

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 21 January 2026**

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Elizabeth Smaje) in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Councillor Beverley Addy | Councillor Masood Ahmed |
| Councillor Munir Ahmed | Councillor Itrat Ali |
| Councillor Karen Allison | Councillor Zarina Amin |
| Councillor Ammar Anwar | Councillor Bill Armer |
| Councillor Ali Arshad | Councillor Timothy Bamford |
| Councillor Donna Bellamy | Councillor Cahal Burke |
| Councillor Aafaq Butt | Councillor Andrew Cooper |
| Councillor Moses Crook | Councillor Nosheen Dad |
| Councillor Hanifa Darwan | Councillor Eric Firth |
| Councillor Charles Greaves | Councillor David Hall |
| Councillor Tyler Hawkins | Councillor Lisa Holmes |
| Councillor Caroline Holt | Councillor James Homewood |
| Councillor Yusra Hussain | Councillor Viv Kendrick |
| Councillor Musarrat Khan | Councillor John Lawson |
| Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton | Councillor Susan Lee-Richards |
| Councillor David Longstaff | Councillor Andrew Marchington |
| Councillor Harry McCarthy | Councillor Tony McGrath |
| Councillor Hannah McKerchar | Councillor Matthew McLoughlin |
| Councillor Alison Munro | Councillor Carole Pattison |
| Councillor Amanda Pinnock | Councillor Andrew Pinnock |
| Councillor Kath Pinnock | Councillor Jane Rylah |
| Councillor Imran Safdar | Councillor Cathy Scott |
| Councillor Angela Sewell | Councillor Joshua Sheard |
| Councillor Anthony Smith | Councillor Richard Smith |
| Councillor Mohan Sokhal | Councillor John Taylor |
| Councillor Mark Thompson | Councillor Graham Turner |
| Councillor Sheikh Ullah | Councillor Habiban Zaman |

131 Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive

The Mayor conveyed congratulations to Councillor Robinson upon the recent birth of her son. The Mayor also conveyed the sympathies of Council to Councillor Bolt, following a recent bereavement.

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The Mayor advised Council that a concert in aid of the Mayor's Charity would be taking place on Friday 13 February 2026 at Batley Town Hall and that tickets were currently available.

132 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bolt, Bramwell, Brook, Daji, Davies, J D Lawson, Lowe, Kahut, Moore, O'Donovan, Robinson, Simpson, Vickers and A Zaman.

133 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 December and 17 December 2025 be approved as a correct record.

134 **Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Armer, E Firth, Kendrick, Longstaff, Pattison, A Pinnock, Sewell, Sokhal and Turner declared an 'other' interest in Agenda Item 12 on the grounds that they are in receipt of a concessionary bus pass.

135 **Petitions (From Members of the Council)**

Council received a petition from Councillor McCarthy which requested the replacement of the footbridge near Upper Mills, Slaithwaite that was recently destroyed in storms.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9(3) the Mayor directed that the subject matter of the petition be referred to the appropriate Executive Director for investigation.

136 **Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)**

Council received the following deputations;

- (i) Deputation from Tia Hamilton Pinnock on behalf of Huddersfield African Caribbean Cultural Trust.

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

- (ii) Deputation from Helen Wilson on behalf of Dewsbury Cemetery Action Group.

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

- (iii) Deputation from Dilys Beaumont on behalf of Better Buses Campaign West Yorkshire.

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

Public Question Time

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

Question from Heather Peacock

“Is Huddersfield bus station getting an upgrade in the next two years as it desperately needs one now?”

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

Question from Owyn Ibberson

“Regarding retaining walls around new developments, how does the Council factor the Highways Act, Section 167, when part of the proposed public highway in question, is actually owned by a third party resident, and no permissions have been sought?”

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

Question from Owyn Ibberson

“Kirklees has a large number of brownfield sites, that are available for redevelopment. What steps does the Council take, before the land is sold off, to ensure that it is actually safe for development eg..heavy metal testing, asbestos testing etc...and are these documents / results made public for transparency?”

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

Question from Tracey Ibberson

“What is the Council's intention for the increase in traffic in and around Cleckheaton with the substantial increase in housing development with regards to air quality and road safety?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

Question from Sarah Young

“If piling operations are carried out in close proximity to residential properties, how will risks related to vibration, noise, and potential disturbance to occupants be assessed and appropriately controlled, such as house surveys?”

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

Question from Sarah Young

“How does any proposed piling activity, when undertaken near residential properties, comply with relevant standards for vibration, noise control, and protection of nearby structures?”

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

Question from Sharon Taylor

“Given that Kirklees planning portal has multiple and various 'application' numbers, relating to the same development or plan, how transparent is this process, for concerned members of the public, to educate themselves around what is happening in their areas?”

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

Question from Sharon Taylor

“With regards to the Highways Act 1980, section 167, how does the Council proceed, with planning permissions already granted, when the developer changes plans, to include a retaining wall, which would contravene (a) within a highway boundary (b) be in close proximity to residential properties (c) is higher than 4.5 feet in height?”

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

Question from Karen McKenna

“When independent asbestos tests, from members of the public, within the area of a brownfield development site, are presented to the Council as being positive (higher than trace levels), and asbestos professionals state clearly, they are higher than 'trace levels', what actions do the Council take, regarding identifying and stopping the cause of the asbestos?”

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

Question from Karen McKenna

“When the Council receive a letter before action, from an established solicitor, who has gone through due diligence regarding factual information, what processes do the Council undertake to ensure they are legally compliant?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate Services (Councillor Dad).

Question from Jenifer Devlin

“Will the Council support the idea of a West Yorkshire Transport Board made up of passengers, community groups and transport workers, with decision making powers over franchising. Will the Council Leader use her seat on WYCA to propose this?”

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

138 Half Yearly Monitoring on Treasury Management Activities 2025/2026 (Reference from Cabinet)

It was moved by Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Pattison and

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted.

139 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 Bolt

“The second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, which ended in March 2025, included an objective that 50% of short journeys in towns and cities should be walked or cycled by 2030. Please can the Leader provide data for Active Travel journeys in Kirklees and in particular where the journeys are mentioned?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Public Health (Councillor Addy).

Question from Councillor Armer

“I was contacted by a Thurstonland resident on 8th January who informed that Cold Hill/Halstead Lane had not been gritted, and the road was in a dangerous condition. On making enquiries I was informed that the local contractor had declined to grit the route because overhanging tree limbs were causing damage to his vehicle. I have since been told that these trees are rooted in private property adjacent to the highway. What powers does this council have to require that vegetation on private land does not cause obstruction to free passage on the highway?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

Question from Councillor Armer

“In the calendar year 2025, on how many occasions did this council request/require property owners to address problems related to vegetation obstructing or encroaching a highway?”

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A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

Question from Councillor J D Lawson

“Pavement parking unfortunately is wide spread not only within Crosland Moor and Netherton Ward but Kirklees as a whole. This inconsiderate parking has a detrimental effect on pedestrians, on the disabled and sight impaired, those using mobility scooters and those pushing prams and buggies causing them to have to walk on often very busy roads all because a car or other vehicle driver thought it acceptable to park on the pavement and therefore blocking access.

In light of the government proposal to give power to local councils regarding pavement parking can the cabinet lead update on what action the council will take to ensure that Kirklees is ready to start using these powers and able to enforce them over large parts of Kirklees?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

Question from Councillor H Zaman

“At Cabinet on 21 October, the Leader said burial land is “specialised” because of groundwater, flooding and soil constraints, and therefore can’t be compared with land being considered for a new leisure facility in Dewsbury.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what technical criteria the Council uses to assess burial land, how many sites in North Kirklees have been assessed since the burial land motion was passed in February, and how many were ruled out on environmental grounds rather than availability or ownership?”

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

Question from Councillor Scott

“Will the Leader confirm whether options to deal with burial provision in North Kirklees will be brought to Cabinet for councillors to consider?”

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

Question from Councillor Scott

Will the Leader confirm the current position on Muslim burial space in Dewsbury?”

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

Question from Councillor Scott

Will the Cabinet Member explain what residents should expect from the permit parking scheme?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Waste (Councillor Hawkins).

Question from Councillor Darwan

"What is the percentage change in expenditure on high-cost children's placements in each of the last three financial years, and what formal assessment has been made of the impact of actions taken to control this cost pressure?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Kendrick).

Question from Councillor Darwan

"What is the current rate of turnover among senior and specialist officers, and what formal assessment has been made in the last 12 months of its impact on service delivery, project timescales, and value for money?"

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

Question from Councillor Darwan

"Despite repeated budget increases, demand pressures in adult social care continue to rise. What evidence can the Cabinet Member provide that current demand-management strategies are working, and what measurable outcomes have improved in the last 12 months?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Corporate (Councillor Dad).

140 Key Discussion - Elected Mayor (West Yorkshire Combined Authority)

The Elected Mayor of West Yorkshire was in attendance for the key discussion and provided an overview of her priorities, prior to a question and answer session.

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

It was moved by Councillor Burke and seconded by Councillor J C Lawson that;

"This Council notes:

- 1) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) refers to young people who require extra help and support with their learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support;
- 2) Private providers play a key role in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sector, including early years, alternative provision and

specialised independent schools and are often commissioned by councils to provide support and education for children with SEND. In Kirklees, there are 10,098 pupils aged 4 to 16 years with SEND. Of these 9,407 pupils are educated in mainstream schools and settings and 691 in special schools (2022). SEND provision is a key issue for many parents in Kirklees.

Across England, approximately 1.7 million pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, representing around 19.6% of pupils;

- 3) There has been a huge surge in the need for SEND provision and, as a result, demand for school places supporting SEND students across the UK. Many state schools are not adequately equipped to meet the increased demand or to support pupils with more complex and challenging needs. This has led to expert providers across the private and charitable school sectors stepping in;
- 4) According to House of Commons Library research, commissioned by the Liberal Democrat national party, the top private equity companies providing SEND schooling have seen their annual profits increase as the SEND crisis has worsened, with some making margins of over 20%. Some of the private providers of special needs education are backed by private equity companies based in tax havens or foreign sovereign wealth funds;
- 5) The SEND crisis has led to many councils facing exorbitant costs for private provision. This is at a time when local authority budgets are being pushed to the brink, with many facing effective bankruptcy or end service provision for vulnerable groups;
- 6) The Liberal Democrat national party has demanded that private providers of special education are subject to an operating profit cap of 8% in order to curb exorbitant profits. The party has called for the Government to cap the profits of these companies to ensure that money is channelled back into the SEND system and not into the pockets of shareholders.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson MP, to express concern that the profiteering from private equity firms is a major driver of the crisis in our SEND system and to cap the profits of these firms at 8%, ensuring that the priority is provision and not profits and helping to cut the excessive profiteering off the backs of disabled children. While the Government's commitment to reform the SEND system is welcome, profit-limiting controls are needed as a matter of urgency."

RESOLVED – That the Motion be approved.

142

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

It was moved by Councillor J C Lawson and seconded by Councillor A C Pinnock that;

"This Council notes:

- 1) The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) is a government-backed initiative that offers free local bus travel in England for

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people over the State Pension age and people with eligible disabilities. However, the scheme is typically only available to individuals with disabilities outside of peak hours, from 9.30am to 11pm on weekdays, and all day on weekends and bank holidays;

- 2) Local areas can offer discretionary concessions beyond the rules set by the ENCTS, including extending free bus travel on weekdays before 9.30am. Locally, the ENCTS scheme is administered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, but Kirklees and West Yorkshire currently does not offer free travel before 9.30am on weekdays for most disabled bus pass holders;
- 3) The Kirklees Transport Strategy (2025) commits to improving accessibility and promoting inclusive, sustainable transport options for all residents;
- 4) Disabled bus pass holders make up about 10% of all concessionary users in England;
- 5) The Bus Services Act became law in October 2025 and aims to improve the performance, accessibility and quality of bus services across the country. Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Harrogate and Knaresborough, Tom Gordon, submitted an amendment to the Bus Services (No. 2) Bill when it was debated in Parliament, and called on the Government to remove the 23:00-09:30 exception to free travel for disabled people. The amendment received support from over 75 MPs, disability charities and campaign groups, but was voted down.

This Council believes that:

- 1) These restrictions disproportionately affect disabled people who need to travel early for work, education, healthcare or caring responsibilities. Disabled people should have the freedom to travel at any time of day, just as non-disabled people do;
- 2) Time restrictions on concessionary travel create a postcode lottery and undermine efforts to promote equality, independence, and inclusion;
- 3) Removing these restrictions would support disabled residents in accessing employment, education, healthcare, and social opportunities.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Request that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Transport to express disappointment at the Government's decision to turn their backs on disabled people as part of the Commons vote last year, as it undermines their commitment to accessibility and equality. The Government needs to rethink their decision and remove the discriminatory restrictions to help create a system that allows everyone to make the journeys they want to. Removing the time restrictions could also open up work and training

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opportunities for disabled people, allowing them to travel with freedom, ease and confidence.

- 2) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Elected Mayor of West Yorkshire, to ask the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to extend the local ENCTS scheme to allow 24/7 free bus travel for all eligible disabled passholders across the region.”

RESOLVED – That the Motion be approved.

- 143 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Establishing a Formal Fast-Track System for Home Adaptations for Residents Living with Motor Neurone Disease**
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 144 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Defending Civil Liberties - Absolute Opposition to Digital ID**
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).
- 145 **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).
- 146 **Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Supporting Local Pubs through VAT Reduction**
Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).