

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

MEMBERS: Councillors; Cahal Burke (Chair), Itrat Ali, Zarina Amin, Andrew Cooper and Jo Lawson

SUPPORT: Sheila Dykes, Principal Governance Officer

FULL PANEL DISCUSSION		
THEME / ISSUE	APPROACH / AREAS OF FOCUS	OUTCOMES / ACTIONS
1. Leader's Priorities 2025/26	The Leader will attend to set out her portfolio priorities for 2025/26.	<p><u>11 July 2025</u> The Leader set out her priorities for 2025/26 and gave an update in respect of recent outcomes. She responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a report on the work being done in respect of 'getting the basics right' be added to the work programme and it be recommended that this work should include a strong focus on effective and timely communication. - the Committee receive an update in respect of cyber security. <p>Informal meetings with the Chair and the Leader take place throughout the year.</p>
2. Finance Portfolio Holder's Priorities 2025/26	The Portfolio Holder will attend to set out his priorities for 2025/26.	<p><u>11 July 2025</u> The Portfolio Holder set out his priorities for 2025/26 and gave an update in respect of recent outcomes. He responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.</p> <p>Informal meetings with the Chair and the Portfolio Holder take place throughout the year.</p>

<p>3. Corporate Portfolio Holder's Priorities 2025/26</p>	<p>The Portfolio Holder will attend to set out her priorities for 2025/26.</p>	<p><u>25 July 2025</u> The Portfolio Holder set out her priorities for 2025/26. She responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.</p> <p>The Committee requested that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An item in respect of the replacement of the Household Support Fund be placed on the Committee's Work Programme. - A visit be organised to see the work being undertaken by Project Search. <i>(This took place on 7th November)</i> <p>Informal meetings with the Chair and the Portfolio Holder take place throughout the year.</p>
<p>4. Corporate Financial Management</p>	<p>To provide oversight of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Corporate Financial Monitoring Reports • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Budget 2026/27 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny 	<p><u>11 July 2025</u> The Committee was provided with a comprehensive update on the outturn for 2024/25. This facilitated Members to be aware of the current position and challenges and gave them the opportunity to put questions and offer challenge to the relevant Cabinet Member and Section 151 Officer. It also provided Lead Members with important background information to be taken into account, as appropriate, when considering issues within the remit of their Panel or to also them to pick up on any items within the remit of their Panel that may require further scrutiny</p> <p><u>12 September 2025</u> (i) Update report on Quarter 1 2025/26: The Committee was taken through the detail of the current position and the revenue variances and pressures affecting each directorate; the Housing revenue Account (HRA); the Capital Plan and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the 'Safety Valve Agreement'</p>

(ii) Medium-Term Financial Strategy:

A presentation was given on the MTFS further to its consideration at Cabinet on 9th September and prior to its submission to Council on 17th September.

The MTFS set out the financial framework for the Council's budget planning for 2026/27 to 2030/31.

It was noted that the Government response to the Fair Funding Review was awaited and may impact on the figures.

Members discussed the position in relation to the Council's contributions to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and the ongoing consultation.

It was noted that there would be a dedicated meeting of the Committee in January 2026 to facilitate engagement on the budget proposals for 2026/27.

5 December 2025

Update report on Quarter 2 2025/26:

The Committee was taken through the detail of the current position and the revenue variances and pressures affecting each directorate; the Housing revenue Account (HRA); the Capital Plan and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the 'Safety Valve Agreement'

Questions were put in respect of the work being undertaken to address numbers of external placement for looked after children; addressing the budget pressures of rising demand in adult health and children's services; and the level of reserves.

16 January 2026 –

The Committee gave consideration to the budget proposals for 2026/27 in advance of consideration by Cabinet and Council.

All Members of Council were invited to attend and contribute.

The meeting included:

- Introduction to the Budget by the Leader and the Chief Executive

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from the Finance Portfolio Holder and the Service Director - Finance • Each Cabinet Member then provided an overview of the key pressures and savings for their directorate, including capital expenditure, supported by the relevant Executive Director, followed in each case by the opportunity for the Committee to ask questions/comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults & Health Directorate - Children & Families Directorate - Place Directorate, including the Housing Revenue Account - Corporate Directorate <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomed the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the budget. - Thanked the other Members of Council for attending the meeting and for their contributions to the debate - Recommended that the feedback provided be considered in taking the budget forward and be reported to Cabinet and Council at the meetings where the final decisions are taken. <p><u>27 March 2026</u></p> <p>The Chair is briefed by the Service Director, Finance on a regular basis throughout the year.</p>
5. Corporate Performance	To provide oversight of the Quarterly Performance Management Reports	<p><u>11 July 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee was provided with an update on the Quarter 4 Council Plan and Performance Report 2024/25 as part of the ongoing engagement on this issue. It provided the Committee with an overview of performance and outcomes and gave Members the opportunity to question and offer challenge to the relevant Cabinet Member and lead officers. Lead Members</p>

		<p>were also able to use this knowledge to identify any issues within the remit of their Panel that may require further scrutiny.</p> <p><u>12 September 2025</u> Update report on Quarter 1 2025/26. The Committee discussed; Education Health and Care Plans, fly tipping, early intervention and prevention in relation to adult social care, accessibility for customers and the use of temporary accommodation for the homeless. Further information was requested in relation to the Customer and Access Programme and this will be addressed as part of the item in respect of Transformation Priorities.</p> <p><u>5 December 2025</u> Update report on Quarter 2 2025/26 and report in respect of the transformation priorities. The Committee discussed levels of sickness absence, monitoring and measures to address this issue; welcomed the improvement in terms of EHCPs and stressed that it was important that this continued; and whether the performance indicators were able to demonstrate impact on resident's quality of life.</p> <p><u>27 March 2026</u></p>
6. Corporate Risk	To provide oversight of the Quarterly Corporate Risk Reports	<p><u>11 July 2025</u> The Committee was provided with an update on the Quarter 4 Corporate Risk Report 2024/25 as part of its ongoing oversight of this issue. This gave the Committee an overview of this important area and the actions and mitigations being taken in each case. Members were able to question and offer challenge to the relevant Cabinet Member and lead officers. Lead Members were able to use this knowledge to take forward any</p>

		<p>issues within the remit of their Panel that may require further scrutiny.</p> <p><u>12 September 2025</u> Update report on Quarter 1 2025/26. The Committee was advised: There had been minimal change since the last quarterly report. Of the amendments to the risks on the register including those added and removed. The Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change undertook to look at the issue of local area energy plans.</p> <p><u>5 December 2025</u> Update report on Quarter 2 2025/26. It was explained that the position was stable.</p> <p><u>27 March 2026</u></p>
7. Council Plan	Pre-decision scrutiny in respect of the latest version of the Council Plan	<p><u>5 December 2025</u> The Committee received a presentation in respect of the key components of the next Council Plan for discussion and feedback. It was requested that the comments/feedback made by the Committee be considered in the further development of the Council Plan 2026-29; and the production of a Council Plan covering a 3- year period, as previously discussed with scrutiny, was welcomed.</p>
8. Transformation Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual progress reports in respect of delivery of transformation projects and activities. 	<p><u>5 December 2025</u> An update was provided, as part of Quarter 2 Performance Report, in relation to the range of programmes and initiatives designed to deliver the ambitions set out in the Council Plan.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Members will be invited to request briefings on the detail of those within their Panel's remit where they consider this will assist their work. 	The governance arrangements included a dashboard with a RAG rating for each programme and Lead Members were invited to pick up on any areas of interest with their Panel.
9. Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight of Action Plan Implementation. 	<p><u>11 July 2025</u></p> <p>A progress report was given in relation to the Council's Action Plan to respond to the recommendations made by the LGA Peer Challenge in November 2024. The Committee had previously considered the Action Plan in advance of its approval by Cabinet.</p> <p>The Committee had welcomed the early engagement with Scrutiny on this issue and the progress made in implementation to date. It requested the submission of a further report following the LGA Progress Review in September 2025.</p> <p><u>5 December 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee received a report to update on progress in responding to the recommendations contained in the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Report 2024, with reference to the progress review report produced by the LGA further in September 2025.</p> <p>The progress made against the actions was welcomed and it was requested that a final update be provided to Scrutiny in 2026/27.</p>
10. Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan (Crime and Disorder) and Domestic Abuse Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-decision scrutiny of the refresh of the Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan, in accordance with statutory requirement under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. 	<u>27 February 2026</u>

11. Government Policy / Legislation	To maintain an overview of potential and forthcoming changes relevant to local government and to consider the potential impact on the Council at an early stage, with specific focus on any changes in respect of financial settlements and the approach to funding.	Briefing notes provided to Committee members in advance of the meetings in June, September, December 2025 and March 2026.
12. Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early learning from the ten integrated library hubs on how citizens can be supported and enabled to access the support and information they need, using a place-based approach, and how this will be used to plan for the future. • Raising awareness of, and the role of wider services and partners in promoting, the integrated hubs • How the service works with volunteers and how they are supported to build on their particular areas of interest. <p>(Including a visit to the Huddersfield Centre)</p>	<u>13 February 2026</u>
13. Corporate Safeguarding Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update report on progress further to the Organisational Safeguarding Assessment in 2025 	<u>14 November 2025</u> A report was provided which provided an overview of the 2025 Statutory Organisational Safeguarding Assessment (OSA). The Committee agreed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OSA 2025 and the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan be endorsed. • The work being undertaken to strengthen safeguarding across all services be welcomed. • It be noted that the OSA 2025 would be submitted for consideration by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. • It be noted that the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan would be reviewed by the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, with the aim of continuously improving safeguarding practice across the Council.
14. Social Connectivity in Kirklees	Progress update in respect of Action Plan	<u>TBC</u>

15. Digital Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny	<u>TBC</u>
16. Tourism Strategy	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of New Strategy (3 Year strategy)	<p><u>14 November 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee was updated in respect of the development of the Council's Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>The Committee:</p> <p>Welcomed the consideration given to the input of scrutiny in the development of the latest version of the strategy.</p> <p>Supported the principles and objectives of the Tourism Strategy and</p> <p>Noted that the final strategy would be submitted to Cabinet for approval within the next few months.</p> <p>The Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on 13 January 2026. The feedback provided by Scrutiny was set out in the report.</p>
17. Procurement Strategy	Update and Introduction of Ethical Procurement Policy and Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers	<p><u>14 November 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of proposed updates to the Procurement Strategy and outlined the proposal to introduce an Ethical Procurement Policy and Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers.</p> <p>The Committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the updates to the Procurement Strategy and the proposals for the implementation of an Ethical Procurement Policy and Code of Conduct for Suppliers would be submitted to Cabinet for approval on 2nd December 2025. • That the Council's current procurement approach was in line with that of other local authorities and would

		continue to be regularly reviewed and as and when further government guidance was received. It also welcomed the work being undertaken to increase the amount of Kirklees spend going to local businesses.
18. Culture Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny of Culture Strategy (10 year)	TBC
19. Communications Strategy and Business Plan	Update on activity	<p><u>11 July 2025 – Informal</u></p> <p>Members received an update in relation to the Comms Strategy and Business Plan which included information in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the mission, to focus on helping Kirklees residents understand, access and have confidence in council services. • The priority ongoing campaigns and alignment with the Council’s priorities and outcomes. • Performance data evaluation and insights. • The ongoing objectives in respect of day-to-day proactive communications. <p>Members made comments and suggestions to be taken on board for future practice.</p>
20. Devolution	Update in respect of devolution and the impact on Kirklees and engagement at regional level.	<p><u>12 September 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee received a report which set out the contents of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. Discussion took place in relation to: the impact on Kirklees, the further detail awaited with particular reference to the arrangements for neighbourhood governance; and the need for funding to effectively implement neighbourhood governance. It was requested that further updates be provided in December 2025 and February 2026 .</p>

21. External Funding Opportunities	Update in respect of activities associated with identifying and pursuing partnership and funding opportunities that support the Council priorities.	<u>TBC</u>
22. Household Support Fund - Replacement	Maintain an overview of the changes from the replacement of the Household Support Fund with the Crisis Resilience Fund in April 2026 and the potential impact on Kirklees residents.	TBC
23. Physical Activity in Kirklees – Next Steps	Recommendation from Cabinet (21/10/25) for Scrutiny to be engaged ahead of, and throughout, the next steps of the process.	<p><u>14 November 2025</u></p> <p>A report was presented in respect of proposals to develop a new sport and leisure facility in Dewsbury and to support wider improvement of physical activity levels in North Kirklees.</p> <p>The Committee resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the engagement with scrutiny and ward councillors at an early stage of the process be welcomed. • That it be noted that an independent options appraisal and feasibility study for the provision of a new sport and leisure facility for Dewsbury are to be progressed and it be requested that regular updates be brought to the Committee, to include the work being proposed, alongside partners, to supplement existing provision to support people across North Kirklees to be more active. • That it be recommended that a clear timeline be established, as a priority, to ensure that all interested parties are kept informed. • That it be recommended that the Committee’s feedback be considered in the commissioning process for the options appraisal.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Committee's comments in relation to the potential outreach work be considered in the further development of these proposals.
24. Member Development Framework	Pre-decision scrutiny prior to submission to Council	<u>13 February 2025</u>
25. Scrutiny Work Programmes	<p>Maintain an overview of the Work Programmes of the four Panels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Environment and Climate Growth and Regeneration Health and Adult Social Care 	<p>The Chair of Scrutiny introduced the Committee's Work Programme for 2025/26 at the meeting in July 2025 and each Lead Member gave an overview of their Panel's Work Programme.</p> <p>The Work Programmes for 2025/26 were approved.</p> <p>Updates are provided by the Lead Members at each meeting of the Committee.</p>

LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING ISSUES

THEME/ISSUE	APPROACH / AREAS OF FOCUS	NOTES
Inclusion and Diversity	Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2024-27 Progress Update	
People Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Update Phase 3/4 Pre-decision of revised strategy 2025 onwards 	<p>Briefing 28/11/25 covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad update including detail on Phase 4 projects. Focus on recruitment and retention and workforce planning including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to fill roles and the approach to address this challenge; early career initiatives, apprenticeships; career engagement. Questions answered in respect of roles in planning, audit and information governance. The recruitment approach including participation in two LGA initiatives and testing alternative models to target potential candidates.

		Outcome: People Strategy update to be added to the OSMC Work Programme for Autumn 2026.
Armed Forces Covenant	Progress Update	Update provided to Committee on 25/7/25