

Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Friday 9th May 2025

Present: Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Jo Lawson

Apologies: Councillor Itrat Ali

70 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Itrat Ali.

71 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Chair provided updates for Members as follows:

- Further to consideration by this Committee, the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan had been approved by Cabinet, on 8th April, and noted by Council on 23rd April. The feedback from the Committee had been reported to these bodies.
- Additional information in relation to the Parks and Greenspaces Team had been provided to Members, as requested as part of the item on the Quarter 3 Financial Management Report.

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th April 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

72 Declaration of Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

73 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

74 Public Question Time

No questions were submitted.

75 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

76 Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan

A report was submitted in relation to the refresh of the Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) and the priorities for the Communities Partnership Plan (CPP) for 2025-2026. It highlighted the intention to undertake a full review of the SIA and the CPP during 2025 and included highlights of some of the work that had taken place in 2024-2025.

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Councillor Amanda Pinnock, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Communities and Chair of the Communities Safety Partnership, was present at the meeting and gave an introduction to the item explaining that the Communities Partnership Plan was overseen by the Communities Board. She welcomed the work that was taking place with key partners, guided by in-depth data and intelligence, across the whole of Kirklees. It was important to understand the root causes of the challenges being faced by communities in terms of crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety so that an appropriate, effective and sustainable response could be progressed, including robust early intervention and prevention. The priorities set out in the report were those areas identified, led by the evidence, as the focus for resources through the partnership approach to achieve the required outcomes. Feedback from the Committee would be presented to the Communities Board for consideration.

Sarah Mitchell, the Head of Communities presented the report alongside Jill Greenfield, the Service Director for Communities and Access Services.

Also in attendance, to respond to questions and comments from Members were; Superintendent James Griffiths, District Commander - West Yorkshire Police; Dale Gardiner, District Commander - West Yorkshire Fire Service, Liz Cussick, Kirklees Highways; Chris Walsh, Safer Kirklees and Jaqui Theaker – Data and Insight Enablement Lead.

The following points were highlighted:

- It was proposed that the current priorities be retained whilst a full review of the Strategic Impact Assessment and the Communities Partnership Plan was undertaken over the next few months, with a view to implementation of the new plan in 2026/27.
- Work was being undertaken in respect of revised Key Performance Indicators to ensure that progress and performance was constantly monitored.
- It was acknowledged that the perception and fear of crime impacted on local communities and there was more still to be done to ensure people felt safe but noted that Kirklees had the lowest average crime rate per 1000 of the population in West Yorkshire. It also compared well statistically with other areas in the country with a similar make-up to the district. Total crime in the district had reduced by over 7% in the last twelve months, including reductions in the areas of violent crime, violence against women and girls, and neighbourhood crime.
- A high-level overview of the data within the four strategic themes and the areas of particular focus for 2025/26, which would be subject to regular review in light of the performance data:
 - (i) Tackling Violence, Abuse and Exploitation:
Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls.
 - (ii) Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Crime:
Anti-Social Behaviour; personal, nuisance and environmental.
 - (iii) Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities:
Community Tensions, Hate Crime, Preventing Extremism, Migration and Inclusive Communities.
 - (iv) Reducing Risk.

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- The next steps, including engagement with all Councillors on the full review and revision of the CPP during Summer/Autumn and the submission of a draft to the Committee, for pre-decision scrutiny, in late 2025.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In respect of exploitation and modern-day slavery, it was acknowledged that this could be a particular area of risk for asylum seekers. The partnership approach included working with the asylum seeker accommodation provider (as the first point of contact) to implement training on this issue. Work also took place alongside Third Sector Leaders to ensure awareness amongst volunteers, and with frontline workers as an integral part of training.
- In relation to fly-tipping, further information in respect of the capacity of the Greenspace Action Team would be provided to Members. The view was expressed that further work should be undertaken to address fly-tipping with CCTV cameras focussed on 'hotspots'. It was noted that there was an element of raising awareness for residents of the impact and implications of fly tipping, in which ward councillors could take a lead.
- In respect of the perception of the 'Prevent' programme, work was ongoing with this small team to progress wider forms of engagement with local communities. Frontline workers were also trained to ensure awareness and work was continuing with faith and belief organisations with the primary focus being to aim to safeguard individuals from becoming involved with extremism.
- The use of 20mph zones and the implementation of this speed as default for residential roads, such as had been adopted in Wales. Kirklees' current approach was to target priority locations where this was considered to be the best solution for road safety but the research and results from areas that had done so would be considered and evaluated. Thirty-five schools and two Sure Start Centres in Kirklees had been targeted for a review of highway safety and speed limits and the ambition was to undertake an audit of the highway network outside all schools, including talking to parents and children about active travel.
- The positive work being undertaken by the Probation Service in respect of the reduction in adults re-offending and the community payback work was noted.
- The Youth Justice Board took a comprehensive multi-agency approach to first time entrants to the criminal justice system, there was a robust understanding of the issues and the Youth Justice Service was undertaking effective initiatives to support individuals and divert them from re-offending.
- The increase in the numbers of people willing to report hate crimes was welcomed; it was considered that this was associated with an increased assurance that they would be listened to and taken seriously. Work in addressing extremism was led by the Police with intelligence gathered at national and regional level. Information was shared and the Board was fully sighted on any concerns, with no significant issues locally at this point in time.
- Gang crime was included within the 'serious violence' priority. A very robust structure was in place and there was a continuous partnership approach considering the issues both operationally and strategically. Weekly meetings took place to review any incidents. It was noted that the more information that was made available to partners the better equipped they were to address the issue.

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- The Kirklees Vision Zero Board was planning a workshop with partners in June with the first full Board meeting taking place in July. This body would report into the West Yorkshire Vision Zero Board. It would become the delivery route for road safety initiatives and provide strategic direction and targeting of resources to progress a holistic approach.
- It was noted that a significant amount of enforcement took place on the road network, which had a recognisable impact. Although there was still work to be done, the statistics in terms of the number of collisions with injury had peaked in September 2023 and had been reducing since then in Kirklees due to the work being undertaken across the partnership. This included work to provide education within schools and colleges.
- The aims of Vision Zero and the joined-up approach being implemented was welcomed.
- In response to a question about a proactive/preventative rather than reactive approach it was noted that this required a collective approach which included every individual driver and pedestrian. Vision Zero was the ambition and funding was focussed on areas where the intelligence indicated that there was the greatest risk, in order to try and prevent future incidents. As the work developed the level and depth of the intelligence would increase and become more useful.
- Further information could be provided to Members in respect of the enforcement of parking restrictions and resourcing.
- The new partnership plan would be developed over the next 6 to 8 months and officers would engage with all Councillors to share information and listen to concerns and this would feed into the plan. Learning from the place-based standard work and the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Perception Survey would also be considered, alongside insight from frontline teams, to shape the understanding about how communities were feeling. Work would also take place with Third Sector Leaders to try and ensure a rounded offer of engagement.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Cabinet Member, representatives of partners and officers be thanked for attending to present the update.
- (2) That the priorities for 2025/26, as set out in the report, be supported.
- (3) That the progress made by the partnership during 2024/25 be noted.
- (4) That the proposal to undertake a full review of the Strategic Impact Assessment and to develop a new Communities Partnership Plan for the period 2026 to 2029 be supported and the proposed engagement with all Councillors and with scrutiny, at an early stage, be welcomed.

77

Armed Forces Covenant Update

A report was submitted to provide an update on the Armed Forces Covenant and the work of the Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Board.

Councillor Beverley Addy, the responsible Portfolio Holder was present at the meeting and gave an introduction explaining that she worked closely with Councillor Masood Ahmed, as the Council's Armed Forces Champion, and the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Board. The Board was formed of a number of partners who came together to progress work to fulfil the legal duty and support the armed forces community. It aimed to understand the needs of the community by working with

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local organisations such as Tommy's Lounge and the Royal Veterans Hub. The Council was committed to supporting the armed forces community by working across the range of Council services, in partnership with external partners, local and national charities, other public sector organisations and businesses. The mandate was to remove disadvantage, not to give advantageous treatment, although special consideration was appropriate, in some cases, for those who had given the most.

Vina Randhawa, the Democracy Manager and Councillor Masood Ahmed, the Armed Forces Champion and Chair of the AFC Board gave a presentation with the following points being highlighted:

- The background to the Armed Forces Covenant, which was a promise made by the nation to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families were treated fairly and with respect.
- The principles of the covenant were to remove disadvantage faced by the armed forces community and to recognise the unique challenges they faced and the sacrifices that they had made. There was a legal obligation on certain public bodies to have due regard to the principles when exercising certain functions. The Government had stated that focus was particularly needed to remove disadvantage in the areas of healthcare, education and housing.
- Kirklees Council had signed the covenant in July 2017 with cross-party and partner support. This had led to the establishment of the AFC Board which encouraged collaboration between partners; fostering understanding of needs and sharing information but also about looking at how the community could be actively supported.
- Kirklees took a partnership approach; 47 organisations in the district had signed the covenant, a number of which were actively engaged in the AFC Board. Connections were maintained across West Yorkshire to share good practice and Board members participated in forums and attended national and regional events. All the local NHS Trusts were now involved and significant work had been done to engage with GP practices across the district.
- The Board had developed an action plan which included both Council and partner priorities. It had achieved a 'strong' silver in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and was working towards Gold.
- A number of initiatives had been undertaken in respect of decision-making, training (including four e-learning modules), recruitment and relevant policies.
- The progress made since the last visit to the Committee (in June 2023) including:
 - A specific webpage to help members of the community find the information and access the contacts they needed.
 - Promoting awareness and understanding of the covenant.
 - A page on the Kirklees TV website; which included podcasts, vlogs and interviews to celebrate and raise awareness.
 - The work with GP practices to become veteran friendly accredited.
 - Work with schools to ensure that students from an armed forces background were identified so that tailored support could be offered.
 - Employment initiatives and engagement with local businesses.
 - Support of events such as Remembrance Day.
 - The use of the allocated budget to support various initiatives and organisations.
- An outline of the priorities for the future:

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- Encouraging staff with a military connection to help shape the work of the AFC Board.
- Closer working with WYCA to share best practice and maximise efficiency and use of resources.
- Promote the e-learning offer, including suicide prevention training.
- Further development of the number of GPs practices being accredited.
- Strengthen links with the cadet's movement.
- Identifying external funding to support existing initiatives and develop a one-stop shop.

Also present was Mick Riley, a veteran, member of the AFC Board and the co-founder of Tommy's Lounge and director of the charity 'Tommy's Voice'. He gave a presentation covering:

- The concept and background behind the development of Tommy's Lounge; including his personal experience as a member of the armed forces and the impact upon leaving this role after 27 years.
- The minimal support available at that point to assist people in making the transition to a completely new lifestyle and the difficulties associated with that including the severe impact on mental health.
- The immense value and impact of support provided by people who have credible shared experience and understanding.
- The development of Tommy's Lounge as a coffee lounge to provide a safe space where veterans would feel comfortable and could meet to talk to each other on a one-to-one basis, without alcohol, and be themselves. This included bespoke coffee made by a veteran and the venue being decorated with personal memorabilia, added to by people who visit, which also provided a source of connection and conversation between strangers and thus helping to establish relationships and peer support.
- He had been invited to join the AFC Board to provide 'ground truth' about the reality for people in the armed forces community.
- The work being done to develop Tommy's Lounge/Tommy's Voice to become a one-stop shop across the range of services; to assist and support those who had not previously had to deal with matters such as paying rent, finding accommodation, claiming benefits, applying for a job, pensions, getting photographic ID, accessing medical care and budgeting in navigating the policies and processes. This was also a benefit for the Council.
- The work undertaken to raise awareness of the impacts of PTSD and provide training to assist businesses in helping someone who is struggling and the introduction of a PTSD card.
- The major challenge for Tommy's Lounge was funding. It had been self-funded up to this point but the income was not sufficient to be sustainable and cover overheads. £12k was enough to keep it running for twelve months.
- In terms of the current approach in Kirklees;
 - strategically there was a lot that was being done right but more resources were needed.
 - The AF champions in services, who were aware of the issues faced by those in the community, were a valuable resource but needed to be used as the first point of contact.
 - Communication about relevant events could be improved and involvement/participation of veterans in ceremonies such as flag raising for AF day.

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- The establishment of a one-stop shop would assist in achieving the gold standard.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- Thanks were expressed to Vina for her work and commitment in this area.
- The Committee thanked Mick for his open and frank presentation and for the support he and Tommy's Lounge were providing to veterans.
- The hope was expressed that the Council and Board would continue to work together to overcome the barriers and constraints affecting Tommy's Lounge.
- The commitment made by the 28 GP practices was welcomed. In response to a question about services associated with mental health and PTSD and referrals it was explained that Tommy's Lounge worked closely with Project One and also had ties to Op Courage (an NHS mental health specialist service designed to help veterans and their families) that meant that urgent referrals could be organised for someone in crisis. There were routes to get people the necessary support and this was recognised, by the Board as an important area of need. Representatives of these agencies were on the Board.
- From the information given, Tommy's Lounge was best placed to assist veterans and could potentially save significant expense for the public sector in preventing people reaching crisis point or helping those that had. This could also be true for other voluntary sector organisations, and it would be beneficial for the Council/NHS to assess the value provided by these services and the impact if they were lost.
- Councillor Addy, as Portfolio Holder, and Councillor Ahmed, as AF Champion, said that they were committed to work with Mick to try and find the necessary funding and, although this may not come directly from the Council, support could be provided in advocating and working towards a longer-term future.
- Work was being undertaken on a funding bid.
- Champions were now in place in a number of services and would be working to ensure that staff undertook the armed forces covenant training so that they could understand the challenges and needs of this community and ensure the necessary support was provided. It was also hoped to undertake briefings for staff to help them understand lived experience and the challenges and to provide an improved response.
- Tommy's Lounge welcomed the wider public as well as veterans and it was proposed that the Committee make a visit.
- It would be helpful to know how many members of the armed forces there were within Kirklees, the numbers of reservists and veterans and how many military charities were in existence.
- It would be helpful if all Councillors could encourage businesses and GPs to sign up to the covenant and raise awareness where possible.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Cabinet Member, Armed Forces Champion and the Democracy Manager be thanked for attending the meeting to provide a progress report in respect of the Armed Forces Covenant.
2. That Mick Riley, of Tommy's Lounge be thanked for his attendance and enlightening and informative presentation.

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3. That the Committee visit Tommy's Lounge to see the work being undertaken at first-hand.
4. That the progress made by the Kirklees Armed Forces Covenant Board, to date, be welcomed.
5. That the Committee's comments be fed back to the Board for consideration in the development of its Action Plan for 2025/25
6. That additional information be provided for Members in respect of the numbers of armed forces personnel, including veterans and reservists in Kirklees and local military charities.
7. That it be recommended that all Councillors should take every opportunity to raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant and to encourage local businesses and organisations in their area to sign.
8. That a further progress update be submitted to the Committee at an appropriate point.

78 Procurement Update

A report which updated the Committee in respect of the progress made in respect of the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 was presented by Ruth Calladine, Head of Procurement and Commissioning Support, supported by Samantha Lawton, the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning, highlighting the following points:

- The Act had gone live on 24th February 2025.
- It combined all existing procurement legislation into one refined regime.
- Detail of the key changes introduced in respect of how public contracts are tendered and managed:
 - Increased transparency and publicity requirements.
 - Simplified procedures for competitive award
 - Record keeping, primarily in relation to conflicts of interest.
 - Contract Management, including supplier performance management.
 - Updates to documentation.
 - A broader interpretation of value for money and the requirement to consider social value.
 - The drive for growth and opportunities within all procurement processes and the need to have regard to the barriers faced by small and medium sized enterprises.
- Contracts that had been in place prior to 24th February, and any new procurements under existing public sector framework agreements, would continue to be governed by the previous legislation, until the framework was renewed.
- The implementation activities already completed, those currently being undertaken and those planned for the future.
- Risks, which included; staff capacity, contract management processes; administrative workload associated with increased transparency; and engagement with small and medium enterprises and the associated mitigations.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In relation to what could be done to ensure that money was retained in the local economy and to build capacity it was explained that work was ongoing with the Business Team within the Economic Development Service to build this link,

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particularly in respect of lower value contracts and to establish which suppliers were available in the district to try and ensure that they were ready to bid when the opportunities arose.

- A pipeline of projects was being pulled together, including those below the statutory level of £2 million which might appeal to local small and medium enterprises. This would be published on the website so that suppliers were aware and could be prepared to bid when needed.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Head of Procurement and Commissioning Support and the Service Director, Legal Governance and Commissioning be thanked for attending to update the Committee.
2. That the progress made to date in respect of the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 be welcomed.

79 Lead Members' Updates

The Lead Members for the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel and the Environment & Climate Change Panel updated the Committee on the work currently being undertaken by their panels.

The Chair gave a brief update on the visit to the Employee Healthcare Service which had taken place the previous week. The visit had been arranged further to the consideration of an update on the People Strategy at the meeting in February. Members had toured the building to see the facilities and heard about different elements of the provision: clinical, wellbeing and restorative practice.

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chair thanked all members for their contributions to the work of scrutiny over the last twelve months. It had been a busy and productive year and the positive involvement of scrutiny at an early stage in decision-making and reviews of practice and policy was encouraged and welcomed.

He and the other Lead Members expressed their thanks to all who had attended meetings of the Committee and its Panels including representatives of partners and external organisations, and officers from different services, including the members of the Governance Team who supported these meetings.

80 Work Programme 2024-25

Members noted the Work Programme for 2024/25. The Committee would hold a workshop to consider the programme for 2025/26 in mid June.