

## COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 12 February 2025

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

1	<b>Question withdrawn</b>
2	<b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner</b>  “What is the latest position with releasing the outstanding s106 education monies to our schools?”  <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>  Discussions are continuing with regards to the delivery of unspent S106 monies for schools. We are aiming to have a position on releasing some unspent money, where it is possible to do so, by the Spring.
3	<b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Ahmed)</b>  “Does the Leader of the Council think that the introduction of parking charges to the new locations has been successful?”  <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>  Yes, I think the introduction of parking charges has been successful. The scale and scope of what our teams have had to undertake should not be underestimated, and importantly we are listening to feedback, and we are making further improvement where we think they are merited.
4	<b>Question from Councillor Greaves to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Ahmed)</b>  “Does the Leader of the Council think that the Household Waste Recovery plan was successful?”  <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>  Yes, I think the Household Waste Recovery plan was successful and I would like to thank all the teams involved for the fantastic work they have undertaken under extremely challenging conditions.  One crew alone collected nearly 60 tonnes in a single day, and all together they collected an additional 1,956 tonnes in the week compared to what we would normally have done.  If Cllrs do come across any issues with waste collection, I would encourage them to get in touch with the team directly, if they have not done so already.

5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Cooper to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“Who represents Kirklees Council on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Climate and Environment Committee?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>Kirklees’ representative on WYCA’s Climate and Environment Committee is the responsible Cabinet member, Cllr Munir Ahmed who was appointed at the Council meeting on 17 July 2024.</p>
6	<p><b>Question from Councillor Cooper to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Turner)</b></p> <p>“What is the shortfall in funding from the Labour Government to the Council to cover the rise in Employers National Insurance Contributions?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The final grant amount for NI compensation calculation was published with the final settlement details on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025.</p> <p>The Council’s working assumption continues to be that there will be a £2.2m shortfall in the grant based on the known size of the funding amounts allocated to MHCLG by Treasury.</p> <p>We have been made aware that this issue can be revisited as part of the 26/27 settlement discussions.</p>
7	<p><b>Question from Councillor Cooper to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Addy)</b></p> <p>“Will the Cabinet drop proposals to privatise Castle Grange and Claremont House Dementia Care Homes?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The decision was taken at Cabinet today, 11/02/2025.</p>
8	<p><b>Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“In light of repeated fly tipping incidents which without doubt has cost this local authority a huge amount over the past few months and years, can we finally take enforcement and CCTV seriously at key repeat offender hotspots on the Walpole Estate and Yews Hill Road?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>GAT enforcement has carried out work in this area previously to help educate residents around waste management. We are working with Housing Management Officers for that area to carry out further educational activities with residents.</p>

	<p>The severe weather we experienced in January caused some issues in areas such as this where bin collections had to be postponed until conditions were safe for our crews. Council Officers from Housing Management Officers, Cleansing and the GAT Fly Tipping Team worked closely to clear all side &amp; bulky waste accumulated during this period as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Where appropriate and evidence available, persistent littering or poor use of waste receptacles will be investigated by our Enforcement Officers.</p>
9	<p><b>Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner</b></p> <p>“In July 2024, the International Court of Justice declared Israel’s occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem illegal. International Agencies including but not limited to the UN Human Rights Council have identified companies profiting from these illegal activities. In November 2024, this council passed a motion to divest from such companies.</p> <p>What specific actions has Kirklees Council taken to identify and remove companies benefiting from the occupation from our preferred suppliers’ lists? How will the council ensure compliance with the motion going forward?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>Officers are currently drafting a report for the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. This report will outline the scope of the procurement review, addressing the motion agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 13 November 2024. The review will comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023, ensuring that public procurement is conducted in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.</p>
10	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“How satisfied are you with the way in which bin collection issues are resolved?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>I think our teams, both on the frontline and in the back office, do an incredible job delivering and managing the service and enquiries we get. We have a consistently low level of enquiries about bin collection issues, our latest figures for Kirklees Direct calls are down 26% compared to the previous year for example. Kirklees Council has an exceptionally high collection rate for bins which stands at over 99.78% as of Q3. We collect a comprehensive set of data around our collections and missed collection frequency to allow us to continuously improve the service.</p> <p>However, we are always willing to listen, learn and improve and if the Cllr has some suggestions or examples then I am more than happy for them to email details across and I will speak to the teams.</p>

11	<p><b>Question from Councillor J C Lawson to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“Why is there no full council meeting in April this year?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The dates of Council meetings for the 2024-2025 municipal year were agreed at the meeting of Council on 7 February 2024, following consideration and agreement by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 19 January 2024.</p>
12	<p><b>Question from Councillor Darwan to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Turner)</b></p> <p>“The UK, as a state party to the Genocide Convention, has a legal responsibility to take action to deter and prevent further genocidal acts being committed against Palestinians. What measures to date have been taken by Cabinet to divest pension funds they administer from companies enabling Israel’s genocide?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>There are several laws in place in relation to the Pension Fund. West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) investments are not controlled by Kirklees Council, although we do have Councillor representation on the Funds Investment Advisory panel. WYPF has a fiduciary duty to its pensioners and participating employers whose money it invests on their behalf. This is not council money. WYPF discloses all investments on its website and is updated at the end of each financial year. The Supreme Court held, in its judgment on the Palestine Solidarity Campaign case, that pension funds cannot take into consideration political preferences over what is required under their fiduciary duty. However, The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) publishes a database of companies involved in ‘specific activities’ in the occupied Palestinian territory. At the time of writing, WYPF does not have holdings in any of these companies.</p> <p>Please refer to the following link <a href="#">LGPS Scheme Advisory Board - Legal Opinions</a> which provides detailed KC (Counsel) opinion on the fiduciary duty in context of the LGPS entitled Local Government Pension Scheme ‘Investments and non-financial considerations’.</p>
13	<p><b>Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Would the Cabinet Member please tell me how successful the bins catch-up operation was after the snow in January?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>Yes, I think the Household Waste Recovery plan was successful and I would like to thank all the teams involved for the fantastic work they have undertaken under extremely challenging conditions.</p> <p>One crew alone collected nearly 60 tonnes in a single day, and all together they collected an additional 1,956 tonnes in the week compared to what we would normally have done.</p>

	<p>If Cllrs do come across any issues with waste collection, I would encourage them to get in touch with the team directly, if they have not done so already.</p>
14	<p><b>Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor A U Pinnock)</b></p> <p>“In what ways does this Council help victims of crime?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The Council continuously works in partnership with a wide range statutory services, businesses and voluntary, community, faith and belief sector to help and support victims of crime</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership - The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act placed a statutory duty on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to develop a strategic plan which addresses multi-agency community safety issues affecting quality of life for residents. In Kirklees the CSP is called the Communities Board. This is coordinated and led by Kirklees Council but working alongside our partners daily.</p> <p>The current Community Safety Plan focuses on 4 strategic themes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Violence, Abuse and Exploitation</li> <li>• Reducing Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>• Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities</li> <li>• Reducing Risk</li> </ul> <p>The approach used in Kirklees to tackle crime and help victims of crime is based on the principle that the best way to support victims is to prevent crimes in the first place and where they do happen to put in place interventions which support victims and hold perpetrators to account.</p>
15	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities – Councillor A U Pinnock</b></p> <p>“With changes coming forward to the Ofsted Gradings for Schools could she confirm the current breakdown of our schools across the old ratings and whether our schools have been collectively improving or deteriorating over the last 5 years.”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The latest Ofsted inspection framework was implemented in September 2019. This framework sets out how Ofsted inspects maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools, further education and skills providers, and registered early years settings in England. There are 2 types of inspection graded ( section 5) and ungraded ( section 8).</p> <p>During the time 2019 to August 2024, Ofsted graded inspections assigned an overall effectiveness grade by evaluating schools across four key areas: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. Each of these areas is graded on a four-point scale: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, and Inadequate. The overall effectiveness grade is then determined based on the combined judgements of these key areas, providing a comprehensive assessment of the school's performance.</p>

An Ofsted ungraded visit, also known as a Section 8 inspection, is a type of inspection that does not result in a change to the school's overall effectiveness grade. These inspections are typically conducted for schools previously rated as Good or Outstanding to ensure they maintain their standards. Section 8 inspections can also be triggered by specific concerns or to monitor progress in schools requiring improvement. Unlike graded inspections, ungraded visits focus on particular aspects of the school's performance without providing a full set of new grades.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ofsted paused routine inspections from March 2020, leading to delays in some school inspections. This pause was necessary to reduce the spread of the virus and to allow schools to focus on immediate challenges. Ofsted began a phased return to routine inspections in September 2020, with full graded inspections resuming in September 2021. Since then, Ofsted has been working to catch up on the backlog, ensuring that schools receive timely evaluations to support educational recovery and improvement. As such some schools have been waiting for their routine inspection for some time, this is especially the case for the schools previously graded as 'Outstanding', but also those schools that are awaiting their first inspection.

In September 2024 the overall effectiveness grade for inspections was removed as Ofsted consulted on a new framework, the report card. The consultation has recently been released. Therefore the data shared below is separated into the Ofsted grade the school has assigned to them based on their latest inspection from Sept 2021 – August 2024, and then information regarding the inspections in Kirklees since Sept 2024, where an inspection does not receive an overall effectiveness grade and therefore these figures are not seen ( or counted in the overall effectiveness table ) and perhaps does not capture the improvements recently made\*\*

**Ofsted Judgements as of 06/02/25**

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Outstanding	17	10
Good	133	81
Requires Improvement	11	7
Inadequate	3	2
	<b>164</b>	<b>100%</b>
Not Judged (schools inspected from September 2024)	11**	
Schools with no judgement due to conversion or newly opened	6	
	<b>181</b>	

As of February 2025, Kirklees has 10% of schools rated as Outstanding, 81% as Good, 7% as Requires Improvement, and 2% as Inadequate, with 11 schools inspected but without an overall grade and 6 newly opened or converted.

Since Sept 2024 - Kirklees has had 11 Ofsted inspections where a report has been published, without an overall inspection grade given. Should these have been given an overall effectiveness grade, as in the previous 3 years, they would likely have been graded good and therefore would have increased the overall percentage of schools in the good / outstanding group and reduced the percentage in the RI / Inadequate group.

Area judgements from Graded Reports	Outstanding	Good	RI	Inadequate
The Quality of Education	1	10		
Behaviour & Attitudes	1	10		
Personal Development	3	8		
Leadership & Management	1	10		
Early Years Provision		9	1	
Sixth Form	1			

In addition to this, 13 schools received an ungraded inspection where 5 schools were judged to remain good, 2 remain outstanding, 2 were judged to be performing better than good and will receive a full graded inspection as it is believed practice is outstanding and 1 may not be good if inspected under a full inspection

The picture is not a simple snapshot as the frameworks and measures have changed to respond to the pandemic and the recent pressures linked to head teacher mental health.

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**Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed**

“In recent weeks there have been 3 further crashes at the accident blackspot between the Sovereign junction and Carr Lane/Cross lane junction. Over the 25 years I have been a Parish & more recently a Kirklees Councillor there have been many attempts at improvements here but still the accidents mount up. The most recent changes having been made in the last 12 months.

At the recent scrutiny Officers stated that there was nothing else that could be considered here, except perhaps a speed camera.

Given the community concerns on this issue will he please outline the steps that the Council now proposes to take to try and have a speed camera installed in this location to reduce the number of accidents in the vicinity.”

Cabinet Member Response

Every accident is one too many and we are committed to playing our part in improving road safety.

Highways officers are aware of recent incidents in the vicinity of the Sovereign and Carr Lane / Cross Lane junctions. However, it can take up to 3 months for information to be gathered, verified and shared with Highways Safety by West Yorkshire Police. Until all details are verified from West Yorkshire Police, Highways Officers are unable to identify the best highways solution / safety solution (details of the causes of an accident need to be confirmed by the police investigation to identify how best to mitigate further accidents). The incidents highlighted by Cllr Taylor are not included in the figures below (due to the delay period outlined).

	<p>Current records show that in the previous 5 years (to Dec 24) there have been 7 slight collisions, 2 serious and 1 fatal, at and between Carr Lane / Cross Lane and A629 junctions with the staggered crossroads with the A635 at Sovereign crossroads (Sovereign). 60% of incidents occurred at Carr Lane / Cross Lane junction and 40% at Sovereign.</p> <p>Unfortunately, in the case of the fatal collision, engineering measures could not have prevented it. Minor works were undertaken in early 2024 to try to improve conspicuity and safety record of the Carr Lane / Cross Lane junctions with A629.</p> <p>Once information is received from West Yorkshire Police, Council Officers will review the location again and / or a longer section of the A629 for safety cameras against the Safety Camera criteria for permanent, fixed or average cameras.</p> <p>In the short term until the data is received, we will undertake some speed counts and review the results against the criteria for a community safety van which can be deployed sooner and easier should the site meet those criteria.</p>
17	<p><b>Question from Councillor Holt to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council of the process which car-users have to go through to park for free in St John’s car park, Cleckheaton and especially where there is no meter present to get a ticket from?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>For St John’s Car Park in Cleckheaton car users can walk to the ticket machine and obtain a ticket for the two free hours to display in their car window.</p> <p>Alternatively, car users can register their two-hour free session by either using the RingGo app or calling the RingGo automated payline on 01484 939108. These details can be found on our car park signage.</p> <p>For the eight car parks across the district that presently do not have a ticket machine we will be installing one in the coming weeks.</p> <p>If you have any specific queries in relation to parking in your ward, please do not hesitate to contact Parking Services.</p>
18	<p><b>Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services – Councillor Hawkins</b></p> <p>“What is the current waiting time while a disabled badge application is being processed?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p><b>Blue Badge Automatic New Applications</b> Current processing time 2 weeks</p> <p><b>Blue Badge Automatic Reapplications</b> Applications received 8 weeks in advance of a current badge expiring are processed before expiry of current badge.</p>



**Blue Badge Discretionary New Applications**

Current processing time is up to 26 weeks.

**Blue Badge Discretionary Reapplications**

Where an application has been received 8 weeks before a current badge expires, every effort is made to assess the application before the current badge expires.

The discretionary blue badge applications involve more complex decision making which is why they take longer to process. All applications don't take 26 weeks, some are processed faster than this. The ones which take longer are usually where we need to gather further information from the applicant or where we need the applicant to undertake an assessment with an occupational therapist.

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**Question from Councillor Sadfar to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner**

“C+K Careers has been informed by Kirklees Council that its funding is to be cut by £150k for the year 2025/2026. On what intelligence based approach was this decision reached? As the need to deliver this important youth service hasn't changed. Also Calderdale Council hasn't implemented a budget cut only Kirklees Council has.”

Cabinet Member Response

Kirklees Council is extremely proud of the offer that C + K deliver, both in terms of what both Council's contract them to undertake, as well as all the additional aspects of their business, including what schools and colleges buy directly alongside the wider offer they provide. We strongly encourage our education providers to take up the high-quality independent advice and guidance that C + K provide for their learners.

We recognise that a further proposed saving to the 'core contract' which relates specifically to the statutory duty that C + K deliver for the Council, which is the tracking, reporting and encouragement of participation in education, employment and training of all 16-18 (and up to age 25 for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan) year olds resident in Kirklees comes on top of reductions from both Kirklees and Calderdale Council's in the previous 2 financial years.

The quality of the work that is undertaken for us is of an extremely high standard, and we recognise that we cannot expect the same level for less funding. We continue to work with C + K to maximise opportunities to enable them to be sustainable and have been keen to consider opportunities where the council can support to reduce overheads, rather than impact on frontline service and are committed to continuing to work with C + K and their board moving forwards.

What I would be keen to point out is that alongside the core contract, we do in addition fund targeted provision for our most vulnerable learners this includes;

- Virtual School for Careers Advice resource to support Children Looked After/carers across Keystage 3 in raising aspirations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Youth Justice Service</u> – to support the YJS team with their understanding of EET and the YPs directly to progress into EET (core KPI for YJS)</li> <li>• <u>Corporate Parenting</u> – to support the Pathways Team with understanding of EET and the Care Leavers (18/19+) to progress into EET</li> <li>• Adult and Community Learning</li> </ul> <p>It is not for us to comment on Calderdale Council’s arrangements for the forthcoming financial year.</p>
20	<p><b>Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner</b></p> <p>“Has a future use for the Tolson building been identified?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>A future use has not been identified yet but officers are exploring options.</p> <p>It has been very important not to rush into an alternative use as the building is still open to the public and will be needed by the Museums and Galleries service until the new Huddersfield town centre Museum and Gallery is up and running, at least until 2029.</p> <p>Cabinet approved moving to Gateway 4 for Phase Two of the Our Cultural Heart programme (which includes the new Museum and Gallery) on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and until this decision was reached, it was not definite that the new facility would be developed. We can now progress with our plans which include looking at a future use for the Tolson building now that we have committed to the Museum service withdrawing the museum from there to relocate it to Our Cultural Heart.</p>
21	<p><b>Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner</b></p> <p>“Does the Council now have the valuation for the land known as HS9 in the Local Plan?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>We do not as yet have a valuation for the Fenay Lane site (HS9).</p>
22	<p><b>Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“I understand the Council was carrying out a review of its Snow Warden policy. Has this happened and are there any changes to that policy?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>The Snow Warden Scheme review begins on February 11<sup>th</sup> and the team will be looking at the current operating model to see if this requires changes now that the scheme is growing. We hope this review will be concluded before the end of February and we will be able to update members if there are any changes to the</p>

	scheme.
23	<p><b>Question from Councillor Daji to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“The residents in my Batley East Ward have been very concerned about the poor services provided by the Highways and Environment Services. Over many months in the summer, I received so many cases where residents were complaining about the overgrown grass and bushes not being cut and overhanging tree branches not being cut down. Also, more recently residents have been asking me why there are no road sweepers in the area and why the state of the footpaths is so bad with the fallen leaves not being swept at all for months. This has led to some people slipping on the footpaths. I have been sent so many videos and photos of the neglect, many of which I forwarded with my emails to officers. It's got to the point where the residents of Batley East are asking why has Batley been so neglected. On top of this, Hyrstlands park in my Ward was so neglected all last summer that the grass wasn't cut despite many emails from me, depriving children and young people from playing cricket all summer. This is very shocking as officers took no action on this.</p> <p>The concerns have led to residents having to do petitions to the council as their emails and phone calls to council officers are ignored, with officers working in silos passing the buck onto others, and Heads of services do not seem to take responsibility and engage.</p> <p>I am very concerned when I walk round my patch and see all the neglect and deprivation in the environment people are living in. I haven't seen any real plans by the Council to bring about any improvements. As the stock answer seems to be lack of resources and staff. Also, the children's play areas have been neglected to the extent they are not fit for purpose and not safe for children.</p> <p>I hope you will take these matters very seriously and take immediate action to ensure senior managers take responsibility for all these concerns. I hope from this coming spring and the summer period all these issues will be dealt with so that the residents and children do not have to go through such a bad summer period again. I would be happy to invite you to come too Batley anytime to see for yourself.</p> <p>I look forward to your detailed reply and action plan to address all these issues. Can you please let me know what action you will take to ensure the Highways and Environment services will deliver a better service to the residents of Batley and how the officers will be more accountable for the delivery of services or lack of them?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>Thank you for your detailed statement regarding the concerns of Batley East residents. We appreciate your dedication to representing your constituents and bringing these issues to our attention.</p> <p>Firstly, I would like to clarify that our officers and managers are committed to providing the best possible services within the constraints we face. Our teams work diligently to address issues as they arise, and while responses may not always align with what people want, it does not equate to a lack of response or action.</p>

	<p>I think it is important to acknowledge the significant financial challenges local government, including Kirklees Council, have faced due to reductions in funding from previous governments.</p> <p>These constraints have inevitably impacted our ability to deliver services at the levels we aspire to. Despite these challenges, we are actively working with the current government to secure the necessary resources to better serve our communities.</p> <p>We are committed to continuous improvement and accountability. Our managers take their responsibilities seriously and are dedicated to addressing the concerns of residents. We are also exploring innovative solutions and partnerships to enhance service delivery within our financial limitations.</p> <p>We appreciate your invitation to visit Batley and will arrange a suitable time to see the areas of concern firsthand. We are committed to working collaboratively with you and the residents to find sustainable solutions and improve the quality of life in Batley East.</p> <p>Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.</p>
24	<p><b>Question from Councillor Daji to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services – Councillor Hawkins</b></p> <p>“With the closure of the Customer Services in Dewsbury the residents in North Kirklees have been very deprived and concerned as they have nowhere else to go for assistance. Including residents who cannot speak English, as the Customer Service had bilingual staff who assisted customers. With the closure of the Dewsbury service these customers are not receiving any service. It was said that the service was to be moved to the library but subsequently I am informed that this closed also. I have also heard that there is some kind of online service. However, I don't know if this is true. Even if it is residents are very dubious as to how this would work.</p> <p>Can the Member throw any light on this and provide details about customer services for people who need assistance?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>Dewsbury Library is not closed, it is open.</p> <p>Customer Services were moved from the Walsh Building to the Library in Dewsbury in January 2024, having combined customer services along with library provision. Residents have fed back that having both in one place is much easier for them and find staff helpful and informative.</p> <p>There are self-help facilities available in the library which includes online support with access to computers so that residents can access the council's website. The council's website is also accessible in a variety of community languages.</p> <p>We continue to have bilingual staff who are on hand to provide support and respond to the diverse needs of residents this includes where English isn't their first language.</p> <p>There are also public access phones available that residents can use to phone the councils telephone contact centre to get support on wider council issues.</p>

**Question from Councillor Daji to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Kendrick**

“With the recent death of Sara Shariff and many other children over the years in parts of the UK, what is the position in Kirklees with Children's Services in terms of children being safe and protected from harm. Is the Member fully satisfied that the services are safe and there are adequate measures in place to monitor levels of quality services to Children to safeguard them. One measure and aspect of risk is Social Workers having very high caseloads and teams carrying vacancies which are filled with agency workers.

Can you please provide information about how many agency social workers are employed in Children's Services currently and what are the plans to recruit permanent staff?”

Cabinet Member Response

Kirklees Children's Services have no agency workers. Managers in children's services provide weekly assurance that our practitioners feel supported and are supervised by their line manager, that children are being seen and that there is a plan is to reduce caseloads.

Senior leaders are visible and have introduced a variety of forums to provide assurance about the quality of practice and that children's plans are not drifting. Every month at least 40 cases are subject to an audit which involves a manager talking to a practitioner and seeking feedback from families. We also look at 25 contacts each month in the duty and advice team to also assure us that families are being directed to the right service in a timely way. Teams also have practice learning days with their teams which involves dip sampling children's cases and seeking feedback from families. Our practitioners also receive a good deal of compliments about the quality of their work.

The service director holds a monthly performance meeting focusing on seeking an understanding about the data and where performance dips seek an understanding of the reasons for this. This is supported by our children's assurance panel, chaired by the Director of Children's Services and our Ambition Board which also oversees performance and data across the directorate.

Senior leaders are assured that through increasing the numbers of managers through the introduction of a practice supervisor role that social workers have frequent supervision and management oversight is much improved.

We have a clear plan for recruitment and whilst we have a number of current vacancies this is due to staff progression within the organisation. We have 10 social workers doing a 'front-line' programme with us, and all have indicated they wish to remain here with us. We also have 16 students many of whom will also wish to stay and we also have staff on apprenticeships as we look to grow our own. By the summer we anticipate that our staffing contingent will be improved.

We have a well-staffed early support service and family group conferencing service which we have recently integrated to join with the teams overseen by the service director for family support and child protection as we are working to meet the expectations set out nationally, for local authorities. There is an expectation

	<p>that the way we deliver services will alter but this will only improve relationships that we have with our families.</p> <p>Family support workers to be renamed family help practitioners work with families at the earliest opportunity providing parenting support and other interventions to support families to care for their children. Through feedback from families and supported by our lower numbers of looked after children we are confident that we have adequate resources.</p>
26	<p><b>Question from Councillor McGrath to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“Do we have data on parking usage in Huddersfield town centre car parks throughout the week and if so, does the data indicate a need for additional parking, or is there sufficient capacity to accommodate typical visitor numbers by car?”</p> <p><u>Cabinet Member Response</u></p> <p>We receive data from both RingGo and our ticket machines, which indicate usage levels and details such as free sessions used, paid session and payment method. Our RingGo service has been in place for some time and so we have historical data that shows year on year trends, but we are building this information for our new machines that have only recently been installed. We also have access to other data such as footfall that our Town Centre teams gather. This data is being built up into a quarterly report to Cabinet to track the impact of changes.</p> <p>At present there are enough car parking spaces in the town centre. I am aware of our partners regeneration and investment activity over the next 12-24 months and acknowledge that this will create temporary pressure on spaces. However, we will manage the situation to ensure there is sufficient levels of car parking in the town centre.</p> <p>We are working with our regeneration colleagues and have commissioned several reports from specialist consultants, to understand sufficiency and future requirements. Whilst we do want to see a shift towards more environmentally friendly transport, we do have to recognise car usage will be here for some time still.</p>