

Contact Officer: Jenny Bryce-Chan

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

GROWTH AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 3rd November 2025

Present: Councillor Zarina Amin (Chair)
Councillor Timothy Bamford
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor Alison Munro

In attendance: Cllr Moses Crook, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
for Transport and Housing
Joanne Barthlomew, Director Development
David Wildman, Service Director, Service Director, Skills
and Regeneration
John Donaldson, Strategic Housing Services Manager
Sarah Holmes, Head of Housing Services
Illyas Ramjan, Head of Major Projects

Observers: Cllr Imran Safdar, ward Councillor for Crosland Moor and
Netherton
Cllr Martyn Bolt, ward Councillor for Mirfield

Apologies: Councillor Yusra Hussain

17 Membership of the Panel

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Yusra Hussain.

18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 September 2025 be approved.

19 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

20 Admission of the Public

All agenda items were considered in public session.

21 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

22 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

23 Update on Temporary Accommodation / Bed & Breakfast

Cllr Moses Crook, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Housing, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the information being presented, provides an update on temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast use in Kirklees. The report outlines the work being undertaken to address homelessness and temporary accommodation provision in Kirklees. This work is carried out by the Housing Solution Service and funded through the general fund. By way of clarification this is completely distinct from the landlord service, which is funded through rents and service charges, and has independent and ringfenced finances.

The Panel was informed that presentation of homelessness, usually results in the council having a duty to provide accommodation, and there has been a significant increase in these presentations nationally over recent years due to a range of factors. For example, the cost-of-living crisis and a reduction in the availability of social housing stock.

This has resulted in an acute homelessness and temporary accommodation crisis nationally, with 130,000 households now in temporary accommodation, including 170,000 children, at a total cost to councils of £2.8 billion in 2024/2025. In Kirklees the cost was approximately £7.6 million, however more importantly, the impact of this housing insecurity on families is profound. Without secure and appropriate housing, people cannot benefit fully from opportunities in education or training, access jobs or support networks, eat healthy meals and other factors.

Experiencing homelessness, particularly when placed in unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation, can prevent individuals from rebuilding their lives. In Kirklees, there has been a consistent focus on reducing this demand in order to invest in residents and ensure that everyone, especially vulnerable groups and children, has the best opportunity to thrive. The report provides an update on these efforts and the progress achieved to date.

Cllr Crook, summarised some of the achievements advising the Panel that: -

- There has been a 20% reduction in the presentation of homelessness due to interventions upstream
- There has been a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast in the same time frame due to additional provision of more appropriate accommodation of 20%
- By prioritising the most vulnerable, there has been a larger reduction in the number of families with children in bed and breakfast, a reduction of 58%.

Sarah Holmes, Head of Housing Services, reminded the Panel that the Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households. This duty applies when a household is assessed as being at the point of homelessness and is also deemed a priority need.

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel - 3 November 2025

The Panel was informed that the duty to provide temporary accommodation does not apply to every homeless household. For those who are not owed this duty, the Council has a range of other duties to support them, including assisting them to secure alternative accommodation and working to prevent homelessness by helping them remain in their current home where possible.

The Panel was informed that a number of interventions have been put in place to try and tackle the increasingly high demand for temporary accommodation. Over the last year in particular, there has been real progress in terms of reducing temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast usage in Kirklees. Some of the interventions implemented include:

- Significant investment in additional staffing capacity, to have greater management oversight of temporary accommodation placement to make sure greater prevention alternatives are sourced for people that might otherwise need to be put in temporary accommodation.
- There has been a full review of Housing Solutions Services, which was informed by expert advisers. This has led to much better outcomes in terms of face-to-face assessments, delivering a more person-centred service when people approach for assistance, when they find themselves threatened with homelessness.
- There has been an enhanced approach to helping people find alternative housing in the private rented sector. This is important because social housing has been reducing in terms of availability over the last few years. This is not just exclusive to Kirklees it is also happening nationally where there is less social and affordable housing available. There is therefore a need to look to the private rented sector and help people find suitable quality and affordable alternatives in the private rented sector. Some good strides have been made in Kirklees in enhancing those private rented options, which has meant that people have not spent as long in temporary accommodation, or they have not needed to go into temporary accommodation in the first place.

It is also important to recognise that the council has been proactive in trying to secure more suitable forms of temporary accommodation, to ensure that people don't have to spend as long in bed and breakfast type accommodation which is the least suitable form of temporary accommodation. The council has been successful in expanding a lease programme using some former surplus student accommodation which has been re purposed to use as family temporary accommodation particularly over the summer.

Looking ahead, a number of challenges remain. There are still more households in bed and breakfast accommodation than desired. The aim is to reach a position where no families with children are placed in such accommodation except in exceptional circumstances. Progress is being made towards this target, and this will remain a key focus over the coming months and years.

There are challenges arising from the need to source more social housing, alongside trying to source more private rental accommodation. There are also

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel - 3 November 2025

some important changes coming in with the Renters Rights Act that recently received royal assent. Over the next year the main provision of the Act will come into force which will make significant changes to the private rented market. It is hoped that this will have long-term positive impacts giving greater security for people who might otherwise have faced homelessness from the private rented sector. The council recognises the need to do more in terms of expanding the option to lease more accommodation to use as self-contained temporary accommodation. There is a need to improve the delivery of new affordable and social housing for long-term accommodation.

The Panel was informed that it has been a difficult year or two in terms of homelessness demand in Kirklees, however Housing Solutions Service and all its partners have made positive inroads into turning the trend of temporary accommodation and in particular reducing the use of bed and breakfast.

In response to the report and the information presented, the Panel asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

- It is encouraging that the number of families in bed and breakfast has more than halved and the ambition of zero families being in that position is very positive. Is there a realistic timescale for achieving that and what are the potential barriers?
- It is good to see a reduction in homeless families being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation and would like to thank the team for achieving that. Having considered some of the main causes of homelessness, for example, lack of affordable housing, welfare reform, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health substance misuse, and generally people with a range of complex needs. Some councils have formed an alliance where they work together to with partners to provide clothing, housing, and medical needs. What is the council doing to address all the whole issues which is often about more than just affordable housing?
- Do people who are at risk of, or on the verge of becoming homeless, know who to contact? Is there a central contact point and is it publicised?
- Has any dedicated work been done at understanding the root causes in the increase of people presenting in crisis to Housing Solutions?
- Does the council provide help with bond money to support people who presenting as homeless to move into private rental accommodation?
- In terms of housing, how does the service balance the need of a refugee with someone who is a permanent resident. Is there a priority order in which they are considered?
- A local resident lives in a large council house and wanted to move into a one bed bungalow and the request was refused. What is the council doing to make best use of the available housing and utilising homes that are under occupied?

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on Temporary and Accommodation/Bed and Breakfast in Kirklees.

- 24 Kirklees Major Transport Capital Schemes; Annual Report 2025**
- Cllr Moses Crook, introduced the agenda item, advising the Panel that the information being presented is an update on the various schemes within the transport capital programme, which are at various stages of development or delivery with some schemes paused at various stages awaiting funding opportunities. These capital schemes are often complex to design, and can be several years in development, however, it is essential that there is this pipeline of work underway in order to benefit from all funding opportunities as they arise.
- The Panel was informed that the complexity of the programme increased significantly due to the impact of Covid, and the substantial rise in national construction costs. As a result, the programme was reprofiled to maximise delivery of the highest number of schemes without compromising quality or resorting to value engineering.
- There remains a strong focus on active travel and modal shift, prioritising health, environmentally sustainable transport, inclusivity, and improvements to the public realm. Current projects in development reflect the priorities first set out in the Active Travel Interim Position Statement and now embedded within the recently adopted Kirklees Transport Strategy. Further opportunities to adjust paused or pipeline schemes in line with these evolving priorities may also deliver additional benefits in these areas.
- David Wildman, Service Director for Skills and Regeneration, advised the Panel that the intention is to present an annual report through the democratic process. The report will review achievements, progress made, the current position, and outline future direction.
- The Panel was reminded that a similar report has been presented over the past two years, outlining transport infrastructure projects funded primarily through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). While not covering the entire highways capital programme, the report details the projects, their current status, and progress. Some schemes have been completed and are now in evaluation, others are on site, and several are well developed and nearing commencement. The programme includes a range of complex schemes at varying stages of delivery.
- The Panel was informed that pipelined projects remain a priority and there is an ambition to deliver them, however, at present, there is no funding associated for their delivery. When funding becomes available, the intention is to align these pipelined schemes and emerging priorities with the resources secured.
- In response to the report and the information presented, panel members, Cllr Martyn Bolt, Mr Chas Ball, Mr Jeff Keenlyside and Cllr Imran Safdar asked a number of questions and made comments including some of the following:

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel - 3 November 2025

Cllr Martyn Bolt outlined a few matters he wanted to highlight in the appended report. He stated that there appeared to be a lack of strategic overview for developing projects particularly with regards to the delivery of active travel. There has been a general awareness for approximately four years of the development of the Transpennine route upgrade rail programme and the implications that would have for active travel, including the closure of a bridge over a live railway line at Deighton called Collier Bridge. An alternative was identified which would have used the Huddersfield Broad Canal. This is only now being considered, after the bridge has closed and will not be completed until the railway bridge for the greenway is opened. Why was no strategic thought given to linking the canal resurfacing works with maintaining the active travel corridor? Cllr Bolt highlighted further concerns with a number of other schemes referenced in the report.

Mr Chas Ball - Huddersfield: active travel networks. Why has the A629 Halifax Road Phase 4 which linked communities, schools, colleges, health facilities, shops and PROW pathways to town centre now been shelved? Given 100,000 people live within 3km of Huddersfield centre why are cycling and walking routes linking key locations in Lindley, Edgerton, Birkby etc into the town centre not being offered improved active travel plans? The proposed route from Huddersfield railway station using reallocated road space on the A629 Wakefield Road to the Penistone Road is showing as pipelined. Since the OBC was prepared involving detailed planning and consultations, there are indications.

Leeds Road Smart Corridor: What is the state of Leeds Road Smart corridor 'monitoring and evaluation' referred to in the annual report? Cycle Kirklees analysed the design and implementation of the dedicated cycle paths in 2024 on a group site visit with a member of the project team and we suggested in writing some changes (to make it LTN 1/20 compliant). We also argued that some design elements should not be repeated. We were disturbed that the same consultants that advised on it and designed it, evaluated the scheme.

Mr Jeff Keenlyside When will we see a start to network planning for cycling and walking in and across Huddersfield town centre and for ensuring cycle routes to link the Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpath 'greenway', the nearly complete Huddersfield Broad Canal towpath 'greenway' and the Birkby Bradley Greenway to key town centre destinations? What plans are there to make travel to Accu Stadium on foot by bike or by wheelchair are signed, safer to use and accessible?

Lockwood Bar Southern Gateway project: why was there was no dialogue between the Lockwood Southern Gateway project team and Cycle Kirklees or other cycling groups between public consultation and TRO stage? At the TRO we questioned aspects of the design and were informed that it met all the requirements of the Active Travel England Route Check Tool. In our recent review of the Lockwood designs, it failed the very first principle of the route check tool as well as having other Policy Conflicts and a Critical Issue. Club cyclists previously used Albert Street as a quiet alternative to Lockwood Road but access to this route when arriving from Woodhead Road has been removed since the last consultation.

Dewsbury Batley Chidswell scheme ends at Batley railway station. Access from the town centre improvements to Batley railway station for pedestrians, cyclists and

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel - 3 November 2025

wheelchairs is not part of DBC or the Batley Blueprint. Are there plans to make Batley a more accessible station by 2029 when the first part of the TRU improvements from Leeds to Huddersfield are forecast to start?

Cllr Safdar, raised concerns in respect of the Lockwood Southern Gateway Project, suggesting that teams be sent to improve the synchronisation of the traffic lights because on some days, what should be a 10-minute journey can become a journey that takes over an hour. He explained that there are anxieties and concerns being raised by parents, carers and drivers whose service users with disabilities are being delayed in these vehicles on that corridor. Could the project be expedited to reduce the delays?

- While good progress has been made, it is noted that at least 50% of the projects are still to be determined and some of those are down to costs. Referring to the projects listed in the table, the cost are forecasts are they coming in on budget as forecast and how does the funding process work and when is the next tranche of funding expected?
- There is work that needs to be undertaken in terms of making sure residents are continuously updated about what work is going on.

In response to the questions and issues raised, the Cabinet Member and officers advised that, regarding specific schemes, members should make direct contact.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member and officers be thanked for providing an update on Kirklees Major Transport Capital Scheme; Annual Report 2025.