

ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the St Helens Borough Council held on
20 September 2023

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

(Not Present) **Councillors Haw, Hawley, Richards, Sheldon and Stevenson.**

29 **MINUTES**

* **Resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12 July 2023 be approved.**

30 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Haw, Hawley, Richards, Sheldon and Stevenson.

31 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

No declarations of interest from Members were made.

32 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor congratulated St Helens RFC women's team on winning the Women's Challenge Cup for a third straight year and being the first team to do so at Wembley Stadium.

33 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Baines, Leader of the Council spoke about the following:

- Children's Services rated Good by Ofsted
- No schools within the borough being affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)
- Council's response to the Rail Delivery Group consultation objecting to the train ticket office proposed closures and writing to the Secretary of State for Transport to raise the concerns of this Council;
- The UK's largest Council; Birmingham City Council issuing of Section 114 notice and Local Government Finance and funding gaps affecting Councils and their delivery of services
- Appointment of VINCI Building to deliver first phase of the St Helens Town Centre transformation and development of Social Inclusion programme; and
- The 'Right to Food Week' (18th – 23rd September) and the opening of a food Pantry in Eccleston

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

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

35 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.

36 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.

37 REPORT OF CABINET – FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 1 2023/24

A report was submitted which informed Council that the Financial Monitoring Report Period 1 2023/24 was submitted to Cabinet on 19 July 2023.

The Council remained committed to the regular monitoring of its financial performance, and this report was provided to update Cabinet on the position of the Council in respect of the general fund revenue budget for 2023/24 and progress in delivering the capital programme

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the decisions made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 19 July 2023 be noted as follows:**
 - i) **note the latest revised budget and forecast revenue position for 2023/24 as detailed in Section 2;**
 - ii) **note the latest position with regard to the implementation of the 2023/24 budget savings and prior-year savings that were not fully implemented in 2022/23, as detailed in Section 3;**
 - iii) **approve the revised capital programme as detailed in Section 4;**
 - iv) **note the latest Reserves and Balances position as detailed in Section 5;**
 - v) **note the other financial monitoring matters as detailed in Section 6; and**
 - vi) **note the Treasury Management Position Statement at Annex G.**

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38 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) Scheme of Delegation – Chief Executive and
- ii) Scheme of Delegation – Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer

* **Resolved that:**

- (1) **the changes to the constitution as set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report be approved; and**
- (2) **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.**

39 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023/24

A report was submitted which advised Council that a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations would commence on 2 October 2023 to be completed by 2 February 2024 for the republication of the electoral register.

The Council had a statutory responsibility to review UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places for each constituency in its area.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a compulsory timetable when such reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months every fifth year. The next compulsory review period will begin on 1 October 2023 to be completed before 31 January 2025.

The Council would now need to undertake a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations commencing on 2 October 2023.

- * **Resolved that the timetable for the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations be noted.**

Councillor Bond left during discussion of the following item.

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

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Charlton and seconded by Councillor T Long:

“As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and outcomes for the children and young people who are

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looked after by the Council.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care headed by Josh McCallister published in May 2022 stated: "Many care experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice in their day to day lives. Public perceptions of care experience centre on the idea that children are irredeemably damaged and that can lead to discrimination and assumptions being made."

Care experienced people often face barriers and discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system.

Such discrimination can be similar in nature to other groups that have a legally protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

The Independent Review included a recommendation that Government should make care experience a protected characteristic. Making care experience a protected characteristic would provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced people.

This Council therefore resolves to adopt the following principles:

- To recognise that care experienced people are a vulnerable group who are likely to face discrimination;
 - To continue to proactively seek out and listen to the views of care experienced people when developing new policies and strategies, and
 - To treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation and call upon other partners and organisations to do so."
- * **Resolved that the Motion be approved.**

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