COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 15 October 2025

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

1	**Question withdrawn**
2	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Councillor Crook** "How many households are currently in homeless accommodation, what is the total weekly cost for homeless accommodation and how much of this do ratepayers fund?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Over recent years, there has been a growing and nation-wide housing crisis – evidenced by the fact that homelessness levels, and social housing waiting lists, are at their highest since records began. The number of homeless households that are living in temporary accommodation across England has risen to over 131,000 households as at March 2025, which was a record high, up 12% from March 2024, and Councils in England spent a total of £2.8 billion on TA in 2024/5. In Kirklees, we are also witnessing the same crisis, and have experienced a big growth in temporary accommodation numbers and the consequent rise in costs associated with this. In light of these pressures, the Council has been working hard to implement a range of improvements and interventions, with the aim of increasing homeless prevention outcomes which mean that fewer people need to spend time living in temporary accommodation with all the uncertainty, cost and upheaval that comes with it. The most recent figures for Kirklees, at the end of August 2025, show we had 383 households in homeless temporary accommodation. In relation to costs, it is not possible to provide a total weekly cost for homeless temporary accommodation as the numbers and costs vary from week to week. However, for the full year 2024/25, the overall net cost to the Council was in the region of £7.6m. There are many factors which impact on homelessness, many of which are outside the direct control of the Council but we will continue to prioritise work to prevent and relieve homelessness, to identify more cost-effective and more suitable types of temporary accommodation, and to work with Government and other stakeholders to ensure we are able to deliver better outcomes for Kirklees residents in housing need.

3	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor Rylah**
	
	"Of the 3,400 children who receive free school transport only 55% travel by bus despite this being the cheapest, most effective and most environmentally and socially sound means of transport available. What are the essential reasons by category of need / support that result in provision of a taxi?"
	
	<u>Cabinet Member Response</u>
	
	All children receiving home to school transport support are assessed based on their needs and then the most appropriate form of transport assistance is granted to them.
	
	Of the 3,400 children receiving free school transport, the 45% who are not mainstream students are children supported by Kirklees who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
	
	Free home to school transport is a duty imposed on local authorities by the Education Act 1993, Kirklees follows the law and the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education. Our policies on transport represent at or close to statutory provision only.
	
	We only provide transport to eligible children, these children have gone through a rigorous assessment process and it has been determined their needs mean they are unable to travel independently to their educational setting using public transport.
	
	• **957** travel in shared transport with peers — this includes both taxis and minibuses.
	• **380** receive direct payments to arrange their own travel — such as parent mileage, personal travel budgets, or post-16 travel support.
	• **184** travel in single occupancy taxis. This is typically due to:
	  ○ No other children in their area attending the same setting
	  ○ Behavioural needs that affect safe travel with others
	  ○ Sensory or emotional dysregulation around peers
	  ○ Complex medical needs requiring individual arrangements
	
	This data reflects the tailored nature of SEND transport provision, which prioritises safety, accessibility, and individual need.
	
	Kirklees complies with its legal duties and follows the statutory guidance in relation to home to school transport support. It has been well publicised in the media and by national bodies such as the County Council's Network and the Local Government Association – the significant challenges Home to School Transport poses across the Country.

4	**Question from Councillor Greaves to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "After years of battling against the Labour Cabinet and trying to make them release the millions held by them in s106 monies to our schools, in May of this year senior officers from across the Council drafted a new policy that would finally enable that to happen. Why haven't this Labour Cabinet approved that policy and removed the block on getting this money out to our schools?"

	Cabinet Member Response Thank you for your question. The proposed policy needs to be considered alongside the Local Plan evidence base, which is currently being reviewed to ensure compliance and alignment. Officers are preparing a paper for Cabinet, and this will be brought forward for consideration soon. We remain committed to enabling the release of S106 funds to support our schools as quickly as possible. It is important that how we spend our developer contributions meets with the various regulations and requirements of the Planning System and we are looking into how this can be best realised. It is complex and requires legal, planning and education teams to work together to bring forward a method for releasing unallocated S106 monies.
5	**Question from Councillor Longstaff to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Turner)** "We have just received a damming verdict from the high court relating to the lack of a section 106 agreement in a Dewsbury planning application. What urgent steps have we put in place to stop anymore damming verdicts from the high court?" Leader Response Whilst the outcome of the JR is disappointing it is clear that the substantive planning merits of the JR were not upheld and the only ground which was related to a procedural matter around publishing draft S106 Agreements online prior to issuing decision notices. The JR itself relied on a recent High Court ruling to support this ground of challenge which was published after the Council had issued Planning Permission for the Outline Planning Application at Heybeck Lane, Chidswell. As a result of this JR decision the Planning Service have put in place measures to ensure that draft S106s are placed online before decisions are issued.
6	**Question from Councillor Longstaff to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Now that Huddersfield Football Club now is in full control of the stadium where does that leave the Huddersfield Giants search for a new home?" Cabinet Member Response We will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to support the future of Huddersfield Giants. The identification and delivery of a new stadium is, in the first instance, a matter for the Huddersfield Giants and its ownership. While we remain open to constructive dialogue with the club and relevant stakeholders, any proposals would need to be brought forward through the appropriate channels.

7	**Question from Councillor Taylor to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (Referred to Councillor Dad)** "Do you think Scrutiny is working at the moment?" <u>Leader Response</u> Scrutiny is a vital element of effective and inclusive decision making. You will have seen from the Annual report on tonight's agenda that scrutiny panels have undertaken a wide variety of work over the past 12 months which has included policy development work, service visits and an increased level of pre-decision scrutiny. Scrutiny is well developed in Kirklees and offers constructive challenge - the LGA peer review highlighted it as being taken seriously in Kirklees. It is valued by Cabinet Members as a way of ensuring the voice of non-executive members and the public is heard and can have an influence on decisions. However, one thing I would like to stress is that effective scrutiny relies on engagement from **all** non- executive members. It is important that Members recognise that engaging with the process by attending scrutiny meetings, asking questions, suggesting areas for investigation and review is vital for holding the Cabinet to account and contributing to robust decision making.
8	**Question from Councillor Burke to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Now that the Council has taken control of the former Gasworks site, will it actively support the Huddersfield Giants in their ambition to secure this location as their preferred long-term home?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> We will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to support the future of Huddersfield Giants. The identification and delivery of a new stadium is, in the first instance, a matter for the Huddersfield Giants and its ownership. While we remain open to constructive dialogue with the club and relevant stakeholders, any proposals would need to be brought forward through the appropriate channels. The Council's position on the former Gasworks site remains unchanged, in that the land 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.
9	**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, as wagons are travelling up Rowley Lane using the pavement to get round the bend to 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.
10.	**Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “Has the Heras security fencing placed around the Cloth Hall Clock Tower and the Toll House at Ravensknowle Park been hired or is it owned by the Council?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Heras fencing around this building has been purchased by the Council. Where we expect Heras fencing, scaffolding or similar to be in place for a prolonged period of time, we undertake a financial appraisal to determine whether to hire or purchase the fencing. In this instance, it was financially beneficial for the Council to purchase the Heras fencing.
11.	**Question from Councillor Munro to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “What is the Council’s plan of action for the Cloth Hall Clock Tower and the Toll House in Ravensknowle Park?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Council is currently in the process of appointing a specialist consultant to assess the structure and condition of the Cloth Hall Clock Tower and Toll House. Once appointed the consultant will visit site, assess the building and prepare a report outlining the issues and their recommendations for rectification of the problems. The Corporate Landlord Service will assess the recommendations, consider the budget implications and make a decision on the course of future action.
12.	**Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment – Councillor Pinnock** “Between June and September 2025, there have been 17 cases reported to ‘Tell MAMA’ (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) involving attacks on mosques and similar buildings. In addition, during the same period, Tell MAMA recorded 913 reported cases across the UK involving targeted anti-Muslim hate — which is deeply alarming. What joint work are the Council and Prevent teams currently doing with local police to address threats against Muslim and other South Asian communities?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your question and for raising this critical issue, especially during Hate Crime Awareness Week. We are deeply concerned by the Tell MAMA data, these figures are not just statistics — they represent real fear, trauma, and disruption in the lives of our Muslim communities. As a council, we are committed to standing against all forms of hate, racism, and discrimination. Our council’s Hate Crime Strategy 2022–2027 sets out a clear

	framework for tackling hate incidents, including those motivated by religion. This includes: • **Partnership with West Yorkshire Police and Safer Kirklee**s to ensure swift responses to hate crimes and visible reassurance in affected communities. • **Support for victims** through our network of hate incident reporting centres across the district, all our Libraries are hate crime reporting centres. • **Community engagement and education,** raising awareness of how to report a hate crime, building trust and confidence in communities to report hate crimes, as we suspect underreporting is an issue. Enabling community events and campaigns such as Islamophobia week. • **Monitoring and intelligence** sharing through the Community Safety Partnership approach to reviewing data and intelligence, which prioritises understanding the nature of hate crime in Kirklees and identify how we can effectively respond from across the partnership. **Responding to hate crime and related incidents** • Expanding community safety patrols around places of worship. • Integrating cohesion functions into wider community facing roles-work of community plus on engagement and developing trusted relationships • Sourcing external funding for places of worship, and government Cohesion unit grants – where we have been able to passport these funds to increase funding for grassroots organisations promoting cohesion / tackling hate. **Prevent and Policing Collaboration:** Prevent teams in Kirklees work closely with counter terrorism police and local police and community partners to: • Identify and respond to emerging threats, including all forms of extremism. • Provide tailored support to individuals at risk of radicalisation. • Build resilience in communities through education, dialogue, and capacity-building. • Work in partnership to safeguard individuals from radicalisation We must also take a moment to acknowledge the horrific attack that took place outside the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation in Manchester on 2 October 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of those affected. Antisemitism, like all forms of hate, has no place in our society. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that Kirklees is a place where everyone — regardless of faith, background, or identity — feels safe, respected, and valued.
13.	**Question from Councillor H Zaman to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing – Councillor Crook** “How many Batley East households have been placed in temporary accommodation over the past 12 months and what was their length of stay?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>

	Data is not available to show how many households are or have been in temporary accommodation and previously lived in the Batley area, nor can we calculate their length of stay. We do have data, however, that shows that the Housing Solutions Service is currently supporting and assisting 26 households in the WF17 postcode area who are threatened with homelessness. It is a point of principle that we would aim to support any household presenting as homeless, regardless of their previous address and on the basis of need.
14.	**Question from Councillor H Zaman to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing – Councillor Crook** "What support is available locally to help families moving from temporary into permanent housing?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Housing Solutions Service supports households in temporary accommodation to access alternative housing in a number of ways. Through each household's personal housing plan, officers work with the families to create bespoke actions that focus on what is needed to achieve a successful move on from temporary accommodation. Actions will include advice and support on bidding for properties on Choose n Move and, if successful, applying for help from the Home Starter Fund (where applicable). Due to the scarcity of available social housing stock, households are encouraged to take up the offer of assistance to work with our Private Rented Partnership Team. We have a number of pathways to support this process including a 'find your own' package or targeted support to access the most suitable accommodation. In order to increase the chances of a successful move on we can offer assistance with bonds or rent in advance and ensure that both suitability and affordability are built into the process. Where there is a need we can also refer to our partners such as Fusion Housing, who can offer a greater depth of support for households that require it.
15.	**Question from Councillor H Zaman to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate – Councillor Dad** "What steps are being taken to ensure that attorneys holding a Lasting Power of Attorney for residents of Kirklees care homes can fully support those they represent, even if they live outside the borough?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Kirklees Council has embedded a robust framework to ensure that attorneys with a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for care home residents can fully support those they represent, regardless of where they live. These arrangements uphold transparency, equity and person-centred care. All care homes recognise the authority of attorneys under a valid LPA, and remote communication (phone, video, email) is facilitated so attorneys can remain involved in decisions and access relevant documents securely. Guidance is provided to attorneys, and care homes are required to support them in fulfilling their role, including remote signing and decision-making. Safeguarding measures are in place to protect residents' interests, and staff are

	trained to understand LPA rights for attorneys living outside Kirklees. If attorneys face any barriers, they are encouraged to contact the council or care home managers for support. Support for Attorneys Living Outside Kirklees Includes: **Support for Attorneys Living Outside Kirklees Includes:** • Remote access to care planning and financial information, where appropriate • Clear communication channels with care home staff, assessment, safeguarding and commissioning teams. • Use of digital platforms (such as Microsoft Teams) for meetings and updates to enable active involvement in decision-making.
16.	**Question from Councillor Ali to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate – Councillor Dad** "I am sure you and all members of the council are in agreement that scrutiny plays a vital role in local government, and that the scrutiny process is a valuable means for elected members to work cross party and 'A Politically' to ensure the decisions affecting our residents and local services are scrutinised and delivered effectively. It is apparent that there is an increasing lack of engagement and attendance at panels resulting in the decreased cross-party participation which puts into question the value of the process in its current format. What measures will you take to ensure the process is fit for purpose, fair and a valuable and effective use or resource?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your question, Cllr Ali. I am aware of the issue of Member attendance at scrutiny panels and in particular the poor attendance levels at Children's Scrutiny. I understand the issue has been raised with the Chair of OSMC and discussed by the Committee and subsequently raised at the Group Business Managers meeting in September. I am also aware that Governance is undertaking a recruitment drive to increase the number of co-optees sitting on each of the Panels. I hope these measures will result in improved attendance going forward and would just re-iterate the point I made in a previous response that Member engagement in the scrutiny process is vital to holding the Cabinet to account and ensuring we have robust and inclusive decision-making processes.
17.	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Pattison** "Leader, you have repeatedly told the media your administration has brought stability to Kirklees Council. Can you explain how the closure of Dewsbury Sports Centre, which has left residents without access to health and leisure facilities, aligns with that claim of stability, particularly in light of the Council's decision to write off £4.3 million in loans as reported by the Dewsbury Reporter?" <u>Leader Response</u>

	I assume you are referring to Kirklees Stadium Developments Ltd. There is no link between the closure of Dewsbury Sports Centre, originally when under your leadership, and the agreement reached by the Council and KSDL, except of course, good management of the scarce resources available to the Council. As members are aware the council was a part of a consortium that developed Kirklees Stadium.- Kirklees Stadium Developments Ltd. Whilst the company achieved many of its objectives, its financial performance and rising operational costs and the need to carry out substantial refurbishment of a 30 year old facility meant that the lease arrangements did not provide a level of income necessary to achieve a sustainable business and required a change of approach. The agreement reached is a solution acceptable to all shareholders and will ensure the stadium is maintained as a community asset whilst relieving the Council of financial liabilities and obligations. Another step towards stability and good management of the council's resources.
18.	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Pattison** "Leader, you often speak about regeneration and stability, yet Dewsbury Town Centre continues to face stalled projects, empty shopfronts, and growing public frustration. How does this situation demonstrate stability when significant sums are being written off elsewhere in Kirklees?" <u>Leader Response</u> The Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board received the funding from central government for the projects in the Dewsbury Town Invesment Plan. The Board is in the process of securing a further £20m for its Plan for Neighbourhoods. Significant progress has been made in delivering the Dewsbury Town Investment Plan projects, and none of the current regeneration projects in the remit of the Board have been delayed or cancelled due to the lack of funds. The Dewsbury Arcade is due for completion in Spring 2026, when the Arcade Group will take over its management, bringing new shops and businesses into an area of Dewsbury that was previously vacant. The Dewsbury Market transformation and adjacent Town Park obtained planning permission in June 2025, and a contractor is planned to be in place by April 2026, shortly after which construction will start. The decant of existing traders to the temporary market into Market Place will start next month (November 2025). The Bond Street sustainable travel project completed in early Summer 2025 which has widened footpaths improving pedestrian safety as a key gateway from the railway station into town with newly laid Yorkshire stone paving that enhances the overall look of the streetscape. Station Apartments (formerly Field House) opposite Dewsbury Train Station is due for completion in Jan 2026 providing much needed high quality living opportunities in the town. In relation to the Stadium, a range of proposals have been considered over the years. More recently the current owner of Huddersfield Town AFC made a proposal whereby they take full responsibility for the stadium site. The council have retained the freehold of the site, which should provide greater certainty about how the site is operated over the medium and long term. This involves an element of debt write off by the Council to facilitate the arrangement

	but provides release from other financial liabilities and obligations including surrender of the swimming pool lease together with the acquisition of a key strategic regeneration site. This is a solution acceptable to all shareholders and will ensure the stadium is maintained as a community asset whilst relieving the Council of financial liabilities and obligations.
19.	**Question from Councillor Scott to the Leader of the Council – Cllr Pattison** "The continued closure of Batley Baths and absence of a replacement plan remain of deep concern to local residents. How does this reflect the stability your administration claims to have achieved, given the Council's willingness to absorb multi-million-pound write-offs in other areas?" <u>Leader Response</u> The write offs you refer to, I presume the agreement reached with KSDL, formed part of the contractual arrangements to enable the Council to exit those arrangements that were no longer of benefit to the Council and released the Council from a number of financial liabilities and obligations whilst gaining a key strategic regeneration site. The Council's stability is clear and is set out in an agreed budget for capital and revenue expenditure for 25/26 which does not provide a direct replacement for Batley Baths. However, there are swimming and other facilities at both Batley Sports and Tennis Centre, and Spen Valley Leisure Centre which many residents use. As you will note the physical activity in Dewsbury and Batley report has been published and will be at Cabinet on 21st October where we, the Cabinet will consider the recommendations and outcome of the engagement undertaken, to discuss the future of leisure and physical activity in North Kirklees.
20.	**Question from Councillor A Pinnock to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration** "How does the Council ensure that detailed remediation plans are fulfilled when the developer has appointed its own building inspector?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Council issues planning permissions and then has a planning compliance team who can check if there are any alleged breaches of planning control such as breaches of conditions or approved plans. In relation to Building Control matters which the question here refers to it is possible for developers to choose Building Control providers outside of the Council. Any approved Inspector is required by law to follow the Building Regulations and is accountable to the Building Safety Regulator. If there are concerns with an ongoing development where a private (none Council) Building Control Inspector is appointed individuals can contact the Building Safety Regulator or the HSE. The Councils Building Control team can also be asked to investigate any concerns about construction sites in Kirklees but will only be able to take action

	where it finds the Approved Inspector has failed in applying the Building Regulations.
21.	**Question from Councillor A Pinnock to the Cabinet Member for Public Health – Councillor Addy** “What steps are taken by Public Health to ensure the safety of residents air quality when contaminants are being removed from brownfield sites?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Although Public Health has an overall statutory duty to protect and improve the health of the population; the operational functions of methods to protect and improve health are often met elsewhere in the council; such as Environmental Health and Planning in relation to development of brownfield land. Public Health’s key role is strategic assurance, overview and scrutiny which is undertaken through the Council’s Health Protection Board. Key officers from the Environmental Health department attend this board to provide assurance that operational functions outside of Public Health are performing as they are expected. In addition, Public Health has a role in health surveillance, alongside other agencies including the UK Health Security Agency and involves systematic monitoring of health data to track diseases and health trends, such as unexplained increases in hospital admissions. So, in summary, public health has no direct role in ensuring the safety of residents' air quality when contaminants are being removed from brownfield sites. However, there is an overview and assurance function over the relevant departments.
22.	**Question from Councillor J C Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment – Councillor A U Pinnock** “What powers does the Council's Environmental Service have regarding the safety of residents and businesses near to a brownfield site where contaminants, that are potentially dangerous to both residents nearby and those working on the site, are being removed?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Environmental Health holds several powers related to environmental protection for sites, including preventing contaminants from affecting individuals off-site. Key powers include: • The statutory nuisance provisions under Part 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which state that dust released from premises may constitute a statutory nuisance. The Council must determine whether a statutory nuisance exists or is likely to occur or recur before issuing an Abatement Notice to those responsible. • Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 outlines a system for managing contaminated sites. Determining whether a site qualifies as ‘Contaminated Land’ according to legal definitions involves complex criteria.

	• For brownfield site developments, planning conditions often address site environmental management during works and the assessment, treatment, or removal of contaminants when relevant. If Environmental Health identifies breaches of these conditions, they do not have direct enforcement power but can collaborate with planning service colleagues to initiate actions under planning law and consent conditions. Environmental Health does not have authority over risks to workers on site; construction site health and safety regulation falls under the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive
23.	**Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment – Councillor A U Pinnock** "Back in December last year, I asked if the Council was trying to kill the spirit of Christmas, highlighting the new policy of barricading Christmas Trees. We are now in October and still I have no answer as to why this is done, despite discussing this with a range of Service Directors and Heads of Service. Can you please clarify for me what the Council's intention is here and what the rationale for the barricades are and why they have been unable to provide me with the relevant risk assessments?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thanks for your question, Councillor Taylor. The main reason we put up fencing around Christmas trees is to keep everyone safe during the festive season. They help prevent accidents, protect the decorations from damage or vandalism, and make sure the displays stay looking their best, especially in busy areas where things can get a bit hectic. I understand your concerns about the risk assessments. These have been in place for a number of years and were carried out following Council policy and national safety guidelines. They are designed to identify and highlight any potential hazards and reduce risks of harm, accident or damage. Officers have met with you regarding this and agreed to review each site's assessment on a phased programme to check. Whether or not the barriers are still required and to make sure everything's up to date reflecting current regulations. We're committed to making the festive period safe and enjoyable for everyone.
24.	**Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate – Councillor Dad** "Since April what action has the administration taken to attempt to fill the hard to fill vacancies such as in debt recovery, planning enforcement, internal audit, planning and flood management, to name a few and what successes have they had? <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> There have been successes in a number of hard to fill areas through a combination of workforce planning and targeted recruitment activity. These include roles in legal which are notoriously difficult to fill across local government, a number of permanent appointments have been made, and

	investment has been made in apprenticeships to support growing our own lawyers. Other notable successes include roles in SEN. Social Work apprenticeships are in place across children and adult services to support a longer-term approach alongside recruitment activity. Graduate level apprenticeships are also successfully utilised in planning to address the recruitment challenges experienced in the field. Where roles are hard to recruit, an approach is developed to include making use of our Linked in Recruiters licence, comms to support and wider advertising. Recognising that a number of roles remain hard to fill, as part of longer term developments to support a proactive approach, workforce planning continues to embed across the council, we are also participating in the LGA recruitment campaign and sector based reset programme to ensure we continue to develop our approach and apply best practice in Kirklees.
25.	**Question from Councillor Armer to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** "Parking on pavements is an ongoing issue in my ward of Kirkburton, especially where the parked vehicle makes passage impossible for pushchair, wheelchair or mobility scooter users. Would the cabinet member please clarify which body has responsibility for enforcing legislation about this?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your question regarding the persistent issue of pavement parking within your ward. I appreciate the difficulties this causes, and we have had similar enquiries from other Enforcement responsibilities for those who illegally park on pavements and cause an obstruction are shared: the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers deal with parking on yellow lines and school 'keep clear' markings, while West Yorkshire Police are responsible for pavement parking and vehicles obstructing junctions or double-parking, unless these occur on yellow lines. We encourage residents and councillors to report problem areas with clear photos or videos showing the obstruction and vehicle details. Reports can be made online via the Council's Report it or Parking pages, or by emailing Parking.Enforcement@kirklees.gov.uk .
26.	**Question from Councillor A Pinnock to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Are planning applications considered to be lawful where the address provided for the project is inaccurate?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Anyone who applies for Planning Permission is required to ensure they provide correct factual information. The Council will where it is known or raised by 3rd parties that information is inaccurate will seek to ensure that applicants provide the correct information. The information submitted by applicants includes Application Forms, red line boundary plans and the correct fee alongside relevant plans and supporting documents. Once a valid application has been through the planning process

	and a decision is made to grant planning permission 3rd parties can challenge any decision on lawfulness or procedural ground through the Judicial Review processes. In relation to the question without knowing details of the case you are referring to it is not possible to comment further but as a theoretical point information should be accurate and correct however address information should be clear from the application forms and in particular the red line boundary plan which will show were the development is proposed and what the applicant intends for the land in question.
27.	**Question from Councillor J C Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "The capital plan includes a £7.5 million investment allocated for the Town Hall in Cleckheaton. What progress has been made in developing a programme of work and when is it anticipated the repairs and refurbishment will begin?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> At Council on 5th March 2025, Council approved a budget amendment that allocated £7.5m to essential works at Cleckheaton Town Hall (CTH), which was profiled as follows: FY 25/26 26/27 27/28 28/29 29/30 £0.00m. £1.5m. £1.5m. £2.0m. £2.5m. No funds were allocated to enable design work or a start on site to occur in 2025/26, however Strategic Finance have subsequently provided sufficient funds to enable the design process to begin. Normally a scheme of this size and complexity would take around 12-18 months to bring to site, which indicates a start on site in 2026/27, which aligns with the allocation of capital funding. AHR (Huddersfield) have been commissioned to design the scheme to address essential works that would be required to enable the re-opening of CTH. They have undertaken further survey work in the building, are updating the cost plan based on these surveys and the design process has begun. It is likely on current progress that a start on site with the refurbishment would be around September / October 2026. Officers continue to meet with the Cleckheaton and Spenborough Town Hall Group on a regular basis to discuss and understand their progress on the development of a business plan for the future running of this building. I also meet with the group on a regular basis and other Cabinet members are also working with the group.
28.	**Question from Councillor Bellamy to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on how the Council ensures timely and effective enforcement of planning regulations, and what measures are in place to address any delays or gaps in the system?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>

	Thank you for your interest in planning compliance and enforcement matters. I appreciate the concerns raised by residents and members regarding the pace and visibility of investigations into breaches of planning control. The Planning Compliance Team receives a significant volume of new cases each month, and their work is guided by the Development Management Compliance Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet. This strategy helps ensure that resources are prioritised effectively and fairly. Planning enforcement is a complex and often lengthy process. It involves careful assessment, detailed investigation, and appropriate communication with those involved before any formal action is considered. It's important to emphasise that enforcement is not about punishment — it's about finding constructive solutions that uphold planning regulations and protect our communities. I understand that many residents would like to see quicker resolutions. However, the legal framework governing planning enforcement is very clear and includes specific timeframes for issuing notices, allowing for compliance, and accommodating appeals. These steps are essential to ensure fairness and due process, but they do mean that cases can take time to resolve. We are committed to keeping residents and members informed throughout these investigations. While there may be periods without visible updates, this does not mean that progress has stalled — many cases continue to move forward behind the scenes. We are also exploring how technology can improve transparency and efficiency across the planning process. For example, our website already offers public access to an overview of enforcement cases, helping residents track developments more easily.
29.	**Question from Councillor Bellamy to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Housing – Councillor Crook** "Can the Cabinet Member explain what procedures are in place for responding to reports of damp and mould in council and housing association properties, and how the Council ensures timely action to protect residents' health? <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> issues of damp, mould, and condensation (DMC) across the social housing portfolio. With regards to social housing managed by the Council in our Homes and Neighbourhoods service, reports of DMC are triaged based on severity and resident vulnerability. Category 1 Emergency Hazards are escalated for immediate action within 24 hours and any significant Hazard visited within 10 days. Staff are trained to assess risk and prioritise cases, accordingly, ensuring a tailored response based on individual circumstances. Qualified surveyors assess properties and provide residents with: • Guidance leaflets and outcome letters detailing findings and next steps • Treatments and associated repairs are commissioned promptly, with follow-up at 3 and 6 months to ensure resolution.

	The Council's approach aligns with statutory and regulatory requirements including: - Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) - Equality Act 2010 - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 - Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code And we are currently able to report compliance with Awaab's Law, ahead of its introduction, for reported cases within our housing stock. The Council's policy avoids blame or lifestyle assumptions. Residents are kept informed throughout the process and are encouraged to report issues early. The approach is proactive, empathetic, and reflects individual needs. The Councils approach to DMC has been subject to scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and corporate governance, including a review by Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel. This robust scrutiny gives confidence that the Council is well placed to support tenants who may encounter issues of DMC. In relation to timely actions, the Council's Housing Solutions Service provide advice and guidance for housing association tenants who report damp and mould in their properties however the responsibility for action to address those issues lies with the Housing Association landlords, and tenants are encouraged to work with their landlords for resolution and escalate via their complaints procedures or ultimately the Housing Ombudsman if timely action is not taken.
30.	**Question from Councillor Bellamy to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** "What is the Council doing to ensure effective maintenance of drainage systems, including gullies, to prevent flooding and related issues on our local roads?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Council's Highways Service looks after our road drainage systems and invests in upgrading them through its capital programme. Regular maintenance includes repairing drains, replacing broken covers, cleaning out gullies, and clearing roadside ditches—especially in our rural areas. Each autumn, teams carry out an "autumn gully blitz," inspecting and cleaning around 4,000 gullies in flood-risk areas. Ahead of severe weather, they also target up to 150 high-risk gullies to reduce the chance of flooding. Alongside this, the Flood Management team regularly clear trash screens on local watercourses to protect homes, land, and roads from flooding.
31.	**Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "How many pre-applications has the council received in the last six months for development on land currently designated as green belt?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u>

	There are currently about a 157 preapps in the system at the moment. To assess how many of those are in the Green Belt over the last 6 months would require a manual check of each preapp to see where it was located. The Planning Services IT system does not currently identify the land designations related to preapplication enquiries so this question would require officers to check each one individually to count up the total numbers. This would take several hours of officer time. As the question asks about all preapps in the Green Belt of which some development proposals in the Green Belt would be acceptable in accordance with local and national planning policy it may be better if the question was asked about specific types of development ie preapps for agriculture, leisure, residential or commercial uses. This would help refine down what the issue is the author of the question wants an answer on.
32.	**Question from Councillor Hall to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "What is the planning department's understanding of the term "grey belt"?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Government updated the NPPF to define what the Grey Belt is within the Green Belt. The Govt have issued guidance within the Planning Practice Guidance online tool to explain this further. The LPA follow the Governments NPPF and PPG guidance when considering Green Belt sites where the Grey Belt principles can apply.
33.	**Question from Councillor McGrath to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor McGrath** Can we confirm as part of the agreement in which Kirklees Council handed over its 40% stake in the Accu Stadium to Huddersfield Town Football Club, a move that I was of course fully in favour of for all parties involved, that the Council has now taken control of the Gas Works site and when can we expect to see spades in the ground along with the estimated cost and timescale for the necessary decontamination work to prepare the site for its future use as a key component of the Station to Stadium Corridor plan? <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for your question and for your support of the Council's agreement with Huddersfield Town Football Club regarding the Accu Stadium. I can confirm that, as part of the agreement in which Kirklees Council transferred its stake in the stadium, the Council has now taken ownership of the Gas Works Street site. This site is a key strategic asset and forms a central part of the Station to Stadium Corridor regeneration programme. Work is already underway to progress the site's development. The outline business case is currently being prepared, which includes on-site survey works scheduled to conclude in early 2026. These surveys will inform the planning application and procurement process, which will be undertaken over the following 12 months.

	Subject to approvals and funding, we are targeting a start-on-site date in early 2027. The decontamination works will be a critical first step in preparing the site for its future role in supporting innovation, enterprise, and connectivity across the corridor. We will continue to keep members updated as the programme progresses and more detailed information becomes available on costs and delivery timelines.
34.	**Question from Councillor McGrath to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration** "Do we have an estimate of how many jobs the Gas Works site could create for our town, and an anticipated timescale for when these opportunities might be realised?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Thank you for question regarding the job creation potential of the Gas Works site. While we do not yet have the details for the number of jobs the Gas Works site itself could generate, it is important to note that the site is part of the wider Station to Stadium Enterprise Corridor and the West Yorkshire Lifesciences Investment Zone, both of which are designed to stimulate significant economic growth and employment across Huddersfield and the region. The West Yorkshire Investment Zone, which includes the Gas Works site and the National Health Innovation Campus, is expected to unlock £220million of investment and support the creation of up to 2,500 skilled jobs over the next five years. These jobs will span sectors such as health technology, advanced manufacturing, research and development, and digital innovation. The Station to Stadium Corridor is being positioned as one of the most strategic regeneration opportunities in Yorkshire, with a long-term vision to attract high-quality businesses and create well-paid, skilled employment opportunities. As the outline business case for the Gas Works site progresses, we will be in a better position to provide more information on job numbers that will be created. These will be shaped by the mix of uses brought forward through the planning and procurement phases.
35.	**Question from Councillor McGrath to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration** "In relation to the George Hotel, are Raddison Red contractually bound to operate the hotel when it opens and has there been any delays due to the change from 91 rooms to 108 rooms?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The council and Raddison Group are contractually bound under a hotel management agreement for Radisson Red to operate the George Hotel. As the designs for the hotel have developed to deliver a viable scheme, a revised planning application was submitted. One element of these designs included an increase in the number of bedrooms.

36.	**Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** "On how many occasions in the last 6 months have the parking enforcement team attended Bulaly Road/Springdale Ave/Thornton Lodge Road, Blackmoorfoot Road around the post office and shops and on the part above Balmoral Avenue on Blackmoorfoot road, and on each occasion how many penalty notices were given?" <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers have undertaken a total of 60 patrols along Bulaly Road, Springdale Avenue, Thornton Lodge Road and Balmoral Avenue over the past 6 months. These are a combination of foot patrols and visits by vehicle in response to complaints. Patrols undertaken in this area in the last 6 months have resulted in 15 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued for different contraventions. The majority of the PCN's issued have been for Waiting Prohibited, issued to cars parked on double and single yellow lines. PCNs have also been issued for Bus Stop Clearway, where a car has parked in a bus stop that was clearly signed to be kept free of parked cars.
37.	**Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste – Councillor Hawkins** Deep Lane – a road predominately in the Golcar ward but used by Crosland Moor residents in significant numbers due to the fact it links Blackmoorfoot Road with the Manchester Road is in a poor state of repair towards the Manchester Road end. Could you please inform me if it is scheduled for patching works and if so when would these be undertaken? <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Deep Lane isn't currently included in the Council's 2025/26 highway improvement programme. That being said, we do recognise the importance of this route for residents travelling between Golcar and Crosland Moor. Our maintenance programme is prioritised using a detailed scoring system based on condition surveys, safety inspections, and how much each road is used. Although Deep Lane doesn't currently meet the threshold for major resurfacing, it continues to be inspected regularly, and any safety issues identified are addressed through our routine maintenance work. We'll continue to monitor the condition of Deep Lane to ensure it remains safe and to help inform future programmes of improvement.
38.	**Question from Councillor Bamford to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** "I have looked online for An Ancient woodland policy statement and have not found one – so can the Elected member responsible for planning set out the approach to Ancient Woodland and adjacent development, including buffer zones that align with Woodland Trust policy, mitigation strategies and ecology,

	given these are irreplaceable habitats?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity sets out: Local Designated Sites & Important Local Ecological Features Proposals having a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Local Wildlife Site or Local Geological Site, Ancient Woodland, Veteran Tree or other important tree, will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development can be clearly shown to outweigh the need to safeguard the local conservation value of the site or feature and there is no alternative means to deliver the prop Policy justification 13.15 states “Ancient woodland (approximately 1,000 hectares) and some ancient and veteran trees are still present in areas of Kirklees. It is important to preserve those which are not protected by statutory designation and resist development which threatens them”. Additionally, the council’s website sets out information on Planning application supporting information and guidance – Trees Planning application supporting information and guidance - Trees | Kirklees Council For applications to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of Kirklees Local Plan policies, it is a requirement that all planning applications, that may affect trees, are supported by the necessary documents set out in British Standard BS 5837, Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction Recommendations.
39.	**Question from Councillor Bamford to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “Given the recent CPRE report that suggests there is enough land for 1.5 million homes and that 54% of that is ready for ‘spades in the ground’, can the Elected member outline the positive action Kirklees Council is taking to engage developers in developing Brownfield sites from the Brownfield Land Register as a priority, rather than using Greenbelt?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> The Local Plan allocated a range of sites across the district to meet our housing needs; we also have a good record of using previously developed land which isn’t allocated in the Local Plan. The Housing Growth Team in the Council work with Homes England and The Combined Authority to access funding available to bring forward sites which need help for remediation or enabling works. There are a number of good examples already in the district which have come about through the Local Plan or from our Blueprint plans for our towns. Black Cats at Crossland Moor will soon be delivering over 700 dwellings. There are plenty of brownfield developments underway in Huddersfield such as at the former Kirklees College site and over in Cleckheaton at Westgate where Strata are building 180 social houses. Mill redevelopments are also a great example of brownfield sites coming forward such as the Binks Mill in Batley. The Council was also successful in securing £1.25 million for Estates Building in Huddersfield to help make that listed building ready for redevelopment. And in Dewsbury the Town Plan funding has led to redevelopment of Station apartments opposite the train station.

	Whilst we would all like to see brownfield sites being redeveloped it is important to have a range of site options available across the district to meet our housing needs.
40.	**Question from Councillor Bamford to the Cabinet member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner** “Can the lead member for planning set out the council's response to speculative and opportunistic applications made for development outside of the local plan and outside of policy?” <u>Cabinet Member Response</u> All planning applications are treated on their own merits having regard to the relevant policies and individual material planning considerations related to the particular case. Like all councils around the country, we must accept to validate any planning application we receive, as long as it meets our validation checklist requirements for the correct plans, forms and supporting documents. Once a valid planning application is received, the planners consult and publish the application. The outcome of any planning application is unknown until this process is concluded.