

**Name of meeting:** Council  
**Date:** Wednesday 10 May 2017  
**Title of report:** Kirklees Democracy Commission

**Purpose of report**

To share with Council the draft report, findings and recommendations of the Kirklees Democracy Commission.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <a href="#">Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)</a></b>	Not applicable
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive – 28 April 2017
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Signed off by the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning Support?</b>	Julie Muscroft – 28 April 2017
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	Not applicable

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** Not applicable at this stage

**Public or private:** Public

## 1. Summary

The cross party, independently chaired, Kirklees Democracy Commission was established to undertake work with the intention of looking at how the following Mission Statement is delivered:

*By 2020 Kirklees is an informed citizen-led democracy with accountable elected representatives who enable communities to influence and affect decisions governing their lives.*

The attached draft report represents the outcome of detailed research, dialogue and engagement over many months and includes a suite of recommendations intended to redesign local democracy for the next generation of Kirklees citizens.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

The Kirklees Democracy Commission was established to answer the fundamental question - *what should local democracy be like in Kirklees as we move to a new Council?* The starting premise for the work was that a healthy and vibrant local democracy must be at the heart of effective local government. Democratically elected councillors, representing citizens, continue to play an important role in leading the relationship between the Council and its communities.

That said, the Council and its relationship with local people is changing. In the context of diminishing resources, the regional devolution agenda, reduced voter turnout and the opportunities of greater participation in a digital age there was a compelling need to revisit what democracy should look and feel like in a changing Kirklees. The Commission's work has been wide ranging although it has sought to break its work down into three broad, yet interrelated, themes:

- The Role of Councillors in a Representative and Participatory Democracy
- Governance, Accountability and Decision Making
- Elections and the Electoral Cycle

In delivering its terms of reference the Commission has undertaken a thorough and far reaching approach to its work. Over 1,000 people have contributed to the Commission's evidence gathering including local citizens, partners, organisations, staff, expert witnesses, other councils, councillors and political groups. The Commission has been totally transparent with all of its work posted on its [website](#) and the majority of its sessions filmed and broadcast. The Commission's work has received considerable national interest.

The attached draft report represents the outcomes of the Commission's work. Its recommendations are intended to strike a balance between strategic considerations and practical proposals that can be piloted or implemented. Whilst recommendations are not confined to the Council alone, there is clearly a strong focus on what is in the Council's gift. Council is asked to consider this context and the consequent proposals with this in mind. The report is presented in draft form to allow Council the opportunity to fully debate the findings before a final version is produced and launched.

### 3. **Implications for the Council**

The implications for the Council are potentially far reaching given the strategic nature of the Commission's work. Such implications, along with specific financial and wider resource considerations, will need to be explored in full once the final report and associated recommendations have been produced following consideration by Council. Such implications would need to be picked up as part of wider dialogue and implementation.

### 4. **Consultees and their opinions**

All Commissioners have had the opportunity to consider the report draft and have signed it off as an accurate reflection of their work and consequent recommendations.

All expert witnesses will receive a copy of the draft report and will be given the opportunity to comment before the final report is produced. This will only relate to matters of accuracy and will not affect the report narrative, conclusions or recommendations.

### 5. **Next steps**

Following consideration by Council the Commission will produce a finalised version of its report which will be publicly launched on Friday 30 June 2017. Work will then need to take place to prioritise and action plan the suite of recommendations as part of a project managed implementation process.

### 6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

The Commission asks that Council endorses the attached report and comments on the proposals contained therein.

### 7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable.

### 8. **Contact officer**

The attached report has been produced on behalf of the Commission by:

Carl Whistlecraft, Head of Governance and Democratic Services  
Tel: 01484 221000  
E-mail: [carl.whistlecraft@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:carl.whistlecraft@kirklees.gov.uk)

### 9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

All of the background papers and associated evidence considered by the Commission in producing its report and recommendations can be found on the [Kirklees Democracy Commission](#) web site.

### 10. **Service Director responsible**

Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive