

Name of meeting: Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 24 October 2023

Title of report: West Yorkshire Joint Services

Purpose of report: The Director of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) will attend the meeting to speak about the work of WYJS, with a particular focus on work undertaken in Kirklees.

Key Decision	Not Applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 12/10/23
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Not Applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft - 12/10/23
Cabinet member portfolio	

Electoral wards affected: District-wide

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable.

Public or private: Public with private appendix

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Director of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) will attend the meeting to speak about the work of WYJS, with a particular focus on work undertaken in Kirklees, and to answer any questions from Members.
- 1.2 A Briefing Note has been provided and is attached.

2. Information required to take a decision

Not applicable.

3. Implications for the Council

Not applicable. Report is for information and discussion.

4. Consultation

Not applicable.

5. Engagement

Not applicable.

6. Next steps and timelines

Not applicable.

7. Officer recommendations and reasons

The report and presentation on the work of West Yorkshire Joint Services is for information and discussion by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Members.

8. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

9. Contact officer

Sheila Dykes – Principal Governance Officer
sheila.dykes@kirklees.gov.uk

10. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable.

11. Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft – Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning

BRIEFING NOTE ON WEST YORKSHIRE JOINT SERVICES

24th OCTOBER, 2023

Briefing from: Andy Robson, Director, West Yorkshire Joint Services

Briefing to: Kirklees Council Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Role of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS)

West Yorkshire Joint Services deliver a number of high-quality shared services on behalf of the five district Councils within West Yorkshire via a Joint Services Committee arrangement made up of members from each Local Authority. These services either fulfil a statutory role on behalf of the five Councils such as Archaeological Advisory Services, Archives, Ecology Services and Trading Standards or those such as Archaeological Services, Asbestos and Calibration Services provide a first-class commercial resource, delivering vital services to local businesses.

WYJS Vision: To support social and economic prosperity across West Yorkshire and operate as a modern and forward-thinking service.

WYJS Mission: Delivering trusted shared services that:

- encourage a growing economy
- support safer, stronger and healthier communities
- preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future
- promote and conserve the natural and historic environment

WYJS Priorities: WYJS focuses on four main interconnected priorities:

- Business and the economy
- Environment and heritage
- Safer, stronger and healthier communities
- Operating as a modern and forward-thinking service

Archaeology Advisory Service

The Archaeology Advisory Service's principal role is to provide informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant heritage sites that are affected by development proposals. The Service helps inform and influence sustainable developments within West Yorkshire and promotes an informed understanding and high level of appreciation of those heritage sites.

Archive Service

The Archive Service collects, preserves and makes available for public use over 21,000 individual collections of the region's historic records dating back to the twelfth century. These records are used for research and learning. WYJS also holds one of only five surviving Registry of Deeds in the whole country used for legal purposes or for family and local history.

Ecology Service

The Ecology Service provides informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant biodiversity habitats and species. The Service holds 501,000 records of individual species (including over 105,000 protected and other notable species) which are mapped on a geographical information system (GIS). The records are accessed or consulted by developers' ecological consultants, nature conservation organisations and the public.

Trading Standards Service

WYJS has several specialist teams within Trading Standards Service covering a wide range of legislation to protect both West Yorkshire businesses and consumers. The Service uses an intelligence led approach to respond flexibly to emerging threats and demands and ensures issues that cause the highest levels of detriment to consumers and businesses across West Yorkshire are addressed as a priority.

The key activities based on risk and harm, which warrant heightened intervention are:

- Doorstep crime and scams: prevention and detection of rogue trading, scams and frauds, disruption of illegal trading and the recovery of money and assets obtained from criminal activity.
- Safeguarding and maintaining the integrity of the human food supply chain including the safety and legality of animal feed.
- Disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco.
- Protecting consumers from purchasing unsafe second-hand cars.
- Product safety: ensuring goods placed on the market are safe and disrupting the sale of age restricted products (for example; alcohol, tobacco and vapes to minors).

Through partnership working this Service also encourages economic growth by proactively engaging with and supporting the West Yorkshire business community (both Primary Authority and non-Primary Authority businesses). Another example of partnership working is the West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) which is hosted and run by this Service. WYFEAT undertakes activities across West Yorkshire to protect vulnerable residents from financial abuse, detecting and investigating incidents of scams, frauds, doorstep crime and family, friends and carer abuse, undertaking effective safeguarding of victims and potential victims, helping residents to be safe, healthy and independent.

West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (WYAS)

The Service operates as one of the leading units delivering efficient archaeological and heritage solutions across the UK with an extensive portfolio of sites from housing developments, quarries, road, rail and other infrastructure projects. The Service's approach is focused on delivering customer-focused commercial services, engaging at all stages of development to provide desk-based assessments, heritage statements, geophysical surveys, landscape surveys, watching briefs, trial trenching and excavation services.

Asbestos Services and Calibration Services

Calibration Services protect and support businesses, Local Authorities and other customers by ensuring accurate testing and calibration of weighing and measuring equipment regulated by the Weights and Measure Act 1985. The Service offers UKAS accredited mass calibrations, legal verification of weighing and measuring equipment, and operates two weighbridge test units. The client base includes weighing instrument manufacturers, engineering, pharmaceutical and medical companies, factories and retail users of weighing and measuring equipment.

Asbestos Services provides asbestos testing services to both private businesses, and Local Authorities. This includes asbestos identification and air monitoring which supports compliance and safety for the Service's clients. The asbestos work is also accredited to ISO 17025:2017 standard through the UKAS accredited quality system.

Recent Case Studies

Some examples of the WYJS activity in the Kirklees District are highlighted in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is a private paper.

Kirklees Council Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Case studies of WYJS activity in the Kirklees District

WYFEAT Fraud Prevention Advice & Training

The delivery of an on-going project involving the coordination of WYFEAT training across the West Yorkshire District areas raises awareness of fraud and financial abuse of vulnerable adults and the reporting mechanisms. WYFEAT have delivered numerous different training sessions within the Kirklees District since the project started. Recently, the WYFEAT safeguarding team have reached out to different partner departments from Housing to Finance teams, delivering six training sessions, covering topics around financial exploitation and recognising the signs including reporting any concerns to the team.

WYJS are undertaking initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of doorstep crime across the districts of West Yorkshire. The project referred to as 'Operation Athena' is intelligence and complaint led to help raise awareness of recent Rogue Trader activity within West Yorkshire communities. In line with further PREVENT and safeguarding work, officers from WYFEAT have carried out community engagement visits with residents of 15 residential areas within the Kirklees District since the start of Operation Athena in December 2022. During these visits, officers distribute awareness and information leaflets and speak with residents about recent rogue trader activity. Officers encourage reporting from within the community and give advice on how to prevent becoming a victim to doorstep crime.

An example of community engagement work includes WYJS officers attending a Pensioner Fair in Brighouse to provide scams and fraud prevention advice to attendees. Copies of the "Little Book of Big Scams" a comprehensive guide on fraud prevention which details common scams and how to avoid them were distributed.

WYFEAT have also been working with the local Kirklees business KLTV to create a library of scams prevention video shorts. KLTV helped to create the content and produced a series of videos which is a resource available to the public and any professional bodies, to assist with raising awareness of common scams and fraud.

WYFEAT currently have two ongoing investigations involving the alleged financial exploitation of vulnerable adults in the Kirklees area. The first relates to an alleged defendant who is a family member of the vulnerable victim. The victim is in care and has a bank account that is overdrawn indicating spending on the account that is not in line with the victim's circumstances. The initial estimated detriment is approximately £30,000; however this is still under investigation and further enquiries are needed to establish the full facts of the case.

A second similar ongoing investigation also relates to a family member of a vulnerable elderly victim and involves the alleged misappropriation of monies belonging to the victim. The victim has accrued financial debt in relation to their current care, unfortunately the victim does not have capacity to manage their own finances. Financial enquiries indicate the alleged loss to the victim is approximately £80,000.

Tobacco

At the start of 2023, West Yorkshire Trading Standards seized its 10 millionth illicit cigarette. In respect to the work undertaken on disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco, these are the key outcome headlines for the Kirklees district over the last nine years:

- over 2.4 million cigarettes seized
- 900kg of hand rolling tobacco seized

In addition the team has also seized more than 15,000 illegal oversize vapes.

In the last twelve months, 59 Inspections at businesses within the Kirklees district including 24 Test Purchases at businesses where intelligence and complaints received indicate illicit tobacco is available. At over 66% of these businesses, a positive sale was recorded which reinforces the importance and value of community led intelligence.

Acting on intelligence received, the WYJS Cheap and Illicit Tobacco Team executed a warrant in partnership with West Yorkshire Police at two residential addresses in Kirklees. An individual who runs a business in Oldham was allegedly using these residential addresses as storage facilities. A joint operation was also undertaken by colleagues from Oldham Trading Standards and Greater Manchester Police at the business premises in Oldham. The Kirklees searches revealed significant quantities of illegal tobacco. Officers also discovered paperwork identifying the individual and business involved, were using both addresses. A total of 134,560 cigarettes and 8.4kg of hand rolling tobacco were seized from the private addresses with a street value of £35,500. Investigations are ongoing in relation to this case.

Trading Standards Service

To support the Kirklees district business community, the Service provides the Primary Authority scheme to deliver a comprehensive package of advice and support to partner businesses. This is a statutory scheme which is a chargeable service and demonstrates WYJS commitment to form a positive relationship between the business and Local Authority. There are eleven Primary Authority businesses in the Kirklees district, which include the likes of Mamas and Papas, Poundstretcher, John Cotton and Continental Wine and Food. Partnership working is also established with the West Yorkshire LEP to provide a route to Trading Standards advice for start-up businesses.

In addition, the Service has worked with the University of Huddersfield entrepreneur programme providing a Q&A session to respond to questions in relation to starting a business and compliance with the wide range of regulations dealt with by Trading Standards.

The Service operates a Motor Trade Partnership (MTP) as part of its work to protect consumers from purchasing unsafe used cars. Eleven businesses in the Kirklees district are members of the MTP and benefit from guidance on compliance with legislative requirements. Members are audited annually and during the 2022 audit cycle, five of the eleven Kirklees businesses achieved an award for Excellent Customer Service.

Under age sales enforcement activity is undertaken based on an intelligence led basis. WYJS operates to strict criteria in responding to complaints about the sale of age restricted products to children, particularly alcohol and e-cigarettes, and unsafe consumer goods.

The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 makes it an offence to treat, or make arrangements to treat, an individual under the age of 18. Enforcement of this part of the legislation sits with WYJS, (other sections are the responsibility of the Police to enforce). WYJS carried out a trader education project across West Yorkshire to write to all businesses providing botulinum toxin (Botox) and cosmetic filler services that could be identified. A total of 107 Kirklees businesses were identified and advised of their obligations. Businesses were asked to sign and return a declaration confirming they had received the advisory letter and that they understood their legal obligations. Any enforcement work arising will be based on an intelligence led approach.

Kirklees Archive Service

Prior to April 2023, the West Yorkshire Archive Service Kirklees office had been closed to the public for a period of time to prepare the archive collections for the move out of the Huddersfield Library. This was a significant project to plan, prepare the collections and to carry out the physical move, not only once, but twice. As the Library was home to the first archive service in the region, many of the storage areas were very dated and not fit for purpose, and as a result the collections had remained poorly stored and packaged for many years. Over a nine month period, archives staff worked systematically through the building to properly package and barcode thousands of unique collections and items to ensure that they were ready to be safely moved into new premises. This work has also ensured that the collections will be better preserved for the future and are ready to move again into the new Cultural Heart facilities once they have been constructed.

In total, the team packaged the following archival items in professional quality materials:

- 30,000 19th & early 20th century Local Authority building control plans
- 7,000 volumes
- 2,500 loose items
- 1,500 new boxes' worth of records
- 1,200 maps and plans of the district

The Archives were moved initially for a short term period into one premises and then again into temporary premises in the Piazza Centre as part of the plans for the Council's new Cultural Heart project. The Archives Office can have upto 9,000 service users in a year. As well as serving the public, staff have supported Kirklees Council by; providing access to historic maps and other records to the Public Rights of Way Service; carrying out research for and providing information to Ward Councillors and Councillor Liaison Officers to allow them to respond to public enquiries and also supplying information to the Council's Legal Team.



The photograph on the left shows the archive collections in poor quality packaging and storage in the basement of Huddersfield Library prior to the move.

The photograph on the right shows the collections currently stored in high-quality barcoded packaging on shelving stored in a precise order in the strongroom in Victoria Lane.

Archaeology Advisory Service

In addition to providing advice and information to the Kirklees District Planning Authority in respect to planning applications, the team have also been working with Network Rail and their contractors to enable the Trans Pennine network upgrade. This support includes supplying information and professional knowledge about Kirklees' heritage and designing and monitoring archaeological evaluations, excavations and building recording during the scheme.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

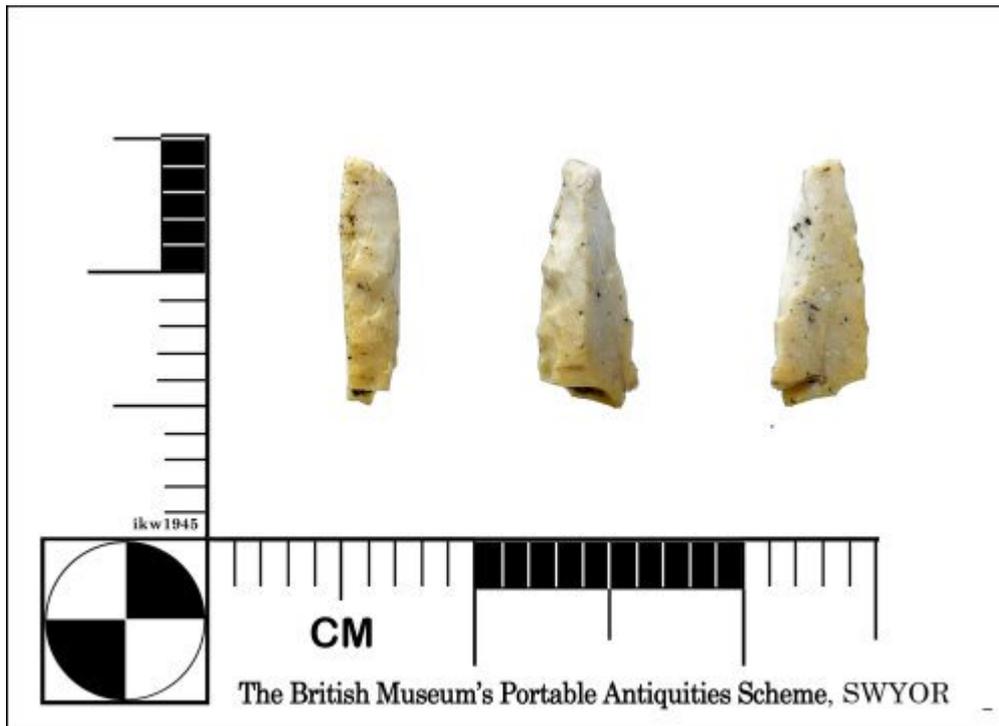
The WYJS Finds Liaison Officer holds a 'Finds Surgery' every quarter at the Tolson Museum. These surgeries are opportunities for finders of archaeological objects to bring them in for examination and identification, and if they meet the criteria, the finds are recorded onto the Portable Antiquities Scheme database.

The Finds Liaison Officer is supported by a team of volunteers to help identify, photograph and record archaeological finds submitted to the Service. In the last twelve months, 118 finds from 'findspots' in Kirklees have been processed and recorded. These finds cover the Mesolithic, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods. Some of the examples are shown in the photographs below:

A denarius of Trajan found in the Kirkburton area.



A late Mesolithic microlith found in the Colne Valley Ward.



A half groat of Henry VII found near Thurstonland

