

Growing a stronger local democracy

checking & celebrating our progress



We're working with our citizens and others to grow a stronger local democracy in Kirklees, from the ground up.

Our report & recommendations

The Kirklees Democracy Commission's report made 48 Recommendations about how we can strengthen our local democracy. In spring 2018, we set up a Working Group of councillors from different political groups to help us respond to those recommendations. Many projects and activities are already under way.

A special year for our democracy

2018 marks 100 years since Parliament passed a law which allowed some women, and all men, to vote for the first time: the 1918 Representation of the People Act. We're celebrating **Vote 100 in Kirklees** throughout the year.

We're also celebrating some important milestones for our local democracy:

Huddersfield 150 - celebrating 150 years of civic achievement in Huddersfield.

Batley 150 - celebrating 150 years since the founding of the Borough of Batley.

Kirklees Youth Council's 10th Anniversary - celebrating inspiring young citizens.

What we're doing

Here are some examples of our current work and ways that you can get involved...

Be a Democracy Seeker

We know that it's not always easy to get the information you're looking for. We want to make sure that our democratic information is more useful for our citizens - and easier to find. So we plan to bring together a group of citizens who are willing to work with us to improve our content. Interested? Sign up:

www.democracycommission.org.uk/seekers

or call 01484 221000 and ask for Diane Sims

Growing our youth council

We're celebrating 10 years of Kirklees Youth Council by looking to the future. We want to hear your ideas about how we can support our young citizens over the next 10 years. Citizens, community groups and schools can get involved. We're also running a Kirklees Youth Survey for 11-18 year olds.

www.democracycommission.org.uk/youthcouncil

or call 01484 221000 and ask for Michelle Ross

Opening up our meetings

Citizens told us that you can't get involved in local democracy if you can't understand how it works. So we're creating some simple video guides and other resources to help make our public meetings easier to understand and to get involved in. If you're on our email list, you'll get regular updates.

Email us with ideas at: kirkleesdemocracy@gmail.com

The changing councillor role

Councillors have a unique role in connecting us to our communities. We know that the role is changing, so we're creating some new role profiles for councillors, which will say what's expected of the role. Our councillors said it's important that we create something flexible to suit different places in Kirklees, and that our staff and citizens are involved in the work.



A new approach to citizen engagement

We want to make sure that everyone has a stake in the place where they live, work or visit. So we've created some new principles for the way Kirklees Council will engage with our citizens. We've also been testing out a tool called the "Place Standard". This is a way of helping to get conversations going about any place (it could be your street, neighbourhood or town), by using some simple questions. We have tried this out in the Golcar Ward.

www.howgoodisourplace.org.uk

or call 01484 221000 and ask for Vina Randhawa

Kirklees Question Time

We're holding quarterly Question Time style events across Kirklees where you can put your questions to local councillors, including the leaders of our local political groups. Each event is webcast and tweeted live and you can submit questions online in advance. Suggestions for panellists are welcome.

www.democracycommission.org.uk/kirkleesqt

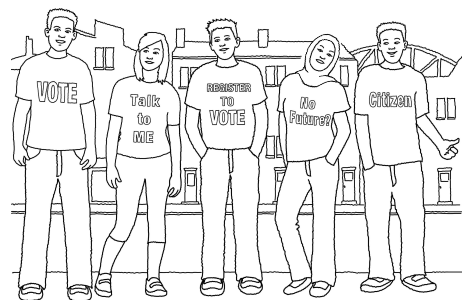
or call 01484 221000 and ask for Jackie Ingham

Improving electoral registration

We're working with our partners to encourage voter registration. Students enrolling at the University of Huddersfield this autumn were given the opportunity to register to vote during their course enrolment. This is a first for Kirklees and is part of our ongoing partnership with the University.

And lots more...

We're working with NCS to help 15 to 17 year olds learn about voting and democracy. We're working with head teachers in secondary schools across Kirklees to look at ways we can raise awareness and understanding of local democracy in schools. We're working with Democracy Club to improve voter information. We're working with lots of local volunteers and partners, including the Batley 150 and Huddersfield 150 groups, to celebrate our democratic heritage and to encourage civic involvement.



Our principles

You can expect these principles to form the basis of every aspect of our practical work to grow a stronger local democracy:

Everything starts with the citizen

The local democracy that we deserve is best shaped by our citizens, who can play an active part in our wider civic society.

Working in the open

We're committed to working in the open, because we want to create as many opportunities as possible for people to get involved. Everything we do is shared. Wherever possible, we have done this in real-time, including live-tweeting our events and webcasting our public inquiries.

Partnership approach

A strong local democracy grows from the connections between people. It's about relationships, conversations and networks.

Evidence led

Our report was based on a year of evidence-gathering that over 1,000 people participated in. We publish our evidence for others to explore and learn from.

Councillors at the heart

Councillors are at the heart of a strong local democracy. We're aiming to sow the seeds of cultural change in our council and in our communities, by putting councillors at the heart of what we do. We've started a special project within our council to do this, which many councillors and staff are participating in.

How are we doing?

You can share your comments and suggestions, sign up for email updates, and find out more ways to get involved in our local democracy, on our website:

www.democracycommission.org.uk

Tweet us @kirkdemocracy

Share comments with your local councillor or Write to: Democracy Service, First Floor North, Civic Centre III, Market Street, Huddersfield HD1 2TG.