

ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the St Helens Borough Council held on
15 November 2023

(Present) **The Mayor (Councillor Clarke) (Chair)**
Councillors Baines, D Banks, J Banks, Bell, Betts, Bowden,
Campbell, Case, Charlton, Collier, Dickinson, Gomez-Aspron
MBE, Greaves, Groucutt, Hattersley, Haw, Hawley, Hooton,
Johnson, Laird, D Long, T Long, Maguire, Maloney MBE,
McCauley, McCormack, McQuade, Mussell, O'Connor,
Osundeko, Pearl, Peers, Quinn, Richards, Sheldon, Spencer,
Stevenson, Sweeney, Tasker, Uddin and van der Burg.

(Not Present) **Councillors Bond, Burns, Hodkinson, Makin, Murphy MBE,**
and Sims

41 MINUTES

* **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20**
September 2023 be approved.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bond, Burns (other Council Business),
Hodkinson, Makin, Murphy MBE, and Sims.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Item	Title	Member(s)	Declaration
12	Community Governance Review – Final Recommendation on Petition Proposal to Create a New Town Council for Newton-le-Willows East and West.	Councillor Gomez- Aspron MBE	Personal and prejudicial.

44 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor informed Council of a recent visit to Stuttgart to celebrate the 75th
Anniversary of the Town's Twinning and the unveiling of a new square called St Helens
Platz.

She also congratulated St Helens Rotary on being awarded the King's Award for
voluntary service.

45 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Baines, Leader of the Council echoed the Mayor's congratulations to St
Helens Rotary and thanked those involved from Schools and the Community who visited
Stuttgart and helped to make it a success.

He then spoke about the following:

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- Remembrance Events across the borough;
- Unveiling of a plaque at Newton Library commemorating 13 former Red Bank school teachers and pupils killed in action during WW2;
- Thanks to emergency services over the Halloween and Bonfire night period;
- Many events held over the past few weeks including Festival of Football, The World Tipped and Out of the Ground Comes Light events;
- Opening the first of three Family Hubs;
- The Leader attended the recent Voluntary and Business awards;
- To a major step in the region to bring buses back under our control;
- Library Strategy;
- Budget Challenge;
- Christmas Appeal launched for 2023.

46 TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9

The Mayor reported that one question had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

Councillor Spencer asked the following question:

“Could the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Climate Change please inform me when the problem of constant flooding of rear gardens in Reginald Road Sutton will be resolved. The problems has arisen since the building of houses on the former Reginald Road Industrial Estate with surface water running off the site into the rear gardens causing problems for residents.”

Councillor Bowden responded as follows:

“Thank you for your question. The Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority delivering its duties under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and I can assure you and the full Council that with regards to the reporting of floods in the rear gardens on Reginald Road, the local flood authority is working collaboratively with the planning service to investigate and confirm the source of the problem and is engaging directly with adjacent housing developer to deliver an appropriate remedy.

In the interim the Council has highlighted to residents and landowners of their own riparian rights and responsibilities signposting them to the Flood Hub for property flood resilience guidance and be assured, Councillor Spencer that the Council shall continue to engage positively with those affected residents.

I have also asked officers to arrange a meeting and I believe you should have received an email to that effect with yourselves to discuss the situation further to assist you and ward colleagues in supporting residents.”

Councillor Spencer asked a supplementary question which the Mayor ruled that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.6 the question did not arise directly out of the original question or the reply therefore it not be allowed.

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47 TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10

The Mayor reported that there were no questions submitted in accordance with this Procedure Rule.

48 TO HEAR ANY DEPUTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

The Mayor reported that no requests to hear a deputation had been received in accordance with this Procedure Rule.

49 CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

A report was submitted which set out a number of issues in relation to the Constitution and the governance of the Council, which Council was asked to consider and either note or determine, as appropriate.

It was the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution and to seek approval to any changes necessary due to changes in legislation or changes in the way the Council wishes to operate.

The report set out the proposed changes which have been identified in relation to:

- i) Revised Terms of Reference for Audit and Governance Committee and
- ii) Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Merseyside Health & Care Partnership Board.

*** Resolved that:**

- (1) the revised Terms of Reference for Audit and Governance Committee be approved;**
- (2) it be agreed that the Council becomes a member of the Cheshire & Merseyside Health & Care Partnership Board as a Joint Committee and the Leader of the Council be nominated to continue as the Council's appointed representative on the Partnership Board and the Portfolio Holder for Integrated Health & Care as their nominated substitute member, as agreed at Annual Council on 17 May 2023;**
- (3) the Terms of Reference for the Cheshire & Merseyside Health & Care Partnership Board at Appendix 2 be approved and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to agree any minor changes to the Terms of Reference in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Integrated Care and Health and Executive Director of People & NHS Place Director St Helens; and**
- (4) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary changes to the constitution so that it accords with the decisions of Council in this regard.**

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50 REPORT OF LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND TRADING STANDARDS FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2023/24

A report was submitted which provided Council with the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Food Law Enforcement Plan 2023/24 which provided details of how official food and feed controls would be delivered in the borough. The Plan was considered by the Licensing and Environmental Protection Committee at its meeting held on 19 October 2023.

The Food Law Enforcement Plan was listed in the Policy Framework in Article 4.01(a) of the constitution for Council approval.

- * **Resolved that the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Food Law Enforcement Plan 2023/24 be approved.**

51 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVE FOR HEALTHWATCH TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A report was submitted which recommended that Council appoint a new Co-opted member representing Healthwatch to the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules allow Council to appoint non-voting co-optees as appropriate.

The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Scrutiny Committee membership had included a co-opted representative of Healthwatch for 10 years. Healthwatch had notified the Council that their current representative was now unable to participate in future meetings and proposed Canon Geoff Almond be co-opted onto the Committee as their new representative.

At its meeting held on 9 October 2023, ASCH Scrutiny Committee resolved to recommend that Council be asked to approve the co-option of Canon Geoff Almond as a non-voting member.

- * **Resolved that Canon Geoff Almond be co-opted onto the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee as a non-voting member.**

Councillor Gomez-Aspron MBE here left the meeting.

52 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON PETITION PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NEW TOWN COUNCIL FOR NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS EAST & WEST

A report was submitted which updated Council on the outcome of the second stage consultation that was held between 21 April and 14 July 2023 and to consider the final recommendation from the Cross Party Working Group (CPWG), having taken into account the results and feedback from both consultations with residents and stakeholders.

The CPWG had considered all consultation responses and information provided regarding the petition to create a new town council for Newton-le-Willows East and West having regard to the criteria set out in the Local Government and Public Improvement in

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Health Act 2007.

The final recommendation had been discussed in detail by the CPWG and Council was invited to approve the final recommendations presented which would therefore allow the Council to formally conclude the CGR process in relation to the petition proposal received from Newton & Earlestown Community Group.

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) the representations received during the second consultation stage in response to the draft recommendations approved by Council on 19 April 2023 be noted; and**
- (2) the final recommendation from the Community Governance Review Cross Party Working Group be approved as follows:**
 - a) having taken account of the results of the postal ballot of registered electors and the outcome of the two consultations held, not to proceed with the petition proposal to create a new town council for Newton-le-Willows East and West.**

Councillor Gomez-Aspron MBE here returned to the meeting.

53 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Baines and seconded by Councillor Gomez-Aspron:

“St Helens Borough Council has suffered huge cuts in central government funding since 2010. Twelve months ago, Council agreed a motion supporting a collective demand for urgent fair funding, and Council notes that one year later the financial challenge continues and is worsening.

Thirteen years ago, the Council received £127m in general funding from government, but for the current year 2023/24 it was just £11m.

Council notes the hard work of officers and members since 2010 in managing the impact of these cuts as best as possible, but further notes the inevitable harm such cuts have done to our ability to support residents and provide the services people expect and deserve.

Council notes that ours is not the only authority to face these challenges. The cross-party Local Government Association estimates that the sector faces a funding gap of around £4billion over the next two years.

It also continues to be a difficult time for many residents. St Helens Borough Council continues to work with our local public, faith and voluntary sectors to provide as much practical support and advice as possible, but those sectors – like ours, and as well as schools, health services, emergency services and more – are also facing huge difficulties.

Essential services cannot be run on thin air – we need fair funding urgently.

Ahead of the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement on 22 November, Council therefore resolves:

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- To support another letter to the Chancellor to be co-signed by representatives of local public, private, faith and voluntary sector organisations to ask for fair funding for essential services;
 - To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and the Prime Minister again to set out the challenges faced by the Council in particular and to ask for urgent support.”
- * **Resolved that the Motion be approved.**

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