

St Helens Local Plan

**Strategic Environmental
Assessment Scoping Report**

September 2026

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1 Purpose of this Report

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1. The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for and determine the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2026 – 2044.
- 1.1.2. The SEA process ensures consideration is given to the environment during the development of certain plans and programmes. This helps to protect the environment, promote sustainable development and allows for increased public participation in decision-making.

1.2 Legislative Context

- 1.2.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment arises from the European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (known as SEA Directive). This Directive was transposed into law for England and Wales in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, referred to as SEA Regulations.
- 1.2.2 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 makes provision for the Government to bring forward Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs), a new assessment that will replace the existing system of SEA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The introduction of EORs will require secondary legislation.
- 1.2.3 Under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, the responsible authority is required to determine whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore whether a SEA is required. This process is called screening. It is undertaken using a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations).
- 1.2.4 Regulation 12 (6) of the SEA Regulations requires the scoping consultation to be undertaken for at least 5 weeks.

1.3 The Local Plan

- 1.3.1 The St Helens Borough Local Plan will form the new Development Plan for the borough and will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.
- 1.3.2 The current St Helens Local Plan up to 2037 was adopted in July 2022 and on 23 December 2024 the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all Local Planning Authorities requesting that they produce an updated Local Development Scheme within 12 weeks of the publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework. In direct response, at its meeting of 26 February 2025, Cabinet adopted a Local Development Scheme (2025-2028) that included timescales for completion of a review of the St Helens Borough Local Plan in accordance with national legislation.
- 1.3.4 Accordingly, in November 2025, the Government announced that regulations to implement the new plan making system (provided by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) would come into force early in 2026. A package of regulations to implement the new system has now been laid in Parliament which includes the new Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 that have a commencement date of 25 March 2026, replacing the 2012 plan-making regulations.
- 1.3.5 At its meeting of 3 June 2026, Cabinet approved the commencement of a new Local Plan for St Helens Borough Council. On 30 June 2026, under the new plan-making system (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, Part 4 Regulation 19), the Council published their 'Notice of Intention' to commence Local Plan preparation, along with a timetable for the production of the new St Helens Borough Local Plan.
- 1.3.6 The planning system is plan-led, and the Government has committed to achieving universal coverage of up-to-date local plans. Local plans are a tool to support growth through development, improve living standards, improve the quality of the environment and deliver the development the country needs. The Government states that reform of the plan-making system is necessary to introduce a faster, clearer and more accessible process for preparing plans. The Government has published new guidance on creating and updating a new Local Plan.

1.4 Screening

- 1.4.1 The following table assesses the Local Plan against the criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA regulations and considers whether a SEA is required.

Criteria	Significant environmental effect likely? (yes / no)	Justification / evidence
1. The characteristics of the plans and programmes, having regard in particular to:		
a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	Yes	The Local Plan sets a policy framework for development in the borough, including site allocations. It will support the delivery of other corporate policy objectives. It will provide borough-level detail to the policies in the Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy.
b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Yes	The Local Plan will provide the overall policy context for other plans and programmes that will be developed to support its delivery, e.g. masterplans / supplementary plans
c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Yes	The Local Plan will be prepared in conformity with relevant legislation. Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that plans <i>“include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.”</i>
d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	Yes	The Local Plan will include a broad range of policy issues, and through site allocations, will address relevant environmental problems.
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	Yes	The Local Plan will support the delivery of other Council plans covering these areas.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:		

a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	Yes	The Local Plan will cover the period from 2026-2044. It will contain a range of policies, site allocations and designations that will have different effects.
b) the cumulative nature of the effects;		The Local Plan is likely to lead to cumulative effects arising from different policies and site allocations, including with the Liverpool City Region SDS.
c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	No	The Local Plan will not give rise to any transboundary effects.
d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	No	The Local Plan will not give rise to any significant risks to human health or the environment.
e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	Yes	The Borough covers 136 square km and is home to circa 183,200 residents. The borough is part of a wider functional economic market area and there are cross-boundary impacts in terms of housing and economic development.
f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use; and	Yes	The borough includes a range of valued environmental assets (including for their heritage, biodiversity and geodiversity value) and the Local Plan will include policies for these. The Local Plan will include policies around pollution and contaminated land, including the borough's Air Quality Management Areas.
g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Yes	The borough includes functionally linked land for sites of international nature importance; and contains sites of national importance.

1.4.2 Within this context, SEA will be required for the new Local Plan. This means that the first stage of the SEA process is the Scoping Report, which will determine the likely extent and level of information that needs to be included

in the assessment process and will be reported in the Environmental Report alongside the draft Local Plan. This will cover any likely significant effects that would arise from the implementation of the Local Plan.

1.5 Scoping Structure

1.5.1 As set out in the Government guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal, the scoping stage is as follows:

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope:

1. Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives - To establish how the plan or programme is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help to identify SEA objectives.
2. Collecting baseline information - To provide an evidence base for environmental problems, prediction of effects, and monitoring; to help in the development of SEA objectives.
3. Identifying environmental problems - To help focus the SEA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting of the SEA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring.
4. Developing SEA objectives - To provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.
5. Consulting on the scope of SEA - To ensure that the SEA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan or programme.

2 Other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives

2.1 Approach

This stage establishes the policy context for the SEA and will ensure that the Local Plan complies with relevant international, national, sub-regional and local policies.

2.1.1 International

Policy / Programme	Key Focus	Key messages / implications for the Local Plan and SEA
SEA Directive 2001/42/EC (as transposed into English law)	Requires environmental assessment of plans/programmes likely to have significant effects. Specifies assessment of biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscapes, and mandates consideration of reasonable alternatives.	This forms the legal basis for the SEA, requiring the identification, assessment and mitigation of likely significant environmental effects of the Local Plan, including consideration of alternatives.
RAMSAR conventions on wetlands of international importance, especially water	Protection and wise use of wetlands of international importance, with a focus on maintaining ecological character of wetland sites and sustainable water management.	The Local Plan and SEA must consider impacts on wetland ecosystems, water quality, and hydrological systems, including through functionally linked land within the borough.
UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015)	Global sustainability framework which sets 17 global goals to be achieved by 2030, including Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities. The goals are a call for a global partnership recognising that addressing poverty needs to go together with improving health, education, reducing	These goals should inform the SEA objectives and be fully considered in the development of local plan policy and strategy.

	inequality and spurring economic growth – whilst tackling climate change and protecting the environment.	
Paris Agreement (2016)	Limiting global temperature rise and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with an international commitment to limit global average temperature rise to “well below 2°C” and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.	The Local Plan must support net zero transition, low-carbon development and climate resilience measures. The SEA should consider the extent to which policies and spatial options contribute to this.
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15, 2021)	Global framework to conserve biodiversity, including targets to halt biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems, and protect at least 30% of land and sea areas (“30x30” target) under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.	The Local Plan should protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to habitat recovery. The SEA should assess effects on ecological networks and opportunities for biodiversity net gain.
UN Convention on Human Rights (2015)	Protection of fundamental human rights, including health, wellbeing and quality of life	The Local Plan should promote healthy and inclusive communities, addressing deprivation and inequalities related to protected characteristics.
UN Climate Change Conference – Glasgow (COP26, 2021)	Strengthening global commitment to climate action (the 1.5°C Paris Agreement commitment) and accelerating decarbonisation, through phasing down unabated coal.	The Local Plan should prioritise early action on decarbonisation, including transport and energy. The SEA should consider short- and medium-term climate impacts as well as long-term effects.
European Landscape Convention (2006)	Protection, management and planning of landscapes	The Local Plan should safeguard landscape character and minimise adverse visual impacts.

		The SEA should assess impacts on landscape and townscape, including cumulative effects.
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2.1.2 National

Policy / Programme	Key Focus	Key messages / implications for the Local Plan and SEA
Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, 2023	Introduces significant reforms to the planning system, strengthens the role of plan-led development, provides a framework for Environmental Outcomes Reports (EORs) – streamlining previous EU generated requirements of SA, SEA, HRA and Environmental Impact Assessments – however this is subject to secondary legislation.	The Local Plan should support sustainable growth, infrastructure provision and good design whilst integrating environmental considerations throughout plan-making. The SEA will remain in force, as secondary legislation is required to introduce the EOR regime.
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)	Establishes the development plan system and a number of legislative requirements for the production of Local Plan documents.	The Local Plan and SEA should meet provisions of the Act.
Planning Act, 2008	The act established the creation of the Community Infrastructure Levy and the decision making arrangements for nationally significant infrastructure projects.	The Local Plan and SEA should meet provisions of the Act.
Localism Act, 2011	The Act sets out how power will be devolved to councils and neighbourhoods, including establishing the Neighbourhood Plans regime.	The Local Plan will need to take account of the preparation of any neighbourhood plans.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Provides the principal statutory framework for the protection of the historic environment in England. Establishes the approach for LPAs in relation to buildings of special historic / architectural interest. It provides the definition of a listed building and sets the framework for decisions around listed buildings and conservation areas.	The Local Plan should protect and enhance the significance, settings and special interest of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and locally important heritage assets. The SEA should assess the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of development on heritage assets, their settings, local distinctiveness and historic character.
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Provides legal protection for Scheduled Monuments and nationally important archaeological remains. Scheduled Monument Consent is required for works affecting a Scheduled Monument.	The Local Plan should safeguard known archaeological assets and ensure that development takes account of the potential for previously undiscovered archaeological remains. The SEA should assess the potential effects of development on such designations.
Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025	Seeks to accelerate infrastructure delivery, improve strategic planning arrangements – mandating Spatial Development Strategies, streamline consenting processes and facilitate environmental assessment reform. The act introduces a system of Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) and a Nature Restoration Fund (NRF).	The Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with the Spatial Development Strategy. The Local Plan will need to consider Environmental Delivery Plans and the Nature Restoration Fund.

Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended)	This sets the legally binding target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.	The Local Plan will need to embed measures to encourage climate change mitigation and adaptation.
Environment Act 2021	Introduces Biodiversity Net Gain (minimum 10%), Local Nature Recovery Strategies and environmental improvement targets.	The Local Plan will need to consider the provisions of the act around biodiversity, green infrastructure and nature recovery objectives.
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	Provides the framework for managing local flood risk and sustainable drainage.	The Local Plan and SEA should be informed by the latest information on flood risk.
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017	This protects and improve the ecological health of water environments and water body status. This is implemented by the Environment Agency.	The SEA should detail where Water Framework directive requirements have been met, and where any mitigation is required.
Equality Act, 2010	The Public Sector Equality Duty requires due regard to protected characteristics.	The Local Plan and SEA will be informed by an Equality Impact Assessment that will ensure that the Local Plan will have due regard to the different protected characteristics.
Land Use Framework, 2026	The first Land Use Framework for England seeks to establish a strategic approach to balancing competing demands for land and how land can be used more effectively. This has 3 sections: A vision for England's future landscapes – informed by sophisticated land use change analysis, a set of principles to inform how	the Local Plan should make efficient use of land, maximise regeneration opportunities and consider trade-offs between growth, environmental protection and food production. The SEA should assess impacts on agricultural land, Green Belt, biodiversity, climate resilience and

	decisions are made about land and government actions to support land use change.	opportunities for multifunctional land use.
25 Year Environment Plan (2018)	This aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.	The Local Plan and SEA should have regard to the aims of the 25 year Environment Plan.
Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)	This builds on the 25 Year Environment Plan and sets out the Government's approach to improving the natural environment, including commitments to species recovery, cleaner air and water, and improved access to nature. Includes ambitions to ensure people can access green or blue space close to where they live.	The Local Plan should support nature recovery, green infrastructure and environmental quality. The SA should assess access to nature, biodiversity and ecosystem services.
National Planning Policy Framework (2024)	The NPPF sets out planning policies for England for plan-making and decision-taking and sets out the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development: with an economic, social and environmental objective.	The Local Plan must be produced in conformity with the NPPF. The SEA should be developed to fully reflect the sustainable development objectives in NPPF.
Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (2024)	Sets national policy for planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling	The Local Plan should identify sufficient provision to meet

	Show people accommodation needs. Seeks to ensure fair and equal treatment whilst facilitating the traditional and nomadic way of life. Requires local authorities to identify a supply of deliverable and developable sites.	evidenced traveller accommodation needs. The SEA should consider the needs of travellers in assessing social impacts of the plan.
National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)	Provides the planning framework for sustainable waste management. Supports the movement of waste management up the waste hierarchy, prioritising waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery before disposal.	The Local Plan should support sustainable waste management infrastructure where appropriate and ensure new development contributes to efficient resource use. The SEA should consider impacts on waste generation and resource efficiency.
National Policy Statement for National Networks (2024)	Provides the framework for decision-making on nationally significant road, rail and freight infrastructure.	The Local Plan should be prepared in conformity with the NPSNN, particularly for major projects such as the SRFI at Parkside.
National Design Guide (2021)	The National Design Guide (NDG) ¹ sets out how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities in the form of ten characteristics.	The Local Plan should support high quality design and placemaking, which reflects the ten characteristics of a well-design place.
National Model Design Code (2021)	The purpose of the National Model Design Code (NMDC) ² is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote	The Local Plan should consider how it can support the production of design codes, and the delivery of other design tools to support high

¹ [National design guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/602cef1d8fa8f5038595091b/National_design_guide.pdf)

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/602cef1d8fa8f5038595091b/National_design_guide.pdf)

² [National Model Design Code - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>)

	successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the NDG.	quality design and placemaking.
Air Quality Strategy for England	This strategy sets out the actions that Defra expects local authorities to take in support of our long-term air quality goals, including our ambitious new PM2.5 targets. It provides a framework to enable local authorities to make the best use of their powers and make improvements for their communities.	The Local Plan should seek to minimise exposure to air pollution and reduce transport emissions. The SEA should assess impacts on air quality and human health.
Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport (2025)	National transport strategy promoting safe, reliable, affordable and accessible transport. Key planning priorities include creating healthy communities, integrating land use and transport planning, supporting transit-oriented development and reducing barriers to travel.	The Local Plan should direct growth to accessible locations and support active travel, public transport and sustainable movement patterns. The SEA should assess accessibility, connectivity, modal shift opportunities, emissions and impacts on health and wellbeing.
UK Modern Industrial Strategy (2025)	Ten-year strategy supporting eight growth sectors including Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy Industries, Digital Technologies, Life Sciences and Professional and Business Services. Identifies Liverpool City Region as a priority location for economic growth and sectoral clustering.	The Local Plan should support economic growth, innovation, employment land provision and investment opportunities whilst balancing environmental constraints. The SEA should assess the sustainability implications of industrial, logistics and employment growth.

Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)	Establishes national standards for Green Infrastructure (GI), including Accessible Greenspace Standards, Urban Nature Recovery Standards, Urban Greening Factor and Urban Tree Canopy Standards. Promotes accessible, connected and multifunctional green infrastructure networks.	The Local Plan should secure high-quality, accessible and connected green infrastructure across the Borough. The SEA should assess access to green space, health outcomes, biodiversity enhancement, urban greening and climate resilience.
Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide (2023)	Provides practical guidance on delivering multifunctional green infrastructure through planning, design codes and masterplanning. Encourages integration of Biodiversity Net Gain, Urban Greening Factors, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and sustainable drainage.	The Local Plan should require green infrastructure to be planned as interconnected networks rather than isolated features. The SEA should consider accessibility to green and blue infrastructure, habitat connectivity, active travel opportunities, nature recovery and quality of place.
Housing: Optional Technical Standards and Nationally Described Space Standards	Introduces optional standards for accessible and adaptable housing (Building Regulations M4(2) and M4(3)), water efficiency and nationally described minimum internal space standards. NPPF supports use of these standards where evidenced local need exists.	The Local Plan should consider whether evidence supports the application of optional standards relating to accessibility, adaptability and housing quality. The SEA should assess the contribution of housing policies toward healthy, inclusive and resilient communities.
Homes England Strategic Plan 2025-2030	Supports Government objectives including delivery of 1.5 million homes during the current Parliament and over 300,000 homes per annum nationally.	The Local Plan should support the delivery of sufficient housing across all tenures, including affordable housing. Regeneration opportunities should be

		maximised alongside housing growth. The SA should assess housing affordability, community infrastructure, regeneration benefits and social inclusion.
Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development (DfT Circular 01/2022)	Sets out how National Highways should engage in the planning system. Promotes a shift from traditional "predict and provide" transport planning towards a vision-led approach that supports sustainable development, placemaking and design quality.	The Local Plan should align growth with sustainable transport principles and avoid creating unsustainable travel patterns. The SEA should consider transport impacts and opportunities to reduce car dependence.
Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS3)	Sets out the Government's vision for active travel to 2035. Includes a target for 55% of all short trips in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled. Strategic objectives focus on increasing physical activity, making active travel the easiest choice and improving safety.	The Local Plan should prioritise active travel infrastructure and create walkable and cycle-friendly communities. The SEA should consider impacts on health, accessibility, carbon emissions, air quality and active travel opportunities.
Waste Management Plan for England (2021)	Provides the national framework for waste management in England and covers household, commercial, industrial, construction, demolition and hazardous waste streams.	The Local Plan should support sustainable waste management and ensure development contributes towards efficient use of resources. The SEA should assess the implications of growth on waste generation / management.
Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018)	Establishes the Government's long-term ambition to eliminate	The Local Plan should support circular economy principles, resource

	avoidable waste by 2050 and accelerate the transition towards a more resource-efficient and circular economy.	efficiency and sustainable design. The SEA should assess the implications of growth on waste generation / management.
Vision 2035: UK Critical Minerals Strategy	Sets out the UK's long-term ambition to secure resilient supplies of critical minerals required to support the clean energy transition, advanced manufacturing, defence, digital technologies and other growth sectors.	The Local Plan should have regard to this strategy and seek to support sustainable economic growth whilst ensuring resource use is minimised. The SEA should assess opportunities to support resource efficiency, and innovation.

2.1.3 Sub-Regional

Policy / Programme	Key Focus	Key messages / implications for the Local Plan and SEA
Liverpool City Region Corporate Plan (2024-28)	Sets out the Combined Authority's vision for a stronger, fairer economy driven by growth, inward investment, skills development and sustainable employment – recognising the intrinsic link between Economy, People, Place, Transport and Digital Infrastructure. The plan sets out the LCR approach to nature recovery and strengthening efforts to reach net zero, tackling homelessness, promoting mobility across the city region and reducing health inequalities.	The Local Plan should support sustainable economic growth, inward investment and employment opportunities whilst ensuring development contributes to climate resilience, nature recovery and high-quality places. The SEA should consider employment, inequalities, health, green infrastructure, biodiversity, climate mitigation and community wellbeing.

Liverpool City Region Growth Plan (2025-35)	The 10-year Growth Plan sets out local priorities around innovation, skills, employment, health, housing and transport. It sets a Productivity Mission for the city region supported by three principles of inclusive growth, AI for good and net zero by 2035. It covers two themes to scale up growth drivers and strengthen the foundations for growth.	The Local Plan should support growth sectors, strategic employment locations and housing delivery whilst managing environmental impact. The SEA should assess the impacts of growth.
Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) (emerging)	Will provide the statutory strategic planning framework for the city region to at least 2040. Focuses on housing, economy, employment, infrastructure, town centres, climate change, natural environment and health.	The Local Plan must demonstrate alignment with the SDS. THE SEA should take the SEA report of the SDS into consideration when assessing the impacts of the Local Plan.
Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Establishes a city region-wide framework for nature recovery. Identifies priority habitats, ecological networks, species recovery areas and opportunities for habitat creation, carbon sequestration, flood management and access to nature.	The Local Plan should protect, restore and connect ecological networks and support biodiversity recovery. The SEA should assess impacts on priority habitats, ecological connectivity, species recovery, natural capital, blue-green infrastructure and climate adaptation.
Liverpool City Region Local Transport Plan (2026)	Vision for clean, safe and accessible transport for people and goods. Five goals focus on economic growth, net zero, health and wellbeing, infrastructure resilience and innovation. Includes delivery commitments affecting St Helens such	The Local Plan should support development patterns that promote sustainable travel and transport accessibility. The SEA should assess impacts on connectivity, accessibility, active travel, public transport use,

	as Carr Mill Station, active travel routes, bus franchising, accessibility improvements and town centre transport investment.	carbon emissions, health and air quality.
Liverpool City Region Bus Service Improvement Plan (2024)	Seeks to improve bus reliability, affordability, integration and accessibility. Supports bus franchising, enhanced services, emission-free buses and strategic investment on key corridors including Liverpool-St Helens services.	The Local Plan should support growth in locations accessible by high-quality bus services and facilitate public transport improvements. The SEA should consider accessibility, social inclusion, modal shift, air quality and transport emissions.
Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (2023)	Establishes a strategic network of active travel routes across the city region. Includes routes in St Helens such as Sankey Valley, East Lancashire Road corridors and St Helens-Widnes connections.	The Local Plan should support active travel networks and ensure development contributes to walking and cycling connectivity. The SEA should consider health outcomes, accessibility, active travel uptake, carbon reduction and public realm improvements.
Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy / Housing Priorities Statement	Focuses on increasing housing supply, improving housing quality and choice, supporting older people, neighbourhood regeneration, improving the private rented sector and tackling homelessness.	The Local Plan should support an appropriate mix of homes, affordable housing and specialist accommodation. The SEA should assess housing accessibility, affordability, health outcomes, neighbourhood quality and social inclusion.
Liverpool City Region Housing Investment Strategy (2020)	Identifies the need for rebalancing the housing market through investment and diversification. Seeks to improve housing quality,	The Local Plan should support housing-led regeneration and a diverse housing offer. The SEA assess patterns of housing growth.

	widen housing choice and support long-term regeneration and market resilience.	
Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy (2026 – 2031)	Sets out a city-region approach to delivering more high-quality homes, improving existing housing stock, tackling homelessness and aligning housing growth with infrastructure, health, transport and economic priorities through a place-based and partnership-led approach.	The Local Plan should support the delivery of sustainable housing growth, regeneration, affordable and specialist housing, housing retrofit, and infrastructure-led development that contributes to healthy, inclusive and climate-resilient communities
Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2024)	Vision for a near-zero emission, integrated, safe, affordable and sustainable transport system across Northern England. Supports improved rail, road, freight and local connectivity through a place-based approach to investment and delivery.	The Local Plan should support sustainable freight movement, regional connectivity and access to employment. The SEA should assess cross-boundary transport impacts, economic connectivity and environmental effects.

2.1.4 Local

Policy / Programme	Key Focus	Key messages / implications for the Local Plan and SEA
St Helens Borough Strategy (2021-2030)	Establishes the Borough's long-term vision and six strategic priorities. Focuses on safe and inclusive communities, housing delivery, economic growth, regeneration, climate action, health improvement and environmental enhancement.	The Local Plan should support inclusive growth, housing delivery, regeneration, climate resilience and healthier communities. The SEA should assess impacts on health, deprivation, accessibility, employment, biodiversity, green infrastructure and quality of place.

St Helens Borough Housing Strategy (2022-2027)	Seeks to ensure residents have access to decent, affordable homes within sustainable neighbourhoods. Supports affordable housing delivery, home ownership opportunities and housing choice.	The Local Plan should deliver a sufficient supply of affordable and market housing and support sustainable neighbourhoods. The SEA should assess housing affordability, accessibility, quality and social inclusion.
St Helens Inclusive Growth Strategy (2023-2028)	Aims to deliver a thriving, inclusive and well-connected economy. Focuses on regeneration, inward investment, skills, employment, green manufacturing, innovation and achieving net zero by 2040.	The Local Plan should support inclusive economic growth and strategic employment opportunities while reducing inequalities. The SEA should assess employment, skills, health, town centre vitality, sustainable growth and environmental impacts.
St Helens Heritage Strategy (2019)	Establishes a vision to increase recognition, protection and promotion of the Borough's historic environment and industrial heritage. Supports heritage-led regeneration, tourism growth and community identity.	The Local Plan should protect, enhance and celebrate heritage assets and local distinctiveness. The SEA should assess impacts on heritage significance, setting, historic character and opportunities for heritage-led regeneration.
St Helens Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan Development Framework	Sets a framework for transformational regeneration, public realm improvements, investment and placemaking within the town centre.	The Local Plan should align with regeneration priorities and support sustainable redevelopment opportunities. The SEA should consider regeneration, accessibility, health and place quality benefits.
Earlestown Masterplan Development Framework	Provides a long-term vision for the regeneration and	The Local Plan should support town centre renewal, economic

	transformation of Earlestown Town Centre.	revitalisation and sustainable transport improvements. The SEA should assess social, economic and environmental benefits arising from regeneration.
St Helens LCWIP (2023)	Establishes a strategic network of walking and cycling routes linking town centres, residential areas and employment locations. Supports active travel and sustainable mobility.	The Local Plan should prioritise walkable and cycle-friendly development and support the delivery of the routes identified in the LCWIP. The SEA should assess accessibility by active modes.
St Helens Active Lives Strategy (2022-2027)	Aims to increase physical activity levels, particularly among underrepresented groups. Supports active environments, active travel and healthy lifestyles.	The Local Plan should create environments that encourage physical activity. The SEA should consider health outcomes, open space provision, active travel and reducing inequalities.
Pathway to Net Zero by 2040	Establishes the Borough-wide ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. Prioritises action on energy, transport, buildings, waste, land use and the natural environment.	The Local Plan should support decarbonisation and climate resilience. The SEA should assess greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation measures and contributions towards net zero delivery.
Climate Action Plan (2023-2025)	Delivers short-term actions to accelerate progress towards the Borough's 2040 net zero target. Focuses on practical carbon reduction measures across multiple sectors.	The Local Plan should support implementation of climate actions and low-carbon development. The SEA should assess climate mitigation and adaptation benefits.
Climate Emergency Response Plan	Focuses on carbon reduction, nature-based solutions, flood resilience,	The Local Plan should integrate climate adaptation and nature

	tree planting and ecological enhancement.	recovery measures. The SA should assess climate resilience, biodiversity and ecosystem services.
St Helens Together Strategy (2025-2028)	Promotes community cohesion, inclusivity and partnership working to improve outcomes for residents and communities.	The Local Plan should support inclusive communities and equitable access to services and opportunities. The SEA should assess equality, wellbeing and social cohesion.
St Helens People's Plan (2021-2026)	Provides the strategic framework for improving health, wellbeing and care outcomes within the Borough.	The Local Plan should support healthier places and reduce health inequalities. The SEA should assess health, wellbeing and access to services.
Resources and Waste Strategy (2023-2030)	Seeks to support the circular economy, achieve net zero, increase recycling and minimise waste generation.	The Local Plan should promote resource efficiency and sustainable waste management. The SEA should assess waste generation, recycling and circular economy outcomes.
St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022)	Current statutory development plan establishing the spatial strategy for growth, regeneration, housing, economy, transport and environment.	Provides the baseline planning framework and evidence context for review. The SEA should consider lessons learned and changes in circumstances since adoption.
Local Economy and Social Value SPD (2026)	Promotes education, employment, training, local procurement and wider social value outcomes from development.	The Local Plan should maximise social value, local employment and skills benefits. The SEA should assess inclusive growth and socio-economic outcomes.

Design SPD (2024)	Provides guidance on achieving high-quality, accessible, attractive and sustainable development.	The Local Plan should promote high-quality design and placemaking. The SEA should assess townscape, quality of place, accessibility and wellbeing.
Locally Listed Heritage Assets SPD (2026)	Establishes criteria and processes for identifying and protecting locally important heritage assets.	The Local Plan should recognise and protect non-designated heritage assets and local character. The SEA should assess impacts on local heritage significance.
Transport and Travel SPD (2025)	Provides guidance on vision-led transport planning, accessibility standards, active travel, transport assessments and freight management.	The Local Plan should support sustainable transport and accessibility. The SEA should assess connectivity, modal shift, active travel and transport emissions.
Affordable Housing SPD (2026)	Provides detailed guidance on affordable housing requirements, tenure mix and delivery mechanisms.	The Local Plan should support delivery of affordable housing and mixed communities. The SEA should assess housing need, affordability and social inclusion.
Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD (2026)	Guides the management of HMO provision and seeks to avoid over-concentrations.	The Local Plan should support balanced communities and high-quality living environments. The SEA should assess effects on amenity, housing choice and community cohesion.
Design and Crime SPD	Promotes safe, secure environments and crime prevention through design.	The Local Plan should support community safety and high-quality public spaces. The SEA should assess safety, wellbeing

		and quality of neighbourhoods.
Telecommunications SPD	Supports digital connectivity whilst minimising visual and environmental impacts.	The Local Plan should facilitate digital infrastructure whilst protecting environmental quality. The SEA should assess landscape and townscape impacts.
Trees and Development SPD	Promotes retention of valuable trees and integration of new planting within development.	The Local Plan should maximise tree retention and planting opportunities. The SEA should assess biodiversity, landscape and climate benefits.
Hot Food Takeaways SPD	Seeks to manage amenity, health and townscape impacts associated with takeaway uses.	The Local Plan should support healthy communities and vibrant centres. The SEA should assess health, amenity and town centre impacts.
Residential Character Areas SPD	Provides guidance on protecting residential character and ensuring compatible development.	The Local Plan should respect local character and context. The SEA should assess impacts on townscape, amenity and place quality.
Developer Contributions SPD (2024)	Sets out the Council's approach to securing infrastructure, community facilities and mitigation measures through development.	The Local Plan should ensure growth is supported by adequate infrastructure. The SEA should assess infrastructure delivery and cumulative effects.
Biodiversity SPD	Promotes protection, enhancement and connectivity of biodiversity resources and Core Biodiversity Areas.	The Local Plan should secure biodiversity enhancement and ecological connectivity. The SEA should assess impacts on habitats, species and nature recovery.

Householder Development SPD	Provides detailed design guidance for residential extensions and alterations.	Relevant context for design quality but of limited strategic relevance to SEA.
Open Space Provision and Enhancement SPD (2024)	Provides guidance on open space requirements and enhancement of existing provision.	The Local Plan should ensure adequate open space provision and accessibility. The SEA should assess recreation, health, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
Joint Waste Local Plan (2013)	Provides the strategic planning framework for waste management and waste infrastructure across Merseyside and Halton. Promotes movement up the waste hierarchy, resource recovery and self-sufficiency.	The Local Plan should safeguard waste facilities and support sustainable waste management. The SEA should assess waste infrastructure, resource efficiency and environmental impacts.
Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (2017)	Provides a long-term framework to transform former industrial land into a multifunctional forest park supporting biodiversity, recreation, tourism and employment.	The Local Plan should support landscape restoration, green infrastructure and environmental regeneration. The SEA should assess biodiversity, recreation, health, tourism and climate adaptation benefits.

2.2 Key Messages

2.2.1 The assessment of relevant plans, programmes and environmental projection objectives at international, national, sub-regional and local levels provides a series of key messages that the SEA will need to take into account:

1. Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth

The Local Plan should support sustainable economic growth, inward investment, innovation, employment opportunities and strategic growth sectors whilst reducing deprivation and inequalities.

2. Deliver Regeneration and Revitalisation

The Local Plan should support regeneration, economic revitalisation and renewal of town centres and other priority areas, helping to create attractive, vibrant and economically successful places.

3. Meet Housing Needs

The Local Plan should deliver a sufficient supply of housing, including affordable housing, specialist accommodation and a diverse mix of tenures and house types to meet identified needs.

4. Create Inclusive, Healthy and Cohesive Communities

The Local Plan should support inclusive communities, reduce inequalities, promote social cohesion and ensure equitable access to opportunities, services and facilities.

5. Improve Health and Wellbeing

Development should promote healthier lifestyles, reduce health inequalities and improve residents' physical and mental wellbeing through access to services, open space and opportunities for physical activity.

6. Support Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

The Local Plan should promote sustainable travel patterns, improve accessibility, support public transport, walking and cycling, and reduce reliance on private car travel.

7. Address Climate Change

The Local Plan should support decarbonisation, low-carbon development and the achievement of net zero objectives, whilst embedding climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

8. Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

Development should protect, restore and enhance biodiversity, support habitat recovery, strengthen ecological networks and contribute to nature recovery objectives.

9. Deliver High-Quality Green Infrastructure

The Local Plan should secure accessible, connected and multifunctional green and blue infrastructure networks that support biodiversity, climate resilience, recreation and wellbeing.

10. Protect and Improve Environmental Quality

Development should seek to minimise environmental impacts, including effects on air quality, water resources, flood risk and wider environmental conditions.

11. Promote Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Waste Management

The Local Plan should support circular economy principles, efficient use of resources and sustainable waste management infrastructure.

12. Protect Heritage and Archaeology

The Local Plan should conserve and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets, archaeological remains, local character and cultural significance.

13. Deliver High-Quality Design and Place-Making

Development should respect local character and context, create attractive places, provide high-quality public spaces and contribute positively to townscape and landscape quality.

14. Ensure Infrastructure Supports Growth

The Local Plan should ensure that housing and employment growth is supported by appropriate physical, social, green, digital and transport infrastructure, taking account of cumulative impacts.

3 Baseline Information

3.1 Approach

- 3.1.2 The following section provides a selection of baseline data which will be used as the basis for the prediction and monitoring of environmental effects to be assessed in the SEA. This baseline data is presented below under the related SEA topic headings.

3.2 Topic Baseline

3.2.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Geodiversity

National Sites

- 3.2.1.1 Nationally designated sites in St Helens include sites of national nature importance which in St Helens includes 2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Stanley Bank Meadow and Highfield Moss. SSSI are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.
- 3.2.1.2 Stanley Bank Meadow³ is owned and managed by St Helens Borough Council. It is one of only two non-coastal grassland SSSIs in the region and is the largest area of lowland damp neutral grassland in Merseyside. The meadow includes several plants that are uncommon in the sub-region, and attract a variety of butterflies, moths and bird species.
- 3.2.1.3 Highfield Moss is managed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust⁴. The majority of the site is within Wigan Borough and was formed from the development of the Manchester – Liverpool railway line. The site is a lowland raised valley mire, and supports peatland plants including sphagnum moss, carnivorous round-leaved sundew, cross-leaved heath, lousewort and marsh gentian, which all support a thriving insect population.

Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites

- 3.2.1.4 Local wildlife sites (LWS) are areas are locally important for the conservation of wildlife. These sites make a major contribution to the ecological diversity of the area and are part of our natural heritage. However, local wildlife sites are non-statutory, and their indication does not dictate how the land is to be managed.

³ [Stanley Bank - St Helens Borough Council](https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/5975/Stanley-Bank) (<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/5975/Stanley-Bank>)

⁴ [Highfield Moss | The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside](https://www.lancswt.org.uk/nature-reserves/highfield-moss) – (<https://www.lancswt.org.uk/nature-reserves/highfield-moss>)

3.2.1.5 Local geological sites (LGS) are non-statutory sites that have been identified by local geoconservation groups as being of importance.

3.2.1.6 In St Helens there are currently 116 LWS, and a further 11 LGS. These are identified in an annex of the existing St Helens Local Plan.

Local Nature Reserves

3.2.1.7 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

3.2.1.8 St Helens has seven LNRs which collectively cover an area of 11.27ha, and are identified in Table 7.1 of the Local Plan:

Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	O/S Grid Reference	Principle Habitats
Stanley Bank	SJ534,971	Neutral Wet grassland, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
Siding Lane	SD463,020	Broadleaf Woodland
Thatto Heath Meadows	SJ508,936	Neutral grassland, Stream, Hedgerows
Parr Hall Millennium Green	SJ527,961	Marshy Grassland, Wetland Reedbed, River
Colliers Moss Common (North)	SJ543,939	Lowland Heath, Raised Bog, Reedbed, Wetland, Scrub
Clinkham Wood	SJ515,980	Broadleaf Woodland
Mill Brow consisting of: • Mill Wood • Mill Brook Parish Nature Reserve	SJ486,955 SJ488,957	Wet Woodland, River, Marshy Grassland, Wetland, River

Ecological Network

3.2.1.9 The Liverpool City Region Ecological Network⁵ and designated Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) identify priority zones such as the Knowsley & St Helens Mosslands and the Blackbrook & Sankey Valley Corridor where

⁵ [Liverpool City Region Ecological Network](https://lcreconet.uk/) (https://lcreconet.uk/)

habitat creation, enhancement and ecological connectivity can deliver the greatest environmental gains. These areas provide a strategic mechanism for supporting biodiversity, improving ecosystem resilience and enabling sustainable development through targeted mitigation, compensation and land-management changes. The network guides investment in nature recovery and ensure that growth in St Helens contributes positively to the borough's natural assets and wider green-blue infrastructure.

3.2.2 Population (including housing and employment)

Population and population change

- 3.2.2.1 St Helens had a population of approximately 183,200 people in 2021, representing growth of 4.5% since 2011. While the Borough has experienced steady growth, this was below both the North West average (5.2%) and England average (6.6%). Population growth has also been lower than some neighbouring authorities such as West Lancashire and Knowsley, although it exceeded growth in Halton and was broadly comparable with Wigan.⁶
- 3.2.2.2 Future projections indicate continued population growth. The Office for National Statistics projects that the population will increase to approximately 193,300 by 2032, representing growth of 4.6% from 2022 levels. Longer-term projections suggest the population could reach around 206,200 by 2047, indicating continued demand for housing, infrastructure and services throughout the Local Plan period.
- 3.2.2.3 A notable feature of future population growth is that it is expected to be driven primarily by net migration rather than natural change. While migration is projected to increase the Borough's population, the number of deaths is expected to exceed births over the coming decade, resulting in a negative natural change.

Demographic profile of St Helens

- 3.2.2.4 The Borough's population remains relatively stable in demographic terms and is less ethnically diverse than England as a whole. According to the 2021 Census, 96.5% of residents identified as White, while Asian residents accounted for 1.4%, Mixed ethnic groups 1.1%, Black residents 0.4% and other ethnic groups 0.6%.⁷
- 3.2.2.5 National identity data indicates that the majority of residents identify as British and/or English, reflecting the Borough's long-established communities. Census data also shows changing social characteristics. The proportion of adults who are married or in a civil partnership declined from

⁶ [St. Helens population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)

⁷ [How life has changed in St. Helens: Census 2021](#)

47.4% in 2011 to 43.3% in 2021, while the proportion of residents who have never married increased.

- 3.2.2.6 The Borough's religious profile has also changed significantly. In 2021, 31.2% of residents reported having no religion, compared with 14.6% in 2011, while the proportion identifying as Christian declined to 62.3%.
- 3.2.2.7 Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities represent a small but increasing proportion of the population. Census data recorded approximately 145 Gypsy or Irish Traveller residents in 2021, equivalent to around 0.2% of the population and more than double the number recorded in 2011.
- 3.2.2.8 Educational attainment remains a challenge. St Helens has a higher proportion of residents with no formal qualifications (21.4%) compared with England (18.1%), and a lower proportion of residents qualified to Level 4 or above (27.2%) compared with the national average (33.9%). These factors are important in understanding labour market performance and economic competitiveness.

Housing Delivery

- 3.2.2.9 Housing provision remains a significant issue for the Borough. The adopted Local Plan established a housing requirement of 486 dwellings per annum, but national planning policy now requires local housing need to be calculated using the standard method.
- 3.2.2.10 Based on current housing stock and affordability indicators, the latest standard method calculation produces a housing need figure of approximately 766 dwellings per annum, considerably higher than the adopted Local Plan requirement. This reflects growth in the housing stock and local affordability pressures.
- 3.2.2.11 Recent delivery performance has been relatively strong. Between 2023/24 and 2025/26, a total of 1,555 net additional dwellings were delivered. Depending on the methodology applied, Housing Delivery Test performance ranges from 88% to 107%, indicating that housing delivery has broadly kept pace with current Local Plan requirements but may fall short of future requirements based on the updated standard method.
- 3.2.2.12 Windfall development remains an important source of housing supply within the Borough. The current Local Plan assumes delivery of approximately 93 dwellings per year from windfall and small sites, reflecting the Borough's historic record of housing delivery on sites not specifically allocated for residential development.

Housing Land Supply

- 3.2.2.13 The Housing Land Supply position for St Helens is set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The 2026 SHLAA

identifies that the borough has land to provide 7,869 dwellings, with 2,919 considered to be deliverable in the next five years. This includes an indicative capacity of 5,291 dwellings identified in the borough's Brownfield Land Register.

Housing Type and Tenure

3.2.2.14 The Borough contains approximately 86,300 dwellings⁸, with the housing stock characterised by relatively high levels of owner occupation.

3.2.2.15 In 2021⁹:

- 65% of households were owner occupied.
- 20% lived in social rented accommodation.
- 15% lived in the private rented sector.

3.2.2.16 Owner occupation is slightly above the national average, while the private rented sector is proportionately smaller than nationally. The social rented sector forms an important component of the Borough's housing stock, particularly in supporting lower-income households.

3.2.2.17 Housing affordability remains an important issue despite house prices being lower than many neighbouring authorities. Fuel poverty affects approximately 11.7% of households, slightly above the England average, with particularly high rates in parts of Central St Helens¹⁰.

3.2.2.18 Housing quality and housing security are recognised as important determinants of health and wellbeing. Evidence indicates that poorer housing conditions can contribute to worse physical and mental health outcomes, while overcrowding, instability and poor-quality accommodation can exacerbate social inequalities.

Specialist Housing Needs

3.2.2.19 One of the most significant demographic challenges facing St Helens is its ageing population. Population projections indicate continued growth in older age groups, resulting in increasing demand for specialist accommodation and accessible housing.

3.2.2.20 The Council's existing "homes first" approach seeks to enable people to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Nevertheless, demographic change is expected to increase demand for:

- Adaptable homes;
- Accessible housing;

⁸ [2025_CT_SoP_Supplementary_Table.xlsx](#)

⁹ 2021 Census TS054 - Tenure - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics

¹⁰ [Local area data: Fuel poverty - House of Commons Library](#)

- Sheltered accommodation;
- Retirement housing;
- Extra-care housing;
- Housing with care;
- Residential care facilities; and
- Nursing homes.

3.2.2.21 The 2018 Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a requirement for between 1,215 and 1,241 specialist housing units for older people between 2016 and 2033. The study also identified a need for approximately 6% to 7% of new dwellings to be wheelchair accessible.

Crime Rates and Fear of Crime

3.2.2.22 Crime and community safety are important components of health, wellbeing and quality of life. Recent data indicates that crime levels in St Helens have been falling. Merseyside Police reported that overall recorded crime in the St Helens policing area fell by 11.3% between April 2024 and March 2025, representing more than 2,000 fewer crimes and around 1,600 fewer victims compared with the previous year. Reductions were recorded across several offence categories, including domestic abuse, burglary, robbery, knife crime and public order offences.¹¹

Employment Rates

3.2.2.23 The labour market in St Helens has improved significantly in recent years and currently performs favourably against both regional and national benchmarks in several areas.

3.2.2.24 For the period January to December 2025¹²:

- Economic activity stood at 79.8%, above both the North West and England averages.
- Employment stood at 77.2%, again exceeding regional and national averages.
- Unemployment was 3.3%, lower than both the North West (4.3%) and England (4.6%).
- Economic inactivity stood at 20.2%, slightly below national and regional averages.

3.2.2.25 These indicators suggest a relatively strong labour market overall. However, there are continuing disparities within the Borough. Rates of unemployment benefit claimants are significantly higher in Central St Helens than elsewhere¹³, indicating persistent pockets of deprivation and labour market disadvantage.

¹¹ [Significant crime reduction across St Helens | Merseyside Police](#)

¹² NOMIS / ONS Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey

¹³ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – Nov 2025

3.2.2.26 The Borough also continues to experience challenges relating to skills and workforce participation. In 2026, 6.2% of 16 to 17-year-olds were classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), significantly above both regional and national averages¹⁴.

The Labour Market in St Helens

3.2.2.27 Despite positive employment rates, several structural economic challenges remain.

3.2.2.28 Workplace earnings are relatively low¹⁵. Average weekly workplace earnings in St Helens (£646.60) are significantly below both regional and national averages. While resident earnings are higher (£747.80), suggesting access to better-paid jobs, workplace wages within the Borough remain comparatively weak.

3.2.2.29 The Borough also exhibits a relatively low level of employment self-sufficiency. Job density stands at only 0.61 jobs per working-age resident, below both Liverpool City Region and North West averages¹⁶. This suggests that employment opportunities within the Borough do not fully match the size of the resident workforce.

3.2.2.30 Spatial inequalities remain evident. Areas of income and employment deprivation are concentrated particularly within Central St Helens, although smaller deprived areas are distributed across other parts of the Borough. These patterns reinforce the importance of inclusive growth and improved access to employment opportunities.

Employment Land and Development

3.2.2.31 The adopted Local Plan identifies a requirement for between 190 and 239 hectares of employment land over the period 2012-2037, with a focus on industrial, distribution and logistics uses.

3.2.2.32 Employment growth has been concentrated around strategic locations benefiting from access to the motorway network, particularly:

- Haydock Industrial Estate;
- Omega;
- Parkside East;
- Parkside West; and
- Other locations close to the M6 and M62 corridors.

3.2.2.33 The Local Plan allocates seven employment sites, including major strategic allocations at Parkside East and Parkside West, which together account for

¹⁴ [Release home - Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ NOMIS: Annual Survey of hours and earnings (2025)

¹⁶ NOMIS: Jobs density dataset

over 140 hectares of employment land. Several allocated sites already benefit from planning permission or are under construction, indicating that many allocations are progressing towards delivery.

3.2.2.34 Existing employment areas continue to play a major role in the Borough's economy. Since 2019/20, over 190,000 square metres of employment floorspace has been delivered on existing employment sites, including major warehouse and industrial developments at Haydock, Mere Grange, Lea Green and other industrial estates.

3.2.2.35 A continuing challenge will be ensuring that major employment growth around Haydock, Omega and Parkside generates accessible opportunities for residents living in the Borough's most deprived neighbourhoods, particularly within Central St Helens.

3.2.3 Human Health

Health Inequalities

3.2.3.1 Health inequalities remain one of the most significant challenges facing St Helens. Although deprivation levels have improved slightly in recent years, the Borough continues to experience substantial disparities in health outcomes between its most and least deprived communities. Areas such as Derbyshire Hill, Town Centre West, Broad Oak and other parts of Central St Helens experience significantly poorer health outcomes than more affluent areas such as Eccleston, Rainford and Rainhill.¹⁷

3.2.3.2 Overall health outcomes in the Borough remain below the national average. St Helens was ranked within the bottom 30% of local authorities for health in 2021 and residents report lower levels of very good health and higher levels of poor health than nationally¹⁸. Disability rates are also relatively high, with 22.3% of residents classified as disabled under the Equality Act. An ageing population is expected to increase demand for health and care services in future years.

3.2.3.3 Life expectancy is lower than the England average for both males and females. Importantly, there are stark geographical inequalities within the Borough. Male life expectancy varies by more than 11 years between the most and least healthy wards, while the difference for females is over six years¹⁹. The Town Centre ward consistently records some of the poorest outcomes for mortality, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and

¹⁷<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/population/household-deprivation/hh-deprivation/household-is-deprived-in-one-dimension>

¹⁸ [How health has changed in your area - Office for National Statistics](#)

¹⁹https://sthelens.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s149527/2%20-%20Mortality%20JSNA%20Presentation_28Sept2023%203%201.pdf

emergency hospital admissions, whereas Rainford, Eccleston and Rainhill generally perform more favourably.

- 3.2.3.4 Health inequalities are also reflected in wider social indicators. St Helens has high levels of child poverty, relatively high teenage conception rates and a male suicide rate substantially above the national average²⁰. Lifestyle-related health issues are concentrated in more deprived communities, including smoking, obesity, alcohol-related harm and physical inactivity. More than two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese, fewer than half consume the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, and unhealthy behaviours are overrepresented in deprived communities²¹. These patterns demonstrate the strong relationship between deprivation, health outcomes and place.

Physical Activity

- 3.2.3.5 Physical inactivity is a major public health issue and is estimated to contribute to one in six deaths in the UK. In St Helens, approximately 31% of adults are classified as inactive²², contributing to poor physical and mental health outcomes and increasing pressure on health services.
- 3.2.3.6 Levels of inactivity are not evenly distributed. Older people, those with long-term illnesses or disabilities, and residents living in deprived areas are significantly more likely to be inactive. This is particularly important in St Helens given the Borough's ageing population and relatively high levels of disability. Physical inactivity is also higher amongst younger adults than the national average, suggesting that inactivity affects a broad range of age groups.
- 3.2.3.7 The built environment has an important influence on activity levels. Increased car ownership, changing travel patterns, home working and sedentary lifestyles have reduced opportunities for everyday physical activity. National travel data shows that many journeys under five miles continue to be made by car, highlighting opportunities to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling for short-distance trips²³.
- 3.2.3.8 The St Helens Active Lives Strategy seeks to increase activity levels across the population while reducing participation inequalities. Planning and development can contribute by creating walkable neighbourhoods, improving connections to services, providing cycle infrastructure and ensuring good access to parks, recreation facilities and open spaces. National guidance

²⁰ St Helens JSNA - 2020

²¹ <https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/your-place/st-helens/>

²² <https://merseysidesport.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/St-Helens-22-23-Adults.pdf>

²³ [NTS 2024: Mode share and multi-modal trips - GOV.UK](#)

highlights the importance of mixed-use development, safe pedestrian routes and integrated active travel networks in supporting healthier lifestyles.

Healthy Eating and Hot Food Takeaways

- 3.2.3.9 Diet and nutrition are closely linked to health outcomes and health inequalities. Evidence indicates that more deprived communities often have poorer access to healthy food choices and greater exposure to unhealthy food environments. This contributes to higher levels of obesity and diet-related illness.
- 3.2.3.10 St Helens experiences higher than average levels of obesity among both adults and children. The highest rates are concentrated in deprived areas such as Town Centre and Parr wards, while areas such as Rainford record lower levels²⁴. Childhood obesity is particularly concerning because obesity established during childhood is likely to continue into adulthood, increasing the risk of long-term health conditions and reducing life expectancy.
- 3.2.3.11 The distribution of hot food takeaway outlets is an important consideration. Research demonstrates a relationship between high concentrations of takeaway outlets, unhealthy eating habits and rising obesity levels. The Borough already had 161 hot food takeaway premises when the Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was prepared in 2011, many located close to schools. In response, the SPD seeks to restrict new hot food takeaways within 400 metres of primary and secondary schools. The policy recognises that takeaways provide affordable and convenient food options as well as employment opportunities, but excessive concentrations can reduce access to healthier food choices and undermine public health objectives.

Air Quality

- 3.2.3.12 Poor air quality remains an important environmental and public health issue within St Helens. Exposure to air pollution is associated with cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and premature mortality, and can disproportionately affect vulnerable groups including children, older people and those with existing health conditions.

Health and Climate Change

- 3.2.3.13 Climate change presents growing risks to health and wellbeing. Vulnerable groups, including older people, people with disabilities, those with pre-existing health conditions and lower-income households, are expected to be disproportionately affected.

²⁴ <https://sthelens.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s118925/Appendix%201.pdf> (same as table below)

- 3.2.3.14 Flooding represents one of the most significant climate risks. Increased rainfall intensity and changing weather patterns are expected to increase flood risk in some locations. Flooding can result in direct physical harm as well as long-term impacts on mental health, community wellbeing and access to healthcare services.
- 3.2.3.15 Climate change is also expected to worsen air pollution episodes and increase exposure to extreme heat. Heatwaves already contribute to significant mortality across England and are projected to become more frequent and severe. As temperatures rise, heat-related illness and deaths are expected to increase substantially, particularly among older and vulnerable populations.
- 3.2.3.16 Paradoxically, cold-related mortality may also remain a concern because of the ageing population and poor-quality housing. Lower-income households may face additional challenges adapting to climate-related impacts due to limited financial resources and poorer housing conditions.
- 3.2.3.17 The close relationship between climate resilience, housing quality, green infrastructure, air quality and health means that climate adaptation should be regarded as a key public health issue as well as an environmental one.

Health and Transport

- 3.2.3.18 Transport has a significant influence on health through its effects on physical activity, accessibility, air quality, social inclusion and road safety.
- 3.2.3.19 Active travel can provide substantial health benefits by integrating physical activity into everyday routines. However, many short journeys continue to be undertaken by private car despite being capable of being walked or cycled. Improving opportunities for walking, cycling and wheeling could increase physical activity levels and reduce emissions.
- 3.2.3.20 Transport can also influence access to employment, healthcare, education and social opportunities. Areas experiencing transport-related social exclusion, including parts of Rainford, Billinge, Bold Heath, Haydock and Earlestown, may face reduced access to services and increased risks of social isolation, stress and poor wellbeing²⁵.
- 3.2.3.21 Road safety remains an important consideration. Between 2015 and 2024, 35 people were killed on roads within the Borough, and the number of people killed or seriously injured annually has remained relatively stable. The Liverpool City Region's "Vision Zero" objective seeks to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on roads by 2040 through safer road design and transport infrastructure.

²⁵ [TRSE In England Visualiser](#)

Health Services and Facilities

- 3.2.3.22 Access to healthcare infrastructure is critical to maintaining health and wellbeing, particularly given St Helens' ageing population and existing health inequalities.
- 3.2.3.23 Primary healthcare provision includes 28 GP practices operating across four Primary Care Networks. Practice sizes vary considerably, and future population growth and ageing are expected to place increasing pressure on services. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies areas where future healthcare capacity improvements may be required.
- 3.2.3.24 Secondary healthcare services are provided principally through Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, including facilities at St Helens, Whiston and Newton hospitals.
- 3.2.3.25 The Borough also benefits from a network of pharmacies, opticians and dental practices. There are currently 20 pharmacy contractors operating from 41 premises, with provision generally aligned to areas of greatest population concentration. There is currently no identified shortage of pharmacy or optician facilities.

3.2.4 Climatic Factors

Energy Generation

- 3.2.4.1 Energy generation and decarbonisation are central to St Helens' transition towards net zero. Greenhouse gas emissions across the Borough have fallen substantially over the period 2005-2023, reducing from approximately 2,275 ktCO₂e to 1,065.7 ktCO₂e²⁶. The most significant reductions occurred between 2005 and 2010, followed by a slower but sustained decline throughout the subsequent decade. A notable fall occurred in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with emissions remaining below pre-pandemic levels thereafter. Overall, the evidence demonstrates significant long-term decarbonisation, particularly through reductions in industrial and energy-related emissions.
- 3.2.4.2 Renewable energy deployment in St Helens remains relatively limited and is heavily concentrated in one technology. Of the 3,310 renewable energy installations recorded within the Borough, 3,301 are solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, demonstrating a strong reliance on domestic and small-scale solar generation. Other technologies are present only in very small numbers, including three onshore wind installations, four landfill gas facilities, one sewage gas installation and one biomass installation. No offshore wind,

²⁶ [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

hydroelectric, anaerobic digestion or tidal energy schemes are currently recorded²⁷.

- 3.2.4.3 Compared to the Borough's estimated 81,000 households, renewable energy deployment remains relatively modest. This contrasts with the wider North West region, where renewable energy generation has grown significantly over the past two decades. Regionally, there are more than 150,000 renewable energy installations and a much more diverse technology mix, including offshore wind, onshore wind, hydroelectric, biomass and anaerobic digestion schemes.
- 3.2.4.4 The North West has transitioned from rapid renewable energy expansion during the 2000s and 2010s towards a period of more incremental growth. Offshore wind is now the dominant source of renewable electricity generation, accounting for the majority of installed capacity and annual generation. Future growth is expected to be driven by smaller-scale solar installations, repowering of existing assets, energy storage technologies and distributed energy systems. For St Helens, the evidence suggests there is considerable scope to diversify renewable energy provision beyond solar PV and increase local renewable generation capacity.

Emissions by Sector

- 3.2.4.5 While overall emissions have declined substantially, different sectors have contributed unevenly to this reduction. Historically, industrial and energy-related emissions have been responsible for much of the Borough's greenhouse gas output. Significant reductions in industrial emissions have been a major factor behind the Borough's overall decarbonisation trend.
- 3.2.4.6 Transport emissions have proven much more difficult to reduce. Despite total emissions in St Helens falling by more than half since 2005, transport emissions remained close to their 2005 level until 2019 and still accounted for approximately 282 ktCO₂e in 2023²⁸. As a result, transport now represents an increasingly significant proportion of the Borough's carbon footprint.
- 3.2.4.7 Road transport dominates transport emissions, accounting for more than 98% of the sector's output. Motorways generate approximately 41.5% of transport emissions, followed by A-roads (32.9%) and local roads (25.6%). This reflects the Borough's strategic location within the regional transport network and highlights the challenge of reducing emissions from private vehicle use and freight movements.

²⁷ [Regional Renewable Statistics - GOV.UK](#)

²⁸ [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

Building Performance

- 3.2.4.8 The energy performance of buildings is a key determinant of future emissions reductions in St Helens. The Borough performs broadly in line with the North West average, with 52.3% of homes achieving EPC Band C or above. However, this overall figure masks substantial differences between housing types, ages and tenure²⁹.
- 3.2.4.9 A key challenge is the age profile of the Borough's housing stock. Approximately 38% of dwellings were built before 1929, reflecting St Helens' industrial heritage, while around 47% date from between 1930 and 1982. Only around 15% of homes have been built since 1983, with approximately 4% constructed since 2012. This means a significant proportion of the housing stock was built before modern energy efficiency standards existed.
- 3.2.4.10 The relationship between age and performance is particularly strong. Only around 25% of homes built before 1929 achieve EPC Band C or above, compared with almost 99% of homes built since 2012. Similarly, there is a considerable gap between new and existing dwellings, with 98.5% of new homes achieving EPC Band C or above compared with only 46% of existing homes.
- 3.2.4.11 Performance also varies by dwelling type. Flats and maisonettes perform best, with over 81% achieving EPC Band C or above, while semi-detached and terraced properties perform significantly less well at approximately 43% and 46% respectively. This is important because much of the Borough's housing stock consists of these less efficient house types.
- 3.4.2.12 Overall, the evidence points towards a substantial retrofit challenge if national and local net zero ambitions are to be achieved. Government proposals to require social rented and private rented housing to reach EPC Band C by 2030 further reinforce the need for improvements to existing stock.

Built Environment

- 3.2.4.13 The built environment has a critical role in addressing both climate mitigation and adaptation. While improving the energy performance of existing buildings remains essential, the design of future development also provides opportunities to reduce emissions and improve resilience.
- 3.2.4.14 Planning policy can influence the strategic outcomes of development by establishing ambitions for lower-carbon construction, renewable energy generation and sustainable placemaking. However, detailed technical standards relating to building performance are primarily delivered through Building Regulations. In practice, planning policy provides the strategic

²⁹ [Energy Performance Certificate \(EPC\) Band C or above, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

direction, whilst Building Regulations and EPC assessments provide the mechanisms through which performance is delivered and verified.

- 3.2.4.15 Key opportunities include promoting compact and walkable neighbourhoods, reducing reliance on private vehicles, incorporating renewable energy technologies into development, supporting low-carbon heat networks and using sustainable building materials with lower embodied carbon. Building orientation, design and layout can also maximise solar gain, support natural ventilation and reduce energy demand.
- 3.2.4.16 Integrating green and blue infrastructure into development is increasingly important in addressing overheating, managing surface water, supporting biodiversity and improving environmental quality.

Flood Risk

- 3.2.4.17 Flood risk presents a significant environmental and development challenge within parts of St Helens. Although Flood Zones 2 and 3 affect a relatively small proportion of the Borough overall, they are concentrated along key river corridors and intersect with important transport routes, industrial land and regeneration sites. Surface water also represents a further flood risk.
- 3.2.4.18 Climate change is expected to increase rainfall intensity and flood risk over coming decades, making flood resilience increasingly important. National planning policy requires a sequential approach to development, directing growth towards areas at lowest risk. Development in higher-risk locations must be justified and supported by site-specific Flood Risk Assessments.
- 3.2.4.19 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) play a particularly important role in managing runoff, reducing surface water flooding and maintaining natural drainage processes. Consequently, flood risk management will remain an important consideration when accommodating future growth.

Green Infrastructure

- 3.2.4.20 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a vital component of climate mitigation, climate adaptation and sustainable placemaking. It provides multiple environmental functions, including carbon sequestration, urban cooling, biodiversity enhancement and flood management.
- 3.2.4.21 Woodlands, grasslands, open spaces and other natural habitats help absorb and store carbon, contributing to emissions reduction objectives. Green infrastructure also moderates urban temperatures through shading and evapotranspiration, helping communities adapt to increasing temperatures and more frequent heatwaves.
- 3.2.4.22 Equally important is the role GI plays in water management. Natural drainage features, wetlands, green corridors and SuDS can slow runoff, increase infiltration and reduce flood risk. As climate change increases

pressure on existing drainage infrastructure, these functions become increasingly valuable.

3.2.4.23 Beyond climate considerations, green infrastructure supports health, wellbeing, recreation and biodiversity. The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure evidence base highlights the importance of ecological networks, tree cover, open spaces and blue infrastructure in supporting sustainable communities.

Transport

3.2.4.24 Transport remains one of the most challenging areas for emissions reduction in St Helens. While overall emissions have fallen substantially, transport emissions have reduced only gradually and now account for a growing proportion of total emissions.

3.2.4.25 The dominance of road transport reflects both travel patterns and the Borough's strategic location. However, recent years have seen encouraging growth in ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). The number of ULEVs registered in St Helens increased from 209 in 2019 to 4,386 by the end of 2025³⁰, supported by growing charging infrastructure and policy requirements for EV charging provision in new development.

3.2.4.26 Nevertheless, evidence suggests that vehicle electrification alone will not deliver the scale of emissions reductions required. Research indicates that the most effective approach combines reducing the need to travel, increasing walking, cycling and public transport use, and then transitioning remaining vehicle journeys to zero-emission technologies.

3.2.5 Air

Air Quality Management Areas

3.2.5.1 Air quality remains a significant environmental and public health issue in St Helens. The Borough has four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) exceed national objectives:

- M6 AQMA, covering land adjacent to the motorway corridor.
- High Street AQMA, along part of the A49 in Newton-le-Willows.
- Borough Road AQMA, between Westfield Street and Prescot Road in St Helens.
- Linkway Reflection Court AQMA, located off Linkway West.

3.2.5.2 More than 1,000 residents live within the AQMA buffer zones³¹, increasing their exposure to air pollution and associated health risks. Importantly, all

³⁰ [Vehicle licensing statistics data tables - GOV.UK](#)

³¹ [St Helens Air Quality Action Plan 2024](#)

four AQMAs are located within or adjacent to areas experiencing high levels of health deprivation, highlighting the close relationship between environmental quality and wider social inequalities.

- 3.2.5.3 Evidence from the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards (AHAH) Index³² indicates that the Borough Road and Reflection Court AQMAs perform particularly poorly. Both record health environment scores significantly worse than both the St Helens and England averages, reinforcing their status as key pollution hotspots. In response, the St Helens Air Quality Action Plan 2024 identifies a range of measures to improve air quality, including active travel, public transport and traffic management initiatives.

Air Quality Trends

- 3.2.5.4 Air quality in St Helens is generally poorer than the national average and exhibits a clear spatial pattern. The AHAH Air Quality Domain, which assesses concentrations of pollutants including nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂), gives St Helens a score of 0.56, compared with an England average of 0.26. Higher scores indicate poorer air quality, suggesting that air pollution remains a relatively significant issue within the Borough.
- 3.2.5.5 The poorest air quality is concentrated in central, urban and industrial areas, particularly around the Town Centre and major transport corridors. Central St Helens, Rainhill and Bold, and West St Helens all record higher pollution levels than other parts of the Borough. At ward level, St Helens Town Centre performs worst, while several Lower Super Output Areas around Bold and Clock Face, Town Centre West and West Park emerge as acute hotspots.
- 3.2.5.6 By contrast, the best air quality is found in the Borough's more rural and less densely developed areas. Rainford, Billinge and parts of Newton-le-Willows consistently record the lowest pollution levels, reflecting lower traffic volumes and reduced urban and industrial influences.
- 3.2.5.7 The Indices of Deprivation Air Quality Indicator shows a similar pattern. St Helens records a score of 2.69 compared with the England average of 2.58, again indicating slightly poorer air quality overall. Together, these datasets demonstrate a persistent geography of pollution, with the highest concentrations associated with densely developed urban areas, major roads and industrial corridors.

Air Quality Health Impacts

- 3.2.5.8 Poor air quality has well-established impacts on health and contributes to health inequalities across St Helens. Exposure to pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter is associated with increased risks of

³² [Access to Healthy Assets & Hazards \(AHAH\) - Dataset - Geographic Data Service](#)

respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, reduced lung function and premature mortality.

- 3.2.5.9 The evidence suggests that those communities already experiencing poorer health outcomes are also more likely to experience the worst air quality. Areas surrounding the Borough's AQMAs are generally among the most deprived neighbourhoods in terms of health and disability, meaning residents face a combination of environmental and socio-economic disadvantages.
- 3.2.5.10 The concentration of pollution hotspots in central St Helens, alongside higher levels of deprivation, reinforces concerns regarding environmental inequality. Residents in these areas are more likely to experience the cumulative impacts of poor air quality, poorer health outcomes and reduced life expectancy.

3.2.6 Land Quality / Soil

- 3.2.6.1 This topic covers soil resources including agricultural land, contaminated land, and development on brownfield land, as well as mineral resources and the consideration of waste management.

Agricultural Land

- 3.2.6.2 Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is a standardised system used in the UK to assess the quality of farmland based on soil, climate, and topography. It grades land from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor) to guide sustainable development and protect the nation's ability to grow food.
- 3.2.6.3 The best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 1) within St Helens is found to the west of Rainford. Grade 2 land is predominantly in the north of the borough around Rainford, Billinge and Moss Bank with pockets around Haydock, Newton-le-Willows, and Rainhill.

Contaminated Land

- 3.2.6.4 The borough's industrial legacy mean that some land is affected by contamination, as well as land stability issues from coal mining operations.
- 3.2.6.5 Coal mining in the borough dates to at least the mid sixteenth century but the borough was rapidly transformed by expansion of mining and associated industries throughout the industrial revolution. Glass manufacturing in the borough dates to as early as 1695 and the first British plate glass manufacturing factory opening at Ravenhead in 1776. Other industries that were common throughout the borough included Copper Works as well as Brick Works and Alkali Chemical Works.

Using previously developed land

3.2.6.6 Since 2016, 81.2% of housing completions in St Helens have been on brownfield land, providing a total of 4,583 dwellings, of the 5,646 gross housing completions. The Brownfield Land Register has a total of 61 sites, with a combined estimated capacity of 5,132 dwellings.

Mineral resources

3.2.6.7 The Local Plan identifies Mineral Safeguarding Areas around mineral resources in the borough that are considered to be of economic importance:

- Shallow coal;
- Clay (including brick clay and fire clay); and
- Sandstone (centred around existing workings at Bold Heath Quarry).

3.2.6.8 The Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in the borough are mapped in an appendix to the Local Plan and cover the majority of the borough. The Authority Monitoring Report identifies how many proposals for non-mineral uses have been permitted in the MSAs.

3.2.6.9 Bold Heath Quarry is the only quarry in Merseyside with an active planning consent for production of crushed rock (sandstone) aggregate. This quarry has planning permission for operation to continue until September 2040, and the planning permission for mineral extraction includes progressive restoration. All mineral extraction is a temporary land use and requires a programme of restoration and aftercare to secure long-term environmental and community benefits.

3.2.6.10 Future aggregate demand will be driven by housing growth, and employment growth particularly on strategic sites such as Parkside East and West. The 2019-2023 Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) notes that aggregate consumption locally exceeds the rate of production. There are limited opportunities to increase production, and the general trend has been one of declining reserves, due in large part to the heavily urban nature of the area and the lack of workable aggregate resources within it.

Waste facilities

3.2.6.11 Waste arising in the borough is managed both inside and outside of the borough. Notable facilities include Veolia at Alexandra Warehouse, Ravenhead Road (glass), Viridor at Parr Industrial Estate (WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) and refrigeration equipment) and Centralgrange Environmental Waste at Merton Street, Pocket Nook (materials recovery facility). These facilities process waste from other areas, 69 local authorities send waste to St Helens for processing, 48 over 10 tonnes per year and 8 send over 5,000 tonnes per year.

- 3.2.6.12 Household waste recycling facilities in the borough are managed by Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and are located at Newton-le-Willows, Rainhill and Ravenhead.

3.2.7 Water

Flood risk

- 3.2.7.1 Flood risk in St Helens arises from both river and surface water flooding and can affect public safety, economic activity, infrastructure and environmental quality. The main fluvial flood risk is associated with the Sankey Brook, Black Brook and Bold Brook catchments. Flood Zones 2 and 3 cover a relatively small proportion of the Borough but are locally significant, particularly where they intersect with transport corridors, industrial land, regeneration sites and development allocations.
- 3.2.7.2 Areas of highest risk (Flood Zone 3) are concentrated along these river corridors, including parts of Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows, Carr Mill and Moss Bank, and the Bold Industrial Estate. Flood Zone 2 extends into wider floodplains, notably around Sankey Valley Park, Bold Moss, Bold Heath and downstream of Carr Mill Dam.
- 3.2.7.3 In addition to river flooding, parts of the Borough are vulnerable to surface water flooding, particularly where extensive areas of impermeable development generate high levels of runoff. This risk is expected to increase as climate change leads to more frequent and intense rainfall events.

Managing Flood Risk

- 3.2.7.4 The overall approach is to direct development towards areas at the lowest risk of flooding and ensure that new development does not worsen flood risk elsewhere.
- 3.2.7.5 National policy requires the application of the Sequential Test, which aims to steer development away from areas at greatest risk. Where development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere, an Exception Test may be required. Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments are necessary for proposals within Flood Zones 2 and 3, larger sites within Flood Zone 1, and locations known to experience surface water flooding.
- 3.2.7.6 As the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), St Helens Borough Council is responsible for managing local flood risks from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. The Council has prepared a Lead Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and accompanying Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Guidance, which promote more sustainable approaches to drainage and water management.
- 3.2.7.7 The Council has also worked with the Environment Agency and neighbouring authorities through the Sankey Catchment Action Plan, which seeks to

reduce flood risk by slowing water flows, improving water quality, enhancing habitats and addressing local drainage constraints.

Wastewater Management

- 3.2.7.8 Wastewater and sewerage infrastructure is managed by United Utilities (UU), which has a statutory duty to ensure that adequate wastewater treatment and sewerage capacity is available to support new development.
- 3.2.7.9 Investment in wastewater infrastructure operates through the water industry's five-year regulatory cycle, known as the Asset Management Plan (AMP) process. Because funding is allocated through periodic reviews by Ofwat, there can be uncertainty regarding longer-term infrastructure provision until development proposals are sufficiently certain to proceed.
- 3.2.7.10 Current evidence suggests that no major upgrades to wastewater treatment works have been identified as necessary to accommodate planned growth within the Borough. However, United Utilities continues to assess capacity requirements as development proposals come forward. Any future improvements required to support growth are expected to be identified through ongoing monitoring and incorporated into future AMP funding programmes.
- 3.2.7.11 Overall, the evidence indicates that flood risk and wastewater management are being addressed through a combination of strategic planning, infrastructure investment, sustainable drainage approaches and catchment-based flood management initiatives. Ensuring that future development is resilient to flooding while maintaining sufficient drainage and wastewater capacity will remain a key consideration as St Helens continues to grow.

3.2.8 Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment

Archaeological Sites and Scheduled Monuments

- 3.2.8.1 Archaeological remains and monuments are vital evidence of our history. They are, however, highly vulnerable to damage and destruction and if lost can never be replaced.
- 3.2.8.2 The Council work jointly with the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) and rely upon its service for all archaeological advice. MEAS maintains a database, the 'Historic Environment Record', of all known archaeological sites in the borough³³. The database contains chance finds, burial remains, historic buildings, parks and gardens and industrial monuments.

³³ [HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD – Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service](https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/historic-environment-record-2/)
(<https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/historic-environment-record-2/>)

3.2.8.3 Archaeological sites within the borough vary greatly in importance and character, and there will always be unknown remains that may come to light as a result of development or other actions.

3.2.8.4 Many sites are poorly understood through lack of research. It is essential that appropriate consultations take place when these sites are affected by development and the appropriate action taken to preserve or record the archaeological evidence.

3.2.8.5 Scheduled monuments are archaeological sites that are legally recognised as being of national importance. These can range in date from the prehistoric period to the 20th century and can take many different forms including buildings, earthworks or a crop mark in a field. They include ruins above ground as well as remains that lie below ground level.

3.2.8.6 There are **12** scheduled monuments in St Helens. These are as follows:

Scheduled Monument	Ward	Date of Designation
Heavy Anti-aircraft gun site 380m east of South Lane Farm	Bold	24 August 2000
St Anne's Well	Bold	18 July 2000
Old Bold Hall moated site, Bold	Bold	22 May 1991
Old Moat House Medieval Moat, Bold	Bold	4 September 1990
Micklehead Green moated site	Bold	17 December 1991
Castle Hill motte and bailey and bowl barrow	Newton-le-Willows East	30 November 1925
Mossborough Hall moated site	Rainford	17 December 1991
Rainhill Hall Farm moated site and twelve fishponds in The Rough	Rainhill	17 December 1992
Cannington Shaw Bottle Shop, Sherdley Works	St Helens Town Centre	Unknown
Number nine Tank House: The Jubilee glassworks 100m south west of the Government Offices on Chalon Way	St Helens Town Centre	28 January 2003

Standing cross south of the chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury in the cemetery at Windlehurst	Windle	14 December 1960
Ruins of the chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury in the Roman Catholic cemetery in Windlehurst	Windle	1 December 1960

Registered Parks and Gardens

3.2.8.7 Established in 1984, the 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England' includes designed landscapes (such as parks and gardens) assessed to be of particular significance. In St Helens there are **4** Registered Parks and Gardens as detailed below:

Registered Park and Garden	Grade	Ward	Date First Listed
Borough Cemetery, St Helens	II	Windle	20 November 2002
Knowsley Park ³⁴	II	Eccleston	1 February 1986
Landscape associated with the former Pilkington Headquarters complex	II	West Park	26 April 2013
Taylor Park	II	West Park	2 July 2002

Registered Battlefields

3.2.8.8 Registered Battlefields are battlefields that have been identified as being sufficiently important to warrant being included on the National Heritage List. In England 47 battlefields have been registered by Historic England (as of April 2026).

3.2.8.9 The **Battle of Winwick (also known as Battle of Red Bank) 1648** (Newton-le-Willows East) was designated as a Registered Battlefield on 31 January 2018.

Listed Buildings

3.2.8.10 St Helens has **151** listed buildings on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. These range from **1** grade I listed building to

³⁴ Knowsley Park lies mainly within the boundary of Knowsley with only a small section along the northern edge of the reservoir falling within St Helens

14 grade II* listed buildings and **136** grade II listed buildings. The grade I and grade II* listed buildings are as follows:

Listed Building	Grade	Ward	Date First Listed
Sankey Viaduct Over Sankey Brook	I	Newton-le-Willows West	3 February 1966
Birchley Hall	II*	Billinge and Seneley Green	23 August 1966
Church of St Aidan	II*	Billinge and Seneley Green	23 August 1966
Adjacent Ruins at Scholes House	II*	Eccleston	28 January 1971
Effigy Pedestal in Garden of Scholes House	II*	Eccleston	28 May 1958
Scholes House	II*	Eccleston	28 May 1958
West Derby War Memorial	II*	Eccleston	15 August 2001
Entrance Archway to Cancellor	II*	Newton-le-Willows East	12 February 1981
159, 161 and 163, Crow Lane East	II*	Newton-le-Willows West	3 February 1996
Guildhall Farmhouse	II*	Rainford	24 March 1966
Manor Farmhouse	II*	Rainhill	28 May 1958
Old Hall Farmhouse	II*	Rainhill	9 June 1952
Statue of Queen Victoria	II*	St Helens Town Centre	12 December 1984
Tank house, beside canal at Crown Glass Works	II*	St Helens Town Centre	23 August 1985
Ruins of Windleshaw Abbey in Roman Catholic Cemetery (Chapel of Saint Thomas of Canterbury)	II*	Windle	11 September 1951

Conservation Areas

3.2.8.11 Conservation areas are parts of our towns and villages that have a special architectural or historical interest. It is important to preserve or enhance the special character of these areas and special attention is paid in the planning process to ensure historical features such as windows and doors are retained wherever possible. Historical road layouts, groupings of buildings, street furniture and landscape all add to the appearance and character of these areas. Change within conservation areas is inevitable. The challenge in these locations is to preserve their special local character rather than detract from it.

- 3.2.8.12 Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, there is a requirement to review areas of special character that are considered worthy of preservation and designate them as conservation areas. St Helens has eight conservation areas. All of these have an appraisal and management plan, however some of these may need to be updated³⁵.

Conservation Area	Ward	Date of First Designation	Date of Character Appraisal and Management Plan
Earlestown Conservation Area	Newton-le-Willows West	2016	March 2016
George Street Quarter Conservation Area	St Helens Town Centre	2001	2010
Newton-le-Willows Conservation Area	Newton-le-Willows East	1976	January 2009
Rainford Conservation Area	Rainford	1976	July 2008
Rainhill Central Conservation Area (Area I)	Rainhill	1976	2008
Rainhill Residential Conservation Area (Areas II & III)	Rainhill	2008	2008
Victoria Square Conservation Area	St Helens Town Centre	1976	February 2011
Vulcan Village Conservation Area	Newton-le-Willows East	1986	October 2009

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 3.2.8.13 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.
- 3.2.8.14 At the Council Cabinet meeting on 21 January 2026 the Council formally adopted the Locally Listed Heritage Assets Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which replaces the 'List of Locally Important Buildings'

³⁵ [Conservation areas - St Helens Borough Council](https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/3497/Conservation-areas)
(<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/3497/Conservation-areas>)

(2011) SPD. Alongside updating the SPD, officers developed a list of buildings and structures of local interest, which will sit alongside the SPD as a 'living' document which will be updated on a regular basis³⁶. The purpose of this is to identify and highlight as many locally important buildings, structures, and sites as possible, and for them to be given the appropriate level of consideration in planning decisions.

3.2.8.15 The Local Heritage List is a 'living' document, allowing it to be updated as and when required (i.e. as a result of future nominations). As of April 2026, there are **211** entries on the Local Heritage List.

Heritage at Risk

3.2.8.16 The Heritage at Risk Register, released by Historic England, gives an annual snapshot of the health of England's valued historic buildings and places, and identifies sites most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.

3.2.8.17 The most recent Heritage at Risk Register³⁷ (released in November 2025) identified **14** assets within the borough, including **3** conservation areas (George Street, Rainhill and Earlestown), **6** listed buildings (two grade II* listed buildings and four grade II listed buildings) and **5** scheduled monuments.

3.2.9 Landscape

Landscape character

3.2.9.1 England has 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) ³⁸. Each NCA represents an area of distinct and recognisable character at the national scale. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape, not county or district boundaries. This makes them a good framework for decision-making and planning for future change. The information contained within the NCA profiles aims to help guide land management and other activities to strengthen character and resilience, responding to pressures such as climate change.

3.2.9.2 The majority of the borough is within NCA56 – Lancashire Coal Measures, the north west of the borough around Rainford is within NCA32 – Lancashire and Amounderness Plain and small areas on the southern boundary of the borough including Bold Heath are within NCA 60, Mersey Valley.

³⁶ [Locally listed heritage assets - St Helens Borough Council](https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/4762/Locally-listed-heritage-assets) (https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/4762/Locally-listed-heritage-assets)

³⁷ [Heritage at Risk Register | Historic England](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?size=n_24_n&filters%5B0%5D%5Bfield%5D=ipa&filters%5B0%5D%5Bvalues%5D%5B0%5D=St%20Helens&filters%5B0%5D%5Btype%5D=all) (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?size=n_24_n&filters%5B0%5D%5Bfield%5D=ipa&filters%5B0%5D%5Bvalues%5D%5B0%5D=St%20Helens&filters%5B0%5D%5Btype%5D=all)

³⁸ [Natural England - National Character Area Profiles - National Character Area Profiles](#)

3.2.9.3 The St Helens Landscape Character Assessment (2006) identifies landscape and townscape character types and areas for the borough. There are 65 character areas within 17 different character types:

- Prominent Hill (Billinge Hill Summit and Slopes)
- Agricultural Moss (Holiday Moss, Holland Moss, Simmonswood Moss, Highfield Moss, Reed's Moss)
- Broad Rural Slopes (Arch Lane, Weathercock, Rainford, Sankey and Rainhill Slopes)
- River Valley (Carr Mill Dam and Sankey Valley)
- Wooded Former Estate (Garswood Park, Haydock Park, Old Garswood Park and Bold Hall)
- Edge Farmland (Elton Head Hall Farm and Blundell's Hill)
- Floodplain Farmland (Sutton Fringe, Sutton Manot Fringe, Clock Face, Bold Heath)
- Undulating Farmland with Woodland (Mossborough)
- Intimate Farmed Valley (Eccleston)
- Raised Spoil Heap (Sutton Manor, Clock Face, Sutton Moss, Lea Green, Lyme and Wood Pit)
- Industrial Fringe (Link Road and Haydock Industrial Estate)
- Separate Settlement (Newton-le-Willows, Bilinge, Rainford, Garswood, Haydock and Rainhill)
- Settled Lowlying Valley (St Helens Historic Core, Retail Ring and Terraces)
- Urban Greenspace (Big Dam, Sherdley Park and Rainhill Golf Course)
- Raised Fringe Settlement (Grange Park, Mossbank, Derbyshire Hill / Parr and Sutton)
- Urban Industrial Valley (Gerard's Brook, Sutton Brook and Ravenhead)
- Residential Valley Infill (Thatto Heath, Eccleston and Laffak)

3.2.10 Material Assets (Infrastructure)

Road transport

3.2.10.1 The Borough also enjoys a strategic position at the heart of the regional road network, between the core cities of Manchester and Liverpool, and to the M6, M62 and M58 motorways. The A570 provides a link to the M58 and M62 motorways for Rainford, central St Helens and the south of St Helens. The A58 provides a link from central St Helens to Prescot, Wigan, the M62 and M6 motorways, and the A580 provides a link in the north of the borough to the M6 motorway and to Liverpool and into Greater Manchester.

3.2.10.2 In 2024, over 859.4 million total vehicle miles were travelled in the Borough, which is higher than the level recorded before the Covid 19 Pandemic in

2019. Cars and taxis accounted for 653.3 million total vehicle miles, which is slightly lower than the 2019 level and the 2016 high of 676.3 million miles.

3.2.10.3 In St Helens cars and taxis account for 76% of all vehicle miles. In the North West cars and taxis account for 28.6 billion vehicle miles, against a total of 36.8 billion, and account for 77.7% of all vehicle miles. The borough has a lower proportion of vehicle miles per resident than regionally and is lower than each neighbouring authority except for Wigan.

Rail Transport

3.2.10.4 St Helens has an extensive and well used rail network, with ten railway stations in the borough that provide regular connections to neighbouring towns and cities, and direct trains across Northern England and to North Wales.

3.2.10.5 The Chat Moss Line serves Rainhill, St Helens Junction, Lea Green, Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows and provides direct trains to Liverpool and Manchester, as well as services at some stations to North Wales, Yorkshire and the North East of England.

3.2.10.6 The Kirkby Branch Line serves Rainford station, with a service to Wigan Wallgate and Headbolt Lane providing connections to Manchester and Liverpool respectively.

3.2.10.7 The Liverpool to Wigan line serves St Helens Central, Garswood, Thatto Heath and Eccleston Park – with plans for a new station at Carr Mill in the north of the borough. As well as providing a regular service from Liverpool Lime Street to Wigan North Western, the line also provides a direct service from St Helens Central to Cumbria and Scotland.

3.2.10.8 Estimation of station usage data shows that in St Helens, 3.3 million entries and exits were recorded from the borough's stations in 2024/25, which is below the last year prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, where 3.5 million were recorded in 2019/20, however figures were significantly higher in the years up to 2016/17. Data for the 10 railway stations in St Helens shows that Newton-Le-Willows was the most well-used station, with links to Manchester and Liverpool, as well as to other destinations in Northern England and North Wales. Rainford was least use, offering a Monday to Saturday daytime only service to Headbolt Lane and Blackburn (via Manchester and Wigan Wallgate).

3.2.10.9 The borough's rail network has supported the Local Plan allocation for the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Parkside at Newton-le-Willows, which has access to both the Chat Moss line and the West Coast Mainline – enabling a high level of connectivity by rail.

Bus Transport

- 3.2.10.10 Bus patronage has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, which is a pattern repeated across other metropolitan areas. Merseyside had 60.6 passenger bus journeys per head in 2025, which declined from 82.1 to 71.1 from 2010 to 2020. Bus passenger miles in Merseyside have reduced from 38.92 million miles in 2010 to 23.94 million miles in 2025.
- 3.2.10.11 St Helens Bus Station is currently undergoing redevelopment and is a hub of the borough's bus network, providing local services within the borough as well as services to Liverpool and Knowsley, Ormskirk, Wigan, Leigh, Widnes and Warrington.
- 3.2.10.12 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will be overseeing the franchising of bus services in the borough starting in late 2026.

Active Travel

- 3.2.10.13 The St Helens Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (2023) proposed short, medium and long term improvements at:
- St Helens Town Centre
 - Earlestown Town Centre
 - Haydock Industrial Park
 - Cycle network linking St Helens town centre to Billinge, Eccleston, Haydock, Parr, Rainford, St Helens Junction and Thatto Heath
 - Cycle links to employment destinations such as Haydock Industrial Estate, Omega Business Park, Parkside and Whiston Hospital
- 3.2.10.14 Notably, the borough does not include any National Cycle Network routes but includes a mix of on-road and off-road routes, including within the borough's greenway network.
- 3.2.10.15 Household survey data that informs the LCR Local Transport Plan suggests that 22% of all journeys are by active modes³⁹.
- 3.2.10.16 Data from the DfT National Travel Survey from 2022/23 provides data on that estimates average number of trips and stages of trips per person in Liverpool City Region – walking made up 7.9% of all journeys by main mode, increasing to 38.3% when looking at stages (e.g. by people walking to access public transport or private car).
- 3.2.10.17 The borough has a Public Rights of Way (PROW) network which includes 6km of byways (open to all traffic), 11km of bridleways and 170km of footpaths.

³⁹ [LTP4 evidence paper draft FINAL 26 oct 2023.pdf](#) (p.4)

4 Identifying environmental problems

- 4.1 This section identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues facing St Helens, drawing on the baseline information. The identified issues have been used to review and refine the SEA objectives and assessment criteria, ensuring that the assessment framework is focused on the matters of greatest significance to the borough and provides an evidence-led foundation for assessing the likely environmental effects of Local Plan.

Topic	Key Environmental Issues
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Geodiversity	- St Helens contains a diverse network of nationally and locally important habitats, designated sites and species. - Development, recreation pressure and climate change have the potential to affect biodiversity and ecological networks. - Opportunities exist to strengthen ecological connectivity, support nature recovery and enhance green infrastructure.
Population (including housing and employment)	- The Borough faces challenges relating to housing affordability, housing quality, specialist accommodation needs and an ageing population. - Educational attainment, jobs density and earnings remain below regional and national averages. - There is a need to ensure that housing and employment growth is accessible and supports communities experiencing deprivation.
Human Health	- Health outcomes remain below national averages in parts of the Borough, with significant spatial inequalities. - Access to housing, employment, education, services and green space all influence health outcomes. - Development should promote healthy lifestyles, active travel, community safety and access to healthcare facilities.
Climatic Factors	- Greenhouse gas emissions have decreased significantly but achieving net zero remains a major challenge. - Transport emissions, the energy performance of existing buildings and limited renewable energy diversification remain key issues. - There is a need to support renewable energy generation, sustainable transport and climate-resilient development.
Air	- Air quality remains a concern in parts of the Borough, particularly around major roads and Air Quality Management Areas. - Poor air quality is linked to both health inequalities and transport-related emissions. - Reducing emissions from transport and encouraging sustainable travel remain priorities.

Land Quality / Soil	• High-quality agricultural land is present within parts of the Borough and should be protected where possible. • Historic mining and industrial activities have left areas affected by contamination and land stability issues. • Mineral resources require safeguarding and brownfield redevelopment remains an important regeneration opportunity.
Water	• Parts of the Borough are vulnerable to river and surface water flooding. • Climate change is expected to increase future flood risk. • Sustainable drainage, wastewater capacity and integrated water management will be important in supporting future growth.
Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment	• St Helens contains a rich heritage resource including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas and locally important assets. • A number of heritage assets are currently identified as at risk. • Development should conserve and enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
Landscape	• The Borough contains a varied landscape character, ranging from urban areas and former industrial landscapes to farmland, mosslands and river corridors. • Development should respond positively to local landscape character and distinctiveness.
Material Assets (Infrastructure)	• Future growth must be supported by appropriate infrastructure, including transport, utilities, healthcare, education, green infrastructure and wastewater systems. • There is a need to reduce reliance on private vehicles and improve sustainable transport options. • Infrastructure investment will be essential to support sustainable communities and economic growth.

5 Developing SEA Objectives

5.1 Draft SEA Objectives for St Helens

- 5.1 Defining and developing the SEA objectives provide the framework against which the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Local Plan are assessed.
- 5.2 The objectives have been developed taking into account the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, national planning policy, local priorities and the baseline evidence gathered for St Helens. The objectives have been designed to reflect these issues and provide a means of assessing whether the Local Plan will contribute positively towards sustainable development.

Topic	Ref	Objective
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and Geodiversity	1.	To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.
Population (including housing and employment)	2.	To reduce poverty and social exclusion.
	3.	To improve access to and use of basic goods, services and amenities in town and local centres.
	4.	To reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime.
	5.	To improve the education and skills levels of the population overall.
	6.	To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities.
	7.	To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth.
	8.	To improve access to a range of good quality and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of the borough.
Human Health	9.	Ensure access to and protection and enhancement of high-quality public open space and natural greenspace.
	10.	To improve health and reduce health inequalities.
Climactic Factors	11.	To mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
	12.	To promote nature-based solutions that enhance biodiversity, improve ecological connectivity, strengthen climate resilience, support flood management and deliver wider environmental and health benefits.
Air	13.	To improve air quality in St Helens.
Land Quality / Soil	14.	To protect and improve land quality in St Helens.

	15.	To promote resource efficiency, sustainable use of materials and transition towards a circular economy.
Water	16.	To maintain and enhance the quality of controlled waters and to sustainably manage water resources.
	17.	To minimise the risk of flooding from all potential sources and ensure there is no residual risk to people and properties.
Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment	18.	To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment, the cultural heritage and historic environment.
Landscape	19.	To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment, landscapes, townscapes and the countryside.
Material Assets (Infrastructure)	20.	To reduce the need to travel, encourage alternatives to the car and other motor vehicles, improve highway safety and make the best use of existing transport infrastructure.
	21.	To provide timely, resilient and accessible infrastructure, including transport, utilities, healthcare, education, green infrastructure and wastewater management.

6 Consulting on the Scope of the SEA

6.1 Statutory Consultation Bodies

6.1.1 To meet the requirements of the SEA, this scoping report is subject to consultation with the three statutory consultation bodies:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

6.2.2 This report will also be published for comment alongside the Local Plan scoping consultation, and the consultation period is **1st September and 6th October**. Comments are invited on all sections of the document, but we seek comments on the consultation questions below.

6.2 Consultation Questions

1. Are there other plans and programmes that should be taken into consideration in Section 2?
2. Are there additional sources of baseline information that should be taken into consideration in Section 3?
3. Are the environmental problems identified in Section 4 appropriate?
4. Do you agree with the draft objectives in Section 5?