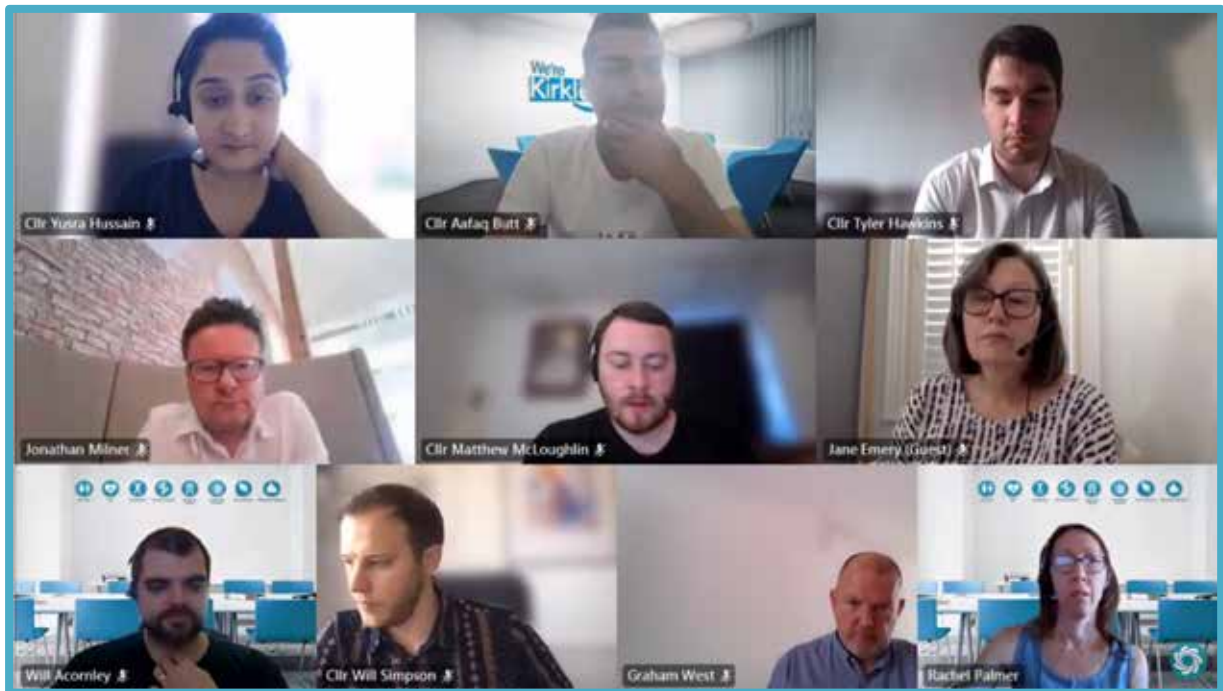
1. The Community Reward Scheme.
2. The Reuse Shop.
3. Improved Litter Facilities.
4. Investment in Innovative Technology to Target Environmental Enforcement.
5. The Glass Collection Trial.
6. Bulky Collections – Third Sector Reuse Partner.
7. Depot Review.

The Panel were presented with the detail of each of the 7 key initiatives which were all in the early phases of development and the reasons why the funding was required for implementation. In the discussion that followed, key points were raised which included the importance of:

- The alignment of similar projects where possible, such as the 'ReUse Shop' and plans for bulky waste collection, to achieve desired shared outcomes.



- Ensuring that new collection and reuse facilities/services are accessible across Kirklees as a part of the long-term plans.
- Working with several third sector and private organisations to create a reuse network.
- Maximising social benefits including, upskilling, and training opportunities, as well as supporting other services (such as homes and neighbourhoods to provide residents with reused furniture for example).



## Outcomes

The Panel welcomed the update highlighting the key benefits of the initiatives particularly in improving waste collection and reduction as well as wider opportunities to uplift products which was key during the cost-of living crisis. The Panel were also provided with early opportunity for input into the 7 initiatives with the understanding that further engagement was to be held with scrutiny, elected members and local communities as the projects developed.

## **Winter Maintenance Policy Review**

Winter Maintenance was reviewed by the Panel in September 2021 which included a focus on the link to planning. Key issues noted included the maintenance of active travel routes, the challenges around housing growth, resources, and capacity for

Winter Maintenance. At this time the Panel recommended that the current policy for Winter Maintenance should be assessed.

In response to the recommendation, at the meeting of the Panel held 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022, a presentation was received which provided an overview of the Winter Maintenance Policy. The update set out the work undertaken by the 'Highways Working Group' which was established to carry out the review of the policy and the supporting winter maintenance operational procedures reflecting the considerations raised at the previous scrutiny meeting. The Panel were informed that:

- The budget for Winter Maintenance had been increased from £1.2m to £1.8m in 2021/22.
- In respect of gritting lengths, treatments times and grit bin provision for the West Yorkshire area, it was reported that Kirklees had the shortest treatment time (on par with Leeds Council) and gritted a higher percentage of the network.
- Kirklees had the highest number of grit bins on its untreated carriageway network.
- Recent service improvements included (i) automated grit bin process, (ii) extending winter standby by three weeks, (iii) effective social media communications and (iv) the review of the existing volunteer scheme.

In the discussion to follow the Panel explored various issues including: the approach to active travel routes, snow warden safety, the use of orange for visibility vests, the amount of grit laid, and the use of snow ploughs. Key questions were raised around the accommodation of new housing estates and the impact of inflation on the Winter Maintenance budget. Concerns were also raised in relation to the gritting around health centres and the consistency of the approach across all wards in Kirklees.

### **Outcomes**

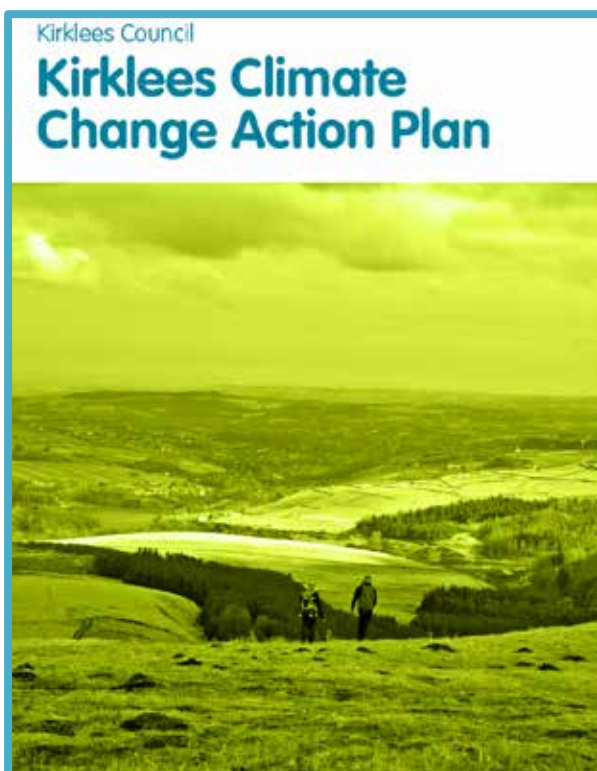
It was resolved that further information be provided to the Panel in relation to; (i) the gritting of routes to health centres (ii) the future maintenance of active travel routes

when the Council had invested initial capital, (iii) the increase in costs for gritting, (iv) information relating to whether grit bin provision could be a planning condition and (v) details of the risk assessment for Snow Wardens.

The Panel also commended officers on the use of social media in engaging with and informing the public around gritting and other winter maintenance issues, noting the positive responses from members of the public now that they had access to direct lines of communication.

### **Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan**

At the meeting of the Panel held 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Panel undertook pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The Panel were presented with the draft Cabinet report, the draft action plan and the proposed next steps for consideration.



The Panel were informed that in response to Kirklees Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, that the CCAP was developed to reach the Council's target to be net zero by 2038. The Plan set out several actions to achieve this and was centred on evidence and public engagement. The plan was structured by 8 action areas which were: Buildings, Energy, Natural Environment and Biodiversity, Sustainable Food and Agriculture, Transport, Waste, Water and Cross-Cutting.

In the discussion to follow the Panel considered a variety of themes in detail including, the approach to communications, the link between the CCAP and other key strategic documents (e.g.- future revisions of the Local Plan, the Transport Strategy and the Resources and Waste Strategy), the measurement of the reduction of carbon emissions and the associated timeframes of the actions.

In relation to Natural Environment and Biodiversity the Panel also asked several questions about; the consideration of the species of trees planted in the proposed sapling nurseries, the risks of invasive species, encouragement for hedgerow productions to increase biodiversity, (particularly insect population growth), water efficiency standards and the wetting of the moors to reduce flood risk and increase carbon capture in the peatlands.

### **Outcomes**

Arising from the discussion the Panel made several recommendations for the development of the Plan.

In relation to the approach to communication and engagement, the Panel felt that the place-based focus of the Plan should be emphasised to address the individual needs within different communities. There should also be several different methods/streams of communication to engage with a variety of audiences, with different levels of understanding and needs. As a part of this the use of lay language and success stories (linking key technical information to the real-life experiences of the public) was recommended to support increased understanding within communities.

The Plan should be used to help inform and support the Local Plan and other key strategic links, such as the Transport Strategy and Waste Strategy. The Panel also recommended that consideration be given to the inclusion of Low Emissions Zones within the Plan, as well as within other linked strategies such as the Air Quality Action Plan.

In relation to measuring success, the Panel recommended that the Plan be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure the climate emergency actions were being achieved. As a part of this, Mid-Term targets (i.e.- for reducing emissions) should be included in Phase 2 delivery of the Plan, and baseline targets for net zero ambitions and reducing carbon emissions should be made clear.

The Panel also recommended that consideration be given to; (i) the co-benefits (i.e., social value and place-based working) when reviewing building efficiency and (ii) the new development higher water efficiency standards be considered for expansion to private developments.

In relation to recruitment the Panel, recommended that the role of external Climate Champions be considered in the long term, and that Site Inspectors be included as part of the mandate that focused on protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

In relation to Natural Environment and Biodiversity the Panel recommended that (i) consideration be given to native species and tree types when planting to achieve the desired outcomes and that the details for mitigating the risks of invasive species be included in the Plan, (ii) the issue of the re-wetting of the moors be considered to encourage carbon retention in the peatlands and to mitigate the impact of degradation and (iii) it was important to encourage farmers to use any available hedgerow to increase biodiversity particularly insect population growth.

### **Progress Update on Huddersfield, Heckmondwike and Dewsbury Bus Station Projects (Part of the Transforming Cities Fund)**

At the meeting of the Panel held 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, a report setting out a progress update and the next steps for the Huddersfield, Heckmondwike and Dewsbury Bus Station Projects (part of the Transforming Cities Fund Programme) was considered. Lead Officers from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) were also in attendance.



Across the three bus stations, the projects were being developed in response to key issues which included the poor-quality physical environment, anti-social behaviour, road safety concerns, a lack of good quality services and accessible facilities, and poor pedestrian access. The investment in the bus stations aimed to achieve improved customer satisfaction, and an overall increase in bus patronage. This was along with reductions in anti-social behaviour and improvements would also make the bus station more energy efficient and contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centres.

In the discussion to follow the Panel explored how the planned improvements would achieve the desired outcomes and how wider bus services could be improved (particularly in more rural areas). Other key themes included questions around; public consultation/engagement, increasing bus patronage, improving safety and accessibility, the greening of the bus stations and the maintenance of these areas.

### **Outcomes**

In relation to increasing bus patronage, recommendations made by the Panel included that (i) consultation/engagement with non-bus users be held to understand what would encourage future travel by bus, (ii) the wider connectivity of smaller towns and more rural areas should be considered to increase network usage.

In relation to the greening of the Bus Stations, the Panel recommended that there should be designated officers with accountability for the maintenance of green spaces around bus stations. These officers should be based locally or visit regularly and act as a point of contact in relation to maintenance. The Panel also questioned the removal of trees' to facilitate the planned improvements and highlighted that the Council's policy in relation to removing trees should be followed.

In relation to increasing safety and accessibility, the Panel recommended that there should be visible security stations and regular patrols inside the bus stations. It was also agreed that regular review be undertaken in relation to the value engineering and the scope of the projects.

### **Grounds Maintenance Current Position**

At the meeting of the Panel held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Panel considered a report setting out the current position in relation to Grounds Maintenance. The update highlighted the work undertaken and the achievements of the Councils Ground Maintenance Team as well as the challenges they faced and the future ambitions for the service.

The Panel were informed that the Grounds Maintenance Team were responsible for all parks and recreational grounds and maintained most greenspaces within Kirklees, as well as delivering contract services to a range of clients including Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods, Highways, Bereavement, Corporate Facilities Management, Schools, Academy Schools, and KAL. It was noted that the Grounds Maintenance service also offered a range of benefits which included:

- Working with people / local groups to provide people with practical work experiences to help them back into employment.
- 6 green flag awards for primary parks and country parks.
- Free and open accessible green spaces people could enjoy which supported mental-health and wellbeing.

- Working closely with partners to support biodiversity and the climate change agenda.

Key challenges were noted in relation to recruitment, budgets, machinery, and the gap between expected and resourced service standards.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel commended those Officers who had served 50+ years within the Grounds Maintenance Team and recommended that these officers be recognised, celebrated, and thanked for their service.

The Panel also made suggestions around the approach to engagement and recommended that a plan be developed. Recommendations were also made to improve the co-ordination of tree planning on recreational grounds through understanding the needs of each individual area, and that consideration be given to alternative provisions to support young people needing a more practical learning experience and to provide clear career pathways, to support recruitment challenges.

### **Comments**

#### **Jonathan Milner – Scrutiny Co-optee**

*"Being engaged with the decision-making process for our towns transportation hubs was a particular highlight. To see the dedication, governance and due diligence that goes into the transformation of our communities is an enlightening and enjoyable experience. The openness and transparency of the scrutiny process along with the collaborative manner in which all involved undertake their duties to ensure that we act in the best interest of our communities to improve and empower them has been refreshing to see in a Local Authority."*

#### **Councillor Yusra Hussain - Lead Member**

*"I want to thank all panel members and co-optees, for their commitment to the work of the Panel and contributions to effective scrutiny through their thoughtful and thorough consideration of the complex and important issues put before them. Key priorities of*



*the Panel in the 2022/23 year included a continuous focus on environmental matters in relation to the climate emergency and consideration of the impact of inflation arising from the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.*

*We have also given scrutiny to a number of pre-decision items, considered matters relating to housing, the developments to Kirklees's bus stations where we were kindly joined by officers from the Combined Authority, and explored the provision of post-16 skills, education and further employment with a key focus on how this relates to the local economy, to name a few of the varied and interesting topics that were considered as part of the Panels busy work programme, as we aim to drive improvement through strong and robust scrutiny."*

## Children's Scrutiny Panel 2022/23

Panel Membership
Councillor Andrew Marchington (Chair)
Councillor Paul White
Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds
Councillor James Homewood
Councillor Ammar Anwar
Oliver Gibson (Co-optee)
Graeme Sunderland (Co-optee)
Toni Bromley (Co-optee)

### Work Programme 2022/23

- Review of the Improvement Journey
- Independent Review of Children's Social Care – white paper
- Educational and Learning Outcomes and Kirklees Future Commission Learning Strategy
- Sufficiency for Children's Service (places/staffing resources)
- Changes to Young People's Activity Team (YPAT) Provision
- Partnership arrangements and visits
- Special Educational Needs and High Needs
- Mental Health in Schools
- Performance Information
- Elective Home Education
- Voice of the young person
- Early Years (Early Help Services and Engagement of Families Together)

- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Feedback from Panel Members on key issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board and Ambition Board

## **Panel Highlights**

### **Review of the Improvement Journey – Outcomes of the Joint Area Targeted Multi-agency Inspection**

In October 2022, the Panel considered a report on the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection that highlighted the following:

- The inspection took place from 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 and was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services.
- The outcomes were provided by letter which summarised the headline findings and provided areas that needed improving.
- The letter from Ofsted explained that the inspectors had found that Kirklees safeguarding children's partners had significant knowledge of their local area and demand, practice with their agencies and the experiences of children. Mature relationships within the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership enabled partners to challenge each other effectively which demonstrated the well-established respect for, and equality of, partners views.
- The Inspectors had determined that Kirklees Council was the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed actions responding to the findings outlined in the letter which was to be a multi-agency response.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel acknowledged the "What needs to improve" and thanked Kirklees staff and partners for the hard work they undertake.

## **Independent Review of Children’s Social Care – white paper**

The Panel considered how the Council was addressing the implications of the Care Reform white paper and the outcome of the Government’s response.

The Panel noted that the Care Reform Report on Children’s Social Care was broken down into 8 key areas, as follows:

- Reset Children’s Social Care
- A revolution in family help
- A just and decisive child protection system
- Unlocking the potential of family networks
- Transforming care
- The care experience
- Realising the potential of the workforce
- A system that is relentlessly focussed on children and families
- Implementation

In March 2023, the Panel considered a report entitled “Stable homes built with love” providing an update on the Government’s response in February 2023 to the McCallister, National Care Review which was published in May 2022.

Vicky Metheringham, Service Director for Child Protection and Family Support explained that on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) issued its response to the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s inquiry into the murders of two children and the Competition and Markets Authority’s study of the children’s social care market in three consultation documents. The consultations closed on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the outcome would inform future planning within Children’s Services at both a Local and National level.

In response to the McCallister report of 2022, the DfE set out an initial response for addressing a range of issues that impacted children’s Social Care Services.

## Outcomes

In March 2023, the key areas covered as part of the consultation period were outlined in the report and noted by the Panel.

### **Education and Learning Outcomes**

In July 2022, the Panel considered a verbal update on Educational Outcomes which highlighted the following key points:

- That a report was scheduled for Cabinet in July 2022 which encapsulated the educational outcomes and challenges during 2021/22 and showed how resilient schools were in providing the continuity of education during this time. The Panel had commented on the draft report at their panel meeting in March 2022 and were thanked for their help in shaping the report to Cabinet in July 2022 on Educational outcomes;
- The Education Strategy referred to as 'Our Kirklees Futures' outlined 3 key obsessions – inclusion, resilience and equity and these obsessions ran through the ambitions and vision;
- Kirklees Futures Summit held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, the key aim of which was to take the learning strategy from planning to first stages of implementation;
- The success of the Summit had produced the momentum for the Learning Strategy throughout the district and would be the key vehicle for improving educational outcomes;
- Reviewing Education and Learning Partnership Board to ensure it was able to hold the system to account for its actions.

In September 2022, the Panel considered a report giving an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection – Action Plan and inspection outcomes as part of their pre-decision Scrutiny.

In October 2022, the Panel received an update on Educational Outcomes and GCSE exam results.

In March 2023, the Panel considered a report on the current context around exclusions and suspensions in Kirklees and planned actions to support work in reducing these. There had been an increase in permanent exclusions and suspensions across Kirklees which applied mainly to boys and secondary schools. The main reason for exclusion and suspensions was around persistent disruptive behaviour. Reducing exclusions and suspensions in Kirklees was a priority, with both the SEND transformation plan and the 'Our Kirklees future learning strategy' outline a number of key actions underway. There was a need to refresh the approach to identify and support the needs of children and young people at a much earlier stage. Projects were being implemented to develop specialist placements across the alternative provisions sector and wider special educational needs and disabilities sector along with training, learning and upskilling.

### **Outcomes**

In July 2022, the Panel agreed that they would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the restructuring and reshaping of the Education and Learning Partnership Board; receive future updates on how the Learning Service and Cabinet Members were scrutinising the educational outcomes, consider future information on longitudinal educational outcomes for the next 5 to 10 years (including 16+ and beyond) and receive a copy for information of the Educational Outcomes report scheduled for consideration by Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

In September 2022, the Panel noted the areas for the improvement journey of the Transformation Plan; that Officers in Children's Service provide the Panel with details of partners involved in the Transformation Plan that they can meet with or visit as part of the Panel's scrutiny work; that the Panel receive further information on the increased number of pupils in Kirklees LA schools and academies with an Education Health and Care Plan since January 2015 to January 2021; that the Panel be invited to be involved in the development of the Transformation Action Plan going forward. The Panel asked that officers build into the action plan how the Panel might scrutinise the inspection outcomes; and that the Panel focus on the impact and affect

of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic factors on educational outcomes as part of their scrutiny.

In March 2023, the Panel asked for further information on the proportion of schools that were primary academies compared to secondary academies and agreed to consider a future report on how progress is measured on the cultural change towards supporting schools in developing a trauma informed approach.

### **Changes To Young People's Activity Team (YPAT) Provision**

In September 2022, the Panel received an update on the ongoing changes to the Young Peoples Activity Team (YPAT) provision as part of the ongoing SEND Transformation Programme and the ongoing development of the Short Breaks Offer.

The short breaks service supported disabled children and young people aged 5 to 18 with profound and complex needs. The service comprised of out of school clubs, weekend and holiday sessions, community sessions which ran from a large council owned building in Ravensthorpe. The building was shared with Adult Services and required significant investment. A need for new premises had been identified several years ago.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel agreed to arrange a visit to the new premises at the Children's Place Nursery in Ravensthorpe when fully operational.

### **Special Educational Needs and High Needs**

In September 2022, the Panel considered the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection – Action Plan and Inspection Outcomes and was informed that in May 2022 the Ofsted inspection report for Kirklees had been published. The report included a copy of the Transformation Plan. The main weaknesses identified were the poor delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP)

and the area's ability across services and within settings to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who were in mainstream settings.

The Healthy Child Programme was being reviewed and would be a priority incorporated into the Transformation Plan as a key workstream going forward. An annual review of the transformation plan was taking place and some examples of what would need to be addressed would be how schools identified children early, to ensure schools had good Mental Health support teams and about making sure schools had a good Healthy Child Programme with a mandate of contacts and early intervention. A broad group of professionals would contribute to the outcomes. The Panel acknowledged the passion that officers were demonstrating to improve families lives and that the improvement journey was a high priority for the Council's Administration.

In December 2022, an Informal meeting of the Panel discussed a draft report scheduled for consideration by Cabinet on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022, giving an overview of plans to refresh and expand the "Alternative Provision" (AP) Education offer and seek authority to progress plans to create additional specialist AP places to support the needs of children (some of whom also have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) who require an alternative education offer.

### **Outcomes**

In September 2022, the Panel agreed to receive updates on the improvement journey of the Transformation Plan and that officers in Children's Service would provide the Panel with details of partners involved in the Transformation Plan that they can meet with or visit as part of the Panel's scrutiny work. The Panel also agreed to receive further information on the increased number of pupils in Kirklees local authority schools and academies with an Education Health and Care Plan since January 2015 to January 2021.



In December 2022, the Panel noted the report to Cabinet and agreed that it was essential that officers captured whether children were happy and also that a long-term plan was put into place for assessing the outcomes.

## **Mental Health in Schools**

In March 2023, In March 2023, the Panel considered a report describing currently commissioned emotional wellbeing and mental health services, including recent developments, and outlined challenges currently being faced.

Following the Covid pandemic there have been effects on Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing. Early years provisions, education, schools, colleges and activities were disrupted, leaving them without their usual support networks and social contact. Some children thrived in the home learning environment, particularly where going to school contributed to anxiety, but many suffered from isolation and loneliness. The youngest children lived through the pandemic at a vital time in their development, missing out on important learning and social experiences, which for some have had a significant impact upon speech, language and communication skills, as well as socialisation and regulation. Schools and early years settings are reporting that some children are less well prepared for school than in previous years. In common with other areas, in Kirklees there has been rising demand for all mental health, learning disability and autism services. This demand is extremely challenging to address, due to the current financial situation and workforce availability. The report introduced proposed developments for services and gave the current waiting list figures for each service area.

The Panel fed back on their visit to the Mental Health in School's Team and had witnessed some really good partnership working between South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Kirklees Council Educational Psychology and Northorpe Hall Trust. The Panel also visited Hillside Primary School and had found it interesting to hear some of the anxieties from year 6 children about their transition to year 7 at secondary school.

## **Outcomes**

The Panel agreed to receive future information regarding the fluctuation in the waiting times and trends for children's emotional health and wellbeing.

## **Partnership arrangements and visits by the Panel**

The Panel visited both internal teams and external partners during the 2022/23 municipal year. The following information gives a summary on some of the visits that took place.

During July to September 2022, the Panel visited:

### **SEND Transformation and Commissioning Team**

The Panel attended the SEND Transformation and Commissioning Team meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 as part of the work programme to enable the Panel to be involved in the discussion on the SEND written statement of action following the recent inspection. The main points considered at the meeting were the SEND Inspection and action plan and outcomes of the Inspection.

### **Parents of children with additional needs (PCAN)**

Some members of the Panel attended PCAN Social meetings in September at The Zone in Huddersfield and Thornhill Lees Community Centre. Panel members met with parents to seek feedback on their experiences of accessing and engaging with the service and to ask what their experience had been like since the Ad-hoc Panel report on SENDACT, which had been approved by Cabinet in February 2019 and whether parents felt that anything had improved. Most of the PCAN parents involved in the consultation with the Ad-hoc Panel in 2018 were no longer attending the group, so the Panel spoke to parents about their experiences and whether the SEND Transformation Plan was making a difference.

The main findings from the visits to the PCAN Social meetings were:

- Lack of specialist resources both in the SEND Teams but also schools.
- SENDACT do not follow up with schools after an EHCP has been issued.
- Long waiting times to get a diagnosis or support.
- No single point of contact for parents to get access to all the support and information they need.
- Parents and children are not asked for their feedback.
- Parent's were not aware of the SEND Transformation Plan or how to access it.

Panel Members agreed to talk to officers about how parents could influence the transformation, how they would engage with parents and measure success of the plan and whether a comprehensive single point of contact and/or guide could be provided for parents of children with SEND. Councillor Marchington agreed to drop-in to future PCAN Social meetings and would arrange a more formal visit with PCAN in December 2022 and invite other Panel Members and the Head of Inclusion and Educational Safeguarding to attend the session. To raise awareness amongst parents, the report on the SEND Inspection and Outcomes considered by the Panel in September 2022 was shared with PCAN following the visits and included a copy of the Transformation Plan. PCAN shared this information with parents on their Facebook pages.

Some quotes from parents were:

*"You can't force children to be square pegs when they are round."*

*"The distance between getting a diagnosis and receiving medication is how many temporary and permanent exclusions your child will have from school."*

*"The professionals don't know about the things that can help parents and they should make it their job to do so."*

*“They said – no decision about you, without you.”*

In October to December 2022, the Panel visited:

### **Children’s Social Care Team (Dewsbury)**

The Panel attended the Social Care Team in Dewsbury on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022 as part of the work programme to meet in-person and speak to front line staff and Team Managers. The Panel asked questions relating to management of data collection and performance, working with partners, the voice of the child and how this was taken into account, good practice, and delivery of quality service. The team expressed that although there were vacancies in their team, they felt well supported by their managers and from other teams.



### **Parents of children with additional needs (PCAN)**

Following the visit to PCAN in September, some members of the Panel attended PCAN social meetings in November and December 2022 to engage with parents /carers of children with SEND. A range of professionals attended the social meeting in December 2022, with a representative from the Local Offer Team requesting



feedback on their new booklet that had been produced. A selection of leaflets advertising support and services was made available for parents on the day.

### **Children with Disabilities Team**

The Panel attended the Children with Disabilities team on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 as part of the work programme to meet staff in-person and speak to managers. The main points considered at the meeting were around data collection, partnership working, the voice of the child, good practice and delivery of quality service. The Panel also spoke to Team Managers about future development and supervision of staff.

### **Children's Social Care Team (The Valleys – Slaithwaite)**

The Panel attended the Social Care Team in Slaithwaite on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to meet in-person and speak to managers and asked questions around data collection and performance, partnership working, the voice of the child and examples of where this was put into practice and delivery of quality service. The Connected Persons Team had transferred to the Valleys in July 2022 which included special guardianship or foster carers who wanted to become special guardians. Approximately 500 children were not in care as a result of special guardianship orders.

During January to March 2023, the Panel visited:

### Child Protection Team



On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023, the Panel visited the Child Protection Team at Civic Centre 3, Huddersfield and met with staff and Team Managers and asked questions around caseloads and recruitment, data collection, partnership working, voice of the young person, delivery of quality services and good practice and learning points. The Panel agreed to investigate the following actions:

- Lack of rooms and meeting space in Civic 3 to hold staff meetings and places to assess and meet with families;
- Special guardianships which have ended because they can no longer look after the child and unsuccessful adoptions which has meant more children coming back into care. The Panel agreed to raise at Corporate Parenting Board.
- Working relationship barriers between Child Protection and Safer Kirklees and how these could be strengthened.
- The relationship between Child Protection and the police and use of police powers which could sometimes conflict against the processes of the child protection team and impact significantly on the child when decisions were made

by the police which the social care team do not agree with and which do not meet the social care threshold.



### Mental Health in School's Team

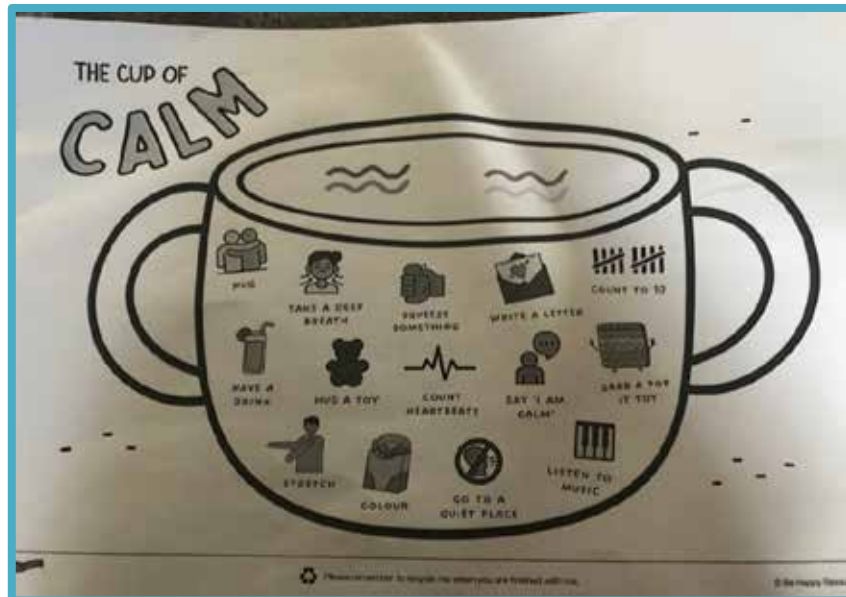


On the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023, the Panel visited the Mental Health in School's Team (MHST) at Lowerhouses Children's Centre and met with staff and Team Managers from the three key partners which were South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Kirklees Council Educational Psychology and Northorpe Hall Trust. The Panel were given a presentation and taken through a resume of the work

undertaken by the key partners and handed an information pack. The MHST service has 3 core functions:

- To deliver evidence based interventions for children and young people with mild to moderate mental health problems;
- Supporting the senior mental health lead in each school or college to introduce or develop their whole school or college approach;
- Offering timely advice to school and college staff and liaise with external specialist services to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education.

The Panel also visited the Hillside Primary School at Newsome and observed an emotional wellbeing session run by a colleague from the MHST service for a group of year 6 children. The Theme of the session was around “do you worry?”. The children were asked to fill in a ‘cup of calm’ poster at the end of the session to describe their feelings.



### **Weekly Referral and Review meeting (Child Protection)**

The Panel visited and observed the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 where officers from Children’s Service, Health and Education looked in detail at a number of individual cases to review the history, key elements of the case and the decisions taken. In some cases further action was agreed to follow up on individual cases.



## Looking forward to 2023/24

The panel agreed that as well as considering reports on important issues relating to children and young people, they would continue to visit teams and partners, to include the Children's Social Care Teams, Children's Residential Homes and functions and the new YPAT premises in Ravensthorpe.

There are a number of areas where the panel will continue to scrutinise progress, including the Review of the Improvement Journey for Children's Services and the ILACs Inspection, Educational and Learning Outcomes, Sufficiency for Children's Service and the Special Educational Needs and High Needs which will include the increase in special school places, SEND Transformation Plan, role of voluntary sector partnerships and new provision and Mental Health in Schools and the fluctuation in the waiting times and trends for children's emotional health.

The Panel also agreed new areas of scrutiny in the following areas - the Review of the Children's Residential Homes and Functions, Quality Assurance and the impact of auditing the Children's Service, the support given to Special Guardianship Orders and wellbeing and the transition of young people to adults.

## Comments

### Councillor Andrew Marchington - Lead Member

*"It has been a privilege to have chaired the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel for the last four years and to share in the improvement journey of the services delivered for and on behalf of children, families and young people in Kirklees.*

*I would like to express my thanks to everyone who has taken the time to talk to the panel and share with us the stories of their lives and work.*

*The report shows the variety of work that the panel has undertaken and in particular the people and places we have visited. We have tried hard not to replicate the scrutiny that already takes place in Children's Services, where on a daily and weekly*

*basis people are already putting their professional judgements on the line, with colleagues and with partners.*

*I wish everyone well as the journey continues, take care."*

**Toni Bromley – Scrutiny Co-optee**

*"I have immensely enjoyed being part of the scrutiny panel in the last municipal year. I feel the work is vitally important for the young people of Kirklees, ensuring they are safe in the community and in education and that goals are being met. As an ex-teacher, I have enjoyed ensuring that young people in Kirklees can thrive and seeing the constant work to provide the best education for them and set them up for successful futures. I am proud to be a resident of Kirklees and have been very proud to be part of the scrutiny panel looking out for the needs of the young people who live all around me."*

**Jo-Anne Sanders - Service Director for Learning and Early Support**

*"The approach that has been taken by Scrutiny has been valued and has supported us to develop our services. By engaging with teams, and observing practise, has meant that there is a deeper understanding of the way our services operate and the partnerships we participate in and lead to secure the best outcomes for children and their families. Being able to seek feedback from Scrutiny on reports to Cabinet has supported a robust, transparent approach to decision making. We have appreciated being able to agree with our Portfolio Holders the priorities for the Panel's workplan. This way of working leads to trusted and professional working relationships."*

## Ad-Hoc Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Panel Membership
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Lead Member)
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor John Lawson

At the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022, a report setting out the proposal to establish an Ad-hoc scrutiny Panel to carry out a focussed piece of work in respect of the major regeneration projects in Kirklees's town centres was considered. The establishment of the Ad-Hoc Regeneration Scrutiny Panel was formerly confirmed at Annual Council 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

### **Terms of Reference**

The Ad Hoc Regeneration Scrutiny Panel was established to scrutinise ongoing major regeneration projects within Kirklees and to hear from all relevant stakeholders, including Cabinet Members, Senior Officers, and Consultants with a view to providing input, through recommendations, as the projects developed and moved towards full delivery.

The Panel had in view the following Core Projects:

- Huddersfield Blueprint
- Cultural Heart
- Dewsbury Blueprint
- Local Centres Program

## Work Undertaken

The Panel used a range of methods to gather the evidence that has been used to inform this report. The Panel held 5 public meetings and 2 informal meetings between July 2022 and March 2023.

As a part of the initial scoping, at the first public meeting of the Panel held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the Panel received an overview of the 4 core projects and a timeline of key milestones for delivery.

The Panel identified the following key themes for consideration throughout the scrutiny process ('golden threads'):

- Achieving net zero ambitions, through a focus on of climate change and environmental issues.
- Ensuring effective and meaningful engagement with key stakeholders through a focus on the Communications Strategies for each project.

The Panel then considered its meeting schedule for the 2022-23 municipal year in relation to the key dates, stages of development and milestones for each Regeneration project presented by officers, to inform its work programme and ensure scrutiny at meaningful stages. In relation to the way that meetings were held the Panel also identified that:

- That updates be presented by area, and that meetings would be held in a place-based way to enable stakeholder engagement with the scrutiny process.
- With each update it was important for the Panel to receive information in relation to the wider overarching projects and the Communications Strategy to maintain oversight of all developments throughout the process.
- Meetings should be held in good time prior to Cabinet decisions to enable the recommendations of the Panel to be taken on Board.

## Panel Site Visits

As part of enhancing the Panel's understanding of the scale of the planned regeneration work, walking tours of each area to be discussed were organised prior to an update being presented to Scrutiny and were led by the officer presenting the report. During the period from July 2022 to March 2023, the Panel visited:

- **Huddersfield Station Gateway Area and St Georges Square** in respect of the Huddersfield Station Gateway, St Georges Hotel, and Estate / Somerset Buildings and Residential Development in Huddersfield Town Centre.
- **Huddersfield Town Centre and Queensgate Plaza** in respect of the Cultural Heart.
- **Dewsbury Town Centre** in respect of the Dewsbury Town Investment Plan. This visit was followed by a meeting with the Chair of the Ad hoc Scrutiny Panel and the Chair of the Dewsbury Town Board. The Panel were invited to observe a meeting of the Town Board thereafter.
- **Cleckheaton Town Centre** in respect of the Local Centres Programme.

## Huddersfield Blueprint, the Cultural Heart and other projects surrounding the Cultural Heart

The Huddersfield Blueprint is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day town centre that was fit for the future, family friendly, inclusive, safe and a good place to invest to enable the existing private sector to flourish as well attracting new businesses. There were several other key projects at various stages of development and delivery surrounding the Cultural Heart which would help realise the vision for Huddersfield Town centre which the Panel also considered as part of its programme of work.

### Update on the Cultural Heart, part of the Huddersfield Blueprint

At the meeting of the Panel held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the Panel considered an update on the Cultural Heart, part of the Huddersfield Blueprint.

As one of six key elements of the Huddersfield Blueprint, the Cultural Heart focused on the Queensgate Market area and included regenerating iconic and historic local buildings such as the library/gallery and the market hall.



At the time of the meeting, the Panel were informed that the Stage 3 design was complete, and planning had been granted for the full masterplan. The Gateway 3 final design was planned to be presented to Cabinet in June 2023.

In the discussion to follow the Panel asked questions around the following themes and issues:

- Clarity on the phasing of the projects
- Financials, in respect of inflation.
- Transport and climate issues
- Consultation and Engagement
- Decision Making
- Accessibility
- Lighting and safety

## **Outcomes**

The Panel noted that one of the major aspects of the scheme, preparing and informing the design, was the Consultation. Various methods of Consultation had taken place since 2019, including with disabled groups to inform the design. External advice had been sought from a disability and inclusivity consultant to advise on going beyond the current best practice, along with other colleagues in Kirklees. In response, the Panel recommended that; (i) scrutiny be informed of the outcomes of consultations around accessibility initiatives as the work progressed, and (ii) British sign language signs be incorporated into the designs.

The Panel also highlighted the importance of delivery phasing noting that the Library, Foodhall and Events Square was mentioned in the timeline, but requested that a further update with respect to the delivery phasing for the wider elements of the Plan be provided to scrutiny at the appropriate time.

Arising from the Panel's question related to how the public transport and parking infrastructure would accommodate increased footfall, the Panel found that a vehicle movement strategy aimed to improve transport and movement around the town centre. Active travel was being encouraged and other options such as the free town bus, taxi pickups/drop offs, and the expansion of the parking offer at Kingsgate shopping centre were also being explored. In response, the Panel recommended that the Vehicle Movement Strategies be provided to scrutiny going forwards.

## **Huddersfield Station Gateway**

At the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, the Panel considered an update on the Huddersfield Station Gateway. The Panel were informed that the TransPennine Route Upgrade provided the opportunities to improve the train stations facilities and develop the Station Gateway. This included connecting St. George's Warehouse with the rest of the town centre as well as development of the Southgate site; predominantly how the Station and Stadium corridor could operate in terms as a focal point for high quality employment opportunities.

## **Outcomes**

The Panel found that connectivity between buses and trains was noted as key to reducing maximum journey times and suggested that the Combined Authority should be involved to ensure oversight across both services when master planning. It was also requested that the passenger number forecasts and options for reducing congestion be provided to scrutiny going forwards.

The Panel explored the scope for achieving climate change, clear air and green targets and recommended that any new car parking provision should include electric vehicle charging facilities and that a bold approach should be taken to pedestrianisation highlighting where this had been successful in other towns and cities.

The Panel also noted the Masterplans in development at the time of the meeting and requested that these be provided to a future meeting of the Panel as well as the Winter 2022 Consultation Plans.

## **Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor Masterplan**

Arising from the recommendations made by the Panel at the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, at the meeting of the Panel held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 an update in respect of the Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor Masterplan was presented. The report set out the long term vision of the plan, to create an environment that stimulated private sector investment as well as the next steps including public consultation in early 2023.

## **Outcomes**

In response, the Panel requested that, the Communications Plan for the Spring Engagement and any updates to the Master Plans should be provided to scrutiny prior to publication. The Panel also explored several environmental issues during the discussion and found that:



- (i) In relation to redevelopment, the Panel noted that there was potential for a large amount of carbon release to be generated from the destruction of buildings and it was recommended that opportunities for reclamation, retrofitting and repurposing should be key considerations moving forwards.
- (ii) In relation to flood risk, the Panel requested that the proposed works should plan to mitigate the risk of flooding in the area.
- (iii) In relation to air quality, the Panel highlighted that learning should be taken from similar developments as examples to understand how to achieve the correct balance between residential, business, and commercial traffic in the town centre.

### **Estate / Somerset Buildings and Residential Development in Huddersfield Town Centre**

At the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, the Panel considered an update on the approach to residential development in Huddersfield Town Centre including the delivery of Estate Buildings and Somerset Buildings.



The Panel were informed that, the scale of investment of the Huddersfield Blueprint would in turn improve the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, provide new opportunities for residential development and attract new residents.

### **Outcomes**

In the Panels exploration they asked about the demographic of the residents that the Council hoped to appeal to through the delivery of the projects and found that the aim was to attract young professionals to increase the opportunities for recruitment to local businesses in this area. In response the Panel recommended that when developing the type of residential offer alongside the Cultural Heart, it was important to consider the needs of those residents to ensure that the new town centre offer met those requirements through the right mix of services and retail/leisure opportunities. Under the theme of climate impact, the Panel highlighted the impact the ring road had on air quality in this location. In relation to the cost-of living crisis, the Panel asked about the financial review process noting the potential impact of inflation rates and it was agreed for the financial appraisal and the affordability review to be provided to scrutiny going forwards.

### **Local Centres Programme (focus on Cleckheaton)**

At the meeting of the Panel held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Cleckheaton Town Hall, the Panel received an update on the Local Centres Programme, with an additional focus on Cleckheaton.

The Panel were informed that in March 2021, the Cabinet considered a report which proposed investing in town and village centres outside of Huddersfield and Dewsbury. The Initial Cabinet report (considered 16th March 2021) proposed that 4 key centres – Batley, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth for the focus for the initial round of investment of £1.5m each. Of all 4 centres, Cleckheaton had progressed the most including having undergone public consultation on the planned masterplan.

## Outcomes

A key theme of the Panel's discussion was the approach to consultation and engagement and several recommendations were made as follows.

In respect of response rates to questionnaires, the Panel noted that there was good participation demonstrated from drop-in sessions and over 2000 hits had been received online, but this had only resulted in 45 completed questionnaires. The Panel wanted to know how this could be adapted to improve outcomes and it was recommended that a quick tick box exercise such as an online poll, with only one YES/NO response option, be used more to increase responses from residents.

The Panel highlighted the importance of ensuring key stakeholder engagement prior to the development of the plan and wanted to know how officers planned to improve the dialogue with ward councillors and other stakeholders to increase participation with engagement exercises. The Panel noted examples of where strong visual stimulus had been used to increase engagement and raise awareness of projects in Huddersfield such as the George Hotel hangings and that the planters on New Street, which demonstrated a timeline picture graph, showing the envisaged outcome and how long it would take to complete. The Panel noted this as a positive approach and it was recommended that (i) visuals, such as static Boards and bold posters, be placed in public locations in Cleckheaton to engage the public in designs and the timelines and (ii) information detailing the designs (i.e.- leaflets/posters) be displayed in local shops and businesses in Cleckheaton to help engage the public. Officers also agreed to liaise with the Communications Team and Ward Councillors to feed staged information to the public.

The Panel also recommended that the Consultation be extended to local schools noting the importance in their representation and that Stakeholder engagement sessions be promoted more and linked to local events.

The way in which softer data, such as verbal responses to resident engagement, was captured was also noted by the Panel as a challenge when obtaining demonstrable

figures to apply for funding, and it was recommended that; (i) consideration be given to the approach to recording responses and (ii) the Council will ensure that a business case is ready (to present when opportunities arise to apply for grant funding) with demonstratable numbers from engagement exercises.

## **The Dewsbury Blueprint**

The Dewsbury Blueprint was launched early in 2020. It set out a vision for the town centre and identified a series of key interventions for delivery over a 10-year period. The Plan aimed to bring more activity into the town centre, make it more attractive and improve accessibility. The final Dewsbury Town Investment plan was given approval in February 2023, the key projects were:

- Dewsbury Market –To create a model market for the 21st century.
- Dewsbury Arcade – To deliver a mix of retail and business spaces.
- Dewsbury Town Park - To create an exemplary piece of new public space with the aim of improving the attractiveness of the town centre.
- Fieldhouse and Daisy Hill (Residential opportunities) – To create a new neighbourhood at the heart of Dewsbury to support town centre vibrancy.
- Creative Culture Programme – There were 2 projects within the programme. Dewsbury would take a central role within the major initiatives of WOVEN in Kirklees, Year of Music 2023, Temporary Contemporary and The Festival of Conversations.
- Dewsbury Revival Grant Scheme - The Building Revival scheme was aimed at providing support for the conversion of buildings to both residential and commercial space as well as improving shop fronts to a Conservation Area Standard.
- Dewsbury Bus Station - Whilst not part of the Town Investment Plan package, a new bus station in Dewsbury was proposed and was a West Yorkshire Combined Authority led scheme.

The Panel noted that the Council were working closely with the Dewsbury Town Board as key stakeholders in respect of the regeneration work and explored several key themes including: acquisitions, bidding and the approach to finances given increased inflation, the plans to increase footfall and the target Market, the marketing strategy and how this related to the wider district, the scope for smaller towns outside of Dewsbury to be included, the scope of the Town Park and how decisions would be made as the projects progressed.

### **Outcomes**

The Panel also held a key discussion around achieving outcomes and increasing footfall in the town centre and as a part of this wanted to understand more about the Town Market and how people be encouraged to visit, and what age demographic was the target market noting the importance of enabling younger residents to benefit from the offer. The Panel found that the mix of offer for the new market had a higher balance for food and beverage, which would create an atmosphere and increase dwell time. The proposal would encourage young people to spend more time in the town centre alongside creating a family friendly early evening offer to prevent people travelling elsewhere. The Panel further recommended that an update on the Market Strategy Mix be provided to scrutiny.

In respect of Acquisitions, the Panel wanted to understand Acquisitions; what mix was being looked at with regards to the acquired building and flats? It was found that the Council would acquire several buildings for various strategic reasons and Daisy Hill was a long-term project that was not anticipated to be finished by March 2026. In response the Panel requested that additional information regarding the regeneration and strategic acquisition of property in the Daisy Hill Area be provided to Scrutiny including a map of the area along with reasons for demolition or regeneration.

The Panel also recommended that (i) the Town Centre Living Plan be provided to scrutiny and (ii) in respect of concerns around inflation, scrutiny be provided with an update following re-evaluation.

## Looking ahead 2023/24

In recognising the length and complexity of the regeneration work, at the meeting of the Annual Council held 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 it was agreed that that a Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel be established to continue scrutiny of major regeneration works in Kirklees's towns in greater depth in the long term.

## Comments

### **David Glover - Senior Responsible Officer for Economy and Skills**

*'Over the two-year period since the inception of Our Cultural Heart in June 2021 the programme has been presented to scrutiny on four separate occasions. The sessions have included formal papers and presentations from council officers and the programme architects that have given the scrutiny panel the opportunity to delve into the detail. Comments, discussion, observations, and suggestions from the panel have been insightful and constructive providing the necessary checks and balances'.*

# West Yorkshire Combined Authority Scrutiny 2022/23

Prior to the election of the first mayor, the Combined Authority had a generalist single overview and scrutiny committee. Following the agreement of the devolution deal, and during the formation of the constitution, it was agreed to adopt a multiple thematic committee structure to expand the number of scrutiny members from 18 to 48.

The Combined Authority currently has three scrutiny committees:

1. **Corporate Scrutiny Committee** (chaired by Cllr Peter Harrand, Leeds, for the first part of the year and Cllr Geoff Winnard, Bradford, for the remainder of the year): this committee oversees the organisation's '**corporate assets**', resources, plans, policies and projects – such as finances, audit, human resources, technology and systems, governance, procurement, property assets, assurance, and overall strategy and performance.
2. **Economy Scrutiny Committee** (*chaired by Cllr Richard Smith, Kirklees*): this committee oversees the region's '**economic assets**', resources, policies, plans and projects – such as the economy, international trade, inward investment, businesses, employment sites and enterprise zones, people and skills, colleges, universities, culture, media and sport.
3. **Transport & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee** (*chaired by Cllr Amanda Parsons-Hulse, Calderdale*): this committee oversees the region's '**physical assets**', resources, plans, policies and projects – such as transport network and infrastructure (bus, rail, roads, bikes, active travel), infrastructure projects, place (planning, housing and communities), and the natural environment and resources (including the waterways, climate, forests, green land).

Each committee has 16 members – 3 from each of the 5 WY districts, and 1 non-voting York member – and is politically balanced.

During the municipal year of 2022/23, significant time was dedicated to financial matters, particularly receiving detailed updates on budget and business planning, project / programme management and Assurance Framework processes amidst the inflation crisis. We were also presented with update reports on the new Integrated Corporate System and Cyber Security processes in this ever-changing digital world. There was a focus on real time information, decarbonisation and looked at transport in planning in detail and looked at the Adult Education Budget, Business Enterprise Zones and the cost-of-living crisis's effect on workers and businesses in the region. In addition to formal meetings Panel's each held successful Mayor's Question Times to question the Mayor on her decisions, policies and plans as they pertained to each of the individual committee remits.

The 2021/22 municipal year saw the implementation of a new expanded Scrutiny Function. During 2021/22, time was dedicated to financial matters, particularly receiving detailed updates on budget and business planning. Workshops were held on budget planning and inward investment (including Channel 4) with focus on behaviour change relating to the usage and service provision of public transport. Three Mayor's Question Times were held in which Members questioned the Mayor on her direct and soft powers relating to each of the Committees' pre-agreed topics.



## Team contact details

Contact the Governance Team at:

Kirklees Council  
Legal, Governance and Commissioning  
PO Box 1720  
Huddersfield  
HD1 9EL

Email: [scrutiny.governance@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.governance@kirklees.gov.uk)

Phone: 01484 221000

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/liveinkirklees>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/KirkleesCouncil>

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