



ST HELENS  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# OUR BOROUGH STRATEGY

## 2021-2030



#STHELENSTOGETHER



## FOREWORD

# MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER

Our borough can be proud of the way we've responded to the huge challenges of COVID-19. Local residents, businesses, charities and organisations have come together to offer unprecedented support to each other. We've shown our resilience and our kindness.

Before the pandemic we were already working on plans to modernise the council and to make our approach more collaborative. It was in that spirit that at the start of the pandemic we worked with partners to develop the St Helens Together brand which has now come to encompass the entire approach we want to take from now on: not only coordinating the large-scale community response to the pandemic delivering help and support where it is most needed, but also looking ahead to lay the foundations for our reset and recovery and transforming the council and wider borough.

This document, our new Borough Strategy, shows the key strategic priorities for the council and the borough, and sets out how we can achieve better results for our communities by working together and supporting each other. It will be supported by a more detailed delivery plan which we will monitor and report on to make sure we are on track.

To develop these priorities and the whole strategy the council has been listening to residents, communities, businesses and stakeholders to understand their experiences of dealing with the pandemic and planning how we can all build a more prosperous and successful borough, support the changing needs of its communities and unlock our full potential.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contribute their thoughts and ideas and helped to shape this document. Your input has informed and shaped our "bonds for a better borough". As we implement this strategy together, we will continue to engage with our communities as we strive to make St Helens Borough a great place by continuing our conversation and building a new relationship of trust and respect with residents, businesses, partners and council staff. We will also rethink and reshape service delivery considering our experiences during the pandemic and invest more time in co-designing services with residents.

By working together to develop and strengthen our bonds I am confident that we can achieve our vision to be a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do.



A white, handwritten signature of David Baines on a dark red background.

**Councillor David Baines**  
St Helens Borough Council Leader



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## INTRODUCTION

# OUR VISION

Working together for a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do by improving people's lives together and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest.

This strategy sets out our vision for St Helens Borough, the themes that identify our place, the priorities we will focus on and the outcomes we will strive to achieve. We have developed this strategy by listening and engaging with people and this is starting point for resetting our relationship with residents, neighbourhoods, businesses and partners. We have also made a commitment to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals to embed sustainability at the heart of everything we do.

During COVID-19, St Helens Together brought together our communities with a shared purpose and common goals. This strategy embeds St Helens Together as our way of working, recognising that we all have a role to play in making St Helens a better borough.

We have developed this strategy in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the profound impact this has had in almost every area of people's lives. Through our recent engagement activity "St Helens Together: Have Your Say" we asked people to share their experiences of the pandemic, how they thought the council had

supported communities through the crisis and what they think are the most important things to focus on in the future.

As a result of the consultation, our existing priorities have been reshaped and reviewed as we move from a period of COVID-19 response, through to reset and recovery.

In 2016 we launched the "St Helens Story", to express why St Helens Borough is the choice of many, the essence of the area and what makes St Helens a great place in which to invest, live, work and visit. Our story is not only about where we have come from and where we are now, but also illuminates our vision for the future.

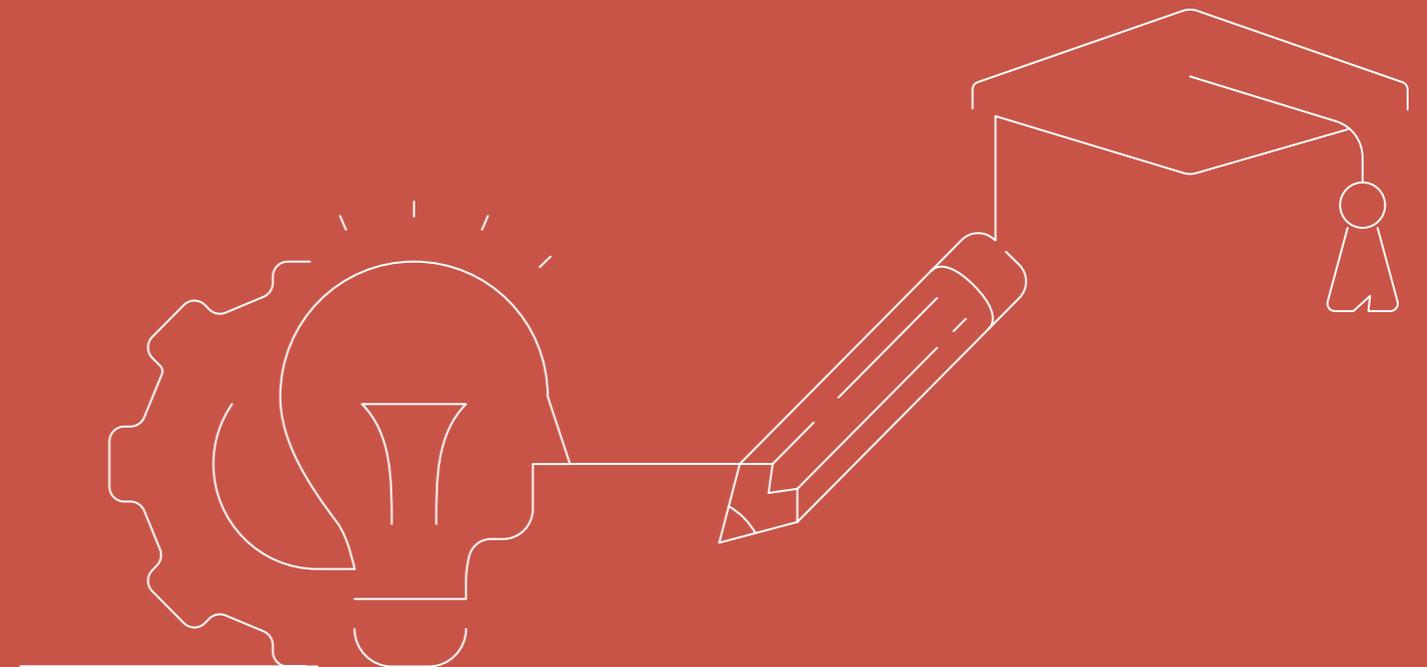
Three key themes were identified as "from industry to ingenuity", "culturally centred" and the "educated choice". Therefore, our vision for our place is based around the three key strengths of St Helens Borough:

- **Innovate**
- **Create**
- **Educate**

# INNOVATE

# CREATE

# EDUCATE



# OUR PRIORITIES

To ensure we can deliver our ambition for the borough we have developed six borough priorities.

St Helens is a large and significant borough at the heart of the North West of England which came to prominence during the industrial revolution. St Helens was once a highly industrialised area and has a proud heritage of coal mining, railways and world-famous glass and chemical industries. The decline of these industries led to significant economic restructuring and a resultant reduction in jobs and business opportunity the legacy of which is still seen today. Despite considerable positive change in recent years, particularly in the reduction in the number of economically inactive residents and significant improvements in skills, economic inactivity remains higher than the UK average, fuelled by high levels of long-term sickness, reflecting poor health in the population.

The borough strategy sets out a refreshed ambition and direction to address these challenges and to ensure that the history and heritage of St Helens Borough is part of building back an exciting future. Running through this strategy is the recognition that to address the social, economic and health challenges we are facing as a borough and as a council we need to do things differently.

Our conversation with residents and stakeholders told us that we need to work more closely with partners and with residents, we need to focus on supporting and empowering communities to find and develop joint solutions to our problems and to put more trust in the people of the borough.

We know from the response to the pandemic, demonstrated by St Helens Together comms that there is tremendous community strength in the borough, and much can be achieved by working together, and we will continue to build on this as we go forward.

We also must build a fairer and more sustainable borough for the benefit of future generations. A key intention within this strategy is to set out the foundation for a new relationship with our communities and partners as we recognise that the council cannot deliver the outcomes that communities deserve without working much more closely and forming a new agreement with residents.

As part of this new approach we want to involve people more in shaping the services they need, and empowering and enabling residents and community organisations to play a more active role in delivery.

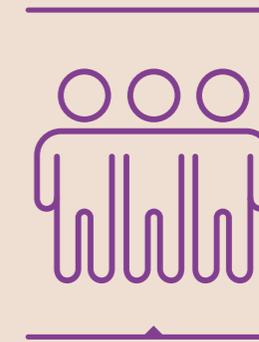
**EMPOWER AND ENABLE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN DELIVERY.**



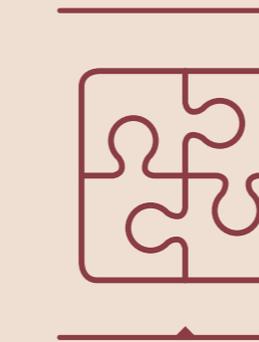
ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE



PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES



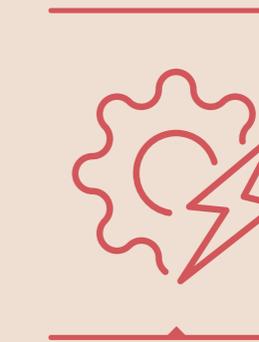
CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL



SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING, INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED LOCAL ECONOMY



CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE



BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL

## CASE STUDY:

# ST HELENS TOGETHER

The community response to COVID-19 was co-ordinated through the #StHelensTogether campaign bringing together a range of partners including the council, St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group, and Torus with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, local businesses and individual residents.

A response infrastructure was swiftly established including a telephone helpline, a community hub to deliver food parcels and essential items to the vulnerable, support to school children, a volunteer portal, to bring together volunteers and match these with people requiring help, support for homeless people, and a 'St Helens is Open' database.

Since March 2020, we have received over 2,000 enquiries per week to our helpline. A wide range of residents have been supported by St Helens Together. 1,744 community volunteers have offered 8,688 hours of their time to support over 32,000 people. Over 37,000 meals and food parcels have been provided and over 16,000 well-being calls have been made. This was made possible by harnessing the skills, experience, and expertise of a wide range of people and the incredible goodwill of the community.

After seeing the impact the coronavirus pandemic was having on her own family, friends and local community, Nicola Karunaratne Diver from Thatto Heath wanted to support the #StHelensTogether campaign and registered to volunteer with Halton & St Helens VCA to help out and make a difference.

Commenting on her reason to volunteer in a bid to encourage others, Nicola, who - as well as carrying out errands such dog walking and picking up shopping and prescriptions - worked on the lateral flow testing centre at St Mary's Market over Christmas - said: *"When coronavirus happened, my husband and I were made redundant. I was sort of still in between jobs but my time is better spent helping out in my community."*

*"I thought volunteering would be a nice way to give something back. I know resources in our community are struggling at the moment because of the pressures on the NHS and council - but we, the residents, are part of the resources of our community, and the more effort we put in gets us back to where we want to be."*

*"Volunteering also helps me maintain and learn skills, You never know what opportunities can come from it."*



# OUR BOROUGH

Our borough is situated in Merseyside and is proud to be part of the Liverpool City Region. It covers an area of 136 square kilometres and is home to over 180,000 people with 4,800 businesses based in the borough. It is a place with a strong identity and cultural history, rooted in our world-famous rugby league team and our proud industrial heritage including England's first canal, a section of the world's first passenger railway, pharmaceutical, coal and glass industries.

It is also a place of great potential with many strengths and opportunities. Our strategic position at the heart the North West provides excellent connections to and from our borough. Its semi-rural nature, with over 65% of the area green belt, makes for a very attractive place to live, with strong growth in new housing and increasing numbers of people choosing to live here.

Our greatest asset is the spirit and strength of our close-knit community, never more evident than in the way it has come together during the coronavirus pandemic to support our most vulnerable residents. You have also told us that the pandemic has brought opportunities in terms of communities getting to know each other better, an increase in digital skills, people starting new businesses and closer relationships between people and organisations across the borough.

## Strengths

- **Community spirit** – our borough is a caring place with many local people volunteering or helping support their family and neighbours.
- **Strong, lasting partnerships** – alongside our vibrant local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector we are part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority unlocking opportunity for enhanced autonomy and devolution.
- **Green parks and open spaces** – over half of our borough is green open space, with parks, woodlands, and waterways to enjoy.
- **Heritage and culture** – our borough has a rich heritage and growing reputation for the arts and culture.
- **Integrated health and care** – St Helens Cares is our nationally recognised approach to delivering joined up health and social care services for local people.
- **Well connected** – our borough sits at the heart of the North West, with good road and rail connections.
- **A Growing Population** - more than 180,000 people living in our borough. There has been strong housing growth and increasing numbers of people choosing to come to live here.
- **A Place to Call Home** – a wide range of housing to meet everyone's needs, good schools and colleges, and a calendar of sporting and cultural events.



We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the everyday lives of our communities from work, school, health, to the way we interact with each other. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated some of the existing health and social inequalities faced by our communities and we know that some of our most vulnerable residents are likely to need more support as a result.

Despite considerable positive change in recent years to our borough, the local economy struggled to recover from the last recession and the new economic outlook presents a significant challenge. At the same time, there is still great potential for positive transformation.

Our position within the Liverpool City Region, strong partnerships and the strength of our community bring many opportunities to work together to improve our borough and the lives of all who live here.

## Challenges

- **Economic recovery and growth** – more businesses and jobs are needed, particularly to support those people and business sectors most affected by the pandemic's impact on the economy.
- **Low attainment and skills** – school attainment and adult skills levels are lower than national averages and need to improve so that people can take advantage of new opportunities in a changing world.
- **Deprivation** - relatively high levels of deprivation and inequality exist within the borough. Our most deprived communities must not become more marginalised through the effect of the pandemic.
- **An ageing population** - our population is ageing faster than many other areas, creating high demand for health and care services.
- **Poor health** – too many of our population suffer from poor physical and mental health, making them potentially more vulnerable to COVID-19 than people in other areas. Life expectancy is comparatively low and wide health inequalities exist.
- **Children's services** - there are too many children we need to look after, and children and families who require social care support. Our support and services to them need to improve.
- **Climate change** - to protect the local environment and address climate change there is the challenge to reduce car use, increase sustainable transport, reduce our waste, and recycle more.
- **Feeling safer** – crime rates are generally lower than those of similar areas. However, we need to make sure people 'feel' safer in their neighbourhoods.



## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Over the summer 2020 extensive community engagement was undertaken to give local people the opportunity to shape the long-term vision for the borough, give their views on how local services should be delivered and how residents could play a greater role in this delivery.

There were four main ways in which people participated:

1. Digital online surveys were completed by residents and St Helens Borough Council staff.
2. Reopened St Helens Borough libraries.
3. There were a number of focus groups held virtually through Zoom and Microsoft Teams with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, local businesses, care leavers, local councillors, Parish councils and St Helens Borough Council staff.
4. The organisation "PLACed" undertook some online engagement sessions and also two face to face socially distanced engagement sessions on Church Street in St Helens Town Centre. These sessions involved people sharing their ideas and writing them onto the shop windows.

***"People thought that it was positive to be spoken to, listened to and engaged with"***

The consultation and engagement process was well received and people commented they felt that had not been spoken to or listened to enough over the last few years. It was clear that people want to be part of the conversation about our borough and want to be involved and have a greater influence in the local decisions that affect them. The people of the borough are the greatest asset we have and it is clear that the council must enable and empower them to shine.

A key question posed at focus groups was ***"how do you want to describe the borough in 2030?"*** There were many words used repeatedly over several focus groups.

## TOGETHER, WE WANT ST HELENS BOROUGH TO BE A PLACE THAT IS...



## COVID-19 RESPONSE

As part of the conversation with our community we wanted to understand the experiences of residents during the pandemic and how they felt the council, working with partners, managed the response during this time.

The success of St Helens Together has shown us that we can achieve things quickly by all working together for the same goals. We will continue this legacy by maintaining our strong relations with our partners, local businesses and residents. We will continue the conversations we started with residents so that we can develop solutions to challenges together. We want to strengthen the close bonds we have formed during these challenging times.

Throughout this strategy we set out our “Bonds for a Better Borough”. The bonds show what the council can contribute, what others can contribute and how, together, we can achieve the priorities for our place.



**83%** of people surveyed said they were satisfied with the council's response to COVID-19



**59%** rated it as “good” or “excellent”



**61%** of people had heard of St Helens Together



## PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During COVID-19, St Helens Together united our communities with a shared purpose and common goals. This strategy makes St Helens Together our way of working, recognising that we all have a role to play in making St Helens a better borough.

To make this a reality we have committed to help people to do more for themselves, for each other and for their community putting people at the heart of everything we do.

When community engagement is strong:

- Residents understand and trust the work of the council
- Residents play a part in decision making
- The relationship between the council and residents is mutual, instead of residents being passive recipients
- More residents get involved in work to support their area and shape changes to how we deliver services
- The council develops a richer understanding of the community wants and needs
- Residents are empowered and valued for their community spirit

We will work in partnership with our residents, partners and businesses to further develop the St Helens Together approach through a clear, consistent and joined up approach to community engagement, and by developing our St Helens Together Bonds which set out the mutual expectations of the council and the community.

### Localities

As part of our St Helens Together ambition is to explore opportunities for greater locality working within the borough. Locality working focuses on involving local people, organisations and partners in shaping and delivering local services.

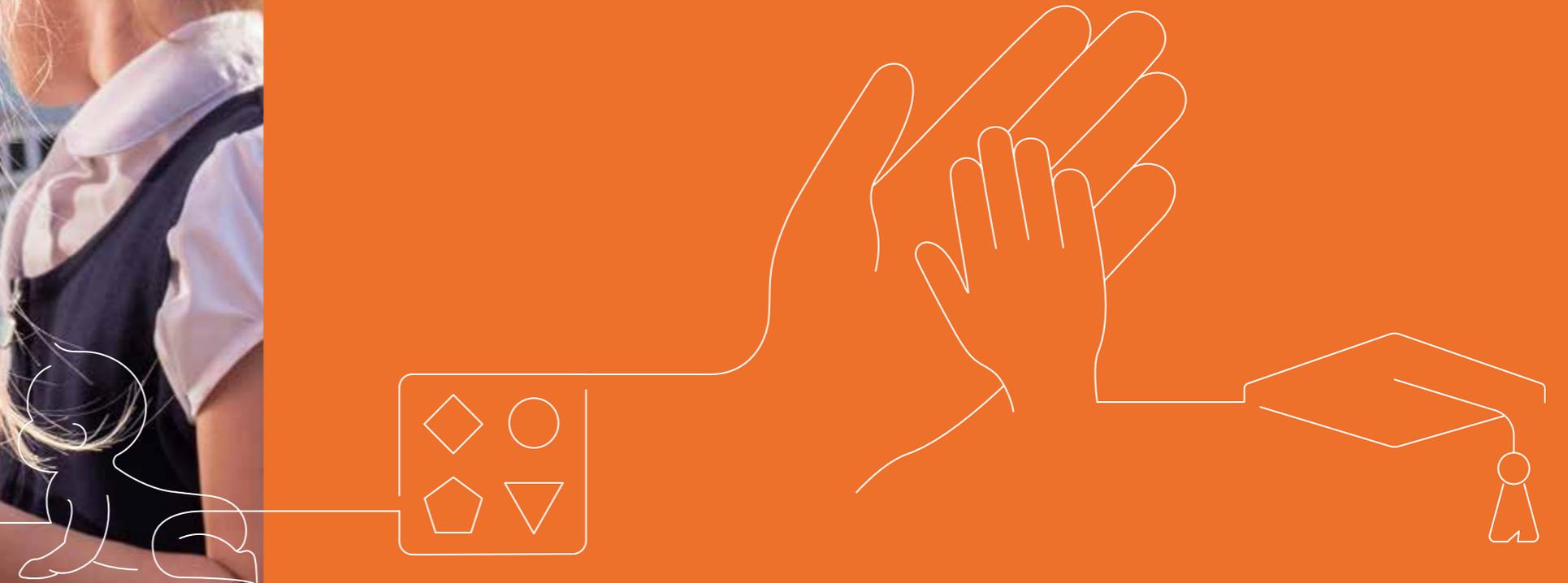
The council is committed to working more closely with communities and partners to deliver high quality, efficient and effective public services through new and enhanced ways of working which contribute to improving the quality of life and well-being of local people. Ensuring that residents can access services in the right way, at the right time, in the right place.



PRIORITY ONE



ENSURE CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A  
POSITIVE START IN LIFE



## PRIORITY ONE

We want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people who live in the borough, improve outcomes for all children, whilst tackling deprivation and child poverty and protecting children from vulnerable backgrounds.

### What we heard

- Children and young people should have more involvement in designing support and services
- The borough has good schools and colleges with caring and nurturing staff
- We need to raise aspirations for all children to encourage them to meet their full potential
- We must build stronger links between young people and local businesses, with support to develop vocational skills
- Young people would like more opportunities and facilities
- Improved mental health support is needed for children and young people
- The majority of children in St Helens are relatively happy with their lives, although 9% of children and young people in St Helens reported low overall well-being which is significantly higher than children nationally (Good Childhood Inquiry)
- Primary aged girls had the highest well-being, while secondary aged girls had the lowest.
- Children who self-identified as having a special educational need or disability and children who reported having caring responsibilities also had lower well-being than their peers did.



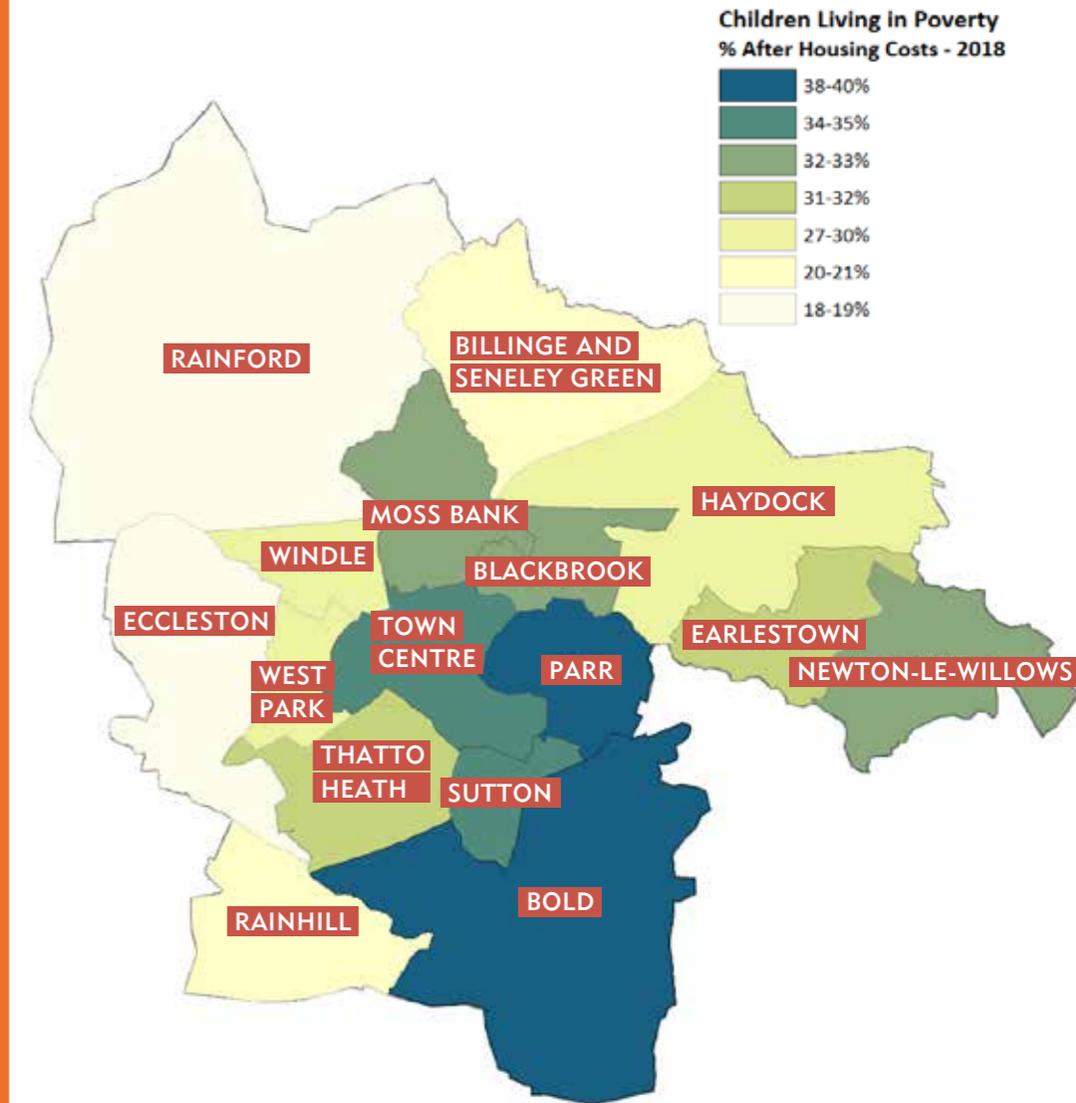
### Together we can achieve the following outcomes:

Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve.

Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised.

Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential.

## THIS MAP SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY BY WARD



## PRIORITY ONE

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

### TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Involve children and young people in shaping services, listen to their feedback and implement the recommendations of the Good Childhood Inquiry	Take time to be supportive parents or guardians, encouraging children to be the best they can be
Support children and families with early help and improve our services for looked after children	Go to school/college ready to learn and take opportunities to develop and share your skills
Work with local schools as well as National Government to review the curriculum and help those in greatest need to catch up and promote educational attainment	Take advantage of training and job opportunities, setting high aspirations for yourself and your family
Reduce child poverty and inequality	Let us know if you or a family you know could benefit from some additional help or support to look after a child better.

#### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:

Children's Services Improvement Plan  
St Helens Borough Education Recovery Plan

Ofsted Ready Action Plan  
Care Leavers Strategy  
Children's Services Demand Strategy  
SEND Strategy



Over **70%** of 5-year-olds achieved a good level of development in the early years learning goals, **better** than the North West average



Almost **33%** of adults have level 4 (degree level) qualification, a 30% increase in 10 years. The number of people without any qualifications has decreased over the same time period



## CASE STUDY:

# REWRITE THE STARS

“Rewrite the Stars” is a programme that recognises the skills and achievements demonstrated by young people in care and leaving care in St Helens. The “Rewrite the Stars” programme was initiated and designed by local young people as the outcome of 12 weeks of confidence building workshops. They felt this title represented them in that they are the stars, they want to rewrite their futures and leave the past behind. The event was a showcase of the talents and skills of young people and over 250 nominations were received for the 10 award categories.

“Rewrite the Stars” has achieved significant outcomes for the young people in terms of raising aspiration and ambition, raising confidence, self-esteem, mental health and physical activity. The cost of this programme to date has been met by community contributions, local businesses and schools, rather than the public purse, and in the long term the savings to the local authority and health services will be significant as these young people grow. The aim is that these early interventions will develop a future generation of people who we hope are able to flourish and thrive independently.

Over 150 local, national and international businesses signed up as St Helens Borough Ambassadors have enabled this programme to flourish. The ambassadors have not only supported “Rewrite the Stars” but also several other successful initiatives to support our children and young people, including:

- Raising £25,000 over the last three years to deliver Christmas hampers for Care Leavers
- The “Believe & Achieve” careers event delivered to looked after children in secondary schools
- Supporting job interview preparation and guidance provided for Care Leavers
- Establishing the Care Leavers Covenant - working with Ambassadors to encourage guaranteed interviews for Care Leavers
- January 2021- Partnership project delivered with Ambassadors to support 271 young people in St Helens without access to IT devices – in excess of £20,000 raised from ambassadors

Our St Helens Together ethos will continue to develop relationships between the council, local businesses and our children and young people to ensure they have a positive start in life.





## PRIORITY TWO



# PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH INDEPENDENCE AND CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES



## PRIORITY TWO

Good health, independence and care starts with people, our connections with communities, the respect and compassion we show one another, and the lifestyle choices we make. We want to continue to deliver excellent integrated services to make sure residents can access help and support in the right place at the right time as part of our 'One Place, One System, One Ambition' vision for the St Helens Integrated Care Partnership.

### What we heard

- We must continue to drive integrated care services through development of St Helens Cares, our Integrated Care Partnership
- Greater recognition is needed for the social care workforce, health services, the voluntary sector and across education
- More could be done to encourage healthier lifestyles
- Greater support is needed to address mental health, suicide and addiction
- There needs to be a holistic approach to physical, mental and spiritual well-being
- Food poverty should be addressed
- A local Health and Wellbeing Charter for businesses should be developed



### Together we can achieve the following outcomes:

People's physical and mental well-being improves

People live well independently

People have a positive experience of health and social care services



## PRIORITY TWO

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

### TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Deliver excellent, responsive, place based integrated services through St Helens Cares by working closely with partners	Continue to invest in your own health and well-being by making healthy choices and seeking help and support when you need it
Improve health, reduce health inequalities	Get active and enjoy leisure services and the parks and open spaces we have in our Borough. Get involved with the local sports sector by taking part or volunteering
Develop health and social care services that meet the needs of communities now and in the future.	Have your say about the services you want and need
Support people to manage their own health conditions in the community	Keep in touch and offer support to family, friends, neighbours, and the community

#### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:

- St Helens Cares Place Plan
- Vision for Adult Services

- Outbreak Management Plan
- Active Lifestyles Plan
- Neglect Strategy



Life expectancy at birth

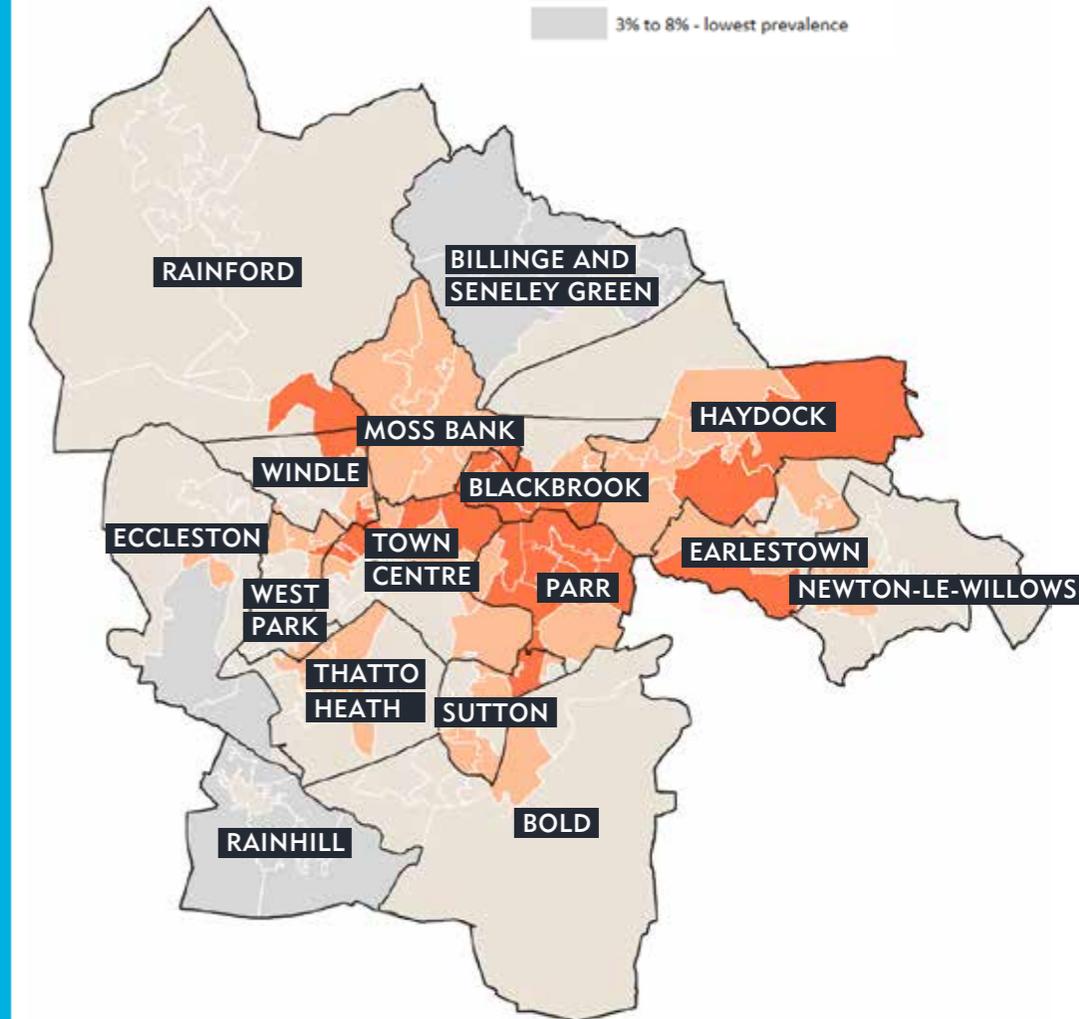
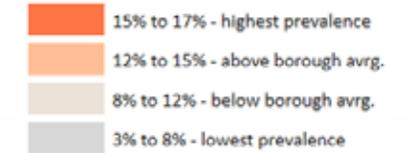
**77.8 years** - Male  
(79.6 years - England)

**81.2 years** - Female  
(83.2 years - England)



**69.2%**  
of adults are overweight or obese  
(62.3% - England)

QOF 2019 - Adult Obesity  
% by LSOA population age 18+



## CASE STUDY:

# CONTACT CARES

Contact Cares is the 'front door' health and care service which gives customers access to a wide range of services and provides advice and support from a health and care professionals, who are all located in one place. Contact Cares provides care and support built around the needs of the individual, their carers and family.

Contact Cares was an essential element of the community response to COVID-19. From the 23rd March until 21st June 2020 Contact Cares received 31,860 enquiries.

An electronic referral link has been established which enables residents to be directed to the voluntary sector, and to individual resident volunteers in a seamless way. Contact Cares supporting teams to work well together and seamlessly sharing information through customers shared care record.

Amanda Wilde is one resident who has benefited from the Contact Cares service. Having lost her leg she was unable to return to her accommodation due to her disability.

She moved to a care home where she spent two years – not going out and despairing of the future.

*"I didn't go out of my room. I was just in there watching telly all the time. And that's all I did. I think you just give up cause I thought I'm never going to get out of here,"* she said.

With Contact Cares health, social care and housing staff work together as a team to make sure people don't end up in hospital or homeless if they become disabled.

Amanda was offered a place in a transitional tenancy flat, which meant she has made friends and gained confidence.

*"I met Barbara because we were going out on a trip. Having Barbara as a friend has given me confidence really because I can have a laugh with her. Friendships are really important - having someone to talk to or just sit with. She's brought the best out of me really."*

And is able to look to the future where she can have her independence back again.

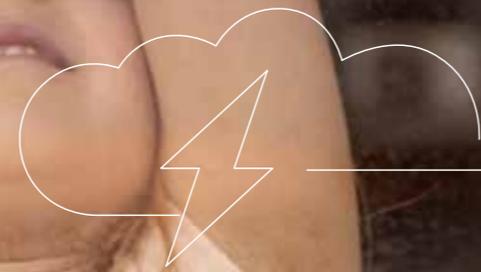




## PRIORITY THREE



# CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL



## PRIORITY THREE

We want St Helens to be a welcoming borough for all, where people get on with each other and feel part of their local neighbourhood. To achieve this, we need to increase community engagement and build thriving, resilient communities that make the best use of their strengths and assets.

### What we heard

- Overall there is a good range of affordable, high quality housing in the borough
- We have a large number of skilled and committed volunteers
- We need greater, more joined up support for homeless people
- Services need to be developed that are closer to the communities they serve
- There need to be more positive opportunities for young people in our neighbourhoods
- Create an online hub for community groups, events and activities

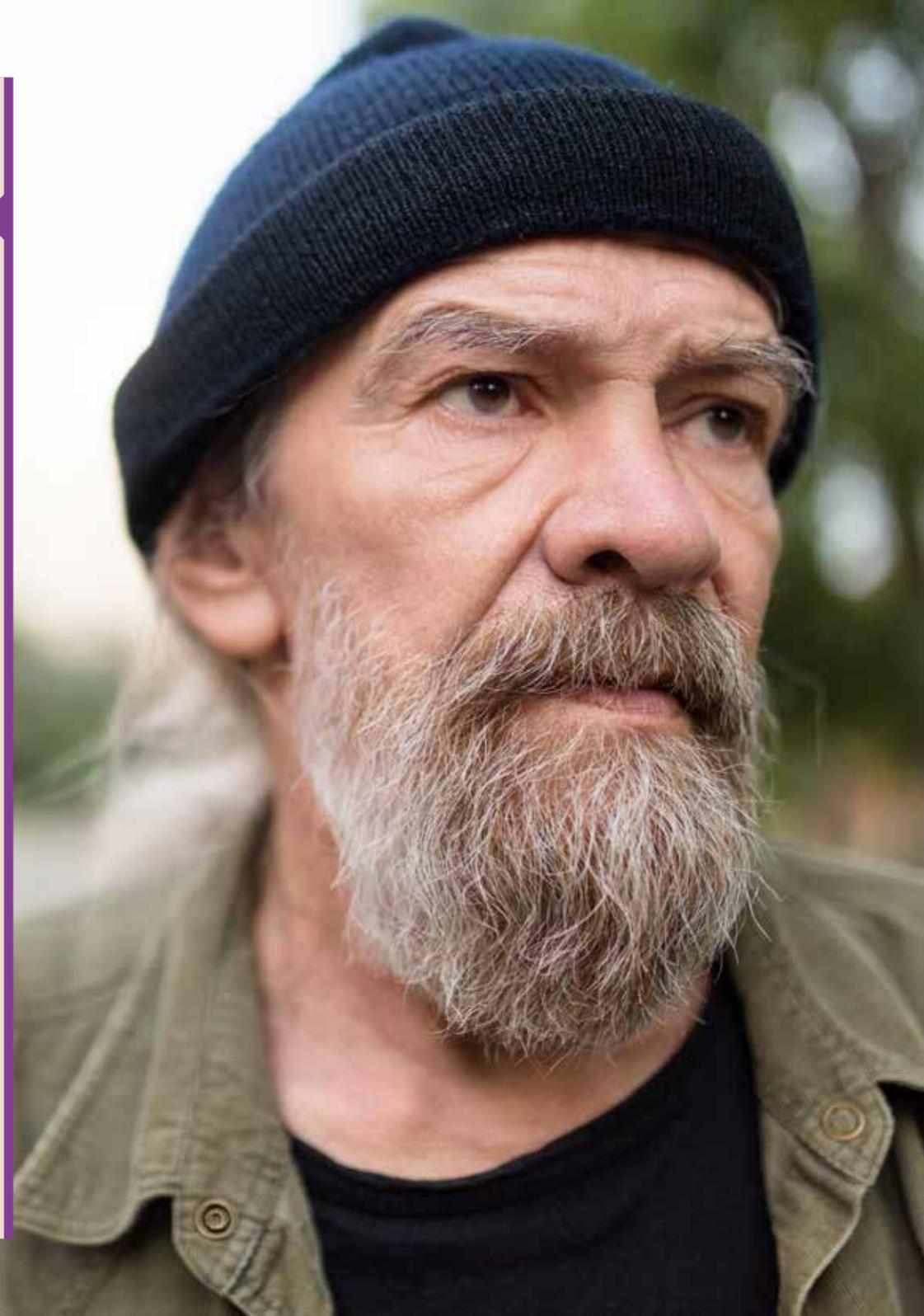


### Together we can achieve the following outcomes:

Our Communities and neighbourhoods are safe, strong and caring.

Our voluntary and community groups are empowered and supported to make a difference.

Our neighbourhoods provide the right homes for all.



## PRIORITY THREE

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Engage with and support our most vulnerable residents and those living in our most deprived communities	Look out for your neighbours, friends or vulnerable people in your community
Retain our registered volunteers and determine how best to mobilise and utilise their diverse skills and experience	Become a volunteer to share your skills and help other people in your neighbourhood.
Work with partners to understand the equality impacts arising more fully from COVID-19 and how adverse impacts can be minimised	Support local voluntary and community groups
We will continue to ensure there are enough quality and accessible homes to meet the needs of the population, and maintain our work on affordable warmth	Let us know any concerns that you have about your home or local area

### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:

St Helens Borough Housing Strategy

St Helens Borough Homelessness Strategy

St Helens Borough Voluntary Sector Strategy

St Helens Borough Community Safety Plan

Domestic Abuse Strategy



**566** dwellings completed in 2019/20,  
**34%** were affordable housing



Almost a quarter of St Helens residents live in the **10%** most deprived neighbourhoods in the country



**£141k** Average house price in St Helens (£262k - England)



## CASE STUDY:

# EVERYONE IN INITIATIVE

In response to the pandemic, in March 2020 the Government requested that local authorities support people who were rough sleeping to come into safe accommodation, with the aim that no residents should be living without accommodation during the pandemic. The initiative, called 'Everyone In' required a partnership approach between the council and the agencies engaged in delivering support to rough sleepers.

During this time more than 150 vulnerable people were helped off the streets and into emergency accommodation, the goal being long-term housing with wraparound support. Both hostels in the borough, St Helens YMCA and the Salvation Army, worked to maintain their existing residents in accommodation, with a local hotel commissioned to provide emergency accommodation, despite most hotels being closed. As the lockdown in March resulted in almost total closure of non-urgent services, partners such as the Hope Centre and Teardrops provided daily hot meals to the residents of the hotel. Whitechapel provided outreach services to engage people who were residing on the streets to encourage them to come into services. Agencies worked together to ensure that the needs of residents were met, including health services, who ensured that residents have access to primary

care services. Change, Grow, Live (CGL) also supported residents to access recovery services during this time if required.

This provision has enabled some of the most entrenched rough sleepers to engage with services and to receive the support required. Among them is Client D, a rough sleeper who had slept out on the streets for over a year and consistently refused every offer of support and accommodation, even under the new "everybody-in" initiative. Despite this the Housing Services Team within the council continued to check on him daily as his health was a great concern.

Then in October 2020, Client D surprised officers by saying yes. Since then, he has been living in temporary accommodation with the right support and help to apply for long-term tenancy, claim the benefits he needs and open a bank account. Client D now has an opportunity for a bright, stable and healthy life.

Services have continued to support people just like Client D, to prevent rough sleeping, including offering emergency accommodation over the winter period. The council continues to work in partnership to increase the number of properties available for people who have experienced homelessness as part of the wider Homelessness Strategy for the borough.

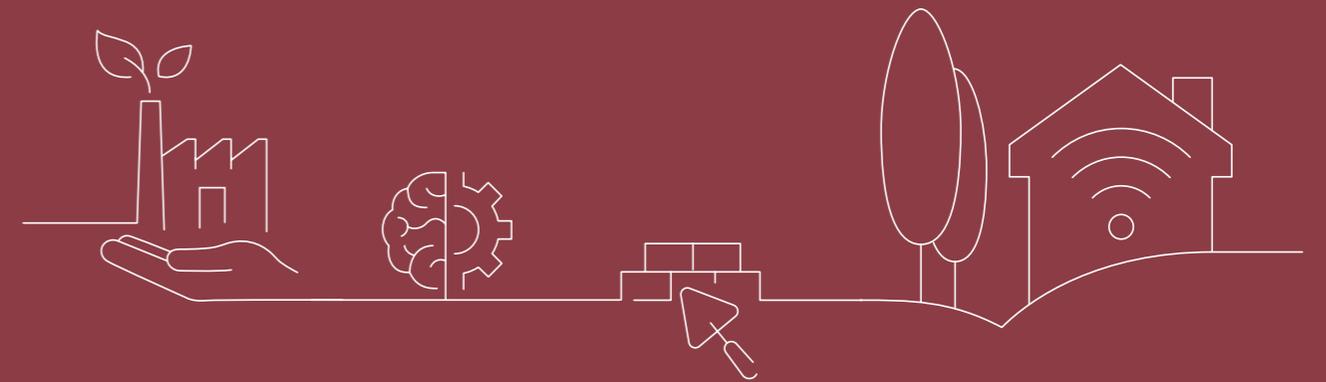




## PRIORITY FOUR



# SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING, INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED LOCAL ECONOMY



## PRIORITY FOUR

The borough has a strong identity and sense of pride that is rooted in its history and heritage and there is a confidence in the future, reflected by increasing business investment, more jobs and opportunities. However, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on every aspect of society, not least the local economy. Improving long term economic resilience and addressing long-standing issues such as poverty and unemployment remain a priority.

To address inequalities and deliver inclusive growth we will focus on developing and supporting our business ecosystem, people and skills and invest in place and a green recovery to drive growth and transformation. This will include the transformation of the former Parkside colliery site into a major logistics hub and employment site and the delivery of our Town Investment Plan to develop a town centre that matches the potential of the borough. We will also maximise opportunities presented by flagship programmes such as Glass Futures, a world-class research and development sustainable, low carbon glass manufacturing facility.

### What we heard

- We have great independent community enterprises and should enable the growth of this sector
- Our retail parks are good
- St Helens Town Centre requires radical transformation, ambitious plans should be made and implemented, considering the offer for families and the daytime and night-time economies
- Should consider offering hot desk facilities for businesses and individual workers
- Encourage local shops with local products
- Invest in the public realm



### Together we can achieve the following outcomes:

Our local economy recovers and grows and people's skills and access to jobs improves.

Our town and neighbourhood centres are vibrant places for all to use, value and enjoy.

Our places are well-connected place with accessible transport and digital networks.



## PRIORITY FOUR

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

## TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Use our place leadership role to help businesses survive and grow and work closely with Liverpool City Region to maximise opportunities for St Helens	If you're a local business, engage with local networks
Embed social value within our plans and strategies to make the most of all opportunities	Support local businesses including the town centres and high streets by using the shops and facilities there
Ensure that the right green, transport or digital infrastructure is provided to support economic prosperity.	If you're a local business, create a healthy workplace and provide opportunities for apprenticeship positions, training and work experience
Review our proposals for the regeneration of the Town Centres in St Helens and Earlestown in order to create jobs, attract business, and create vibrant high streets that attract visitors.	Take part in consultations and give us your feedback and views
The council will encourage inward investment to create jobs for local people	Take up opportunities to develop new skills

### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:  
St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035

Town Investment Plan  
St Helens Borough Economic Recovery Plan  
LCR Building Back Better Economic Recovery Plan



**26** Total enterprises per 1,000 population (42 - England)



**74.8%** of people in St Helens are in work, higher than the NW (74.2%)



The number of jobs per 100 people. (0.87 - England)

## CASE STUDY:

# NEWTON LE WILLOWS HIGH STREET

Newton le Willows High Street is booming. Recent years has seen it transform into the bustling hub of Newton-le-Willows, with a great variety of independent businesses that really give the high street that community vibe. Businesses happy to call it home, include artisan delis and cafés, a craft beer and ale shop, quality pubs, up market restaurants, trendy home and women's wear stores, hairdressers, and beauty salons, among others. There's even great connectivity linking the town to both Manchester and Liverpool, with a brand new, state of the art train station and bus interchange at one end of the high street.

Rewind a few years back, and it was a different story. Local councillors realised the potential of their high street and together with local businesses formed a High Street Business Hub. Over the years the hub has gone from strength to strength, putting on community events such as a scarecrow festival and trail, food, drink and craft fayres and an annual town show. Funds made from these events are then further invested into a rolling annual events calendar. These events, together with an increasing number of local

independent shops, has helped to make Newton le Willows High Street the beating heart of the local community once more.

One such thriving independent business on the high street is The Firkin. A micro pub, run by brothers Phil and Daniel Cunliffe, The Firkin emerged on to the street seven years ago, offering a selection of real ale and craft beer to try inside or take away and has proved to be a huge hit with customers.

*"With a decent footfall, we could see the potential in the high street as a place to invest a business,"* said Phil, who is the pub's director and native to Newton-le-Willows. *"The key to our success, which is something I'd pass onto anyone else considering launching their own local independent business, is to know your customer. "It's obviously been tough this year with a number of lockdowns and restrictions forcing us to close – but we're passionate about what we do and post-Covid, when things go back to some form of normality, we hope that more people come out to support local businesses like us which are the heartbeat of high streets and communities."*





## PRIORITY FIVE



# CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE



## PRIORITY FIVE

We want St Helens to be a better, healthier and more sustainable place that proudly celebrates our culture and heritage whilst embracing new opportunities. However, like all areas the borough faces a number of challenges, including adapting to climate change, linking communities to services and employment, ensuring good access to open space and increasing the number of people choosing active travel and public transport.

In order for the borough to remain a great place to live, work in and visit we must strive to deliver a green recovery. The greatest threat the borough faces is climate change, we have set an ambitious target to achieve our zero carbon target by 2040 and have committed to the delivery against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We also want to enhance our arts, culture and heritage offer to ensure every resident can contribute, experience and benefit from an uplifting cultural encounter.

### What we heard

- The borough has high quality green spaces and parks
- We must celebrate our partners including our recognised Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations and create more arts, culture, and heritage opportunities
- We want new development to create new quality neighbourhoods that we can be proud of. They must respect the environment and existing communities
- We want to improve our recycling rates by making it easier to recycle.
- We want to encourage people to make healthy and sustainable transport choices. Promoting walking, running, and cycling. We want everyone to respect our environment by reducing litter and fly-tipping
- We want to grow more trees to make our environment a positive experience and tackle climate change



**We want to create new and exciting green environments accessible for all. Together we can achieve the following outcomes:**

Our environment is protected for the future

Our green and open spaces are enjoyed and looked after by us all

Our spirit and identity are celebrated through our heritage, arts and culture



## PRIORITY FIVE

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

## TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Deliver our strategies for arts, culture and recreational services	Be proud, celebrate and enjoy our arts, culture, heritage and recreational facilities in the borough
Use funding opportunities to invest in projects that promote alternative means of travel, maintain air quality and reduce our carbon footprint.	Walk, cycle and use public transport where you can
Review our waste management processes to improve our services to residents	Help to keep where you live clean and tidy and recycle as much as you can
Establish a Climate Change Commission to tackle climate change and become carbon zero by 2040 and support delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals to reduce inequalities and build a more sustainable future	Make simple lifestyle changes like buying more locally produced food to reduce your carbon footprint

### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:

St Helens Borough Heritage Strategy  
St Helens Borough Arts Strategy  
St Helens Borough Libraries Strategy



St Helens Borough covers 136sqm, **65%** is green space. There is a good motorway, train and bus network



**92** public parks and green spaces (720 hectares)



**7m** recycling and waste collections made per year

## CASE STUDY:

# BOLD FOREST PARK

For nearly three decades, The Mersey Forest has brought together a range of partners to transform an area of St Helens previously dominated by colliery spoil heaps into a burgeoning Forest Park and natural asset.

St Helens Borough has faced significant social, economic and environmental challenges since the demise of the local coal mining industry.

However, the creation of a cluster of community woodlands spanning 220 hectares, including Sutton Manor, Clock Face Country Park and Griffin Wood, has dramatically improved the image of the area and offers a future source of economic development.

Landowners are working together with the local community as part of The Mersey Forest to harness the collective potential of the maturing woodlands under the banner of Bold Forest Park.

The woodlands are already proving a popular local resource, attracting 200,000 visitors per year. In an area where health and well-being are important considerations, the Forest Park provides a valuable space for walkers, cyclists and families.

The ambition is to now develop it to attract visitors from further afield – in turn helping to support local businesses. Working together with the local community, St Helens Borough Council has created a formal area action plan for the Forest Park, using neighbourhood planning principles.

Whilst the area has already been transformed, additional funding will help to further deliver the action plan to increase green spaces for recreation, improve access and create visitor infrastructure.

The vision for the Forest Park is to provide a high-quality setting to stimulate tourism and provide a platform for local businesses to grow and develop, as well as assisting the creation of new businesses. The area will also provide opportunity for a diverse range of outdoor activities to support the local economy and improve the health and well-being of its local residents.

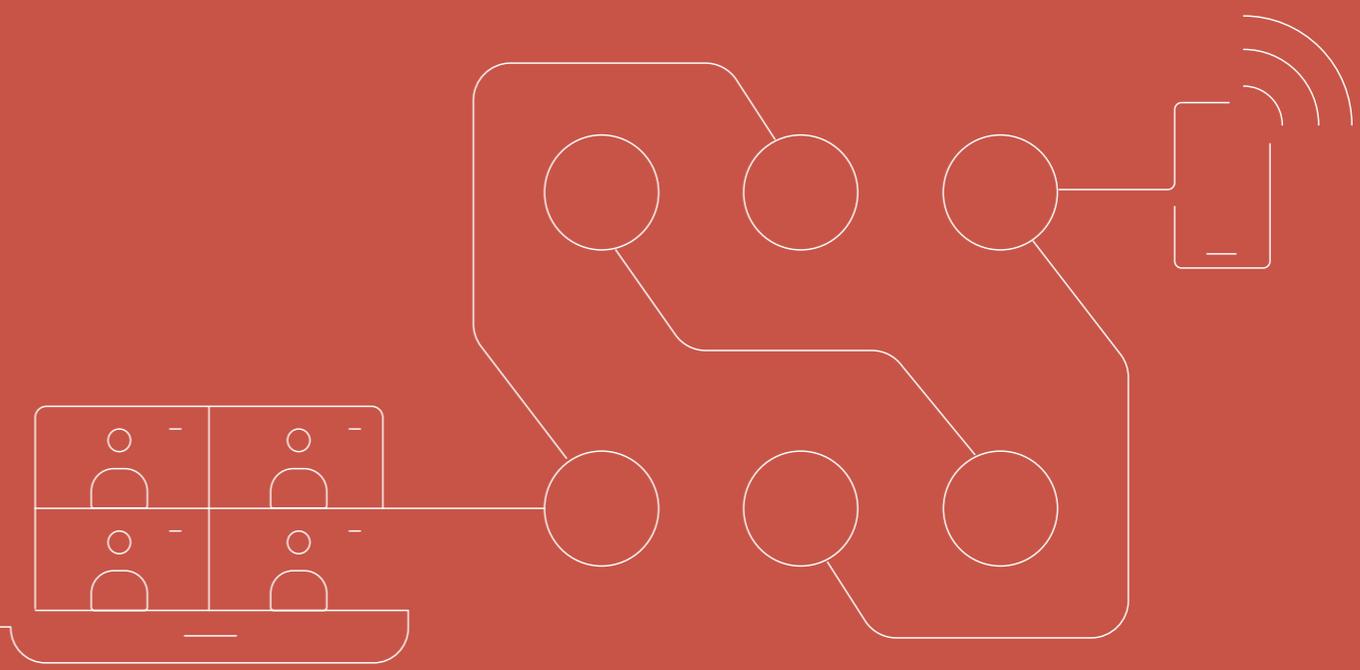




PRIORITY SIX



# BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL



## PRIORITY SIX

We want the council to work much more closely with communities and partners to shape and strengthen the prospects of the borough and its residents. Despite growing demand and an unprecedented period of budget reductions for local government, the council has continued to deliver high quality public services and value for money for residents.

### What we heard

- The council has been more responsive over the pandemic and needs to continue being more proactive and responsive
- Enable and support the residents, community groups and businesses with a positive attitude
- Increase online services
- Increase trust through greater involvement of citizens
- Publicise more good news and local successes
- More community events and promotion of local activities



### Together we can achieve the following outcomes:

Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strengths and skills in our community

Invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and elected members

Embrace innovative ways of working to improve service delivery and the operations of the council

Meet our community's needs by delivering accessible and responsive services

Provide value for money and ensure we are financially resilient and sustainable



## PRIORITY SIX

# OUR BONDS FOR A BETTER BOROUGH

## TOGETHER WE WILL

The council will	You can
Adopt new ways of working and reshape services to be more responsive, rationalise our operational estate and reduce costs	Use your vote in local and national elections
Create further opportunities to co-design, engage and involve residents, community groups and local businesses	Get involved and engage with us on shaping local services
Develop further digital services	Make the most of our online services

### Key Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The delivery of this priority will be supported by a range of strategies, plans and programmes including:

St Helens Borough Council  
Budget Strategy

St Helens Borough Council  
Ways of Working Programme

St Helens Borough Council  
Commercialisation Strategy  
IT Strategy  
Organisational Development Strategy  
Community Engagement Strategy



**£149m**  
council budget



**48** councillors  
representing the  
borough



**2963**  
council employees



## CASE STUDY:

# REIMAGINING OUR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The COVID-19 pandemic almost overnight changed the way that many organisations operated, but even before the pandemic, St Helens Borough Council was determined to introduce a more modern, flexible way of working for staff – reducing costs and freeing up council buildings and assets for other uses.

St Helens has many beautiful and historic buildings, including St Helens Town Hall, the Gamble building and Earlestown Town Hall, and like many local residents, the council is committed to retaining our historical buildings, and safeguarding their future public use. Future plans will see buildings such as St Helens Town Hall and Earlestown Town Hall become a more familiar place for residents, with investment in improving areas such as the Assembly Halls to make them a suitable venue for wedding ceremonies, civil partnerships, concerts, events and conferences. As office space in the Town Hall would no longer be required, this would allow for the potential development of commercial opportunities and increased community usage. This would make the building more accessible to local people, as well as retaining the heritage of the building and its place within the town centre and residents' lives.

In March 2020 a public consultation was held on the potential future use of The Gamble Building, with feedback showing an overwhelming desire by local people to see the building used as a community arts, cultural and educational space.

With this in mind, and taking the first steps towards this realisation, office accommodation has now been moved out of the building, with just the Archives Service remaining, while plans are drawn up.

These plans would also support the wider regeneration of St Helens Town Centre and the borough. English Cities Fund (ECF) plan for the town centre includes a £200m commercial and leisure investment that would completely transform the town centre, including the addition of top-quality office space. In the medium term the council could potentially look to develop a new building in the town centre within the regeneration area, to coincide with the expiry of the lease on Atlas House. As well as housing council services this building could also co-locate other local services and partners, further supporting the council's wider One Public Estate vision, to rationalise and re-imagine some of the public sector buildings in the centre.

The council has also recognised its need to look wider than St Helens Town Centre to the district centres, and the plans provide further opportunity to examine locality working, allowing services to be provided closer to the communities and residents who use them and facilitating a greater understanding of the needs of residents in that particular area. These locations could again provide a hub in which various local services and partners could be based.



# HOW WE WILL DELIVER AND MEASURE PROGRESS

This strategy will be supported by a delivery plan to support implementation. We will also monitor progress against the outcomes framework using the following measures of success and will report our progress to residents.

## Outcomes Framework

ENSURE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A POSITIVE START IN LIFE	
Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>Children and young people are safe from harm and the lives of children in care improve</b>	Effective early help for children and families
	Reduced numbers of children in need
	Children and young people are effectively safeguarded
	Safely reduced numbers of children we look after
	More children and young people looked after by foster carers
	Care leavers have suitable accommodation and opportunities for education and employment
<b>Children and young people's aspirations, attainment and opportunities are raised</b>	Improved educational attainment of our children and young people; in particular our vulnerable and cared for
	Increased opportunities for our young people who are not in education, employment or training
	More schools are graded 'Good' or 'Excellent'
	The needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are met
	Children and young people's mental health is improved

<b>Children and young people are healthy, resilient, confident, involved and achieve their potential</b>	Children and young people's physical health is improved
	Fewer teenage conceptions
	Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are fully involved in decisions that affect their lives
	Fewer young people become involved in the youth justice system and reoffending

PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH, INDEPENDENCE AND CARE ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES	
Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>People's physical and mental well-being improves</b>	Increased healthy life expectancy
	Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities
<b>People live well independently</b>	People are well supported to live independently at home
	Fewer people needing long-term social care support
<b>People have a positive experience of health and care services</b>	High levels of satisfaction with health and social care services
	Carers are effectively supported
	Adults are effectively safeguarded
	More people with self-directed social care support
	More services based around localities and primary care networks

**CREATE SAFE AND STRONG COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR ALL**

Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>Our communities and neighbourhoods are safe, strong and caring</b>	Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour
	Fewer incidents of domestic abuse
	Road safety improves
<b>Our voluntary and community groups are better supported to make a difference</b>	More people volunteering in the community
<b>Our neighbourhoods provide the right homes for all</b>	Reduced levels of homelessness
	Fewer people sleeping rough
	Increased numbers of homes and affordable homes
	Fewer empty properties
	Support to end fuel poverty

**SUPPORT A STRONG, THRIVING, INCLUSIVE AND WELL-CONNECTED ECONOMY**

Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>Our local economy recovers and grows and people's skills and access to jobs improves</b>	Local businesses are well supported to recover and grow
	The local economy is strengthened and diversified
	Investment in St Helens Borough increases
	People are supported into work
	More residents with higher level qualifications
	Employment needs are met
<b>Our Town and neighbourhood centres are vibrant places for all to use, value and enjoy</b>	We protect and enhance our town, district and local centres
	Perceptions of our town and district centres improve
<b>Our places are well-connected place with accessible transport and digital networks</b>	We improve our sustainable travel infrastructure
	We deliver advanced digital infrastructure and networks

## CREATE GREEN AND VIBRANT PLACES THAT REFLECT OUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>Our environment is protected for the future</b>	Our Carbon emissions reduce year on year
	Our recycling increases
	We produce less waste
	We increase active travel and use of sustainable transport
<b>Our green and open spaces are enjoyed and looked after by us all</b>	Fewer incidents of flytipping
	High levels of street cleanliness
	Greater community ownership of green spaces
	More people reporting environmental issues and concerns
<b>Our spirit and identity are celebrated through our heritage, arts and culture</b>	Increased opportunities for people to engage in arts, heritage and culture
	More people participating in arts, cultural and leisure activity leading to improved health and well-being

## BE A RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL

Outcome	Measures of Success
<b>Communicate, listen, engage, and work in partnership well with our residents, communities, local organisations, and partners recognising the strengths and skills in our community</b>	There is growing trust and confidence in the council
	We communicate positive messages and behaviours that increase community resilience
	We promote our borough to create improved perceptions and pride in the area
	We respond to residents and communities concerns in a prompt manner
<b>Invest in developing the strengths and skills of our workforce and elected members</b>	Our workforce is agile, skilled, and motivated
	We increase training and development opportunities for our workforce and elected members
	The health and well-being of our workforce is well supported
	Our shared values and behaviours promote a positive work culture
<b>Embrace innovative ways of working to improve service delivery and the operations of the council</b>	Increased use of new technology to support customers and communities
	Increased customer engagement with digital and online services
<b>Meet our community's needs by delivering accessible and responsive services</b>	Levels of customer satisfaction are high
	More services delivered in localities, based on where and how customers need them
<b>Provide value for money and ensure we are financially resilient and sustainable</b>	Our budget is sustainable and delivers the best possible outcomes for our communities
	Cost effective use of resources and performance improvement

# HOW WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS

In order to deliver our vision to make St Helens a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do we must continue our engagement with residents, neighbourhoods, local businesses and partners as our success in delivering this vision will ultimately be judged by those who live, work and study in the borough.

By engaging communities in shaping how we deliver the vision and priorities for the borough and raising awareness and understanding of the choices we face, we will be better placed to succeed together.

Our future is dependent on an open and honest two-way conversation about what we are trying to achieve and the role that residents, neighbourhoods, businesses and partners must play to help us reshape how we deliver.

Our first review of progress against the borough strategy will take place in September 2021.





**#STHELENSTOGETHER**



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL