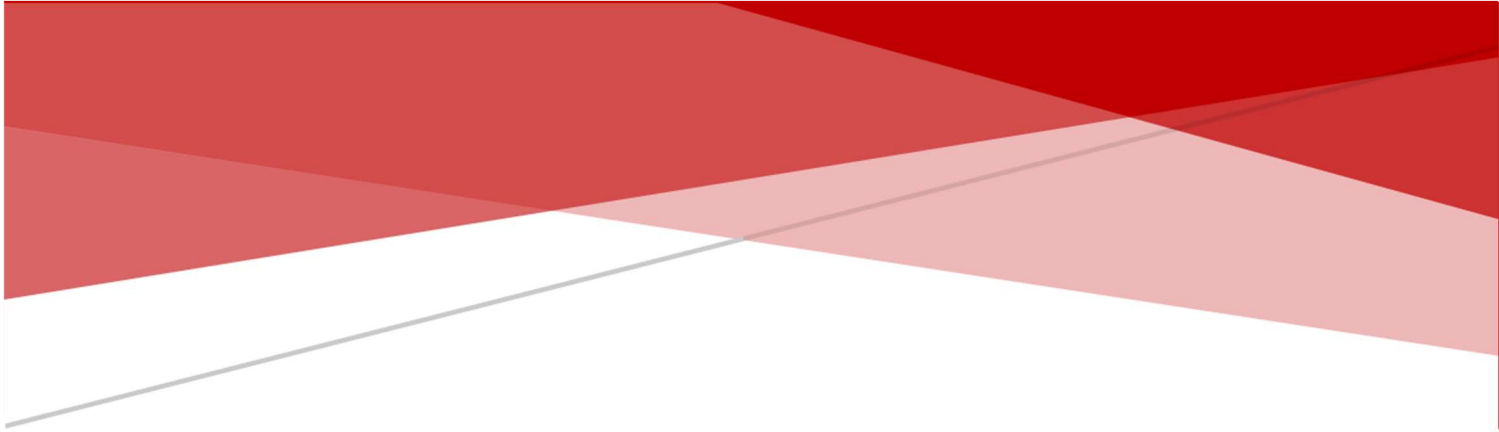
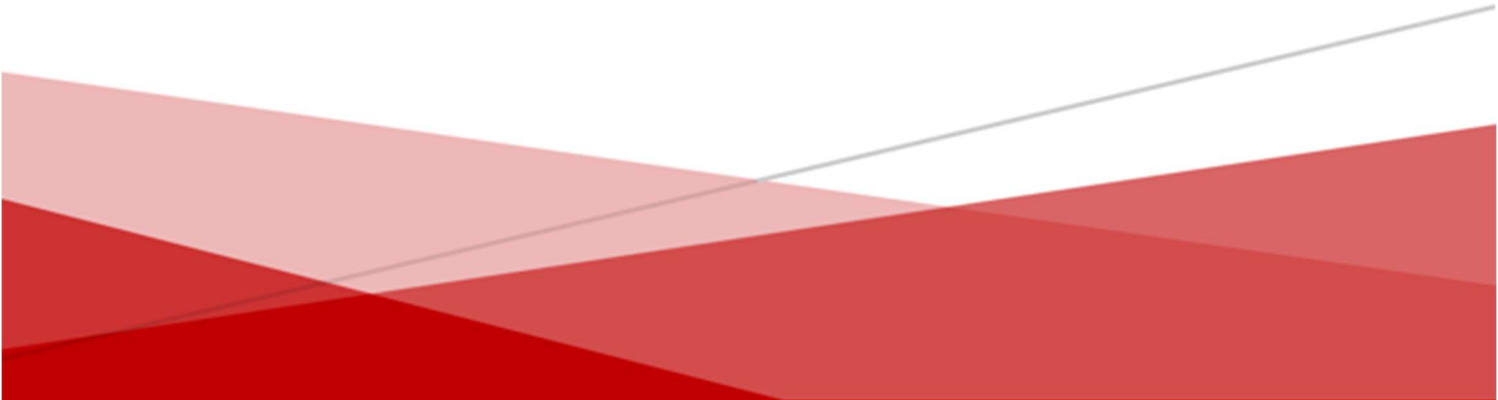




# SCOPING REPORT

St Helens New Local Plan

September 2026



# Introduction

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Local Plan Timetable sets out key milestones for the preparation and adoption of the new St Helens Local Plan. It will ensure that St Helens communities and stakeholders understand the timescales for the Plan coming forward and when they can participate.
- 1.2. This consultation is the first stage in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan. The existing Local Plan, the St Helens Borough Council Local Plan, was adopted on July 2022, Waste is dealt with through the Merseyside Joint Waste Local Plan (2013) and there is an additional Development Plan Document the Bold Forest Area Action Plan (2017).
- 1.3. The Local Plan now requires updating to align with the Governments new planning requirements. St Helens New Local Plan will be prepared under the new updated plan making system, introduced in March 2026. It will also incorporate a minerals and waste plan.
- 1.4. This stage follows the formal publication of the Notice to Commence a New Local Plan and the publication of the New Local Plan Timetable, both issued on 30 June 2026. Further information can be found on the [Plans Under Preparation](#) webpage.
- 1.5. The purpose of this Scoping Consultation is to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan-making process by seeking views from local residents and stakeholders as to what the plan should contain and how future engagement should be carried out.

# How to get involved

## How to get involved

- 1.6. This consultation will run from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026 until 5pm on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

Comments on the Scoping Report can be submitted on line via <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/KEPUEB/> or emailed to [planningpolicy@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@sthelens.gov.uk) or posted to:

Development Plans  
Place Services  
St Helens Borough Council  
PO Box 512  
St Helens  
WA10 9JX

- 1.7. To sign up for future Local Plan and Planning Policy consultations please complete the form found here [Consultations and latest news - St Helens Borough Council](#)



*Figure 1 St Helens Council located in the wider LCR*

# The New St Helens Local Plan

## 2. The New St Helens Local Plan

### St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022)

- 2.1 Local plans are the basis for England's planning system, shaping how places grow and develop. They set out where new homes, employment, infrastructure, and community facilities are located, and provide clarity for residents, businesses and developers.
- 2.2 We have a statutory duty to prepare a Local Plan and keep it updated. St Helens current Local plan was adopted in July 2022 covering the plan period up to 2037 with a minimum requirement for 10,206 dwellings over the plan period or 486 dwellings per annum and 173.24 ha of employment land between 2021 and 2037.

### Why are we producing a New Local Plan

#### Changes to increased housing supply

- 2.3 In December 2024, the Government announced major changes to the way that local housing needs are calculated. The change introduced a new standard method, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which applies a percentage increase to the existing stock of housing in each Council area. Under this new approach St Helens local housing need has increased to 766 dwellings per annum from July 2027.
- 2.4 At the same time, further changes to Government's Planning Policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) initially issued in December 2024 and reiterated in the NPPF August 2026 version required that Councils with existing Local Plans that were 5 years old would be required to commence Local Plan Making before the five year period is up. As St Helens Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in July 2022, it is imperative that work starts as the current Local Plan will be 5 years old in July 2027.

#### Changes to National Planning System

- 2.5 This New Local Plan system was established under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and has fundamentally changed the process for preparing Local Plans to speed up and to deliver more succinct documents that are easier for people to use.
- 2.6 The new system came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 with the commencement of regulations setting out how a Local Plan should be prepared. The introduction of these Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026) is the trigger that means that the Council should be minded to commence Local Plan making.

### St Helens New Local Plan 2044 progress

- 2.7 The Council published a Notice of Intent to Commence (Regulation 19) and the Local Plan Timetable (Regulation 4) on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026. The Council is required to undertake this Scoping Consultation (Regulation 20), prior to passing through Gateway 1 Self Assessment by 13<sup>th</sup> November 2026, which marks the start of the formal plan making process.

### **Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)**

- 2.8 A key strategic factor for the Council is the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), which is being progressed alongside the new plan making system and will provide an overarching spatial framework for the city region, including setting out the scale and distribution of housing and employment growth. Our Local Plan will need to be in general conformity with the SDS. Once adopted, the SDS will form part of development plan for St Helens and carry significant weight in decision making. St Helens continues to be actively engaged in the preparation of the SDS.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 2.9 Proposed plans, policies and strategies must be subject to a robust, high-level process to evaluate their potential environmental impact prior to adoption. This is typically undertaken through an SEA. As part of the new Local Plans system, the Government is intending to replace SEA and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) with Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs). However, at the current time these requirements have not been formalised through regulations and, as such, the 2004 SEA Regulations continue to apply.
- 2.10 In addition, the requirement for a broader Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating social, economic and environmental considerations, as undertaken for the current Local Plan, has been removed.
- 2.11 As a result the Council has decided to undertake an SEA Screening/Scoping consultation in the absence of any updated guidance. The Consultation will run alongside the scoping consultation until 5pm on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

### **Local Plan Timetable**

- 2.12 Our new timetable has been prepared in line with the new plan-making expectations and replaces the previous Local Development Scheme. The [timetable](#) is available on our website. This will be updated throughout the plan making process.



Figure 2: St Helens Local Plan Timetable v2 August 2026

# The Purpose of the Scoping Consultation

## 3. The Purpose of the Scoping Consultation

- 3.1 The new plan-making system details the processes that must be followed to ensure that the plan is considered sound.
- 3.2 As part of Gateway 1 of the new plan making system, the Council must carry out a Scoping Consultation. This early stage in the plan making process seeks the views on what the New Local Plan should cover and how we, as the Council, should engage with communities and stakeholders as the Plan progresses.
- 3.3 The Scoping consultation will involve the Council, notifying and inviting views from individuals and organisations, as required by the Regulations. This is similar to the way we have previously consulted for the current St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022). The 'relevant' and 'general' consultation bodies as referenced in the Regulations are set out at the end of this document in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 This consultation will assist in the development of a clear understanding of the likely scope of our New Local Plan; including, identifying the main themes and locally specific issues people think our New Local Plan should address and how you want us to engage you in the plan making process.
- 3.5 Following the Scoping Consultation, we will be publishing the Scoping Consultation Summary which will include, the main issues raised from the responses received and how we will have regard to those responses at the point of publication.

## Community Engagement Strategy

- 3.6 The Council previously engaged with the local community and stakeholders in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement<sup>1</sup>. This set out how and when the community would be involved in the preparation of the Local Plan and other planning documents and how they will be consulted on planning applications.
- 3.7 The 2026 Regulations do not make provision for an SCI in relation to 'new' Local Plans prepared under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. Instead, requirements for public and stakeholder engagement in relation to the Local Plan are to be met through an engagement strategy, supported by statutory consultation requirements set out in the Regulations and relevant national guidance, including guidance on neighbour notifications. As we consider how we are going to consult on our new Local Plan, we want your views on how we have consulted in the past, what worked well and what may be improved. The Regulations require that the new Local Plan must be published on the Council's website in a searchable electronic format, but we will also need to offer

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<sup>1</sup> [St Helens Council SCI 2025](#)



documents in alternative formats and maintain non-digital options for those with limited online access.

| Plan Making Stage                                                                                                                                   | Proposed Comms Method                                                                                | Target Audience                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Content and Evidence Base Consultation</li> <li>Draft Local Plan Consultation</li> </ul> | Mail out to those identified on the consultation data base only via email/post                       | Borough wide including residents, businesses, hard to reach groups and other stakeholders |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Press Releases                                                                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Social Media, including St Helens Council Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn                        |                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                     | St Helens Borough Council Residents Newsletter (email)                                               |                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Hard copies of documents available in St Helens Town Hall and Libraries                              |                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Online publication of documents on our website in both PDF and HTML*                                 |                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                                                     | Exhibitions, targeted consultation with hard to reach groups or within specific geographical areas** |                                                                                           |

\*Documents will be made available in an easy to read format and can be requested in alternative languages, other accessibility requests will be responded to accordingly

\*\* all venues will be accessible

## Question 1

Are there any other methods of communication or engagement that you would consider more effective and that we should consider that we haven't already included?

## Question 2

Do you have any views on how we can best ensure that all communities and demographics are able to meaningfully participate in the Local Plan process?

## **Next key steps post Gateway 1**

### **Consultation on proposed Local Plan Content and Evidence (June/July 2027)**

- 3.8 The following information will be consulted on;
- The draft Plan vision and any proposed aims and objectives
  - The proposed spatial strategy, including the approach to minerals and waste policies
  - A summary of the evidence we intend to gather and details of any evidence we have already gathered
  - Other supporting information which may include initial draft policies

### **Gateway 2 (November 2027)**

- 3.9 The second gateway takes place after the first consultation on the draft Local Plan. It involves getting feedback and advice from a planning inspector on progress, including how well the plan is meeting the requirements for Gateway 3.

### **Consultation on the proposed Local Plan (April – June 2028)**

- 3.10 This consultation will provide the opportunity to comment on the full draft Local Plan plus the Policies Map, supporting evidence and Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

### **Gateway 3 (September 2028)**

- 3.11 The third gateway takes place after consultation on the proposed Local Plan. It involves a final check by a planning inspector to confirm that all legal requirements are met before the plan can be submitted for examination.

### **Examination (October 2028)**

- 3.12 The Local Plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination which will consider whether the Local Plan is sound – meaning it meets the test of soundness set out in national planning policy. Those who have made representations on the plan during its preparation will have the right to present their views to the inspector.
- 3.13 Following the examination if the inspector finds that the plan is sound or could be made sound subject to modifications the Council will be expected to adopt the Local Plan and make it available.

# Key Considerations for the New Local Plan

## Background

- 4.1 Located between Liverpool and Manchester, St Helens Borough enjoys a strategic position at the heart of the North West and Merseyside conurbation.
- 4.2 The urban form of St Helens Borough can be traced back to its history of coal mining, railways, and world famous glass industries. Driven by rapid population growth during the 18th and 19th centuries, St Helens (and the related areas of Haydock, Newton-le-Willows and Rainhill) grew to form substantial urban areas. Within the northern part of the Borough are a number of villages and hamlets that originally formed to serve the surrounding agricultural uses. Within the southern part of the Borough a number of communities that originally served the coal mining industry have in some cases merged to form part of the core urban area of St Helens.
- 4.3 In recent decades the traditional industries have declined in importance, with a corresponding reduction in jobs and business opportunities, and the creation of a legacy of derelict and (in some cases) contaminated land. These issues lie at the heart of many challenges facing the Borough.
- 4.4 However, St Helens Borough has also undergone considerable positive change, with successful efforts to regenerate the economy, infrastructure, and environment. Key achievements have included the completion of a new stadium for the Saints Super League team, improvements to railway stations, new business premises, the new Town Centre College Campus, improved parks and open spaces, reclamation of former collieries and some other industrial sites, and significant levels of new housing. Big attractions include The Dream - a 20m high artwork on a reclaimed colliery overlooking the M62 – and the nationally significant Haydock Park Racecourse.
- 4.5 The population in St Helens has increased by 4.5% from 175,300 in 2011 to around 183,200 in 2021. In 2021, St Helens ranked 106th for total population out of 309 local authority areas, which is a fall of four places in a decade. As of 2021, St Helens is the 17th most densely populated of the North West's 39 local authority areas. The Borough's population is projected to increase to 193,301 by mid-2032, a percentage increase of 4.6%. By 2047 the population in St Helens is set to increase to 206,155. Which is a 6.5% increase on the projected 2032 figure.
- 4.6 Health inequalities are a significant concern in St Helens, and the difference between the deprived and affluent areas of the Borough are clear and persistent.

- 4.7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranked St Helens 68th most deprived in 2025 and 40th most deprived in 2019 out of 317 authorities. These changes show that St Helens has become slightly less deprived since 2019. This creates a range of shared challenges and opportunities, including for housing, health and social care services, transport, and the role and design of town centres.
- 4.8 The Council's statutory duties in respect of nature conservation and improvement are linked in with the wider city region and a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has recently been adopted. These natural assets play an important role in supporting residents' physical and mental wellbeing and contribute significantly to the Borough's sense of place.
- 4.9 St Helens environmental resources and built heritage are an important part of what makes St Helens distinctive. However, they also present both opportunities and constraints when considering how the Borough should grow and develop in the future. Balancing the need for regeneration, housing delivery, and economic development with the protection of these assets will be critical.
- 4.10 At the same time as responding to wider economic challenges, it is important to ensure that development remains viable and deliverable so that investment can come forward to support sustainable growth and improved outcomes for local communities.

### **Key priorities for St Helens**

- 4.11 At this early stage, it is important for us to understand what matters most to you about the future of St Helens. People's priorities will differ, and your feedback will help shape a Local Plan that reflects the needs, aspirations and character of our borough.
- 4.12 The draft NPPF sets out key topic areas that all Local Plans have to address. These include:
- Sustainability
  - Climate Change
  - Housing
  - Employment and Retail
  - Communications and Infrastructure
  - Minerals and Waste
  - Effective use of Land
  - Green Belt
  - Design
  - Transport

- Health, Pollution and Safety
- Flood Risk
- Natural Environment
- Historic Environment

### **National Decision-Making Policies**

- 4.13 One of the most significant changes in the new framework is the introduction of National decision-making policies (NDMPs).
- 4.14 NDMPs are intended to provide consistent national policies on certain planning matters, such as design, heritage and site sustainability. Their purpose is to reduce repetition across Local Plans and ensure that these issues are dealt with in a consistent way across the country.
- 4.15 As many topics previously covered by Local Plans will now be addressed through NDMPs, it will not be necessary to repeat these policies in our new Local Plan. The Local Plan should only add local detail where national policy specifically says this is required. We cannot include local policies that try to do something different to the NDMPs such as imposing stricter targets on developers.
- 4.16 The St Helens Borough Local Plan was adopted in July 2022, we will go through a process of considering which of the detailed policies in the existing Local Plan can be carried forward into the new Local Plan, potentially in modified form to take account of the introduction of NDMPs. However, it is likely that the new Plan will be different from the existing adopted St Helens Borough Local Plan; it will be placing greater emphasis on issues, challenges and opportunities that are specific to St Helens whilst incorporating elements of the Bold Forest Area Action Plan.

### **Planning for efficient land use**

- 4.17 To meet the requirements of the new NPPF, we need to make the most efficient use of land. The Local Plan will need to explore new and innovative ways of using the land that is available, whilst protecting our environmental, historic assets and open space. The new plan will create series of opportunities and challenges and as a Council we need to:
- manage competing demands for land across the borough, balancing the need for homes, jobs, infrastructure, open space and environmental protection
  - ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with growth, so communities have the services and facilities they need
  - ensure that all development meets high standards of design and quality, so it is fit for the future and meets the needs of residents and employees both now and over the long term

- identify opportunities for mixed-use development so that homes, jobs and community facilities are located close together, making it easier for residents to access everyday services.

### Question 3

Do you think there are any other challenges or opportunities we should be aware of in relation to efficient use of land? In order to support growth in St Helens and meet central government's housing requirements what infrastructure do you consider is required?

## Housing

- 4.18 A key driver for the new plan is the need for more homes. The existing Local Plan sets out a minimum requirement of 10,206 homes over the Plan period, equating to 486 dwellings per annum. The revised standard method introduced in December 2024 now sets an annual housing requirement of 766 dwelling per annum. This means that we must identify additional land beyond current allocations to help avoid unplanned growth. However, challenges relating to increased pressure on existing infrastructure and services will need to be addressed and planned for thoroughly. It is important to note that sites allocated in the current St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022) which haven't been developed will remain allocated for development to meet the housing numbers set out in that plan and will continue to count towards our supply of sites.
- 4.19 The New St Helens Local Plan will provide the chance to address wider housing issues, as a result we need to:
- explore opportunities to deliver sufficient levels of affordable housing, ensuring a range of housing options are available to meet the needs of all residents
  - ensure that a range of suitable homes are provided for older people, residents with disabilities as well as those with other specialist needs
  - deliver housing designed to be accessible and adaptable to meet changing needs over time
  - understand and plan for the land and housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities, ensuring their accommodation needs are appropriately met within our District

### Question 4

What do you think we need to consider in planning for more homes?

### Question 5

Are there any places that you think could benefit from new homes? You might want to consider places with good transport links, access to jobs, or where new homes could help regenerate underused or neglected land or help support underutilised local services.

### Question 6

In order to meet central government's housing requirements, what form, scale and type of housing do you think should be planned for and where?

## **Economy**

- 4.20 St Helens is part of the Liverpool City Region functional economic area. As identified in the Liverpool City Region Growth Plan, St Helens contributes to the foundational strengths of the City Region economy in the construction and logistics sectors. The borough has the potential to contribute to the future growth drivers in the City Region economy, particularly in advanced manufacturing and health and life sciences.
- 4.21 As a Council we need to:
- provide sufficient employment land to meet our employment needs
  - improve existing employment sites where they are outdated or no longer meeting modern standards
  - Provide a range of employment and mixed-use sites to meet needs, attracting inward investment, provide work opportunities for our residents and foster an environment where existing businesses and new, innovative start-ups can prosper - whilst supporting a thriving and diverse rural and visitor economy.

### **Question 7**

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities that the council should be aware of in relation to economic issues?

### **Question 8**

Where do you think new jobs should be located in St Helens?

### **Question 9**

What types of employment should St Helens be seeking for the future?



## **Retail & Town Centres**

- 4.22 The Borough is host to a diverse hierarchy of centres ranging from the town centres of St Helens and Earlestown which act as the Borough's key focal points, to smaller district and local centres which serve the day-to-day needs of their local area.
- 4.23 Key Issues that have been identified within St Helens relating to retail and town centres include:
- The need to support the roles and maintain and enhance the vitality of the Borough's hierarchy of centres;
  - Delivering long-term regeneration of St Helens & Earlestown town centres, which supports their vitality and resilience and ensures that they adapt and evolve through the regeneration opportunities;
  - Consider the introduction of other uses, including residential to support town centres and diversification to reflect the move away from retail, and supporting investment in the public realm and the borough's cultural offer;
  - The need to ensure that proposals for main town centre uses are in an appropriate location and that proposals for retail, leisure and office development are of a scale that would not have significant adverse impacts – this may involve setting a local impact assessment threshold;
  - The need to maintain retailing as the predominant use within the Primary Shopping Areas of town and district centres, whilst accommodating non-retail uses; and
  - The importance of the Borough's Local Centres for accommodating local retail and supporting community facilities.
  - Improving connectivity between the town centre and surrounding retail destinations - addressing severance from highways and supporting investment in active travel and improving environmental quality.

### **Question 10**

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities for St Helens Town centre?

### **Question 11**

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities for Earlestown Town centre?

### **Question 12**

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities for St Helens' district and local centres?

## Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

- 4.24 The Green Infrastructure network in the Borough has a wide range of functions and values for recreation and tourism, air quality (supporting the Council's Climate Change Emergency declaration), public access, health, heritage, biodiversity, water management and landscape character, providing a sense of place, distinctiveness, and quality of life. Much of the network (such as Bold Forest Park and the Sankey Valley Park) is influenced by the town's industrial past of coal mining, glass making and chemical production and has a strong heritage value. Mossland has historically been drained for agriculture and the remnant stock provides multi functional benefits for water management, carbon storage and biodiversity.
- 4.25 Open space forms a part of Green Infrastructure and for the purposes of Local Plan policy includes formal intensively managed open space such as parks, sports grounds, amenity greenspace, play areas, allotments, cemeteries, and church yards. It also includes natural and semi-natural open space that are less-intensively managed with more attention given to natural habitats of value to wildlife. Many of these form greenway links between the countryside and urban areas.
- 4.26 As a Council we need to:
- Address disparities exist across the borough, with central, urban and industrial areas having poorer environmental quality, health outcomes and access to environmental assets compared to rural and peripheral areas.
  - Address the green infrastructure deficit in central and built up areas.
  - Prioritise urban greening, air quality improvements, and enhanced green/blue infrastructure networks, particularly in central St Helens and other high-need areas, to support regeneration and improve health outcomes – including through protection, enhancement and expansion of the greenway network.
  - Ensure new development provides access to open space, sport and recreation facilities, addressing existing shortfalls, and incorporates play provision.
  - Protect and enhance important biodiversity assets

### Question 13

Do you think the quantum and quality of open space in St Helens is sufficient? How can it be improved? Are there any parts of the Borough which need more greenspace or have an abundance of greenspace?

### Question 14

What types of open space are the most important to St Helens and what specific open spaces do you value?

## Climate Change

- 4.27 In line with central governments legally binding commitment for the UK to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 St Helens Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and committed the borough to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040. This commitment now drives a detailed Climate Action Plan with more than 130 actions across transport, buildings, energy, waste, and nature. Our new Local Plan needs to ensure that all development helps reduce carbon emissions, minimises harm to the environment, and incorporates measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 4.28 In order to help mitigate against climate change the plan will need to:
- prioritise development in locations well served by public transport to support more sustainable travel choices, and ensure new development is designed to enable and encourage walking and cycling both within sites and to surrounding areas
  - reduce carbon emissions through sustainable construction methods and by improving the long-term energy performance of buildings
  - Support sustainable approaches to the location, design, construction, operation and impact of new development and infrastructure, to help secure the extremely rapid reduction in local emissions needed to stay compatible with the latest international climate agreement and nationally legally binding targets to reach net zero carbon
  - Ensure Green and Blue infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and nature-based solutions are incorporated into our towns, villages and within new development to support carbon reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation.

### Question 15

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities for the natural environment in St Helens?

## Design & Heritage

- 4.29 St Helens boasts a varied and unique built environment, based upon its history connected with the railways, mining, glass and other industries. While many of these unique buildings and structures within the borough are recognised nationally (as noted above), there are many buildings and structures throughout the borough that are of local interest, but may not meet the criteria for statutory designation however merit local protection.
- 4.30 Within the Borough there are a number of statutory designations including 12 scheduled monuments, 4 registered parks and gardens, 1 registered battlefield, 151 listed buildings of which 1 is grade I, 14 grade II\* and 136 grade II listed buildings.
- 4.31 Good design is central to the creation of attractive, accessible, inclusive, successful, and sustainable places. High-quality, well-designed developments, including the design of buildings, contribute positively to the quality of place in the borough and make the best use of land. Development should be inclusive, creating places and spaces where everyone can access and benefit from a full range of opportunities available to members of society.
- 4.34 Key points that will need to be addressed through a New Local Plan include:
- The borough has a diverse character and townscape and there is increasing development pressures that may pose a risk to this local character.
  - Areas identified for regeneration are St Helens town centre, Earlestown town centre, the former Watson Street Glassworks (St Helens town centre and Peasley Cross & Fingerpost ward), the former Pilkington HQ site / Alexander Park (West Park ward), land at Cowley Hill (Moss Bank ward), land at Parkside (Newton-le-Willows East ward) and land off Laffak Road (Moss Bank ward). The regeneration areas create opportunities to introduce high quality design and placemaking and improve local character.

### Question 16

What do you think are the challenges and opportunities for design and heritage in St Helens?

## Transport

- 4.35 St Helens well connected. The Borough is served by a number of railway stations on the Liverpool to Wigan line and Manchester to Liverpool line. A good network of bus routes is also in place, with opportunities to be strengthened through bus franchising. The borough is served by an on and off-road cycling infrastructure and the public rights of way network. Liverpool John Lennon Airport is within a 30 minute drive and Manchester airport is within a 45 minute drive of the Borough by road.
- 4.36 By road, St Helens benefits from a well-connected highway network, including the M6 and M62 motorway, with the M58 on the Borough boundary. Key A roads such as the A49, A570 and A580 provide strategic routes across the borough and connections to Warrington, Liverpool, Manchester and Lancashire . Together, these routes offer convenient access to surrounding towns, cities and regions across the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire, Manchester and Lancashire.
- 4.37 St Helens has a significant opportunity at Parkside East where land has been allocated for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SFRI) with the primary purpose of facilitating the movement of freight.
- 4.38 Key issues the New Local Plan will need to address include:
- A vision-led approach to transport.
  - Work closely with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to help deliver the goals, principles, policies and priorities set out in the Adopted Local Transport Plan (April 2026)
  - Building on the new town centre bus interchange and bus franchising that provide significant opportunities for the role of buses alongside new development.
  - Recognise the Government's preference for locating development close to railway stations, and prioritise sites with the strongest potential for good walking, cycling and public transport connections
  - Ensuring that new development enables sustainable and accessible travel options through giving priority to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport within the design of development, and providing high quality, sustainable connections and access to/from new development
  - Manage the impact of additional vehicle trips generated by new development, including their individual and cumulative effects on congestion, road safety and air quality, particularly in relation to reducing carbon emissions from transport in line with national requirements and our local climate commitments
  - Plan parking provision carefully so it supports development needs while making efficient use of land and encouraging sustainable travel choices

### Question 17

Do you think there are any other challenges and opportunities we should be aware of in relation to transport issues?

## **Minerals & Waste**

- 4.39 As the Council is both a minerals planning authority and a waste planning authority, the new St Helens Local Plan will include waste policies in some form, as the plan period for the current Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton runs to 2027.
- 4.40 Several key issues in relation to minerals and waste have been identified including:
- Maintaining a sustainable supply of aggregates – responding to declining aggregate reserves and protecting the borough’s limited mineral reserves and associated infrastructure through safeguarding.
  - Ensuring that the restoration following mineral extraction in the borough maximises opportunities to enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure, landscape quality and climate resilience.
  - Ensuring future development, particularly on strategic housing and employment sites, is supported by an adequate aggregate supply, through safeguarding, recycled aggregates and appropriate transportation of imported materials.
  - Embedding the principles of the circular economy, including through reduced reliance on primary minerals, and managing waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy to minimise waste and to support transition to a low carbon economy.
  - Ensuring sufficient waste management capacity, including reviewing whether additional waste allocations are necessary and supporting increased recycling and resource recovery.
  - Managing strategic cross-boundary waste movements and the borough’s relationship was both an importer and exporter of waste for specialist treatment.
- 4.41 The New St Helens Local Plan will need to make responsible use of land and natural resources to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance natural carbon stores and promote the transition to a low carbon borough and circular economy, reusing and recycling waste and minerals.

### **Question 18**

What challenges face St Helens in dealing with minerals and waste, are there opportunities that the local plan can investigate?

### What does this mean for St Helens?

- 4.42 We must carefully balance the demand for homes, jobs and infrastructure with the need to protect and enhance our important environmental and historic assets. This means making difficult choices about where development should go, ensuring it delivers the things communities need, while safeguarding what makes St Helens unique. Our Local Plan is about striking that balance and achieving the best outcomes for now and into the future.

| Question 19<br>Please chose three of the most important issues out of the topics below that you think would be critical in the production of the Local Plan |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                             | Improve employment opportunities and support the economic regeneration of the Borough                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Meeting the housing requirement set out in the Plan. Providing the right homes in the correct location, including affordable and specialist housing |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Providing a range of sustainable transport options and making sure active travel is a priority                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Protecting our landscape and natural environment, improving biodiversity, improving air quality and reducing the risk of flooding                   |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Protecting our historic environment                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Ensuring that residents have good access to open spaces, playing pitches and children's play provision                                              |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Ensuring high quality and energy efficient sustainable design                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Providing mitigation/adaptation to climate change through green infrastructure and design                                                           |

## Vision

- 4.43 To develop a Vision for the St Helens Local Plan that will genuinely reflect St Helens, we are considering what the Local Plan should deliver by 2044 and what are the characteristics that make the Borough distinctive. Under the new Local Planning system, the vision should be supported by no more than ten measurable outcomes which will form the basis the monitoring the progress of the plan.
- 4.44 The Vision for St Helens will take into account the features that define St Helens, including:
- our strategic location within the Liverpool City Region, our economic role, and strong connections to Liverpool, Cheshire, Manchester, Lancashire and the wider Northwest
  - what feels important to those who live, work and visit the Borough
  - our heritage of a varied and unique built environment, based upon its history connected with the railways, mining, glass and other industries; and
  - the distinctive character of the towns and beyond.
- 4.45 In developing the vision, we will consider how our Plan can address the priorities that emerge from the challenges and opportunities facing the borough, including:
- meeting housing needs by planning for a sufficient supply of appropriate, well-located homes that meet the needs of all of the community
  - supporting a strong and diverse local economy by enabling business growth, supporting town centres creating jobs, and building a resilient, future-ready economy
  - addressing climate change by supporting development that reduces carbon emissions, protects natural assets and helps communities adapt to risks such as flooding and coastal change, in line with our climate commitments
  - promoting sustainable and safe development by ensuring growth is focused in accessible locations, well connected by public transport, walking and cycling networks, and designed to be inclusive and safe for all
  - supporting thriving communities that are healthy, inclusive and resilient, promoting wellbeing, reducing inequalities, and enhancing quality of life across the Borough; and
  - protecting and enhancing the natural environment by safeguarding important habitats, improving biodiversity, maintaining high standards of air quality.



- 4.46 These considerations will help to shape a Local Plan vision that reflects St Helens priorities, recognising the uniqueness of St Helens, and guiding future development whilst providing flexibility to develop future opportunities and the changing needs of its communities.
- 4.47 St Helens Council are looking for feedback on these issues to establish if they reflect what matters most to you and whether there are aspects of St Helens future that should be reflected in the vision.

#### **Question 20**

Do you think these are the right issues to consider for our vision?

#### **Question 21**

Do you think 15 years from the point of adoption, taking the new Local Plan up to 2044 is sufficient for the new St Helens Local Plan?

## Appendix 1

### Consultation Bodies

| Consultation body listed in Regulation 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Local application to St Helens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Active Travel England                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| b. Any person – to whom the electronic communications code applies as a result of a direction given under section 106 (3) (a) of the Communications Act 2003, and who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in the planning authority's area; | Openreach<br>Mobile UK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| c. Canal & River Trust                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| d. The Civil Aviation Authority                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| e. The Coal Authority                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| f. Sport England                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| g. The Environment Agency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| h. The Forestry Commission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| i. A highway authority within the meaning of section 1 of the Highways Act 1980 (31), any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area (Including the Secretary of State, where the Secretary of State is highways authority)                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Helens Borough Council (as highway authority)</li> <li>• National Highways</li> <li>• Neighbouring highway authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Halton Borough Council</li> <li>○ Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>○ Lancashire County Council</li> <li>○ Warrington Borough Council</li> <li>○ Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| j. Historic England                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| k. Homes England                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| l. if it exercises functions in the planning authority's area— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an integrated care board</li> <li>• Electricity supply</li> <li>• Gas supply</li> <li>• Water and sewerage undertaker</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merseyside and Cheshire ICB</li> <li>• Electricity North West</li> <li>• Cadent Gas Limited</li> <li>• United Utilities</li> <li>• Scottish Power Energy Networks</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| m. an Integrated Transport Authority for an integrated transport area within the meaning in section 77(1) of the Local Transport                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liverpool City Region Combined Authority / Merseytravel</li> <li>• Greater Manchester Combined Authority / Transport for Greater Manchester</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Act 2008(38), which is in or adjoins the planning authority's area;                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| n. The Marine Management Organisation                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| o. Natural England                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| p. A Neighbourhood Forum any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area         | <p>There are no neighbourhood forums in St Helens. Adjoining the LPA area is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Golborne and Lowton West Voice (Wigan)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| q. Network Rail                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| r. The Office for Nuclear Regulation                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| s. The Office of Rail and Road                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| t. Not Applicable – applies to Greater London                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| u. a relevant consultation body any part of whose area is in or adjoins the planning authority's area; | <p>Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (and constituent authorities of the Liverpool City Region):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Halton Borough Council</li> <li>Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>Liverpool City Council</li> <li>Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>Warrington Borough Council</li> <li>West Lancashire District Council</li> <li>Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council</li> </ul> <p>Parish Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In St Helens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Billinge Chapel End</li> <li>Bold</li> <li>Eccleston</li> <li>Rainford</li> <li>Rainhill</li> <li>Seneley Green</li> <li>Windle</li> </ul> </li> <li>Adjoining the LPA area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bickerstaffe (West Lancs)</li> <li>Burtonwood and Westbrook (Warrington)</li> <li>Croft (Warrington)</li> <li>Cronton (Knowsley)</li> <li>Cuerdley (Warrington)</li> <li>Great Sankey (Warrington)</li> <li>Knowsley (Knowsley)</li> <li>Penketh (Warrington)</li> <li>Prescot (Knowsley)</li> <li>Simonswood (West Lancs)</li> <li>Up Holland (West Lancs)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whiston (Knowsley)</li> <li>○ Winwick (Warrington)</li> </ul> <p>Minerals and Waste Planning Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEAS</li> <li>• Halton Borough Council</li> <li>• Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>• Liverpool City Council</li> <li>• Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council</li> <li>• Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council</li> </ul> <p>Local Policing Bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merseyside Constabulary</li> <li>• Cheshire Constabulary</li> <li>• Greater Manchester Constabulary</li> <li>• Lancashire Constabulary</li> </ul> <p>Combined authority and combined county authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liverpool City Region Combined Authority</li> <li>• Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority</li> <li>• Greater Manchester Combined Authority</li> </ul> |
| v. Not Applicable – applies to Greater London                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| w. Education authority                                        | St Helens Borough Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| x. Lead Local Flood Authority                                 | St Helens Borough Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| y. Responsible authority for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Liverpool City Region Combined Authority                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |