

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

At a meeting of the Commission held on
5 October 2020

- (Present) **Councillor Wiseman (Chair)**
Councillors Cunliffe, Greaves, Hattersley, T Long, Lynch,
McDonnell, Osundeko, C Preston and Reynolds
- (Also Present) **Councillor Bond, Cabinet Member Finance and Governance**
- (Not Present) **Councillors Haw and Johnson**
- Mr D Thorpe** - **Church of England**
Mr C Williams - **Roman Catholic Church**

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

- * **Resolved that Councillor Wiseman be appointed as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.**

Councillor Wiseman here took the Chair.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Haw and Johnson and Mr C Williams and Mr D Thorpe.

3 MINUTES

- * **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020, be approved and signed.**

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

5 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

No Declarations of Party Whip were made.

6 ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2020/2021

A report was submitted which allocated seats on the various Committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in order to comply with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to make appointments to those seats in accordance with Section 16.

Under the terms of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 where a Council is divided into different Political Groups in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, as this one is, seats on all Committees have to be allocated to give effect to the following principles:

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- (a) all the seats on Committee are not to be allocated to the same political group;
- (b) the majority of seats on a Committee should be allocated to the group which has the majority of the Authority's membership;
- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the total number of seats on Committees must be allocated in proportion to the political strength on the Council; and
- (d) subject to (a), (b) and (c) above the number of seats on each Committee must be allocated in proportion to the political strength on the Council.

The political make-up of the Council was reported as follows:

Labour	35 Seats
Liberal Democrat	4 Seats
The Independents	3 Seats
Conservative	3 Seats
Green	2 Seats
Vacancy	1 Seat

Section 16 of the above Act provides that after the allocation of seats had been determined, that the seats be allocated to Political Groups. The seats were the property of the various Political Groups for appointment.

The appointment of Members in line with the wishes of the Groups were shown in the recommendations.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **in order to comply with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the seats on the following Committees be allocated as detailed below:**

		Total	Lab	Lib Dem	Con	Ind	Green
1	Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee	10	7	1	1	1	0
2	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee	10	7	1	0	1	1
3	Place Services Scrutiny Committee	10	7	1	1	0	1
		30	21	3	2	2	2

- (2) **in order to comply with Section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the appointments to those seats allocated in accordance with Section 15 and the appointment of Members in line with the wishes of the groups is shown below:**

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1. Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

Lab	7	Councillors	Gill, Lynch, Maloney, McDonnell, Pearson, L Preston and Uddin
LD	1	Councillor	Pearl
Ind	1	Councillor	Greaves
Con	1	Councillor	Mussell

Co-opted (Non-Voting) Mrs B Smith, Representative from Healthwatch

2. Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

Lab	7	Councillors	Cunliffe, T Long, McDonnell, Osundeko, C Preston, Sweeney and Wiseman
LD	1	Councillor	Sims
Ind	1	Councillor	Greaves
Grn	1	Councillor	O'Keefe

Co-opted (voting) Mr D Thorpe (Church of England)
Mr C Williams (Roman Catholic Church)
Vacancy (Primary)
Ms P Lawson, Parent Governor (Secondary)
Ms J Leybourne, Parent Governor (Special)

3. Place Services Scrutiny Committee

Lab	7	Councillors	Gill, Hattersley, J Jackson, P Jackson, McQuade, L Preston and Uddin
LD	1	Councillor	Smith
Con	1	Councillor	Mussell
Grn	1	Councillor	van der Burg

Co-opted (non-Voting) Superintendent S Brizell, Merseyside Police
Mr I Mullen, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

(3) **the Overview and Scrutiny Commission appointed Chairs to Committees as follows:**

Committee	Chairman
1 Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor McDonnell
2 Children and Young People's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor T Long
3 Place Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Hattersley

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7 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

A report was submitted which detailed the Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission as follows:

The Commission is responsible for all Overview and Scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council, and in particular:

- To appoint and work with the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees to develop and agree the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes.
- Hold regular discussions with Scrutiny Chairmen, Cabinet Members and Executive Directors to identify priority topics for consideration by Scrutiny.
- Identify and take responsibility for items that transcend the terms of reference of, or that fall outside the remit of, the individual Committees.
- Consider the Council's Budget Strategy and budget proposals made by the Cabinet and recommend if consultation or representations need to be made.
- Consider strategic Council policy decisions and recommend if consultation or representations need to be made.
- To make representations to the Cabinet, and Council if necessary, on any issues or areas of concern arising from the overview and scrutiny process.
- To monitor the achievement of the "Be a modern, efficient and effective Council" Council Priority as set out in the Council Plan.
- Produce an Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report detailing all scrutiny activity for the year.
- Co-ordinate the Members' Overview and Scrutiny learning programme to facilitate continuous improvement of the overview and scrutiny function.
- To receive regular updates on the activities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee.
- To receive relevant reports on a regular basis in order to review and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council.
- To review and scrutinise the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts prior to approval by the Audit and Governance Committee.
- In undertaking this role, the Commission is able to question members of the Cabinet, and/or Chief Officers, regarding their decisions in relation to the financial performance and financial health of the Council.
- To exercise the right following call-in to review and, where appropriate, ask for re-consideration of decisions made by, but not yet implemented by, the Cabinet or Council.

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- To receive and have regard for Councillor Calls for Action within the remit of the Commission.

The Terms of Reference of the Adult Social Care and Health, Children and Young People's Services and Place Services Overview and Scrutiny Panels were also submitted for Members' information.

* **Resolved that the report be noted**

8 **RESET AND RECOVERY**

The Assistant Chief Executive presented an update to the Commission upon the Council's reset and recovery plans.

The presentation, entitled 'St Helens Borough Council Reset and Recovery' detailed the following:

- Introduction;
- Response;
 - communications;
 - continuation of the 'St Helens Together' approach;
 - 'Doing things differently' – using examples of a selection of Council services;
- Reset and Recovery
 - vision and priorities;
 - Council strengths/ challenges;
 - Council Strategy;
 - Council Principles;
 - Council Organisation;
- Future Ways of Working
 - core principles;
 - ways of working to date;
 - the 'next normal';
- Where the workforce will work/use of buildings;
- Reset & Recovery (people and place); and
- Next steps and Conclusions

Members acknowledged that the new ways of working outlined provided many advantages, particularly in relation to efficiencies and environmental benefits. Two questions were raised over the provision of support and guidance to address the significant challenges that all staff faced in terms of staff wellbeing, support and culture change.

The Assistant Chief Executive stressed the importance of staff wellbeing as a key priority, with several initiatives and socially interactive events being established and embedded to address the challenges, and to offer support to staff. It was also explained that managers would have a significant supportive role in the wellbeing of their staff.

In terms of culture change it was acknowledged that shifts had taken place at a very rapid pace, particularly through accelerated digital transformation, and that the new ways of working approach represented a journey for all staff. Plans were ongoing in establishing educational and support initiatives around flexible working and equipping staff to embrace the new/future ways of working. The Assistant Chief Executive added that more communication and engagement strategies would take place.

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A question was raised whether the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on the Council's regeneration plans, particularly with regards to Town Centre regeneration.

In response, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that the Council was currently developing an economic recovery plan which was due to be completed by the end of October 2020, adding that the progress on the key regeneration programmes would be detailed in that plan. The Assistant Chief Executive stressed that wider issues mentioned in the presentation around key regeneration programmes would also be detailed in the economic recovery plan.

In addition, clarification was sought upon how Members would translate the Reset and Recovery plans into effective outcomes for the Borough's residents and in appropriate timescales. In response, it was outlined that there would be focus on what success looks like with an alignment of plans to key priorities, with the inclusion of localised priorities.

It was also outlined that these new ways of working were not unique and had been in operation for some time in various organisations within other sectors.

The Assistant Chief Executive was thanked for his attendance and his comprehensive presentation, and all staff were thanked for embracing the new ways of working and adapting to change in a very challenging environment and in a rapid timeframe.

* **Resolved that the presentation be noted**

9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Commission gave consideration to its Work Programme. The Work Programme document contained suggested items from the previous Commission Membership as well as items relating to the Commission's new remit following changes to the Scrutiny Committee structure by Council. Members were requested to consider the Work Programme and make suggestions regarding when items should be considered by the Commission and whether any additional items should be added.

It was resolved that Members of the Commission would consider any additional items to be included on the work programme, particularly in respect of the next meeting and inform the Scrutiny Manager by Monday 12 October 2020.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the report be noted; and**
- (2) any items to be added to the work programme or for inclusion at the next meeting be conveyed to the Scrutiny Manager by Monday, 12 October 2020.**