

## **COUNCIL MOTION**

**13 July 2023**

**PROPOSED BY:** **Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE**

**SECONDED BY:** **Councillor Mike Prendergast**

**TITLE:** **Constitutional Changes**

At the last full meeting of the Council a Notice of Motion in relation to Overview & Scrutiny Committees was rejected by the majority party but at the time the Leader of the Council indicated that he considered that matters of this nature should properly be discussed at the Council AGM.

The Council now agrees that in order to ensure both transparency and objectivity chairmanships of all O&S Committees should be held on a proportionate basis by Members who are not of the ruling party.

In addition, the O&S Committees should have full access to any information and documentation that was made available to the Cabinet but which is currently denied to O&S Committees and indeed every other Member of the Council who is not on the Cabinet.

The Council considers that these democratic changes are essential and without them the O&S Committees cannot fulfil their function in full.

The Council also agrees that as part of the same agenda the Leaders of the main political parties be allocated a seat on the Cabinet as ex-officio Members with the ability to access all the information and to ask questions and make comment at the Cabinet meetings but without the ability to vote.

As part of the overall democratic process local Councillors in Southport in particular from all Parties receive constant representations concerning help and assistance with various ward matters and issues affecting the Town in general but where these are not matters of

strategic interest to Sefton and would therefore benefit from a locally based decision-making process.

This can best be achieved by the early reinstatement of the Southport Area Committee where very few disagree that it served a useful purpose and was often well attended and where members of the public also had the benefit of being able to hear from the Police and other agencies that directly affect the area.

The Council wishes to make clear that in making these changes they have no impact at all on the ability of the majority party to determine policy in every area and to implement within the law whatever they feel to be the appropriate decisions.

The Council also recognises however that ensuring transparency is a key element in respect of public confidence and there is continual anecdotal evidence that this is not at the level it should be within the borough and the changes outlined would therefore play an important part in remedying this deficiency.