



St. Helens  
Council

# Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2017-18



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## What is Scrutiny?

St Helens Council is run by councillors elected by the people of St Helens. A small number of them form the cabinet (also referred to as the executive) which sets the direction, determines the priorities and takes the important decisions. The councillors in the cabinet hold powerful positions and it is important that they are held to public account for their actions. This is done through a system called overview and scrutiny and is undertaken by the non-executive councillors.

This is common to most local councils. They ensure that decisions are taken based on good evidence including the views of those with an interest in the matter and are in the best interests of the people of St Helens. Overview and scrutiny is selective in what it looks at so that it can add value to the most important services provided by the council, its partners and contractors. Wherever possible it helps to shape policy through early discussions as well as scrutinising proposals before they are finally agreed. The scrutiny work programme is published on the council's website.

There is an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Commission and five Scrutiny Panels:

- Health and Adult Social Care
- Audit and Financial Monitoring
- Children and Young People's Services
- Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure
- Safer Communities

### Scrutiny Chairmen 2017/2018



**Cllr David Baines**



**Cllr Martin Bond**



**Cllr Anthony Burns**



**Cllr Nova Charlton**



**Cllr Jeff Fletcher**



**Cllr Richard McCauley**

Any Council member who is not a member of the Cabinet can undertake scrutiny. Non Councillors may be co-opted onto Scrutiny Panels and task groups. At St Helens we have a number of co-opted members who sit on our Children and Young People's Services, Health and Adult Social Care and Safer Communities Scrutiny Panels.

Each year Scrutiny Panels undertake one or more pieces of work (reviews) that focus on particular issues and consider them in greater detail than is possible during Panel meetings.



Commission Chairman: Cllr David Baines

## Commission Activity During 2017/18

### Review of Budget Setting Process and Portfolio Spending Plans 2017/2020

In the current economic climate, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Chaired by Cllr David Baines, wanted to make sure that the Council could continue to deliver the services which are most important to the Council and St Helens residents. Commission members undertook a review of Portfolio Spending Plans as part of its scrutiny of the 2017/20 budget setting process.

We continue to recognise the difficult financial climate against which spending plans have been developed and acknowledge the detailed work and hard decisions that have been undertaken in this time of continued central government funding cuts. The Commission and Scrutiny Chairmen have welcomed the opportunity to discuss these spending plans throughout the year with Portfolio Holder and Chief Officer and to understand the implications for departments and for service delivery.

With the grant reductions in mind, the Portfolio Holder meetings explored the implications for each portfolio of operating within the revised and reduced spending implied by the reduced Cash Limits. Of particular focus was the action necessary for each portfolio to maintain spending within the reduced budget.

We are well aware that some extremely difficult decisions need to be made. In some instances, the scale of the savings required mean that these decisions will have an unavoidable impact on service delivery.

“During 2018/19, Scrutiny will inevitably continue to look at the impact these budget cuts may have.”

### Review of the Effectiveness of Scrutiny Arrangements

Local government and public services more generally are going through a period of significant change.

Scrutiny is key to democratic accountability and transparency and should be able to tackle, challenge, support, engage with, and provide recommendations on the important issues affecting residents and communities. We felt that undertaking this review of current arrangements was an opportune time for members to help to shape the service to ensure that scrutiny is best placed to meet current challenges and ensures that it makes best use of member and officer time whilst adding value in support of better outcomes for residents.

This report presents the outcomes of an in-depth review of the effectiveness of the Council’s scrutiny arrangements. It compares the council against CIPFA Good Governance self-assessment template as well as seeking the views of those engaged locally in the process.

In depth consideration was given to the current number of scrutiny panels, a reduction in these and various alternative options. Members of the task group recognised that current arrangements were no longer fit for purpose and did not reflect the 3 departmental responsibilities and the Council’s key ambition areas. It was agreed that given the time constraints, any proposed realignment of the panels and their responsibilities be discussed with the leader at the beginning of the new municipal year. The report concludes with several recommendations, which if adopted, will go some way to enhancing the current scrutiny function. Copies of the full report are available on our website.



### Scrutiny of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - covering the local authority areas of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral - was established on 1 April 2014 with the aim of improving:

- the exercise of statutory functions relating to transport in the Combined Area
- the effectiveness and efficiency of transport in the Combined Area
- the exercise of statutory functions relating to economic development and regeneration in the Combined Area
- economic conditions in the Combined Area

In November 2015, it secured a Devolution Agreement with Government, securing £900 million of funding along with the devolution of powers and responsibilities from Whitehall. This Agreement was further developed in March 2016 and provides the resources, freedoms and flexibilities to deliver the City Region’s strategic priorities around economic development, transport, strategic housing and employment and skills.

Part of the Devolution Agreement was to have a directly Elected Mayor for the Liverpool City Region. Steve Rotherham was elected to this post in 2016.

In addition, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has established a Scrutiny Panel, which has seen an extended role for scrutiny here at St Helens. Cllr Baines as

Chair of the Commission and Cllr Bond were selected to represent the Council in order to achieve greater public accountability over decisions made and services delivered to the whole Liverpool City Region. The LCRCA Scrutiny Committee has completed a number of pieces of review work during 20-17/18 namely: Spatial Strategy, Air Quality and Welfare Reform. Copies of these reports can be found on the LCRCA Scrutiny web pages.

In addition to this, Cllr Long the Portfolio holder who was responsible for Liverpool City Region engagement has regularly attended the Commission to give progress updates on actions taken within the combined authority.

### **Budget and Performance Monitoring**

The Audit and Financial Monitoring Scrutiny Panel, chaired by former Cllr Jeff Fletcher has scrutinised the Budget Monitoring reports and the Corporate Financial reports on a frequent basis and sought information and explanations in respect of any identified issues of concern.

The Panel regularly requests supplementary reports and calls in officers to explain areas of underperformance. A feedback loop to the Executive is provided via a standing item on the cabinet agenda to address issues arising from scrutiny. There is also a standing item on the Audit and Governance Committee agenda to consider the Panel Chair's report on items scrutinised, highlighting issues the Panel wishes to draw to the committee's attention.

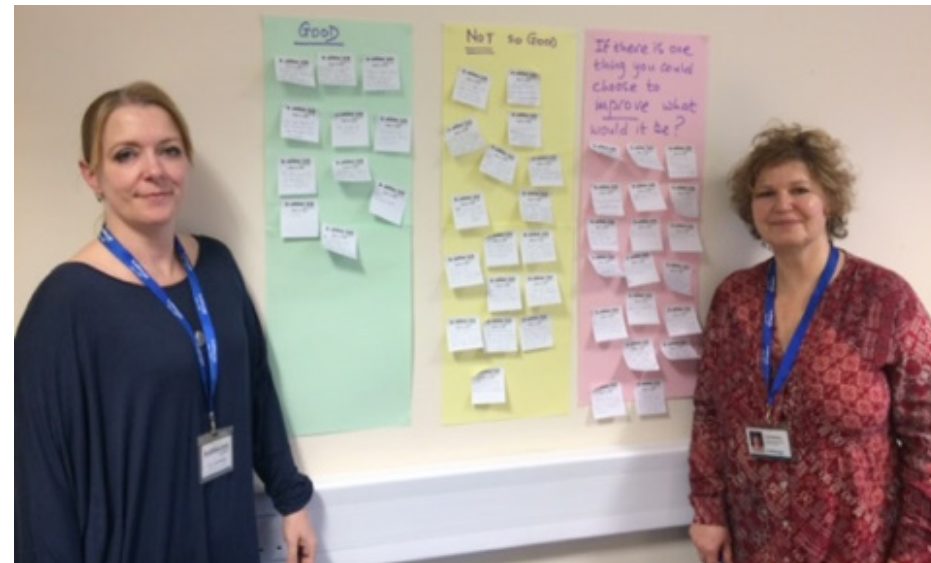


## **Scrutiny Reviews: Task and Finish Groups**

### **Adult Mental Health Services**

Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel, including Healthwatch representatives formed a task and finish group to review Adult Mental Health Services within the borough.

Services and pathways are continuously evolving and the task group are keen to see a clear way forward for both staff and service users.



We met with social care management here at the Council to gain an understanding of the services and the pathways involved. We also received a presentation from North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust at Peasley Cross Hospital to explain the new structure and working practices that are currently being implemented.

For the past six months, Healthwatch have been undertaking their own independent review of local Mental Health Service and recently held a 'coffee morning' style meeting with services users. The meeting was well attended and service users shared personal accounts of their own experiences of local service provision several of which highlighted flaws in the system such as waiting times, referral process and the pathway itself.

We also visited the Iris Ward at Peasley Cross Hospital.

A draft report is currently being compiled which will be submitted to a future Panel meeting.

**“OVERALL, THE TASK GROUP WERE EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY TAZ AND THE TRUST’S SEXUAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT TEAM.”**



### **Teenage Sexual Health Services**

Members of the Children and Young People’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertook a light touch review on Sexual Health Services for Teenagers. Members of the task group met with Council Officers and staff from St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospital Trust to obtain background information on the service provision.

The task group also visited the Millenium Centre where the Teen Advice Zone (TAZ) was based.

Overall, the task group were extremely impressed with the services provided by TAZ and the Trust’s Sexual Health Improvement Team. Those working in this service were dedicated professionals who went above and beyond their duties to ensure that young people receive the best service/advice available.

Some minor recommendations including data sharing with local pharmacies, have been made to further enhance the service and these have been presented to Cabinet.

### **Voice of the Child - Fostering Services**

A task group has recently been established to review Voice of the Child within the Fostering Service. Members of the task group have met with members of the Children in Care Council and also the Young Advisors to commission them to undertake a piece of work on behalf of the task group.

We hope to engage with as many young people as possible to ensure we can understand their views about the Fostering Service and to ensure they feel that they are being listened to, and as Corporate Parents, are fulfilling our role to the very best extent.

Update reports will be provided to the CYPs Scrutiny Panel on an ongoing basis.



## Educational Attainment at Key Stage 4

Following concerns expressed by Members relating to educational attainment at KS4 within the borough, both CYPS and A&FM Scrutiny Panels held a joint meeting to look at how as a Council we could improve educational outcomes for our children.

We heard that 9 schools had been officially recognised as schools causing concern - judged Requires Improvement in their last Ofsted inspection and 18 have been identified - through the LA's school effectiveness strategy as requiring improvement or intervention.

This year saw disappointing outcomes at KS4 placing St Helens 148th out of 152 LAs - present a significant challenge to our secondary providers and the LA. St Helens College's 14-16 provision was included in the LA's results.

We were reassured to hear that intensive work is taking place to assist in improving leadership & management in the secondary sector. Two former head teachers of outstanding secondary schools have been deployed to support and challenge SLTs.

The Council will intervene robustly to ensure that there is improvement in leadership in all phases. This issue will of course remain on our work plan for 2018/19.

## Effectiveness of Multi-Agency Partnership Working

As part of the Scrutiny Work Programme, members agreed that the Panel be tasked with looking at the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership working.

The Council had been operating a People's Board in shadow format since April 2016. In January 2017, Cabinet agreed to establish the St Helens People's Board, subsuming the responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership. The Board brought together the necessary member responsibility and policy intentions of the St Helens Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Community Safety Partnership

Since the formation of the Peoples Board, concerns have been expressed by members of the Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel around the accountability and the amount of time available at these meetings to allow for full and thorough consideration of crime and disorder issues. Whilst the Panel understands the strategic importance of the health agenda and innovative work being undertaken, members feel that the crime and disorder statutory responsibilities of the Board have been somewhat overshadowed. There appeared to be little time available to question, provide multi-agency responses and monitor progress against actions to a range of crime and disorder issues within the borough. We felt that this was an oversight and believed these substantive issues required more thorough consideration/discussion.

The Panel requested the Board to consider the creation of a senior management group which would consider community safety and crime disorder issues. Such a group could decide on substantive issues linked to community safety and crime and disorder and present, where appropriate, relevant issues to the People's Board. We believe that this would provide the necessary accountability and a transparent pathway which will allow for full and thorough consideration of crime and disorder issues in the Borough.

We can report that changes have now been made to the People's Board Terms of Reference and a working group has been established to set up the Joint Agency Group. Regular updates on the outcomes of this group will be provided to the Panel.

## Service Charges for Owner Occupiers in Retirement Villages

Members of the Environment, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel, formed a small task and finish group to review Service Charges for Owner Occupiers in Retirement Villages.

Previously in 2013 Scrutiny had undertaken a review 'Empowering those who live in Retirement Villages' which looked at the location of Retirement Villages within the borough, the facilities/activities available and the provision of onsite management.

Following this year's review some of the same key areas that were identified in 2013 have been bought up again. These are centred on the lack of transparency with regards to service charges and the sinking fund.

The task group met with officers from both Your Housing Group and Torus and also visited residents at three Retirement Villages, Heald Farm Court, Heyeswood and Reeve Court.

We learnt that residents were still unclear on what funds were for or what they are spent on, particularly the sinking fund. There also appeared to be a lack of communication between management and the residents and a lack of interest/attendance in the residents committees.

Our recommendations focused on the format of and how often financial information, including services charges and sinking funds and how this is communicated to residents be fully reviewed to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for both prospective buyers and throughout the ownership of the property. We also requested that consideration be given by Torus and Your Housing Group to reviewing the continuation of service charges at the point a property becomes vacant and that this information be clearly communicated to prospective buyers and their families.



## Waste Collection and Recycling Arrangements

In February, Cabinet referred the Council's review of recycling and waste collection service report to Scrutiny for further consideration prior to a decision being made. The review recommended that the council undertake a small pilot collection system based around a three weekly brown bin service whilst continuing with weekly recycling, in September 2018. It was suggested that subject to the success of the pilot collection system, and incorporating any lessons learnt, that implementation be extended to cover all properties from September 2019.

A cross party Task Group was formed which agreed to examine the findings and the various options set out in the report and hear evidence from the Strategic Director of Place Services, Senior Council Officers, the Cabinet Member for Green, Smart and Sustainable Borough, the Chief Executive of MWRA and the Waste and Disposal Strategy Manager from Wigan.

Two meetings were held which were open to members of the public to observe. Elected members not on the Task Group were also invited to attend. Residents were encouraged to contact their ward councillors or utilise social media to submit their views on the proposals. These views were summarised and considered at both meetings.

A report setting out recommendations which included the need for a public consultation exercise prior to any roll out were submitted to Cabinet in June. We are awaiting feedback from these.



## Scrutiny Panels - Formal Panel Work

In addition to task and finish group work, Panels have been busy looking at various other strategic issues. This has been undertaken either in the form of regular in depth reports being presented to Panels or one off special meetings which gives scrutiny members the opportunity to look at specific issues in more depth.

Issues scrutinised during 2017/18 have included:

### Environmental, Regeneration, Housing, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel



Chairman: Cllr Martin Bond

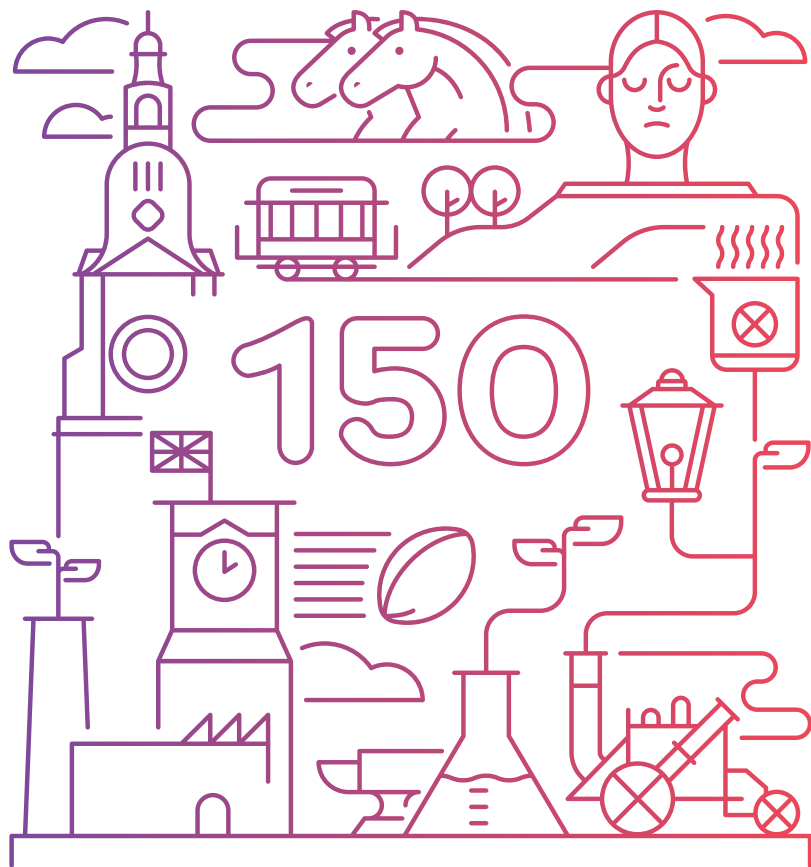
### Town Centre Strategy

Members discussed in depth;

- The importance of attracting new businesses into the town centre
- Young Advisors being involved in discussions and plans
- Suitable Governance Structures

Following the acquisition of Church Square members received a further update and reviewed income and unit vacancy rates. The overall strategy will be delivered over a period of time and Scrutiny has agreed that this will be an ongoing item on their forward plan.





### St Helens 150th Anniversary Celebrations

Members received an update on plans for the 150th anniversary celebrations for St. Helens. A number of events were programmed throughout 2018 and members discussed the strategic aims and specific aims and objectives for the programme of events. Concerns were raised with regards to the sustainability of the projects after 2018 and the high cost implications. It was agreed that this would be reported to scrutiny on a regular basis.

### Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The former Leader of the Council, Councillor Barrie Grunewald attended the Panel to discuss the LEP. A brief background on the role of the LEP was given, which outlined its role in liaising with Government and setting strategies.

Discussions took place around the governance, accountability and transparency of the LEP, what St. Helens gains from it and the links between the LEP and the City Region.

Concerns were raised by panel members to a lack of representation St. Helens had with regard to the LEP advisory boards and how the Councils engagement could be improved.



### Selwyn Jones Leisure Centre

Members requested information on the proposed refurbishment of Selwyn Jones Leisure Centre. The cost and plans were being collated which is key in agreeing the extent of the scheme and the timescales.

Funding has been discussed with Sports England and communication with local user groups will be undertaken. Plans will include a large fitness suite, an exercise studio, a group exercise bike studio; a coffee shop and an adventure play are for under 11's. Members requested that costs and plans be made available to Scrutiny when available.

### Queens Park Leisure Centre

Members raised concerns about Queens Park swimming pool being closed due to tiles becoming displaced on the pool floor. The leisure centre underwent a major refurbishment in 2010 and had seen no problems prior to this.

The pool was closed for just over four months, during this time all swimming lessons and exercise classes had been relocated to other leisure centres. Members were pleased to hear that the public had been kept up to date on the work, including email correspondence, social media posts, posters within the leisure centres and press releases.

### Central Library

The Cabinet member for Libraries and Leisure, Councillor Sue Murphy attended panel to give an update on Central Library. There had been extensive damage to the ceiling and roof of the library and the cost of repairs would be considerable.

Members discussed the possibility of relocating the library service to another town centre location in the interim and the location of library stock. Other libraries had extended their opening hours to ensure the impact on service users would be limited.

Members stressed to officers the importance of reaching a solution quickly to limit the inconvenience to the public and to consider the accessibility of any site considered.

# Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel



Cllr Nova Charlton

## St. Helens Safeguarding Children Board

Steve Atkinson, Chair of the St Helens Safeguarding Children Board attended the Panel to give a presentation about the work of the Board. This outlined the strategies and activities undertaken over the past year, its role and duties as a Board.

Questions were answered in respect of raising local education aspirations and attainment in young people, especially in our Special Schools, welfare issues and support strategies. The 2016/2017 Annual Report and its content was discussed and the Panel were assured that future annual reports would be presented to the Panel on a timely basis.

## 'The Lost Boys Review'

Jo Davies, Senior Assistant Director for Schools' Services and Mavis Smith, Early Years Quality and Inclusion Manager attended the Panel to outline the key issues which affect boys falling behind in their early years' language and communications skills. Concerns were raised with regards to children starting nursery less prepared i.e. toilet training, speech and language difficulties and members were pleased to learn that the LA are requesting feedback on this from those schools with two year old provision.

Again members were assured that work will continue in this area and that a future update will be brought back to Panel.

## Traded Services for Schools

Throughout the year the Panel has received several updates on the implementation of the new Traded Services for Schools platform. throughout the year. The new platform is an on-line portal whereby schools can purchase Councils services such as catering, Internal Audit, Governor Services, grounds maintenance etc. in the form of Service Level Agreements (SLA).

The platform is now live and schools have been accessing it to purchase their 2018/2019 SLAs. The Panel raised concerns with regards to the level of schools engagement and the qualities services that other neighbouring Authorities offer and have requested further updates on its progress. This will be an ongoing item on the Panel's forward plan.



## Development of the Regional Adoption Agency

Sam Murray, Assistant Director, Social Work Support updated the Panel on the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency involving several Local Authorities joining together to form a partnership 'Together for Adoption'.

This allows us to build on the best practice from partners, to meet changing demands and will allow for a wider pool of staff and prospective people hoping to adopt a child. Members were pleased with the expansion of the adoption service and looked forward to seeing the opportunities that it will provide for young people in our care.

## Front Door/Early Help Strategy

Sam Murray, Assistant Director, Social Work Support gave an update on the proposed arrangements. Members were pleased to see more joined up working with partners and schools. Measuring the success of early interventions and the challenges facing Children's Social Care were discussed. Members were reassured that the Front Door will enable officers to work in a more holistic way to ensure our families receive services that are designed around and meet their needs.

## Looked After Children (LAC)

Stephen Tracey, Senior Assistant Director, Social Work and Community attended the Panel in November to report on LAC and the associated budget plan. Key areas were discussed, including background to the Strategy/Action Plan, the budget position, financial implications, a case study and the way forward.

Numbers of LAC both in and out of borough were discussed and concerns were raised with regards to the boroughs high number of LAC. The Panel will continue to monitor this over the coming months and were assured that the new strategies being put in place such as Front Door integrated services would help reduce these numbers and provide better outcomes for our LAC. Again, due to the importance, this will be included in our forward plan.

## Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel



Chairman: Cllr Richard McCauley

### Sharps Waste and Safe Disposals

Peter Mallet, Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Coordinator attend the Panel to provide an update on Sharps Waste and Safe Disposals following concerns raised by panel members and press coverage of several incidents.

The procedure for reporting and the collection of incidents was outlined and had been reiterated to staff receiving and processing the calls. Members of the panel were informed that all incidents were responded to immediately and assurance given that the teams work quickly and safely to deal with each and every incident.

Partnership working with local charities and pharmacies would enable service users to be informed of drop off and collection points and the dangers of waste being left in public places.

### Knife Crime

Throughout the year the Panel has received several reports and updates on Knife Crime within the borough. Jason Pickett, Assistant Director, Community Services has given comprehensive reports on the work of the Council and the community including a piece of work commissioned and delivered by the Young Advisors.

Following the establishment of a multi-agency task group, it was agreed that the focus be on young people with support and guidance from the Ben Kinsella Trust. The main outcome was to ensure all young people aged 10 upwards would have an awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying a knife. Messages would be delivered in both a universal and targeted manner through schools and community groups. The Council's Young Advisors attended a panel meeting to report on their work with other local young people. They have delivered peer-to-peer sessions to young people to engage in conversation and informal education and are working on several other projects including the **No More Knives** campaign.



Assurance was given that victims of all crimes were supported and that the continued work around Knife Crime would ensure that all young people are educated of the dangers.

It was also pleasing to hear from Councillor Lisa Preston, Cabinet member for Community Safety (including housing) that following a meeting with Pub Watch St.Helens that the majority of pubs and bars in the town had signed up to using Knife Wands on their doors.

This is currently being rolled out across the town centre and members commented that work should be undertaken to ascertain if Knife Wands could be enforced.

Members were keen to follow the progress of this work and regular updates have been requested, including a follow up report from the Young Advisors and meeting with members of the family of Danny Fox to learn about the work they are undertaking in the communities talking about knife crime.

### Drug and Alcohol Services

The Panel received a presentation on St.Helens Substance Misuse Integrated Recovery Service which is now being delivered by Change, Grow, Live (CGL) a leading charity providing support to vulnerable people facing addiction, homelessness and domestic abuse.

Following the detailed presentation a volunteer worker shared details of their life and how CGL supported their recovery journey. Members of the Panel visited the service on two occasions and were extremely impressed by both the standard of the support and advice given and by the dedication of the staff and volunteers.



### **Effective Use of Community Triggers**

Community Triggers enable victims and communities the right to require agencies to deal with anti-social behaviour that they feel had not been previously adequately addressed. Members requested an update to ensure that the process was working correctly.

Six requests have been received by St.Helens Council since the start of the programme in October 2014 and all had to meet the required thresholds. Although resources are reducing for all partners involved, members felt that the programme was an effective way of working with victims and communities to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved.

### **Use of Dispersal Zones**

Members received updates about the police led Dispersal Orders that are used to disperse groups that are gathered on streets who may potentially cause anti-social behaviour. Members were pleased to learn that Dispersal Orders have been successfully used in several areas including times such as Bonfire Night and Halloween.

It was pleasing to learn that social media is being monitored to identify potential gatherings which allows interventions to be put in place and that good multi-agency working is key to its success.

### **External Building Cladding**

Following the tragic event at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) contacted all Local Authorities requesting they assess any building over 18 meters high, to ensure they comply with regulations.

Working with partners including Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Merseyside Police, Local Housing Providers and Letting Agencies and schools all relevant buildings were identified and reviewed.

Members of the Panel requested an update on the boroughs position and learnt that all the relevant buildings have been assessed, confirming there are no high-risk buildings in the St.Helens estate. A Joint press release with partners was issued to reassure members of the public that risks were minimal.

### **St.Helens Custody Suite**

The recent closure of the St.Helens custody suite has been a bitter disappointment for the Council and although close working between the Cabinet member for Community Safety (including housing) and Merseyside Police has taken place, the decision has been made to close St Helens Custody suite.

Members raised concerns with regards to prisoners being taken out of borough to an alternative suite and the time spent traveling would result in a lack of police presence in the borough. Councillors agreed to continue to fight to re-establish a custody suite in the borough and regular updates by the Police and Council Officers will be provided.

### **Youth Diversionary Programme**

Jason Pickett, Assistant Director, Community Services delivered a report to panel members with regards to the Youth Diversionary Programme following a spike in anti-social behaviour in the Thatto Heath ward.

A successful bid to the Communities Fund by the Council and Thatto Heath Amateur Rugby Football Club has enabled the delivery of a youth diversionary programme.

Members were pleased to learn that as a well-respected part of the community, Thatto Heath Amateur Rugby Football Club has successfully engaged with more than 50 young people through outreach and face-to-face work. Although outcome data is still to be finalised, recent reports show a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour in Thatto Heath. This is excellent news.

### **Merseyside Police Service and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Updates**

Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have given verbal updates at panel meetings throughout the year. Current topics are discussed and updates on previous issues are given to keep members of the Panel informed of the work that partners are undertaking.

## Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel



Chairman: Cllr Anthony Burns



### St.Helens Cares

Mike Wyatt, the Former Strategic Director for Peoples Services gave an in depth presentation to the Panel with regards to the current position, local statistics, aims and objectives of St Helens Cares and the way forward. The development of St Helens Cares will bring together a wide range of public service organisations enabling the joint management for the responsibility of the quality of care and the available funding to provide services.

Members of the panel asked various questions and concerns with regards to the impact on front line services, staffing re-structure, budget pressures and the involvement of Scrutiny. The Panel will be updated on the progress of St Helens Carers throughout the coming months.

### Adult Safeguarding Board

Tom Wolstencroft, Independent Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board attended the Panel to give a presentation about the work of the Board. This included, the Boards six key principles, its role and duties and the Annual Report.

It was pleasing to see the good partnership work being undertaken to safeguard the residents of St.Helens and members questioned what Scrutiny's role is for the future. The Chair will continue to be invited to attend and update the Panel.

### Review of Procedures of Lower Clinical Priority (PLCP)

As part of a consultation process three members of St.Helens CCG and the Commissioning Support Unit gave a presentation on the changes proposed to PLCP. This included the Commissioning Policy, why and how it works, and the reviewing and consultation process.

### E-cigs - Use and Impact

Sue Forster, Director of Public Health attended Panel to discuss E-cigs including National data, consensus and proposals, also St. Helens Stop Smoking Support Services data.



At risk of  
developing  
Type 2  
diabetes?

## Type 2 diabetes is becoming increasingly common in the UK - and it's related to lifestyle

If you are overweight, rarely exercise and drink more than the recommended weekly amount of alcohol, you could be at risk of, or even already have, Type 2 diabetes.

Your local Healthier You service can help you take control of your health by supporting you to make changes to your diet, weight and the amount of physical activity that you do. Taking this kind of action now is very important as it can reduce your risk of, or even stop you, developing the very serious health condition of Type 2 diabetes.

For more information, visit  
[www.lwtcsupport.co.uk](http://www.lwtcsupport.co.uk)  
or speak to your GP



Service  
provided by



Since 2000, smoking among adults in England has fallen by one third and among children by two thirds, however one in five adults still smoke be it a cigarette or an e-cigarette.

Members were keen to ensure that data is continued to be gathered both nationally and locally and that the regulation of the use of e-cigarettes in public spaces is maintained.

### **Suicide Prevention**

Sue Forster, Director of Public Health gave a presentation covering local statistics, suicide rates and the Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan, which documents the way forward and the work to be undertaken.

Members acknowledged that suicide rates are increasing and welcomed the excellent work being undertaken by the Council, but also noted that more work was required and that the Action Plan continue to be brought back to the H&ASC Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

### **Support for Adult Carers**

Councillor Marlene Quinn, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health attended panel to talk about Support for Adult Carers within the borough.

This gave an overview of the commissioned Carer's Service in St.Helens including national context, local provision and related data, key service performance and local change, including St.Helens Carers.

Nearly 11,500 carers receive support from the service, which is estimated to be half of the boroughs carers. Members discussed the issue of 'hidden carers' and were pleased to learn that the service was continually successful in identifying hidden carers and is building strong links with local schools.

### **National Diabetes Prevention Programme**

Matt Davies, Head of Public Health Commissioning reported to the Panel the work currently underway with regards to supporting NHS England National Diabetes Prevention Programme.

The number of people with diabetes in St.Helens is higher than average and there could be more that have not been diagnosed.

Referral rates are on track and engagement in targeted areas is working well. Take-up rates with GP practices and referrals data were discussed as well as the way forward with the programme.

### **Collaborative Working with the Voluntary Sector**

Councillor Marlene Quinn, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health and Caroline Barlow, Senior Assistant Director, Quality and Finance delivered a report which detailed the contribution of the Voluntary Sector and Faith Sector in supporting residents and communities.

Current funding and contracts were discussed, also ongoing programmes including the Social Prescription Pilot and the importance of the voluntary sector in its delivery.

Members asked questions around the mapping of the voluntary sector, work undertaken to ensure all faiths were included and the pressures of funding cuts. In addition, the VCA and representatives from the faith sector attended the next meeting

and shared their views and experience. It was agreed that more work in this area would be undertaken.

### **Sexual Health of Young Men**

Councillor Gill Neal, Cabinet Member, Public Health and Wellbeing and Sue Foster, Director of Public Health attended panel to report on Sexual Health of Young Men.

Updates were given on local programmes that are being rolled out from April 2018, Sexual Health Clinics, Sexual Health Support for Young People through a range of services including Teen Advice Zone (TAZ) which has been reviewed by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel this year.

The Sexual Health Strategy 2014-2018 is due to be updated and reviewed and members were keen to receive an updates on its completion.

### **Healthwatch Updates**

Jayne Parkinson from Healthwatch has kept the Panel updated on current Healthwatch work throughout the year, giving reports at each meeting on current engagement work and ongoing task and finish groups.

## Looking Forward to 2018-2019

Having concluded the work undertaken by the Panel's in 2017/18, it is now time to turn our attention to the development of the work programme for 2018/19.

Key to developing the work programme is making sure that chosen topics align with the priorities set out in the Council Plan and planned budget reductions and that by undertaking task and finish group work this adds value. Liaison with Portfolio Members will continue to play an important part in our work and their attendance at Panels will provide us with a comprehensive overview of the key challenges within their portfolios.

## How to find out more about Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny should reflect the issues that matter to those who live or work in St Helens. Help us by telling us what you think we should focus on in 2018/19. We have the scope to look at any issue that reflects St Helens not just council related services.

You can contact us by using the methods listed below, or submit a suggestion for our work programme using the Scrutiny pages on Council's website.

## Contact Us...

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