OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on
18 July 2016

(Present) Councillor Baines (Chairman)
Councillors Bond, Fletcher, L Glover, McDonnell,
Pearson, C Preston, Pritchard, Shields and Wiseman

(Not Present) Councillors Ireland, J Johnson, Jones, McQuade and
Pearl
Rev D Hall - (Roman Catholic)
Rev T Neylon - (Church of England)

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Ireland, J Johnson, Jones,
McQuade, Pearl and Reverend Hall and Reverend Neylon

10 MINUTES

* Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2016, be approved
and signed.

11 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

No Declarations of Interest from Members were made.

12 PUBLIC NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

A report was submitted which updated the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on
Key Decisions that the Cabinet expected to make. Members were informed that there was
a Key Decision expected to be made within areas which would be subject to each Scrutiny
Panel’s key policies and strategy reviews.

A brief description of the Key Decision had been included in the report for Members to
consider and identify any issues of particular relevance to be taken into account in the key
policy/strategy reviews.

A Public Notice of Key Decisions published on 22 June 2016 was attached at Appendix 1
to the report.

* Resolved that the report be noted.

13 BUDGET STRATEGY 2017-2020 (REPORTED TO CABINET ON 22 JUNE 2016)

A report was presented on the Budget Strategy 2017-2020 which had been submitted to a
meeting of Cabinet held on 22 June 2016. The Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director
Corporate Services was present to answer questions from Members.

The Council adopted a long-term budget strategy in October 2001 with the aim of
maintaining the Council’s sound financial position. The principles of the budget strategy
had been amended over time only in the allocation of efficiency targets, with the aim of reflecting the national efficiency agenda. These principles were:-

(a) budgets will be cash limited;

(b) all growth will be contained within the overall service budget;

(c) there will be no contribution from General Balances;

(d) there will be no general revenue contributions to fund capital expenditure;

(e) overspends in the current year will be funded from service cash limits for the following year;

(f) any savings targets required to remove any funding gap will be set by reference to high cost services; and

(g) efficiency targets should be allocated on a basis to meet the national efficiency agenda.

The budget strategy had been successful in enabling the Council to meet its funding challenges since 2001. The report outlined that those funding challenges would continue throughout this decade.

The Government had linked the efficiency agenda to the overall national budget deficit reduction strategy, which had seen major reductions in Government grants to Local Government. This would continue for the next three years.

The Government had stated that it wished to see a position that Local Government is wholly reliant upon locally-raised funding to resource its services by 2020. The report proposed that the Zero Based Budget Reviews of Portfolios should be undertaken again, and this process should be used to support the budget reduction agenda. The detail of the review was highlighted in the report.

Cabinet had resolved that:

(1) Portfolios undertake further Zero Based Budget Reviews of their areas of responsibility and identify areas for potential savings for 2017-2020, to support the development of options on which Cabinet will form a budget position later in the year;

(2) the Scrutiny Commission be requested to consider the implications of the budget strategy, and appropriateness of that strategy, given the funding challenges faced by the Council;

(3) the Budget Consultation be commenced and the Budget Simulator placed on the Council’s website; and

(4) this process be seen as complementary to an exercise of forward planning what services would look like in 2020.
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Members raised questions with regard to the report which were answered at the meeting.

* Resolved that:

(1) the report be noted; and
(2) the Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director Corporate Services be thanked for their attendance.

14 REVIEW OF OLDER PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND LONELINESS - DRAFT REPORT

A report was submitted which informed the Overview and Scrutiny Commission of the Review of Older People’s Needs and Loneliness – Final Report

The Scrutiny Review had been undertaken by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the report had been approved at a meeting of the Panel held on 9 June 2016.

The report detailed the background and scope, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review.

Members discussed the contents of the report.

* Resolved that:

(1) the report be noted; and
(2) the final report be submitted to Cabinet.

15 ANNUAL SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

A report was submitted and outlined by the Scrutiny Manager which updated Members on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/2017.

The report detailed the results of consultation undertaken to assist Members in their selection of topic areas for inclusion in the Work Programme 2016/2017.

The Work Programme had been developed by taking into account:

- Corporate priorities and objectives, including the Cabinet’s Key Decisions;
- Partnership strategic priorities and objectives; and
- The interests and concerns of Members, Council Officers, members of the public and other stakeholders such as community and voluntary groups and local businesses

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission was requested to examine a list of suggested topics which had been submitted for possible inclusion in the Work Programme that had been received from the following stakeholders:

- Consultation with Strategic Directors and Cabinet Members
- The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Panels
- Consultation with Partners
- Correspondence to all Head Teachers
- Consultation with St Helens Healthwatch
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Members were informed that since the last meeting of the Commission, each Scrutiny Panel had met and agreed topic areas as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2016/2017. These were detailed in the report at Paragraph 4.3.

The Chairman also informed the Commission of the need to establish a Task and Finish Group to undertaken the Budget Scrutiny Review 2017/2020.

It was important that the Work Programme allowed sufficient space to accommodate one off reviews and any urgent topics that may arise during the year.

* Resolved that:

(1) the report be noted;

(2) the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed the Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/2017 as follows:-

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Commission
   - Budget Scrutiny
   - Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny

(b) Audit and Financial Monitoring Overview and Scrutiny Panel
   - Budget and Performance Monitoring – Corporate Financial Report
   - Internal Audit Plan 2016/17
   - Internal Audit Reports and Follow Ups

(c) Children and Young People’s Service Overview and Scrutiny Panel
   - Completing relevant actions arising from inspections, audits, scrutiny exercises and case reviews
   - Ensuring the highest possible quality of safeguarding services in the borough in accordance with the Council’s statutory responsibilities and leadership roles
   - Ensuring the voice of the child is listened to

(d) Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel
   - 2020 Improving Recycling Rates
   - Regulation of Private Landlords (Joint Review with Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel)

(e) Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel
   - Mental Health Support Services
   - District Nursing System

(f) Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
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- Regulation of Private Landlords (Joint Review with Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel); and

(3) a Task and Finish Group be appointed to undertake the Budget Scrutiny Review 2017/2020, to include the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels as lead role to focus on their respective Cabinet Portfolio Areas and Councillors Jones and Pearl.

16 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

A draft report was submitted and presented by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, which sought approval for the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16.

In accordance with the Council’s Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission must report annually to Council on its working and that of its Panels in 2015/16, and make recommendations for further Work Programmes and amended work methods, if appropriate.

* Resolved that:

(1) the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/2016 be approved; and

(2) the report be submitted to the next meeting of Council.

17 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY PANEL UPDATE

A verbal report was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission by the Chairman which updated Members on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Panel.

The Local Authorities of the Liverpool City Region reached agreement with the Government in November 2015 regarding the devolution of resources, powers and responsibilities from Government to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The details of the agreement were considered and approved by Full Council at its meeting held on 19 November 2015.

Before the Government could devolve powers to the Combined Authority, it was obliged to carry out a Governance Review and propose a Scheme in relation to the exercise of powers. The Review was intended to demonstrate that the devolution of powers as set out in the Scheme would be likely to improve the exercise of those functions in the area of the Liverpool City Region.

The Governance Review and Scheme was approved for the purposes of consultation by the Combined Authority on 17 June 2016. The consultation would be undertaken from 24 June 2016 until 5 August 2016, with its outcome reported to the Combined Authority on 19 August 2016.

The Governance Review and Scheme was appended to the agenda for Members information and the Commission was informed would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 20 July 2016.

The Commission discussed the Governance Review and Scheme raising their concerns in relation to the consultation process which they believed to have been inadequate.
Resolved that:

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) the Chair to raise the concerns expressed by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in relation to the consultation process with the Cabinet.

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