COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 17 September 2025

AGENDA ITEM 13 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

1	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "In regards to School s106 developer funding, how much in total does Kirklees currently hold for School s106 contributions and how much of this has it held for over 5 years?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> There is £8,146,870.00 held for the provision of education places, required as a result of housing developments, and £1,652,898.45 has been held for 5 years after the final instalment from the developer.
2	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor Rylah** "In regards to School Transport, of those children receiving school transport how many by number and percentage travelled by public and/or school bus in 2015, 2020 and 2025?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Around 1910 or 55% pupils were supported to travel on a public or school bus in 2025. We do not hold the data for 2015 or 2020.
3	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** "How many Homes and Neighbourhoods properties became vacant in the last 6 months and what are the reasons for the average re-let times being 85 days when the national average is 36?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Between the dates 21st February 2025 and 21st August 2025 Homes and Neighbourhoods received 586 new voids into our process. In February 2025 we report 501 vacant properties, currently we are reporting 419, a reduction of 82 properties in the period. The service ended last financial year with a performance KPI of 85 days recorded in March 2025, this data was published to Housemark (the industry benchmarking service) in the early part of April, in line with Housemark's reporting criteria. We have seen a steady reduction in relet timescales month on month, and currently our average performance is 70.58 days – a reduction of 15 days since April.

	In the period from April 1st 2025 to 31st August 2025, the service has proactively externally benchmarked and reviewed its processes, identified areas of delay, and designed an action plan to improve our council's void performance. We continue to work through our action plan with the appropriate governance structure to further improve our performance and reduce waiting times for prospective residents along with associated costs to the council. This includes a cross-service process review through collaboration with Accessible Homes Team & Housing Solutions which both sit outside Homes & Neighbourhoods but their processes are included in H&N performance KPIs.
4	**Question from Councillor Safdar to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison** "What is the Council doing to identify and challenge any systemic ways in which its own decision-making processes may be reinforcing deprivation? Many residents in disadvantaged areas feel that the way funding and attention are allocated ends up deepening the inequalities they already face. I would like to know how the Cabinet is ensuring that council policy actively works to undo, not repeat, those patterns?" <u>Leader Response</u> People in disadvantaged areas can face significant challenges on basics like how to pay for food, transport, and vital services. Long-standing social inequalities and discrimination can also limit people's ability to make improvements in their lives and advocate for change. Protecting these and other vulnerable people is one of the key priorities set out in Our Council Plan. As a large organisation delivering vital services, we are always mindful of the intended and unintended impact of our decisions. As part of our duties under the Equality Act, we must have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination in our decision-making. One way in which we do this is through our Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs). An IIA is a tool we routinely use to assess the actual or potential impact of our activities and decisions on people and communities in Kirklees. Through our IIAs, we identify ways in which to improve our services and ensure they do not reinforce existing inequalities. As part of these IIAs, we consider nine characteristics required by law under the Equality Act. These include age, disability, sex, and race. In addition to these characteristics, we have chosen to consider deprivation in the form of poverty and lower socio-economic status. We have chosen to go beyond our legal duties because of the importance of this issue to us and communities. IIAs for our Cabinet decisions are all available on the council's website. Deprivation is a complex issue impacted by multiple factors. For that reason, working in partnership is essential. We are working actively with our partners to share local intelligence and take collective action. Our top-tier strategies are partnership strategies not just held by one organisation. For example, the Inclusive Communities Framework (ICF) provides an approach to working with communities and partners. With a shared sense of purpose, we can bring our collective insight, expertise, and resources together to achieve greater impact and make our local places even better. Another example is through the Tackling

	Poverty Partnership, which brings together partners across the public sector as well as with volunteers, businesses, and established community organisations, such as our established emergency food providers. We know there is always more to do on this important issue. That's why the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy we agreed at Cabinet last year set out poverty as one of the key determining factors of inequality. We will be publishing an update on our progress in the coming months, where I will be able to share more details on some of the progress made over the past 12 months in addressing inequality, including when linked to deprivation.
5	**Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Kendrick** "Many of my residents have told me that important sectors like children's care should not be run for profit. Does the Council feel that it is getting good value for money from using private children's care agencies?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> As corporate parents, we all take our responsibility to ensure children and young people have stable, loving homes where they can thrive extremely seriously. In Kirklees, we've worked hard to ensure that the majority of our children live in family-based settings—either with extended family or in foster care. We're proud to have a higher proportion of children in family-based placements than most other local authorities. However, some children and young people have needs that are best met in residential care settings. We operate our own children's homes locally, providing capacity for 22 children across 5 homes, (*note one home is currently under refurbishment). . We sometimes use private providers, across Kirklees there are a total of 47 private childrens homes offering a total of 167 beds for children (placed by other councils). We are also aware that there are currently a further 32 homes in the planning stage. Kirklees childrens services have placed 20 children in 17 private children's homes in Kirklees. A further 25 children are living in childrens homes outside of Kirklees. As you may be aware, there has been national concern about the excessive profits made by some private providers. Following the McAlister review, the government is introducing reforms to improve children's social care, including measures to limit the profits of private children's home providers. Locally, Kirklees already manages costs effectively through robust commissioning practices and our participation in the White Rose Framework. The average cost we pay for external placements is well below both national and regional averages. We continue to work closely with providers to ensure value for money and improved outcomes for our children and young people. We maintain strong oversight of external placements. These are reviewed by a multi-agency panel chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services, which considers both cost and quality.

	We maintain robust oversight of all children placed in private homes, including regular visits to ensure the care provided meets the standards and outcomes set out in individual placement agreements. We are also finalising a 10-year strategy to plan for the future needs of our children and young people. This strategy will outline how we intend to expand local authority-run provision and continue to recruit and retain our exceptional foster carers—so that, wherever possible, children can live in family-based settings.
6	**Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment – Councillor A U Pinnock** "Huddersfield is home to a peaceful and community-led Sikh community, which makes the recent vicious attack on two elderly Sikh men in Wolverhampton deeply distressing. What is even more concerning is that police there only reached out 48 hours after the incident. With hate crime and polarisation on the rise and given that our own community has felt the devastating impact of such violence with the loss of Jo Cox, and many of my constituents raising concerns about feeling unsafe, many of my colleagues have received reports of worrying increase in racism here in our Borough so what steps is our Council taking to strengthen community cohesion, relieve tensions, and ensure robust measures are in place to keep Kirklees a safe and harmonious place for all residents?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> **Strengthening Inclusion and Community Cohesion in Kirklees** Kirklees Council is committed to fostering inclusion and cohesion, ensuring people from all backgrounds feel connected and valued in their local communities. The Kirklees Community Safety Partnership has identified **Hate Crime** and **Community Tensions** as key priorities for 2025/26, following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in May 2025. There is a strong, ongoing focus on monitoring community impacts and tensions through weekly collaboration between the Police, Council services, and wider partners. The **Partnership Intelligence Portal** is a vital tool for sharing intelligence—from early signs of community unease to specific incidents—helping shape timely, coordinated responses to prevent escalation or support de-escalation. We continue to strengthen our reach into communities. The **Communities Service** and **Community Plus Team** work closely with community, faith, and belief-based organisations to listen, share insights, and offer reassurance where needed. **Kirklees Libraries** are also deepening their role in engaging with residents and understanding local concerns. We maintain strong links with **Third Sector Leaders**, **Community Champions**, and networks to ensure community voices are heard and acted upon. The **Inclusive Communities Framework**, co-produced with partners, is now being embedded across the Council and wider system partners, making

	cohesion everyone's business. It encourages organisations to actively engage with communities, listen to their concerns, and show that they care about what matters to residents. This approach helps create safer and more cohesive communities where people feel valued and included. In July and August, two successful grant rounds—**Community Plus Fund** and **Safe People, Safe Places**—invested **£300,000 of external grants** into community and voluntary organisations across Kirklees. These funds support inclusion, cohesion, positive local narratives, and amplify voices that are often underrepresented. The Communities Service and Community Plus Team will continue to support these groups in developing their activities.
7	**Question from Councillor Longstaff to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "At the last full Council meeting you stated that a meeting was taking place on Friday to discuss the new stadium for the Huddersfield Giants. What was the outcome?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your enquiry regarding the meeting referenced at the last Full Council. The meeting in question was a scheduled session of the Kirklees Stadium Development Limited (KSDL) Board. While the discussions were positive and constructive, as this was a private board meeting, I am not in a position to disclose the details or outcomes at this time.
8	**Question from Councillor Burke to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "The petition calling for the council to release the former St Andrew's Road gasworks site for the Huddersfield Giants' proposed new stadium now has over 4,000 signatures. When I raised this matter previously, the Cabinet response was to dismiss the idea outright. Given the strength of public feeling, the risk of losing our Super League club, and the opportunity to align this project with the wider Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor, will Cabinet now commit to reopening discussions with the Giants and their partners, and set out a clear timeline for properly evaluating this proposal rather than closing the door on it?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> I fully recognise the strength of public feeling and the importance of securing a sustainable, long-term home for the Huddersfield Giants. As stated at the last Full Council meeting, there is ongoing dialogue between the Giants and other partners to explore opportunities for a permanent location. It is for Huddersfield Giants to identify and secure a suitable location for their facility, and the council will act in its capacity as a local planning authority and follow appropriate due process in this regard. Regarding the former St Andrew's Road gasworks site, as outlined in my previous response, this land is not available. The land is also not in council ownership. It is earmarked for high-quality employment-led development as part of the Station to Stadium Corridor Masterplan, which aligns with the broader strategic ambitions of the Investment Zone and the Health Innovation Campus. The Giants are aware of this and are actively considering alternative locations.

	We remain open to constructive discussions and will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to support the club's future.
9	**Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "A resident would like to know whether the Heras security fencing placed around the Cloth Hall Clock Tower and the Toll House at Ravensknowle Park has been hired or is it owned by the Council?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Heras fencing around the clock tower has been purchased by the Council. Where we expect Hera's fencing, scaffolding or similar to be in place for a prolonged period a financial appraisal is undertaken. Due to hire costs for this type of fencing in this instance it was financially beneficial for us to purchase.
10	**Question Withdrawn**
11	**Question from Councillor Cooper to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison** "The Palestine Solidarity Campaign has produced new guidance for Local Government Pension Schemes saying we have a legal duty to divest from companies enabling Israel's genocide. Please could you provide a Council view on this?" <u>Leader Response</u> A number of campaign groups hold views and legal opinions. Kirklees Council is not the administering authority for the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF). There are a number of laws in place in relation to the Pension fund. However, WYPF's investments are not controlled by Kirklees Councillors, WYPF is a different legal body and entity and sets out its investment strategy on its website.
12	**Question from Councillor Cooper to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Dad)** "What will the impact be on Council budgets, Council services and the individuals affected of the proposed cuts by the Labour Government to disability benefits?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Currently we do not know what the Chancellor is proposing and will not until November 26th which she recently announced would be budget day this year therefore it's not possible to have any estimate of the impact of that upon the Kirklees budget. However, we can say that any changes to disability benefits may impact in terms of demand pressure on council services and on the local economy in terms of money available to spend in communities. Potential increased demand for Council services could include • Requests for support through the Household Support Fund, • Benefit Advice Services • Discretionary Housing Payments • Implications for Council Tax Reductions

	• Fewer automatic Blue Badges, increase in discretionary decision making • and other services and activities where access depends upon or is assisted by receipt of disability benefits. • Increase in applications for Free school meals • Increase in Kirklees Passport applications
13	**Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Why won't the Council release section 106 monies to make the road safety improvements that are desperately needed on Rowley Lane just below the School when wagons are travelling up Rowley Lane using the pavement to get round the bend and continue up the hill, when this is the pedestrian walkway for school pupils and families walking to school?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> To date, none of the triggers set out in the S106 agreement have been reached so no monies have been released.
14	**Question from Councillor A Smith to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** "A report by the Local Government Association and the Empty Homes Network found that the number of long-term empty homes across England increased by nearly 10% over the last five years. Data from April 2020 indicated that Kirklees had a seven-year high of 2,647 long-term vacant properties. Given the chronic housing shortage and the significant local increase in empty properties, what specific, measurable, and time-bound actions is the council taking to proactively bring these homes back into use, beyond simply relying on the empty homes premium?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Council takes action to respond to and address long-term empty homes wherever they are causing a statutory nuisance, utilising appropriate powers. Our own records show that the number of long-term empty homes in Kirklees (those empty for over two years) has decreased over the last five years – there are now around 517 such homes, representing 0.2% of total housing stock in the district. Our action on empty homes seeks to remedy the nuisance caused and to make sure that the homes are secured against unauthorised access. As part of this work, Council officers will try to engage with empty property owners and provide advice and support on options for bringing the homes back into use. The challenge regarding empty homes is fully acknowledged and will be an area for exploring and prioritising in the forthcoming Housing Strategy for Kirklees, as it is important to make effective use of all housing stock in Kirklees to help meet housing demand. Further work will be done to engage with those Councils who have had proven success in this field, and to look at all potential legal options available to the Council.
15	**Question from Councillor A Smith to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** "Given that the UK government's 'Simpler Recycling' legislation requires changes from all local authorities, and Kirklees Council has been aware of this for some time, why has the decision been made to delay the full implementation

	until 2028. This timeline means residents will continue with a low performing and contaminated recycling system for over two and a half years longer than necessary, missing significant opportunities to improve our recycling rates and contribute to the district's carbon reduction targets. What specific barriers prevented a more ambitious and immediate rollout, and what are the quantifiable environmental and financial costs of this extended delay?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> As outlined at recent scrutiny and Cabinet meetings, Kirklees Council will delay implementing the government's ‘Simpler Recycling’ policy until 2028 due to contractual, infrastructure, financial, and operational challenges. It’s incorrect to suggest the Council had long-standing clarity on the policy, as the final guidance was only released in November 2024. This requires separate collection of fibres like paper and card. Proceeding with a new waste contract before this detail was confirmed would have been risky and potentially costly to Kirklees taxpayers. The delay allows us time to plan and procure a new contract and engage residents effectively. We are also preparing a formal implementation plan, and DEFRA has suggested councils with clear plans may receive support during the transition. But we aren’t just sat waiting until 2028, we are already acting. This week, our Recycling and Waste Advisors are carrying out targeted education work in Batley East to reduce contamination – including door-to-door visits, bin checks, and, where necessary, enforcement. These efforts will be rolled out district-wide where we see contamination hot spots. We are taking firm action now to improve recycling and reduce contamination, alongside a careful approach to implementing Simpler Recycling that protects taxpayers and improves services long-term.
16	**Question from Councillor Cooper to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “Please can we have an update on the Council's plans for Netherton Village Hall?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Netherton Village Hall remains on the Council’s list of assets declared surplus to requirements. It is in our pipeline for disposal. The Land Registry are currently considering our request to amend the title, the timing of which is outside of our control. Once resolved, Netherton will be sold at auction as soon as possible.
17	**Question Withdrawn**
18	**Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** “How does a community group petition for a speed camera under the “Community Concern” provision of the West Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership strategy?”

	Cabinet Member Response The community group can contact highways services to request that a location is considered against the community concern criteria either through contacting highways or by visiting the safety camera partnership section of the Kirklees website and clicking on 'report other road and highways problems' link. Please see the link below. https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/transport-roads-and-parking/the-safety-camera-partnership.aspx Officers within the Safety Team will then either review any existing speed data (or collect data if required) against the criteria. If the location meets the required criteria we will liaise with the WY Safety Camera partnership to ask them to consider the location as a site of community concern. Once approved a joint discussion will take place with regards to suitable locations (and any accommodation works that might be required) for the community van to be located. After the site is then established, the day-to-day operations of the van and enforcement / ticketing if required will be undertaken by the partnership.
19	**Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** "Will the Cabinet Member please inform the Council of the progress of the Borough Clean-up which was included in this year's budget?" Cabinet Member Response Work has been underway with a number of teams across the Council including Waste, Parks, Greenspace Action and Highways to identify key activities in priority areas. These activities include but are not limited to additional cleaning of our town centre footpaths, street lighting and signage in centres like Birstall and Cleckheaton and cutting back of overgrown vegetation across the district. Work will begin in the coming weeks with a view to completing activities by late Autumn.
20	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Can the Cabinet Member explain why, in Kirklees, decisions on which applications are referred to Planning Committee are now being taken by the Chair, when the constitutional change passed by Full Council in June 2023 made it clear that the referral process lies with ward councillors citing valid planning reasons, not at the discretion of the Chair?" Cabinet Member Response The updated scheme of delegation and committee referrals was approved on the 13th of September 2023 and not in June 2023. The updated Scheme of Delegation about Committee referrals is clear that a valid planning reason should exist if a Ward cllr requests a planning application to come to Committee. The Chair must then assess whether he thinks those reasons given by a ward Cllr are valid planning reasons. If the Chair declines to accept the reasons given for the referral, he is within his gift to decline the application to come to planning committee.

21	**Question Withdrawn**
22	**Question from Councillor H Zaman to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** “Kirklees Transport Strategy consultation cites 2,000 responses but little detail on how objections have shaped the plan. An example of changes is the Lane Rental Scheme -did you consider risks of utilities passing costs on to residents?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Transport Strategy, approved on 9 September, was shaped by extensive engagement, including over 2,000 responses via surveys, workshops, and partner sessions. While the final document doesn't list every change, it was redrafted to reflect feedback—particularly around sustainable transport, connectivity, and environmental priorities. Key concerns raised included safety, affordability, accessibility, and bus service reliability, which have informed updates to the strategy. A “you said, we did” summary will be published to show how public input influenced the final plan. The Lane Rental Scheme, developed alongside Leeds and Wakefield, aims to reduce disruption on the busiest roads at peak times. Over 90% of works in similar schemes avoid charges due to better planning. The risk of costs being passed to residents has been considered, and the scheme is designed to encourage efficiency, not penalise essential works. With record investment across the district, this is the right policy at the right time to support smoother, more coordinated infrastructure delivery. Should you wish to ask as supplementary relating to the Transport Strategy, this sits with Councillor Crook who would be able to assist with any additional questions. If your supplementary relate specifically to the Lane Rental Scheme, I am happy to respond to any further queries.
23	**Question from Councillor J C Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** “Oakenshaw residents have been told by the Council that options for the Cross to be reinstated are being considered. What are these?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> We are currently undertaking detailed option appraisals for reinstating the cross. The current village locations include 1) putting the cross back at its existing location 2) an adjacent grassed area very close to where the cross was and 3) the Garden of Rest. The outcome from the appraisal will be shared and discussed with stakeholders including village residents.
24	**Question from Councillor J C Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** “What specific consultation was done with Oakenshaw residents in connection with the planned 24-hour bus lane? This is on a road where there are no 24-hour buses.”

	Cabinet Member Response Robust consultations were undertaken in conjunction with West Yorkshire Combined Authority which included references to constructing the 24-hour bus lane as part of the overall development. 2 rounds of consultations were undertaken in 2021 and 2022 via West Yorkshire Combined Authority's YourVoice consultation platform which included references to the 24-hour bus lane in the FAQ's Section.
25	**Question Withdrawn**
26	**Question from Councillor A Pinnock to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** "Is it acceptable to ask those with limited mobility, and/or registered disabilities, to have access to transport outside their homes removed by the building of a permanent cycle lane?" Cabinet Member Response The Kirklees Transport Strategy, adopted at Cabinet 9 September, is clear in its commitment to inclusive transport. During our consultation and engagement exercise while developing the Transport Strategy, we spoke to many people with disabilities, and received a high proportion of responses from people with disabilities to our online survey. These responses, from people with visible and non-visible disabilities and varying ranges of accessibility needs, helped shape the final strategy. While the Strategy promotes active travel and cycle infrastructure, it also prioritises accessibility for all, including those with disabilities. The design of cycle lanes and associated infrastructure is intended to enhance mobility options, not restrict them. Any permanent changes are subject to inclusive design principles, ensuring that door-to-door access and safe movement remain available for all residents. The matter you raise regarding the impact on people with limited mobility, and/or registered disabilities as a result of a permanent cycle lane is one of significant legal, ethical, and practical importance. In short, any impacts on disabled access require robust justification, inclusive design, and appropriate mitigation. If a scheme necessitates changes that affect disabled access, any authority must: demonstrate that the change is proportionate, explore and document alternatives, and provide reasonable adjustments. We want to continue to engage closely with people with disabilities who travel in Kirklees, to ensure that the development of our future transport networks and associated infrastructure is one which serves all across our district. Crucially, early engagement with disabled communities and the importance of co-designing infrastructure that works for everyone is key. While the promotion of active travel is a key policy objective, it must not come at the expense of accessibility for disabled residents. Any infrastructure changes must be designed and implemented in a way that upholds our legal duties and reflects our commitment to inclusive, equitable communities.

27	**Question from Councillor A Pinnock to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Work is scheduled to start on Cleckheaton Town Hall in January. What progress has been made towards signing contracts for essential repairs?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> AHR (Huddersfield) have been commissioned to design a scheme to address essential works that would be required to enable the re-opening of Cleckheaton Town Hall. They are currently undertaking survey work in the building to enable the design work to progress. I am unaware of any commitment to start work in January 2026. Officers continue to meet with the Cleckheaton and Spenborough Town Hall Group on a regular basis to discuss progress on this project, with two further meetings in the diary including one with local Councillors on 2nd October.
28	**Question from Councillor H Zaman to the Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor Rylah** "When was the former Almondbury Community School site first identified by Kirklees Council, or in discussions with the Department for Education, as the location for a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school - was this before or after the Cabinet's 2019 decision to close the school?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The site for the new Woodley School and College building was chosen following a rigorous site selection process. This commenced with a joint 'desktop' exercise between Kirklees Council's Children's Services and Capital Development team, supported by in person visits where needed, to identify potential sites within the Council's ownership that may fit the search criteria. It was important that the site was central to Kirklees so that the schools could be accessible from all part of the district. In addition, officers looked at approximately 20 other potential sites not within Council ownership to assess suitability. Factors taken into account in the selection included accessibility, as well as other potential strategic uses for the land. This process identified two existing Council owned sites that best met the search criteria. These were the site of the former Deighton Centre and the former Almondbury Community School secondary site. It was noted that the Almondbury site was at the time in temporary use by King James school but expected to become available in 2022 when building work on their main site would be completed. The sites were evaluated for suitability by an independent consultant. Following an officer decision to explore the Deighton and Almondbury sites in October 2020, This process took place throughout late 2020 and early 2021 and the decision to select the two sites was taken at Cabinet on 5th October 2021.
29	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Hawkins)** "In North Kirklees, residents are being intimidated by the widespread display of

	illegal flags, with at least one sign stating “Whites Only” being placed in a local park. This feels disturbingly similar to Northern Ireland, where flags were used to mark territory, and even to the symbolism of Passover, when homes were marked with signs. The Council has said removing the flags could cost £250,000 – but isn’t that cost being created by those who are effectively fly-tipping and vandalising our streets? Why is this Council willing to appease racist intimidation by leaving the flags in place, while at the same time failing to apply for the Warm Homes Grant which could have supported struggling families?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> I'm horrified to hear of the sign you mention, but I understand it has now been removed, as it should be. Any such appalling and offensive vandalism should be reported straight to the Police, and the Council will always act quickly to remove such odious messages wherever they appear. Harassment and intimidation will not be tolerated in our community. If councillors or residents witness anything like this, I strongly encourage reporting through the Police Intelligence Portal so the Police and our Safer Communities team can monitor and act. Our Safer Communities Service can provide advice on using the portal or any other support. Where flags have been attached or painted onto public infrastructure, the Council assesses them on health and safety grounds and removes them if they pose a risk, for example by causing confusion or accidents on roads. This process is already in place and will remain under constant review to protect the public. Finally, the Council has made no estimate of any financial costs. The figure of £250,000 refers to City of York Council, not Kirklees.
30	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “The Arcade Group was set up to manage the restoration and running of Dewsbury Arcade, yet it now appears to be extending its influence across wider town centre regeneration. Its Chair seems to have been hand-picked rather than openly elected and is also a former Labour councillor now seeking re-election in 2026. Can the Council explain what formal mandate this unelected group has to speak or act for Dewsbury town centre, and what scrutiny has been applied to ensure accountability and neutrality?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Dewsbury Arcade Group is a separate organisation, and the Council is not involved in decisions relating to its membership. Communications put out by the Arcade Group is also a decision for them.
31	**Question from Councillor McCarthy to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** “During the extreme weather in January earlier this year, the bridge over the River Colne along public right of way COL/115 was unfortunately destroyed. Since then, as ward councillors we have been working with members of the local

	community to try and restore this popular walking route. Unfortunately, despite council officers' efforts, we have been set back by the fact that we do not know who has ownership or responsibility for the maintenance of this bridge. Could the Cabinet Member outline what investigations have taken place regarding the ownership and responsibility of this bridge, and the findings of these investigations, and also will they commit to working with Colne Valley ward councillors and the wider community to find a solution for the restoration of this community asset?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your question regarding the footbridge over the River Colne, which was destroyed during extreme weather in January. Officers have investigated ownership and maintenance responsibility, including reviewing Land Registry and historical council records from the 1930s–1940s. So far, no clear evidence of ownership has been found, and no private owner has accepted liability. The investigation is ongoing. The Council remains committed to reinstating this valued walking route and will continue working with Colne Valley Ward members and residents to explore options and I will provide any support in my role that I can to expedite restoration of this popular route.
32	**Question from Councillor McCarthy to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook** "Could the Cabinet Member outline the progress of improvement works on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal between Marsden and Slaithwaite?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Huddersfield Narrow Canal scheme is due to be completed by the end of September 2025. The programmed completion date was December 2025, so the scheme is being completed 2 months ahead of schedule. The final surface treatment started in the current week (commencing 8th September 2025).
33	**Question from Councillor Kahut to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison** "Does the Leader of the Council accept that racial tensions and community cohesion are being strained in the current political climate, and if so what measures, community cohesion events have been planned to try and counter such tensions?" <u>Leader Response</u> We can never be complacent about tensions in our community. That's why – here in Kirklees - we work with the Police and our own Communities Service every day to promote cohesion and tackle problems as they arise. Based on Police intelligence and insight from Council Officers working out in communities there are there are no significant community cohesion tensions being reported at this time. If as Elected Members you are hearing about racial

	tensions it is essential this is reported through to the Partnership Intelligence Portal to inform an accurate assessment across Kirklees. Although the level of racial tensions is currently not being reported as being high presently the following activities are in place: - There is always a strong, ongoing focus on monitoring community impacts and tensions through weekly collaboration between the Police, Council services, and wider partners. The **Partnership Intelligence Portal** is a vital tool for sharing intelligence—from early signs of community unease to specific incidents—helping shape timely, coordinated responses to prevent escalation or support de-escalation. At this time there are no significant concerns being reported. The **Communities Service** and **Community Plus Team** work closely with community, faith, and belief-based organisations to listen, share insights, and offer reassurance where needed. **Kirklees Libraries** are also deepening their role in engaging with residents and understanding local concerns. We maintain strong links with **Third Sector Leaders**, **Community Champions**, and networks to ensure community voices are heard and acted upon. In July and August, two successful grant rounds—**Community Plus Fund** and **Safe People, Safe Places**—invested **£300,000 of external grants** into community and voluntary organisations across Kirklees. These funds support inclusion, cohesion, positive local narratives, and amplify voices that are often underrepresented. The Communities Service and Community Plus Team will continue to support these groups in developing their activities.
34	**Question from Councillor Kahut to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment – Councillor Pinnock** "Would the Council work with us and help organise at least 3 large community multicultural events across Kirklees, involving diverse, food stalls, music, colours, cultures and costumes with something for everyone?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your request regarding the organisation of large-scale multicultural community events across Kirklees. I'm pleased to share that the Events Team, working in collaboration with other council services, already delivers a vibrant and diverse programme of events throughout the year and across the district. All of which align closely with the objectives you've outlined, by bringing communities together through shared experiences of music, food, culture, and celebration. In addition, our Markets Service plays a key role in delivering culturally rich events such as Apna Bazaar, which has taken place in Batley, Dewsbury, and Huddersfield, showcasing a wide range of food, music, and traditions from across our communities. While the 2026 programme is still in development, we are open to further discussions with Members to help shape future programming—particularly in the context of available capacity, resources, and external funding. We'd welcome the chance to work collaboratively to build on our existing offer and ensure it continues to reflect the rich diversity of Kirklees.