Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

COUNCIL

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

At the Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kirklees held at Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield on Wednesday 10 December 2025

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Elizabeth Smaje) in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Councillor Beverley Addy
Councillor Itrat Ali
Councillor Zarina Amin
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Tanisha Bramwell
Councillor Aafaq Butt
Councillor Moses Crook
Councillor Paola Antonia Davies
Councillor David Hall
Councillor Caroline Holt
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Viv Kendrick
Councillor Jo Lawson
Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton
Councillor Gwen Lowe
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Andrew Pinnock
Councillor Imran Safdar
Councillor Angela Sewell
Councillor Anthony Smith
Councillor Mohan Sokhal
Councillor Mark Thompson
Councillor Sheikh Ullah
Councillor Adam Zaman
Councillor Munir Ahmed
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Ammar Anwar
Councillor Ali Arshad
Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Cahal Burke
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Hanifa Darwan
Councillor Eric Firth
Councillor Tyler Hawkins
Councillor James Homewood
Councillor Zahid Kahut
Councillor Musarrat Khan
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Paul Moore
Councillor Darren O'Donovan
Councillor Amanda Pinnock
Councillor Jane Rylah
Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor Joshua Sheard
Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Alex Vickers
Councillor Habiban Zaman

106 Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive

The Mayor advised that the signatories to the Motions as set out at Agenda Items 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24 and 25 had given notice to withdraw the Motions from the order of business in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14(8).

107 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ahmed, Bamford, Brook, Dad, Daji, Greaves, Holmes, Lee-Richards, McCarthy, McGrath, H McKerchar, K Pinnock, A Robinson and Simpson.

108 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

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109 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

110 Petitions (From Members of the Council)

No petitions were received.

111 Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)

No deputations or petitions were received.

112 Public Question Time

Council received the following written questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11;

Question from Tracy Weaver

"Are risk assessments submitted by developers independently verified by the council or an external body, or is the council's role to accept the consultant's conclusions at face value?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

Question from Tracy Weaver

"Can the Council list the non-delegable duties of the Environmental Health Department regarding brownfield sites and protection of existing residents?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock).

Question from Sharon Taylor

"Does the Council operate any form of approved, preferred, or recommended environmental consultant list for contaminated land assessments, or provide informal signposting to consultants familiar with Kirklees requirements?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock).

Question from Sharon Taylor

"Has the Council ever rejected a contamination report for failing to assess existing residential receptors?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock).

Question from Owyn Ibberson

"What measures are in place to guarantee that residents receive clear, transparent explanations of how their environmental or construction-related concerns have been assessed, including what evidence was reviewed and how conclusions were reached?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock).

Question from Owyn Ibberson

"After having asked a supplementary question in the council, what is the expected timeframe of a written follow-up response, or the fowarding of additional information, if an answer is not given in the council chamber?"

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

113 West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 16 October 2025 were received and noted.

Comments and questions arising from the Minutes were responded to by the Leader of the Council.

114 Written Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons

Council received the following written questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12;

Question from Councillor Safdar

"During recent community cleanups a number of volunteers, including Cllr Vickers and I, have noticed quite a few nitrous oxide canisters dumped in residential areas. Many across our town are also concerned about an increasingly high number of road traffic accidents and antisocial behaviour linked to such drug abuse. According to the National Poisons Information Service (NPIS), enquiries about recreational nitrous oxide misuse grew by 144% in 2022–23, with most users being very young (average age ~ 21.8 years) with figures rising ever since.

We are aware that West Yorkshire Police and local health partners have started to address the rising misuse of nitrous oxide canisters across our communities,

particularly the increasing concerns about drivers using nitrous oxide while behind the wheel. What additional enforcement, public-health education, and prevention measures are being considered to protect residents in affected neighbourhoods, reduce antisocial behaviour linked to canister littering, and ensure that West Yorkshire's roads remain safe for all?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock).

Question from Councillor J D Lawson

"In April 2025 I was approached by a CIC who wanted to set up a Community Hub on the Walpole Estate and were looking at the possibility of using the now closed former Family Centre as a base. The CIC came with funding and saw, like myself, the need for activities for young people and eventually other community based activity run out of the former Family Centre. Ideas that are achievable and could rebuild a sense of community on Walpole. Walpole at present has nothing bar a corner shop and an infrequent bus service leading to residents feeling it has been neglected and forgotten about by Kirklees.
After contact with a number of different service directors and officers over many months Cllr Alex Vickers, the CIC lead and myself finally got to see inside the building to see if it would be suitable for use in August. After this visit we were informed that discussions were taking place about the long term future of the Centre.

Could the Cabinet Member please update me on the further discussions taking place and outcomes?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

Question from Councillor Taylor

"Recently, the Department for Education announced their new initiative: Go All In, featuring 2026 as the national year of reading and restoring reading for pleasure across the nation.

I've been asked by the Student Head Librarian at one of the schools in my ward, what the Council are doing in 2026 for the Year of Reading, but also what else the Council thinks school libraries should be doing for the Year of Reading to increase reading for pleasure?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Education (Councillor Rylah).

Question from Councillor Taylor

"There are examples of submitted planning applications where third parties such as Yorkshire Water have clearly stated that they do not have the resources to support the increased infrastructure demands such an application would create. What is the

process for the planning department to liaise with such third parties when considering the application for approval?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

Question from Councillor J D Lawson

“When will the land vested with housing on Springdale Avenue be cleared of the fly tip?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook)

Question from Councillor Taylor

"Following the Chancellor's budget announcements concerns have been raised across the business community and especially in the hospitality sector about the viability of many businesses hit with significant increase in business rates, coupled with the rise in employer NICs and above inflation increases to the minimum wage.

Given this and the worsening economic outlook, what action is being taken to review the viability of the Cultural Heart and George Hotel business cases to make sure that these will not become a drain on Council finances"

A response as provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

Question from Councillor R Smith

“We’re starting to see abandoned housing developments due to the developer going bankrupt. What fiscal checks do the planning department carry out on developers who submit planning applications to minimise the risk of this happening?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

Question from Councillor Sheard

“The Council has announced further job cuts, yet I have identified significant savings — of at least a million pounds — that could be made by merging or removing senior management posts where responsibilities clearly overlap.

Frontline services have already absorbed years of reductions, including the grass-cutting team, which has been stripped from over 250 staff in 2016 to roughly around 40 today.

Given this, will Cabinet explain why a review of senior management posts has not been prioritised *before* proposing yet more cuts to frontline staff who have already borne the brunt of previous savings?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

Question from Councillor Masood Ahmed

“Can the Leader confirm whether she has made any request to the Chief Executive or Mayor under the Flag Flying Policy to support the raising of the Palestinian flag, and if not, will she explain why the full extent of her authority under that policy has not been used?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

Question from Councillor Scott

“The Culture and Change portfolio emphasises the importance of strong leadership, openness, and respectful engagement across the organisation. In light of this, can the Portfolio Holder explain how current approaches to member engagement align with these principles, particularly given ongoing concerns about delayed responses to councillor enquiries and the perception that issues are only addressed when raised publicly?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

Question from Councillor Scott

“As Leader responsible for Culture and Change, can you explain why key information including delays, officer decisions, and Forward Plan movements continues to be withheld from councillors until the last minute, or not provided at all?”

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison).

Question from Councillor H Zaman

“Under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council has statutory duties towards people leaving custody or with previous convictions. However, your previous response to Council did not set out the specific operational guidance used by officers.

Could the Cabinet Member clarify which assessment criteria, internal decision-making guidance, and risk-management frameworks Kirklees Council currently uses to determine eligibility, priority need, and prevention duties for individuals leaving prison?”

A response was provided by to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

Question from Councillor H Zaman

“Can the Cabinet Member explain how this administration justifies placing disabled residents in temporary accommodation that is clearly unsuitable for wheelchair

users, despite the Council's legal duties under the Housing Act, Equality Act and Care Act and whether this reflects a wider breakdown in how vulnerable people are being treated under the current homelessness system?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).

115 Minutes of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee - Local Issues

Council received the Minutes of (i) Cabinet held on 21 October 2025 and (ii) Cabinet Committee – Local Issues held on 10 September 2025.

116 Holding the Executive to Account

(It was proposed by Councillor Hall and seconded by Councillor Marchington that the time allocations as set out in Council Procedure Rule 13(2)(ii) not be applied, and that each portfolio update be restricted to a maximum of five minutes to enable more time to be allocated to questions to portfolio holders. The proposal, upon being put to the vote was carried).

Council received a portfolio updates from the Cabinet Members for (i) Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner) (ii) Communities and Environment (Councillor A U Pinnock) and (ii) Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins) prior to oral questions to the Leader and Cabinet Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.

117 Minutes of Other Committees

Council received the Minutes of (i) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee held on 26 September 2025 (ii) District Wide Planning Committee held on 4 September and 9 October 2025 (iii) Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 25 July and 12 September 2025 (iii) Personnel Committee held on 22 July 2025 and (iv) Strategic Planning Committee held on 31 July 2025.

118 Oral Questions to Committee/Sub Committee/Panel Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies

Council received oral questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13(4).

119 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy

Item withdrawn.

120 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Firework Use, Enforcement and Community Safety

Item withdrawn.

121 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Raising the Flag of Palestine on Town Halls Across Kirklees

Item withdrawn.

122 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposition to Disability Benefit Reforms

Item withdrawn.

123 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Abolition of the Council Committee System

It was moved by Councillor J C Lawson and seconded by Councillor Cooper that

"This Council notes:

1) The statement by the former Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, on the 24th June 2025 which outlined the Government's plan to introduce legislation which will 'simplify governance arrangements' for local authorities in England and abolish the committee system, requiring all councils to adopt the leader and cabinet system;

2) Councils in the UK typically operate under one of three governance structures: leader and cabinet, committee or mayoral systems;

3) Most councils currently operate under a leader and cabinet model. The committee system was the way that councils were governed up until 2000. The Local Government Act 2000 changed the models of governance, introducing the leader and executive (cabinet) and elected mayor and executive models. The Local Government Act 2000 also resulted in the abolition of the committee system in England everywhere (except shire authorities with a population under 85,000). However, as part of the Localism Act 2011, the committee system was re-introduced as an option for all local authorities to adopt;

4) Typically, under the leader and cabinet model, the full council elects a leader, who then appoints a cabinet (executive), with cabinet members responsible for specific areas of service and the cabinet being the primary decision-making body. Under the committee system model, power is exercised, alongside full council, by a number of politically balanced committees, each with a specific area of responsibility. Under the executive mayor and cabinet model, a directly-elected mayor leads the executive and is accountable to the electorate;

5) Currently, councils in England can change their governance arrangements and local residents can have a say on the governance model adopted by their local authority via a referendum;

6) As part of the Government's plans, councils currently using the committee model, including councils which have recently transitioned to the committee model following a referendum, will be required to transition to the leader and cabinet model;

7) The Government has argued that the changes are needed in order to improve clarity and accountability in decision-making, enhance efficiency by streamlining governance structures and preventing unnecessary expenditure

on governance transitions.

This Council believes that:

1) Councils across the country use various governance systems, with some favouring the committee system and others preferring executive systems. Councils should have the choice to choose which model of governance best suits the needs of its residents. The details of councils' internal arrangement should be a matter for local discretion. Although Kirklees Council currently operates a leader and cabinet model, it should be given the opportunity to transition to the committee system if Kirklees residents support this. Local people should be given the power to make the best choice for themselves;

2) The Government's plans are at odds with the devolved powers that the Labour party advocates. It should not be a one-size fits all approach. Fundamentally, the Government's plans to change the way that councils operate is top-down and heavy handed, ignores local choice and undermines local democracy. It is centralisation by stealth;

3) The committee system offers a number of benefits and abolishing it is a huge opportunity lost. As part of a committee system, councils are not run by a small group of councillors; instead, the committee system supports cross-party collaboration, and councils are often run in a more inclusive manner. Council committee systems can also increase accountability, reduce top-down decision making, provide a platform for diverse perspectives and provide greater opportunities for participation;

This Council, therefore, resolves to:
Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Alison McGovern MP, to express concern about the Government's plans to standardise local government structures and express concern that local authorities have not been consulted. The Government should abandon its plans for reform, since the measures will undermine local empowerment and local decision-making."

The Motion, upon being out to the vote, was not carried.

RESOLVED – That the Motion not be carried.

124 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Protecting the Green Boundaries Between Kirklees Towns and Villages
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

125 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Review of the Communal Grounds Maintenance Charge
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

126 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Further Support for Armed Forces Veterans

Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

127 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Growing Epidemic of Violence towards Women and Girls

Item withdrawn.

128 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Need for SEND Profit Caps on Private Providers

Item withdrawn.

129 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Labour's Welfare Cuts

Item withdrawn.

130 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Disabled Bus Access

Item withdrawn.