

## COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 15 January 2025

### AGENDA ITEM 11 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

1	<p><b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“Do any Labour backbench Councillors support the Labour Cabinet’s budget proposals?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>When the Labour Group presents its budget proposal to the Budget setting Council Meeting on the 5th of March, all Labour Group members will have been fully involved in preparing this.</p>
2	<p><b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“What are the green bin contamination rates for the year to date, for each individual collection round across Kirklees?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>At the beginning of 2024 just under 20% of all green bin material was contaminated. Our most recent figures in November 2024 show this has dropped to under 10%.</p> <p>We don’t have this data for individual collection rounds.</p> <p>Crew logs capture when the crew can see a contaminate in the top third or quarter of the bin. There can be a margin for error if a contaminate is further down the bin, additionally there is a possibility for user error.</p> <p>When we get crew logs or other data showing contamination hot spots, one of the things we do is undertake doorstep engagement. An advisor visits to provide information to help the resident use their bin correctly. 85% of residents that have a visit don’t contaminate afterwards. Our advisors have visited thousands of residents across the district to deliver this work over the last 12 months.</p>
3	<p><b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“What are the latest performance measures for fly-tipping and how do they compare to the measures from the year before?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>There are different data sets for flytipping that we use together to give us a picture of the situation across Kirklees.</p>

	<p>We record the number reported, the number cleared, and tonnage of waste from fly tips. We also look at performance rankings for action taken and Fixed Penalty Notices issued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of fly tips reported doesn't tell us how many fly tips there are. 1 fly tip can be reported multiple times. However, in 2023 it was 7014 and in 2024 it was 9010. Reporting can increase for lots of reasons and is not just linked to the number of fly tips. It can be due to improved reporting systems, people becoming aware of how to report (campaigns to encourage reporting), the length of time it takes to clear a fly tip, how visible the fly-tipped is.</li> <li>• The number of cleared fly tips. Again, this is not the same as the number of fly tips. To close-down the report of a fly tip when dealt with you have log it as cleared. There can be multiple logs of the same fly tip, although lots of reports can be linked (hence this number being smaller than the above number on reports), if the public have used slightly different location information for the same fly tip there will remain duplication. So, it is not just the number of fly tips that influences this number it is also the number and accuracy of reports. However, in 2023 was 2,697 cleared, and in 2024 this was 3,973.</li> <li>• The tonnage of material fly tipped. This was 298.14t in 2023 and 322.4t in 2024.</li> <li>• Action taken and Fixed Penalty Notices issued for flytipping - we ranked 71st out of 309 authorities in terms of actions taken and 102<sup>nd</sup> in terms of Fixed Penalty Notices issued. This puts us in the top 3<sup>rd</sup> for both measures.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Does this administration value the grass verges which we have across the district?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>In terms of environmental value, grass verges offer numerous benefits to urban and rural environments. They enhance the aesthetic appeal of streets and roads, provide habitats for wildlife, and help manage stormwater by absorbing rainwater, reducing runoff, and preventing flooding. Additionally, grass verges can improve air quality by trapping dust and pollutants, and they contribute to the overall green space, promoting mental well-being for residents.</p> <p>In terms of asset value, the verge forms part of the highway and performs a more operational purpose as it is often a breakup point between the road and footway. The verge often holds statutory undertakers' apparatus and performs a drainage function on roads without positive drainage.</p>
5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Could the Cabinet Member explain to me the Council's policy on upgrading pedestrian crossings to Pelican Crossings and why one in the Deputy Leader's ward at New Mill has been approved?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p>

The assumption has been made that, in this case, Cllr Taylor is using the term “pedestrian crossing” in reference to a zebra crossing. If that assumption is correct, there are several reasons why a zebra crossing may be replaced by a puffin crossing, where the “red and green men” for pedestrian use are displayed on the push button unit, (pelican crossings, which are those that display the pedestrian “red and green” men at the far side of the crossing are no longer used as a matter of course across Kirklees).

There is no Kirklees “policy” which dictates the choice of zebra / puffin crossing. The initial installation is based on “The Zebra and Pelican and Puffin Crossing Regulations and General Directions 1997 and is an officer and data lead decision.

If a request to change a crossing type is made, and officer assessment will be made, based on regulation requirements and current circumstances at each individual site. If the case for change is approved, then a scheme will be developed and put on the list for funding from CRSTS Safer Roads Capital funding, The capital plan is then, in turn, approved at Cabinet.

The 2 zebra crossings in New Mill, one on the A635 and one on the A616, have both been replaced by puffin crossings to try and improve existing traffic congestion on the A635 Penistone Road and the A616 Sheffield Rd junctions. The funding for these replacement crossing facilities has been provided via 106 monies from development sites local to New Mill.

It was an officer decision to spend these 106 monies in this location, in line with Scheme of Delegations and in adherence with Financial Procedure Rules and the scheme has been in development, in consultation with the Holme Valley South ward councillors, for 3+ years.

The signal controller, with the aid of new smart technology, will better manage traffic and pedestrian movements through New Mill centre, with carriageway and pedestrian detection being used to cross pedestrians, whilst creating positive opportunities for side road traffic to emerge from Penistone Road and Huddersfield Rd more efficiently, and reducing the existing congestion.

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**Question from Councillor Longstaff to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison**

“We have had deputations from volunteers who have attended Council meetings saying how hard it is to deal with Kirklees Council. In the future we are going to need these volunteers, therefore what steps have we taken to assist these groups?”

**Cabinet Member Response**

As Councillors, we all see every day the value of volunteers and community groups in our wards and communities. Many of us volunteer with these groups alongside our roles as councillors. We all know how vital these passionate members of the community are: they’re the lifeblood of communities, people using their time, energy, motivation and skills to make great things happen in our communities.

We recognise the significant time and energy people put into their communities, and so supporting community groups and volunteers is something this Council takes very seriously. Working with communities is at the heart of what many of our services do, but a few specific initiatives are particularly worth mentioning.

For a number of years we have had a significant, multi-year contract with Third Sector Leaders Kirklees, a local community capacity organisation. TSL works with voluntary and community groups, charities, social enterprises, clubs, associations and other not-for-profit organisations in Kirklees to help them achieve their aims, and do more. As well as investing our own funding into this contract, we've also used government funding to fund a network of community anchors, locally based groups across the district that help to connect, advise, and support in their local areas.

A number of our teams work closely with volunteers, including our libraries, environment, active citizens, Community Plus, and third sector teams. Through these teams, we connect groups to advice and support to help them get things done in their communities.

Finally, both the council and TSL have been working with local businesses who have approached us to ask for support and guidance to help their staff volunteer.

Taken together, these investments of time, money, and skills are helping volunteers and community organisations across Kirklees.

We're always looking to do more. I'm happy that the government has confirmed an extension of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund beyond 31st March. We're currently involved in conversations with West Yorkshire Combined Authority to confirm the conditions for that money. I hope some of that money will enable us to do even more to support community groups across Kirklees.

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**Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed**

“How much has Kirklees Council spent on removing fly tip in the financial year 2023-24 and is it likely that the figure will be far greater this financial year?”

**Cabinet Member Response**

We have two key costs. The cost of the staff that clear the fly tipping and the cost of the disposal of the waste that is fly tipped.

The staff that clear the fly tipping work in our Greenspace Action Team. This is a team of people that undertake several environmental activities, including environmental enforcement and the removal of fly tipping. The cost of the flytipping element of this team is £243,539 per annum.

We do utilise ad hoc time from other services such as street cleansing and highways depending on the needs of an individual fly tip this would be difficult to assign a value to.

In 23-24 our disposal cost for flytipping were £51,810. However, this only includes waste collected by crews specifically assigned to collect fly tipping. The disposal cost of fly tipping collected proactively by other teams as part of other duties is not included in this figure as this waste will be mixed with other waste streams.

Of the two key costs and if they will increase next year 23-24 to 24-25.

	<p>There are no changes planned to the Green Space Action team so this should remain the same (however the annual staff pay award will impact costs as in all areas).</p> <p>Disposal cost cannot be estimated but can be provide at the end of the year.</p>
8	<p><b>Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“Could you update Council as to what actions have been taken since the passing on a motion on the Gaza conflict which called on Kirklees to :</p> <p>That we ask that Kirklees Council where at all lawful and practical to avoid purchases of goods from Israeli companies illegally occupying the afore mentioned Palestinian Territories.</p> <p>That this Council commits to conducting a thorough review of its procurement practices to ensure that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are not used.”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>Officers are currently considering planning the scope and outline details of the review and a report will return to Council in due course.</p> <p>This review will adhere to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023, which aim to ensure that public procurement is conducted in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner.</p>
9	<p><b>Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“While in conversation with one of our NPT, I was informed that parking in bus lanes does not result in the vehicle holder receiving a parking ticket. If this is the case why do the Parking Enforcement team not issue tickets?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>The legislation in place at the time bus lanes across Kirklees were implemented, did not require the introduction of waiting restrictions i.e. yellow lines, (standing traffic), to enforce parking within them, as it was written into the Legal Order, and drivers were expected to understand the rules of a bus lane.</p> <p>Legislative guidance has recently suggested that, as best practice, all bus lanes that we wish to ensure are kept clear of parked vehicles, by taking enforcement action, should have double or single yellow lines, depending on the hours of operation, it is still not a legal requirement.</p> <p>As this was a recommendation, and best practise, rather than a legislative requirement, it has not been seen as a priority. Particularly given that parking is not regularly reported as a major issue by the bus companies. As a result, our bus lanes have not been retrofitted with waiting restrictions in our bus lanes.</p> <p>It does not impact on either the Councils ability, or the ability of uniformed police officers to enforce.</p>

	<p>Uniformed Police officers, and Kirklees Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) can issue Fixed Penalty notices for parking infringements.</p> <p>Our Civil Enforcement resources are limited, and whilst it is possible to enforce, our priority for enforcement is focused on locations that are regularly reported for infringements and / or road safety is adversely affected by illegal parking. That is not necessarily within our bus lanes, but, if reported, we will deploy enforcement staff, as resources permit.</p>
10	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Do you think the Council’s response to the recent cold snap and problems with snow and ice was good enough and, if not, what is the Cabinet Member doing about it?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>I think our teams have been fantastic in their response and the work they have undertaken to keep the borough moving and as safe as possible.</p> <p>Our Highways teams have been out in what have been challenging conditions, through morning and night, to plough and grit roads continuously. If anyone does not do so already, I would recommend following our dedicated Social Media channels to see this and keep informed.</p> <p>We also took the decision to fill all grit bins reported to us as empty as soon as resources allowed, increasing this to all empty grit bins as soon as resources allowed, with no need to report as it became clear the weather wasn’t abating.</p> <p>Our bin crews have been in every day doing as much as they can. I have also seen our other teams, such as Parks and Street Cleansing, roll their sleeves up and help where they are needed, taking critical care staff to appointments in 4x4s, hand clearing pavements and gritting in crematoria and town centres, clearing car parks and many more activities.</p> <p>I appreciate some people will always want or feel there is more to be done, but I think we have prioritised the key areas with the resources we have.</p>
11	<p><b>Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities – Councillor A U Pinnock</b></p> <p>“How many schools did not open or opened late on Tuesday 7/1/25, and subsequent days that week, because of ice?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>In total this week, we have received 460 reports of either closures, partial closures or late starts, as follows:</p> <p>140 reported closed/partial closed/late start Monday 6th January  113 reported closed/partial closed/late start Tuesday 7th January  98 reported closed/partial closed/late start Wednesday 8th January  70 reported closed/partial closed/late start Thursday 9th January  39 reported closed/partial closed/late start Friday 10th January</p>

12	<p><b>Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Which community buildings (such as schools, surgeries, hospitals and council buildings) have their approach roads gritted as a priority and are these done before the town centres?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>In accordance with the council’s winter maintenance policy, the resources available are initially deployed to treat our designated priority gritting routes. Once we are satisfied that those routes are operating satisfactorily, we look to switch some of our resources on to those minor routes that form our designated secondary gritting network. Therefore, any community buildings which have access to roads that form part of either the priority or secondary gritting road network, will be treated.</p> <p>Only then and dependent on the availability of resources, do we consider any requests to grit access roads to those community buildings that are not on our priority or secondary gritting designated network.</p>
13	<p><b>Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“How long does the Cabinet Member feel it is reasonable to leave a Kirklees resident without a black bin collection?”</p> <p><b><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></b></p> <p>In normal circumstances we aim to collect black bins on a 2-weekly cycle, with this extending to 3 weeks over the Christmas period. In periods of extreme weather, we continue to collect where we can. We understand the importance of collecting black bins, which is why the decision was made to suspend green collections week commencing the 13 January.</p> <p>The Council operates an excellent waste collection service, which consistently performs at a high level, achieving a 99.81% collection rate without complaint in the previous month for example.</p> <p>We understand the importance of the bin service and our teams work on Bank Holidays throughout the year, only changing this at Christmas, when all Councils have to due to so many Bank Holidays running together.</p> <p>This year our teams where in working on both weeks of Christmas/New Year, including working Friday which is not a normal operating day. Unfortunately, we cannot control the weather, and this has disrupted our collections meaning some residents have gone longer between collections than we would have wanted them to.</p> <p>We did communicate our recovery plan, and we requested all residents to present their black bins for collection this week, to mitigate the impact the weather has had.</p>