

Kirklees Council

Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Lead Member: Cllr Yusra Hussain (June-August) and Cllr Moses Crook (September-October)

Panel: Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Period of Update: **From:** 12 June 2023 **To:** 10 October 2023

Panel Highlights

(Include examples of pre decision work, scrutiny getting out and about, etc)

LM Briefings June-August

David Shepherd, Strategic Director Growth and Regeneration
Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development
Edward Highfield, Service Director, Skills and Regeneration
Naz Parkar, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods
Cllr Graham Turner, Portfolio Holder, Regeneration (Finance & Regeneration)

Panel workshop 12 June 2023

The Panel held its workshop to begin to shape and develop its work Program for the 2023/24 municipal year. In conjunction with the Portfolio holder for Regeneration, senior officers within the service outlined the Directorate priorities for the year ahead, which would help to inform the Panels work Program priorities.

Panel meeting – 3rd July 2023

At the Panel meeting on the 3rd July, senior officers from the Growth & Regeneration Directorate provided the Panel with a presentation which gave an introduction to the services within the Directorate including:

Skills and Regeneration
Development
Homes and Neighbourhood

The Panel also received an update on the Housing Delivery Plan Update and Small Centres Program.

Panel meeting 14 August 2023

At the meeting, the Panel considered Damp, Mould and Condensation and Tenant Safety in Council Housing. The Panel was advised that with regard to damp, mould and condensation, a dedicated IT system had been introduced, where all relevant information can be brought together in one place and all officers in Homes and Neighbourhoods and Kirklees Direct have access to this system and have received guidance on how to use it. The information held in the system would be used to triage and categorise cases.

LM Briefings September – October

Edward Highfield, Service Director, Skills and Regeneration
Johanna Scrutton, Planning Policy Team Leader
Jonathan Nunn, Policy and Partnership Team Manager
Edward Highfield, Service Director, Skills and Regeneration
Cllr Graham Turner, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration
Gillian Wallace, Head of Employment and Skills

Martin Dearnley, Head of Risk, Financial, IT and Transactional Service
Joanne Bartholomew, Service Director, Development
Cllr Elizabeth Raynolds

Panel meeting 25 September 2023

At the meeting on the 25 September, the Panel received an update on the Kirklees Local Plan Review Process and update on the Kirklees Wide Town Centres and Small Centres Program. The Panel was informed that it is a statutory requirement to publish a review of whether the local plan is fit for purpose, and that has to be carried out, within five years from the date of adoption. For Kirklees, the assessment has to have been undertaken and taken through the cabinet process and be in the public domain by February 2024. The Panel was informed that the assessment will go to cabinet on the 17 October 2023, and then on to council on the 15 November 2023.

The panel received a detailed update on the Batley Small Centres Plan within the Kirklees Wide Town Centres and Small Centres Program.

Panel meeting 10 October 2023

The Panel meeting on the 10 October was an additional meeting of the panel to consider, Inclusive Economic Strategy and receive an Overview of Post 16 Skills, Training and Apprenticeships.

Outcomes:

From the information presented on damp mould and condensation, the Panel asked that the guidance and training materials provided to frontline staff to help them triage, and effectively deal with calls, be shared with the staff within the MP's offices as they are often the first contact.

From the information presented on the Local Plan, the Panel supported the officer recommendation that additional non-mandatory phases of public consultation be carried out. The panel recommended that officers look at the consultation strategy, which is the same as for LP1, and take any learning points to further enhance consultation response – both numerically and in terms of inclusivity.

On the Kirklees Wide Town Centres and Small Centres Program, the presentation concentrated on a review of the plans for Batley town centre. The panel noted cost pressure due to inflation along with relatively tight delivery timeframes associated with some of the funding streams for this project. Panel recommendation was to note the review and applaud continuing capital programs supporting economic growth and aspiration. Panel also noted that a wider review of the Town Centres and Small Centres Program was scheduled within the work program later in the year.

The presentation on Inclusive Economic Strategy was noted as was the continuing impact of Covid and the cost of living crisis, and corresponding mitigations for this within the strategy. The persistent economic lag for the lowest decile in comparison to overall growth was noted. Awareness of this persistence of deprivation and Officer strategy to combat this was recognised. The panel supported the strategy overall.

The panel noted the presentation on Post 16 Skills, Training and Apprenticeships

and in particular the persistent correlation between childhood poverty and future life prosperity prospects. The positive work to mitigate this was noted.

Monitoring Work

(If monitoring previous recommendations please identify what difference Scrutiny has made)

The recommendations from the ad hoc scrutiny panel into Building Safety & Compliance Combined Action Plan will be monitored by the Panel and an update is scheduled for March 2024.

The Lead Member will monitor the Station to Stadium Program through briefings with the Cabinet member.

Looking Ahead

(What are the next issues the Panel plans to look at?)

The Panel will next meet on the 20 November 2023, and the items on the agenda will be 'Interim Housing Position Statement for Boosting Supply', Cultural Heart Gateways 3-4, and an informal session looking at corporate risk.

Lead Member comments:

Cllr Yusra Hussain – June 2023- August 2023

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel was newly established at the start of the municipal year, and at the work programme development workshop, in June 2023, it became apparent that it would be a busy work programme and additional meetings to deal with the scope of the panels work would be required.

The priorities included on the Panel's work programme were developed in conversation with senior officers from the G&R Directorate and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. During my tenure as Lead Member, the panel considered matters including damp, mould and condensation, housing growth, small centres programme and tenant safety. I had asked that any information being presented to the Panel should include a financial aspect to the update, in recognition of the difficult financial position the council was facing.

Cllr Moses Crook LM – September 2023 – October 2023

I would like to say that the support I had from Governance Officers in this was exemplary. I took this role on part way through the municipal year and with Officer support, I was able to navigate catching up on both process and the broader context of this scrutiny panel quickly. Arrangements for briefings and work planning were arranged efficiently and it was this support that allowed the working of the panel to continue without disruption.

Briefings from Officers and Cllrs were comprehensive allowing for effective scrutiny process to be carried out to reassure stakeholders that good decision making, and policy continues to be maintained by Kirklees Council. Recommendations from the Panel were well received by Officers.