

Our Council Plan – 2026/27 – 2028/29

Meeting	Council
Date	25 February 2026
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Carole Pattison, Leader of the Council
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes Yes
<p>Purpose of Report Our 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan (provided at Appendix 1) sets out the overarching ambitions, and strategic direction for the Council. It applies to all directorates and service delivery areas.</p> <p>The new three-year financial settlement now means we can set a Council Plan with a longer-term planning horizon, and as such, the Council Plan presents delivery activity over the next three financial years.</p> <p>It sets out our key priorities, goals, and specific activities and milestones to support the achievement of those goals over that period.</p> <p>The Council Plan goes hand in hand with the budget. Together, these documents set out the strategy, and the resources required to deliver on our ambitions. The Council Plan will be considered alongside the annual budget for decision at Council on the 25 February 2026.</p> <p>Council is asked to approve and adopt the 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan (Appendix 1) as part of the Council’s Policy Framework.</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Council to approve and adopt the 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan (Appendix 1) as part of the Council’s Policy Framework. • To note that on the 10 February 2026, Cabinet received and noted the contents of the Council Plan and recommended that it be approved by Council. • For Council to note the feedback provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and the response, as provided in section 5 of this report. <p>Reasons for Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council and must be approved by Council to become adopted as part of that framework. • The Council Plan sets the overarching ambitions, and strategic direction for the services and activities relating to the business of the council, across all directorates and service delivery areas. It is an important document providing strategic direction to all other plans, activities and services delivered by the Council. 	
<p>Resource Implication: The Council Plan sets out the strategic framework for the council’s budget and is to be considered alongside the council’s budget for decision at Council on the 25 February 2026.</p>	

Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources 23.01.2026
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Kevin Mulvaney 19.01.2026
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?	Samantha Lawton 19.01.2026

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? No personal data is included in this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council Plan sets out the overarching ambitions, and strategic direction for the Council. It applies to all directorates and service delivery areas.
- 1.2 The new three-year financial settlement now means we can set a Council Plan with a longer-term planning horizon, and as such, presents delivery activity over the next three financial years. The Plan sets out our key council priorities, goals, and specific activities and milestones to support the achievement of those goals over that period.
- 1.3 The Council Plan goes hand in hand with the budget. Together, these documents set out the strategy, and the resources required to deliver on those ambitions. The Council Plan will be considered alongside the annual budget for decision at Council on the 25 February 2026.
- 1.4 The Council Plan retains the longer-term cross-directorate principles which we work alongside our partners to achieve, including our vision, our shared outcomes, and our key partnership strategies. However, following feedback from the Local Government Association during our Corporate Peer Challenge in 2024, these elements of the Council Plan will be separated out into a revised Partnership Framework, and will be reviewed, developed and agreed with partners during 2026.
- 1.5 The Council Plan also retains a set of key indicators we use to measure and understand the challenges and opportunities faced by people, communities and organisations in the borough. The indicators are aligned to the shared outcomes, and we report on these indicators on a quarterly basis. Alongside our shared outcomes, these will also be reviewed with our partners during 2026.
- 1.6 Following the recommendations made to us by the Local Government Association in November 2024, we developed and launched the ‘Our Council’ initiative in April 2025, to refresh and strengthen our organisation’s culture. It guides the way we work as an organisation and has seven key principles that can be applied to every team and service across the council. Work to embed the principles as part of everything that we do is ongoing and has already made a difference in re-shaping and strengthening how the

council operates. These principles will help teams and services across the council to deliver on the ambitions set out within the Council Plan.

- 1.7 The Council Plan retains existing internal principles and ways of working, including our People Strategy, and associated organisational values and supporting behaviours (values of Kindness, Inclusion and Pride) which have now been brought in as a key principle within the 'Our Council' initiative.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The Council Plan sets out the overarching ambitions, and strategic direction for the Council. It applies to all directorates and service delivery areas.
- 2.2 The plan is part of the Council's Policy Framework as set out in Article 4 of the council's constitution. As such, it is approved at Full Council.
- 2.3 The plan doesn't attempt to list all the council's services and programmes. It summarises the council's role alongside partners in delivering our vision and shared outcomes. It sets out the way in which the council operates and the priorities, goals and activities that will help us to deliver on those priorities.
- 2.4 The plan has been developed alongside the budget in line with our Annual Business Planning Cycle and is at Council alongside the budget for decision. The new three-year financial settlement now means we can set a Council Plan with a longer-term planning horizon, and as such, presents delivery activity over the next three financial years. The Council Plan goes hand in hand with the budget – together, these documents set out the strategy, and the resources required to deliver on our ambitions.
- 2.5 The plan will continue to be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis, so that the three-year plan remains current, and reflective of progress and delivery planning.
- 2.6 Progress reporting on the goals and associated activities and milestones, will continue through 'Council Plan and Performance' reporting, which is shared with Cabinet on a quarterly basis. A final progress update on the delivery activity outlined in the current 2025/26 Council Plan, will be included within the 2025/26 quarter four 'Council Plan and Performance Report'.
- 2.7 Further to Cabinet on the 10 February 2026, additional information relating to the development of an 'Opportunities Register' has been included within the 'Getting the Basics Right' priority.

2.8 Developing a Partnership Framework

The Council Plan retains our long-term cross-directorate principles, which we have been working towards achieving for several years, alongside our partners across the district. These include:

- **Vision** - Our vision for Kirklees is "to be a district that combines a strong, sustainable economy with a great quality of life - leading to thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality where people enjoy better health throughout their lives."
- **Shared Outcomes** – These eight outcomes describe the impact the council and our partners are looking to have. These are summarised as: Healthy and Well, Best

Start, Independence, Aspire and Achieve, Sustainable Economy, Shaped by People, Safe and Cohesive, and Clean and Green. It also includes an outcome we have chosen for ourselves: a commitment to be 'Efficient and Effective'.

- **Our Key Partnership Strategies:** Environment Strategy, Inclusive Economy Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Inclusive Communities Framework.
- **Indicators which help us measure our shared impact:** a set of performance indicators, aligned to our shared outcomes, which help us understand the challenges and opportunities faced by people, communities and organisations in the borough. These indicators are reported on through the council's quarterly performance reporting.

However, following feedback from the Local Government Association during our Corporate Peer Challenge in 2024, these elements of the Council Plan will be separated out into a revised Partnership Framework.

During 2025, we engaged strategic partners and key strategic partnership boards in initial discussions on the development of a Partnership Framework. Partner engagement on the framework continued in November at the annual Picture of Kirklees event, held at Dewsbury Town Hall.

Now that the initial phase of engagement is complete, the development of a new framework will be discussed and agreed with partners during 2026. Discussions will also include what collaborative actions will need to take priority, how the framework will be supported, and what governance arrangements could be established to support implementation. When the new Partnership Framework has been agreed with partners later this year, the Council Plan will be updated to reflect any changes that have been made to the key elements described above.

2.9 **Our Priorities**

The 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan priorities build on the priorities in the current (2025/26) Council Plan.

Underneath each of the four broad priorities, further details cover specific goals for the next three years, and activities and milestones to support the achievement and delivery of those goals over that period.

The four strategic priorities are:

Getting the basics right

We will continue to ensure that essential services are available and effectively provided to all. This is also about being a well-run organisation and enabling continuous improvement. Over the next three years we want residents and customers to see and feel a difference from the organisational improvements we're making.

Protecting the vulnerable

We will support and protect those in our community who are most in need, including the elderly, children, and those with disabilities. This also includes tackling the barriers and disadvantage faced by many in our communities as well as a focus on early intervention and prevention, which can be more efficient for the council but also means better outcomes for communities.

Enabling everyone to thrive and have successful lives

We will help to build a borough with opportunities for all, fostering an environment where everyone has the chance to succeed. This includes working alongside partners and communities to ensure all residents have the foundations of a good life, for example in housing, education, health, and the environment.

Economic growth

Building on the tangible progress being made across Kirklees, we will create further economic growth by working alongside our partners to support jobs and investment opportunities. Our aim is for this to translate to better livelihoods and prosperity for people across Kirklees.

2.10 Our Council

Following the recommendations made to us by the Local Government Association in November 2024, we developed and launched the 'Our Council' initiative in April 2025, to refresh and strengthen our organisation's culture. It guides the way we work as an organisation and has seven key principles that can be applied to every team and service across the council. Work to embed the principles as part of everything that we do is ongoing and has already made a difference in re-shaping and strengthening how the council operates.

These principles will help teams and services across the council to deliver on the ambitions set out within the Council Plan. They describe areas where we already have existing strengths across our services and where we need to focus further development.

Since launching in April, we've worked to embed these principles through internal events, leadership conversations and internal communications. Teams in the council are holding conversations about what the principles mean to them. We're now working to extend and deepen this engagement and integrate the principles as part of wider internal processes, for example through new employee induction. The seven principles have been included below:

Our Council:

- Gets the basics right
- Focuses on customers
- Lives within its means
- Is kind, inclusive and proud (or organisational values)
- Collaborates and connects
- Takes responsibility
- Listens and responds

2.11 Our People

Our People Strategy sets out how we will achieve our shared outcomes by having people with the right skills, values, and behaviours, and by working in partnership in our places.

Our People Strategy has our values and behaviours at its heart. The Strategy has four outcomes, supported by our People Pledge and a programme of work that supports working towards achieving the outcomes for all our staff. These outcomes are: Healthy

and Well; Inclusive Employer of Choice; Effective and Compassionate Leadership; and Skilled, Flexible, and Engaged.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The new 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan (provided at **Appendix 1**) will replace the current (2025/26) version of the [Council Plan](#).

3.2 Financial Implications

The Council Plan provides the overarching strategic framework for the Budget, which sets out the resources available for delivering upon the priorities contained with the Council Plan.

3.3 Legal Implications

The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council, as set out in Part 2, Article 4 of the Council's Constitution, and as such, it is the decision of Full Council whether to adopt any Council Plan.

3.4 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

Our Council Plan restates our commitment to our People Strategy, which sets out how we will achieve our shared outcomes with the support of healthy, motivated and flexible staff with the right skills, values and behaviours.

4 Consultation

Results from the public consultation on the associated draft budget have also been considered as part of the development of the Council Plan, ahead of consideration at Cabinet and Full Council.

5 Engagement

The existing vision, shared outcomes and partnership strategies are products of partner engagement and will need partnership engagement to review and develop these as part of a new Partnership Framework. Initial engagement with partners, and at key partnership boards has already taken place during 2025 and will continue during 2026.

All four council directorates have been engaged in developing the areas of focus in the plan.

In December 2025 and January 2026, Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) received presentations on the Council Plan, including the approach to developing the Plan, the new priorities, and a list of suggested goals associated for each priority. The Committee welcomed having a three-year plan, as this would assist the council in planning over a longer-term period, and provide clarity on how activity would build on progress made during that timeframe. Committee members also asked a series of questions including how the priorities had evolved from the last plan, links with partnership working, and how the plan will be reviewed and monitored. It was clarified with OSMC that:

- The priorities in the plan build upon the priorities in the existing plan.
- A separate process is underway for developing a Partnership Framework.
- Initial engagement with partners on the Partnership Framework has already taken place, and further collaborative work with partners will lead to finalising the framework in 2026.
- The Council Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated as necessary, so that the three-year plan remains current, and reflective of progress and delivery planning.
- Progress reporting on the goals and associated activities and milestones, will continue through 'Council Plan and Performance' reporting, which is shared with Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

6 Options

6.1 Options Considered

Council may either choose to approve the plan as presented or indicate any amendments or changes they may wish to make. Our recommendations to Council are:

- For Council to approve and adopt the 2026/27 – 28-29 Council Plan (**Appendix 1**) as part of the Council's Policy Framework.
- To note that on the 10 February 2026, Cabinet received and noted the contents of the Council Plan and recommended that it be approved by Council.
- For Council to note the feedback provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and the response, as provided in section 5 of this report.

6.2 Reasons for recommended Option

- The Council Plan is included in the Policy Framework for the Council and must be approved by Council to become adopted as part of that framework.
- The Council Plan sets the overarching strategic direction for the services and activities relating to the business of the Council, across all directorates and service delivery areas. It is an important document providing strategic direction to all other plans, activities and services delivered by the Council.

7. Next steps and timelines

The 2026/27 – 28/29 Council Plan will be considered for adoption by Council on 25 February 2026.

If the Council Plan is adopted by Council, it will be published on the council website, replacing the current version of the Council Plan. It will then be used by all services across the Council, to guide and prioritise activities and work relating to the delivery of services.

8. Contact officers

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9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The current Council Plan (2025/26), approved by Council on 5 March 2025.

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday 5th March 2025, 5.30 pm | Kirklees Council](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: 2026/27 - 28/29 Council Plan

11. Service Director responsible

Andy Simcox, Service Director Strategy and Innovation