



Local Democracy – The Next Generation

The Work of the Kirklees Democracy Commission

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Some context...

Price versus Value?

Price	Value
Public perception	New Council
Budget pressures	Strategic debate – future focussed

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Brave leadership



“New Council cannot work without democracy being refreshed”

– Adrian Lythgo,
Chief Executive of Kirklees Council

Cross party “buy in”
Huddersfield University



The process



Cross party
Independently chaired
Open and transparent
Multi-disciplinary project team
Working at pace





Our mission...

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



Three key themes

Councillors

The role of councillors in a representative and participatory democracy

Elections

Elections and the electoral cycle

Decision-making

Governance, accountability and decision-making





Enabling themes

Devolution

Digital



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Stages of the work

- ✓ All start from the same place
- ✓ Research phase
- ✓ Engagement phase
(public and stakeholder groups)
- ✓ Public inquiries
- ✓ Visits
 - Political engagement
 - Reporting

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Emerging themes #1



Councillors need to move to a more 'enabling' and facilitative role with communities

The changing relationship between citizen and state requires councillors and public bodies to have a different "social contract" with communities

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Emerging themes #2



We need to interact with the public as citizens and not customers

Increased participation would be more effective if people see their relationship with public bodies as citizens

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Emerging themes #3



People are interested and want to be involved, but there are barriers in making this happen

More transparency is required, plus greater collaboration with communities and help to develop and grow civic society

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Emerging themes #4



More citizenship education on local democracy in schools and communities



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Emerging themes #5



There is a clear identification by people about 'place'

People mainly associate more with towns and villages, not Kirklees

Councillors need to help communities grow and flourish at a neighbourhood level (grass roots democracy)

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Emerging themes #6



There is the possibility of looking at changing the election cycle

- Moving to an all out election once every 4 years may help continuity and long-term planning and reduce costs
- Dangers in changing the frequency, e.g. may 'distance' the electorate
- Need to make elections more of an "event"

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Emerging themes #7



We need to attract the next generation of councillors

We should demonstrate the impact that a councillor can have



Emerging themes #8



Use technology more (and better)

- We must take the debate and dialogue to where the people are
- Need to avoid digital exclusion and blend online with offline interaction (provide information in different formats to suit the participants)





Emerging themes #9



The wider context of devolution

We need greater clarity in terms of the role of councillors, and accountability and decision making

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What happens next?

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Next steps...

- Present draft findings and share
- Final report(s)
- Council discussion
- Redesign local democracy

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I've learned that...

It's really hard, but...

- People are interested, care and want to help
- You can't do this without a great team
- It's all about the planning – use the tools and brief properly
- It's great for cross service working
- Transparency is the way to go
- Maintaining focus and pace is tough
- Local democracy does still matter
- The hardest bit is still to come



Questions?

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Group discussions

How can councillors have a more enabling role in communities?

How can we interact with the public as citizens not customers?

How can we attract the next generation of councillors?

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